

Lakeshore Learning Promotes Early Childhood Development with Donation to Officer Breann Leath Unit

Leah Hession, IDOC Maternal-Child Healthcare Coordinator

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Lakeshore Learning, a leading provider of children's educational supplies and proponent of early learning is giving back to the community with a donation of developmental products worth nearly \$500 to the Officer Breann Leath Memorial Maternal-Child Health Unit. The Leath Unit, which resides inside the walls of the Indiana Women's Prison, seeks to address barriers to the social determinants of health affecting pregnant and post-partum women experiencing incarceration, while providing them the unique opportunity to keep their babies with them after birth. Along with the ability to bond with their infants in the unit, mothers engage in educational classes aimed at enhancing their parenting skills through evidence-based curriculum.

"Lakeshore is pleased to work in collaboration with Shine Early Learning's SPARK Learning Lab and Child Care Answers to provide safe, age-appropriate educational products to the Leath Unit in an effort to help build a positive learning space for the children," says Doug Williams, Senior Vice President at Lakeshore Learning. "As a company dedicated to serving the early childhood education community, we know firsthand how important it is to create an engaging learning environment during the formative years in a child's life. We hope these products will assist the mothers in fostering a love of learning in their children from an early age and will create a positive impact in their lives." Along with their donation of high-quality educational products, the Lakeshore team has teamed up with SPARK Learning Lab and Child Care Answers to organize a donation drive for additional enrichment products from the Lakeshore store as well as essential items for the Leath Unit.

"We are so honored to have been given the opportunity to work with one of the finest organizations and suppliers in early childhood development," says IDOC Maternal-Child Healthcare Coordinator, Leah Hession. "The Leath unit's goal of addressing the social determinants of health goes hand in hand with Lakeshore Learning's vision as we work collectively to provide the highest level of childcare to those in our care and across Indiana. We cannot thank Lakeshore Learning enough for these exceptional enrichment products for the infants and toddlers of the Leath unit."

In 1954, single mother Ethelyn Kaplan achieved her lifelong goal of opening a toy store in Northern California. After realizing the educational and developmental values of these products, educators from across the state flocked to Lakeshore Learning store. Beginning as a single store, championed by a strong woman with ambition, Lakeshore Learning has been providing top-quality learning products and educational materials for early childhood programs, elementary schools, and homes across America for over 50 years.

Shine Early Learning's mission is to bring a relentless focus on positive family and child outcomes to close the achievement gap and build a better future for children, families, and communities. To achieve this mission, we have created a transformational approach to quality improvement for early education and care. Our project SPARK Learning Lab provides professional development in the form of training and coaching to early education and care programs throughout the state of Indiana.

Child Care Answers grows with you. Since 1985, Child Care Answers has been a go-to resource for all things child care in Central Indiana—a hand to hold for families, child care professionals, and community partners. Families turn to them to find trusted child care and quality information about their child's development. Child Care Answers also equips child care providers with the resources and tools they need to start their own professional care and expand their existing programs. They ensure that community partners, employers, and policy makers have access to a platform that amplifies their own work and creates awareness around a shared vision—making the essential accessible to all. Connect today at childcareanswers.org.



Lakeshore Learning's generous donation included a mirrored balancing bar, sensory blocks and balls, musical engagement products, building blocks, sensory tubes, and discovery cubes.



Three of the current Leath Unit babies play with the newly donated Lakeshore Learning products. The acoustic sensory tubes and colorful boxes containing assorted items of the same color were a popular choice with the children. These items teach color recognition which can boost a child's logic skills.