

AWARDS

Astor Early Head Start Honored

On May 7, Astor Services for Children & Families' Early Head Start Program was honored for their work in successfully addressing the issues of children's mental health, including early identification, outreach, family education, providing mental health awareness in schools, and successfully intervening on behalf of afflicted children and their families. This award was presented by the New York State National Alliance on Mental Illness during a reception at the 2013 "What's Great in Our State - A Celebration of Children's Mental Health Awareness," at the New York State Museum in Albany.

Head Start and Early Head Start are federally-funded programs for low-income families. Since 1978, Astor has operated the Head Start Program in Dutchess County, and later assumed responsibility for the Early Head Start Program.

The children in Astor's Head Start and Early Head Start Programs receive mental health screening through collaboration with

Astor's Hudson Valley Behavioral Health & Prevention Programs. This program provides early identification and intervention of social emotional problems in children, ages 2 to 18, through the Child and Family Clinic Plus Program (Clinic Plus). This program is a state-wide initiative by the Office of Mental Health to furnish mental health services for children and families.

"On behalf of the children, families and staff, I am delighted to receive this recognition. Astor's Early Head Start Program serves over 200 infants, toddlers and their families in seven sites across Dutchess County. These are the issues at the core of our Early Head Start Program: social emotional development, health relationships and positive attachments for children. All stakeholders in our program play a critical role in ensuring optimal mental health and positive self-esteem," said Mary Sontheimer, Assistant Executive Director, Astor Services for Children & Families, Early Childhood Programs.