



Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission

# Media Advisory

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **EOC's Head Start Helps Combat Childhood Obesity in Mendota**

*- Health Fair promotes healthy eating habits and lifestyle change -*

**(Fresno, CA)** Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission's (EOC) Head Start program invites the community of Mendota and members of the media to its first annual Mendota Health Fair. The event – which focuses on curbing childhood obesity – takes place Saturday, April 17, 2010, between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. at Rojas-Pierce Park located at 200 Sorensen Avenue in Mendota.

The Health Fair was conceptualized by Kathy Hix, Head Start Registered Nurse, and Shana Burns, Head Start Nutrition Assistant, who saw a need to lower childhood obesity rates after assessing the nutrition and health status of students enrolled in Head Start's Mendota Center. "We knew something needed to be done after a recent nutrition and health assessment showed that 36 of the 80 children enrolled in our program – 45% of them –were considered overweight or at risk of being overweight," says Hix. "More shocking is that nine of those 36 children were considered 'extreme cases' and were immediately referred to meet with a registered dietitian."

The Mendota Health Fair will educate and increase the health and nutritional status of Mendota families and empower parents to make healthy choices for themselves and their children. Free toy lead testing, children's immunizations, diabetes and hypertension screenings, and other health screenings will be offered.

A job fair and book distribution by Fresno County Library will also be held alongside the Mendota Health Fair which is made possible by our cosponsors Proteus, Inc., and Poder Popular.

### **About Head Start - Preschool:**

Head Start-*Preschool* provides economically disadvantaged children, ages 3 – 5 years, with a variety of age appropriate early childhood education-learning experiences to foster intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth.

### **About Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission (EOC)**

For over 44 years, Fresno County EOC – a private, nonprofit agency – has helped low-income Fresno County residents become self-sufficient. EOC offers over 35 comprehensive programs that develop an individual's capabilities and places them on the path toward financial independence.

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