

## The Easterseals Early Learning Center at Hickory Hills Celebrates its Arab American Community

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**Our staff and clients represent the richness and beauty of all individuals. Just one example is our Easterseals Early Learning Center at Hickory Hills that serves a population in which more than 80 percent of families identify as Arab American.**

April is [National Arab American Heritage Month](#)! Did you know that Chicago has the 5th largest population of Arab Americans in the country and that the population of Hickory Hills, Illinois is more

than 10 percent Arab American?

Our mission and work at Easterseals Serving Chicagoland and Greater Rockford are inherently grounded in embracing the abilities of and expanding possibilities for all, and our staff and clients represent the richness and beauty of everyone. Just one example is our community of Arab-American families who are served by our Easterseals Early Learning Center at Hickory Hills. More than 80 percent of the children enrolled at our Center identify as Arab-American.



The Easterseals Early Learning Center at Hickory Hills is one of two early learning centers directly operated by Easterseals Serving Chicagoland and Greater Rockford; the other is the Gilchrist Marchman Child Development Center. The Centers provide full-day, year-round services to children 0-5 years old, and offer competitive tuition rates and subsidized child-care options, in addition to Head Start and Early Head Start.

At our Hickory Hills location, there are six staff members, including teachers, an enrollment coordinator, and the front desk manager, who speak both English and Arabic. Staffers fluent in both languages include Instructional Coach/Supervisor Mona Alqadi.

“It’s so important for us to serve our community in a way that will most resonate with them. Children and families feel more comfortable when they are able to speak to someone who speaks their language. And while our children are learning English, they respond better when we are able to also speak Arabic with them,” says Alqadi.

Alqadi says the Hickory Hills staff makes sure to honor the cultures, languages, and histories of its students and families. “Easterseals encourages teachers to include cultural activities into their lesson plans. We label our shelves and book libraries in English and Arabic. We also make sure that our communications to families, like our newsletters, are translated into Arabic.”





At Easterseals Serving Chicagoland and Greater Rockford, our mission is to make profound, positive differences in the everyday lives of early learners and individuals of all abilities through access to expert educational and family support services. This month, April 2023, we celebrate Arab American Heritage Month, as well as Autism Awareness Month, National Deaf History Month, Scottish American Heritage Month, Celebrate Diversity Month, Community Service Month and Earth Month.

[Follow us on Facebook](#) to see more information about these celebrations!