



## Benedictine Sisters of Erie — PENNSYLVANIA

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The East Coast Migrant Head Start Program began in Erie in 1978 under the sponsorship of the Hispanic American Council. Twenty-five preschoolers were served at St. Patrick Social Hall in downtown Erie. The contract was transferred to MHEDS (Minority Health Education Delivery Service) the following year and the program was moved to Mount Saint Benedict in Harborcreek.

In 1980, the Benedictine Sisters were asked to become the delegate agency and the program was expanded with a contract increase to thirty children. The Benedictine Sisters' former motherhouse, located in the center of Erie, was renovated in 1992, and the East Coast program moved there. In the move the program was merged with an already existing daycare/after school program to form Saint Benedict Child Development Center. The East Coast Migrant Head Start children were integrated into five preschool classrooms to facilitate language development and share traditions and culture.

The East Coast Migrant Head Start Project has been a constant support, offering guidance and funds to bring quality care to migrant children of northwestern Pennsylvania. With generous donations from the ECMHSP and other grants, a special outdoor learning space/playground was created. Over the last couple of years the East Coast Migrant Head Start Project has been able to provide expansion funding which enables St. Benedict Center to offer services to our migrant children for six additional weeks.