



Office of the County Executive

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CONTACT OWEN MCEVOY
443-679-8397

County Executive Steve Schuh Celebrates Opening of New Tot Lot Play Area in Whitmore Park

Annapolis, MD (December 16, 2015) – County Executive Steve Schuh today joined Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services Director Carnitra White, Maryland Family Network Executive Director Margaret Williams, community members and a dozen young children for the ceremonial ribbon cutting and opening of a new Annapolis Family Support Center Tot Lot play area in Whitmore Park.

“An important role of government is to improve access to health-promoting recreational spaces for citizens. But we can’t do it alone,” Schuh said. “Today is a wonderful example of how government and dedicated community providers are working together to create more places where our children can run around, get exercise and be healthy.”

The Tot Lot features new climbing equipment, slides and games suitable for children ages 1 to 5. It will primarily be used by children of young parents enrolled in programs at the Annapolis Family Support Center, part of the Department of Social Services. The county provided the land for the Tot Lot, which was made possible by a \$36,000 grant from Maryland Family Network to the Support Center.

“Outdoor play is a critical element of child development, and Maryland Family Network is proud to be able to support these young families,” said Williams. “Having access to free childcare and the educational opportunities offered through the Annapolis Family Support Center enables these young parents to improve their lives and better support their children.”

The Annapolis Family Support Center is part of a network of 26 centers that provide free, comprehensive services to families, targeting parents and their children from birth through age three. So far this year, more than 158 county residents (including 77 children) benefited from adult education, employment/job training, free childcare and parenting education services.

This month, Annapolis Family Support Center staff began offering parenting classes to interested Annapolis High School students after school. Classes are held at the school, making it easier for the teens to attend.

“This unique arrangement with the Anne Arundel County Public Schools System allows new teen mothers and fathers to develop more effective parenting skills and fulfill their aims related to school and family life,” said White.

Refreshments for the ribbon cutting ceremony were provided by Matthew Lalumiere, manager of the Dunkin Donuts of West Street.

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