

Coastal Kids Breaks Ground On Expansion

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By Samuel J. Baldwin

Coastal Kids Preschool broke ground on June 13 on an expansion of their Damariscotta facilities.

Currently, Coastal Kids operates a "developmentally appropriate education for preschool children of all incomes and abilities" out of a converted split-level house on Biscay Road, according to material provided by the organization. The addition will provide increased teaching and office space, and it will increase access and facilities for special education and handicapped students.

The expansion will nearly triple the facility's footprint; in addition to nearly \$1 million in low-interest loans from both public and private funding sources, the school has raised more than \$150,000 to help pay for the expansion.

At the groundbreaking, officials from the school described the project as 16 years in the making and expressed their excitement about finally having a facility that will accommodate the level of services they'd like to provide.

The expansion will increase the available slots at the school to 49 kids each day, or a 75 percent increase. That number includes 16 slots for children with special needs, or an increase of more than 50 percent, according to Coastal Kids.

At the groundbreaking, representatives read letters from Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins.

Both Senators commented on the value of the public/private partnership the school represents.

"It is clear that everyone worked together to make this day a reality," according to Snowe's letter.

Collins' letter applauded the fact that the "safe, nurturing environment that is so important to children" will be available to more children thanks to the expansion of the facility and particularly the expansion of the special education program.

Construction on the project will begin immediately, and Coastal Kids expects to hold a ribbon cutting sometime in December.