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GOOD NUTRITION FOR MI ESCUELITA PRESCHOOL CHILDREN STARTS AT THE VISITING NURSE ASSOCIATION

The American Academy of Pediatrics advises that children cannot learn on an empty stomach and it is important that they start the day with a good breakfast. The Visiting Nurse Association has been working with Mi Escuelita preschools in Dallas since 1997 to help ensure their students are nutritionally ready for learning.

Mi Escuelita is a nonprofit early childhood program that teaches English and beginning learning skills to children age two to five from low-income families, to prepare them for successful entry into elementary school.

Each school day, nutritionally balanced breakfast, lunch, and snacks for the 450 children enrolled at Mi Escuelita are prepared in the Visiting Nurse Association's Beatrice M. Haggerty Kitchen through a contractual arrangement. Menus are planned by a Visiting Nurse Association nutritionist. The meals are transported to the six Mi Escuelita preschools located in East Dallas, Oak Cliff, Oak Lawn, Pleasant Grove, and West Dallas.

"Many of our children are suffering from anemia when they start attending Mi Escuelita," states Gayle Nave, the program's executive director. "In addition to ensuring that they get proper nutrition at mealtime, we see that they receive age-appropriate education in the areas of health and nutrition to help them develop good eating habits that carry over into adolescence," she adds.

Mi Escuelita and the Visiting Nurse Association are community partners of the

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United Way of Metropolitan Dallas. Together, they play a vital role in the United Way's focus on improving communities through support for education and health initiatives.



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