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## Amy Pinkston Named Outstanding Early Childcare Professional

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The first Outstanding Early Childhood Professional awards were presented in 1988 by then Governor Bill Clinton. On Sunday, April 2, 2006 at the Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock, the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission and the DHHS/Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education acknowledged the 17<sup>th</sup> group of early care and education professionals that play a vital role in preparing

young children for school success and years beyond across the State. Director of Ozarka College Kids Academy, Amy Pinkston was among those five honored statewide.

The Ozarka College Kids Academy serves children ages six weeks to five years and is a Quality Accredited program. In her role as Director for Ozarka Kids, Pinkston has exhibited tremendous organizational skills, knowledge, supervision skills in addition to providing a safe and caring environment for children in care. Amy helped organize the Ozarka Kids Academy Parent Advisory Board for parents to become involved in the success of the program and to ensure parents that their children are receiving the best child care possible.

Along with her role as Director, Amy is also a Child Development Associate and Child Care Orientation Instructor at Ozarka College. It is her belief that everyone in Arkansas would benefit if those working in the early childhood profession completed training in order to achieve a higher level of quality care for children in care. Her vision is to have only trained, caring professionals working in the field of childcare in order to

provide not only educational skills for children entering kindergarten but a safe, nurturing environment.

Not only is Amy a distinguished professional, she is also an outstanding volunteer in the National Association of Junior Auxiliaries, Inc., a non-profit organization of women committed to rendering charitable services in their communities with emphasis on children. Amy lives in Batesville with her husband Scott, who also works for Ozarka College as Director of Information Systems and her three-year old son, Lance who is a student at the Kids Academy.

During Arkansas Children's Week, which was held April 2-8, the needs of young children to have engaging and quality early care and education programs were recognized and the opportunity was taken to thank the educators and many others involved in their care and education.

Early Childhood programs across the state, including child care, Head Start, preschools and elementary schools, held local fairs, open houses, rallies, play-days and other activities to bring awareness to the growing needs of young children. The Ozarka College Kids Academy held a book fair and had many other activities and events for the students and their parents throughout the week.

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