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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
Charleston, Illinois

# news

ART TATE, Assistant Director, University Relations  
Office: (217) 581-5983 - Home: (217) 348-7553

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FILE COPY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EASTERN HELPS MIGRANT STUDENTS

CHARLESTON, IL.--In an effort to reduce the dropout rate among migrant students, Eastern Illinois University is offering a summer education program designed to improve the students' reading, writing, math and swimming skills.

Funded through a \$21,000 grant from the Illinois Department of Education, the migrant student education program is being offered for the first time at Eastern for 33 migrant students, ages 3 to 12, from South Texas and Florida.

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"The migrant students get a hit and miss education transferring from three to four schools yearly. The program's goal is to reduce the present school dropout rate of 50 percent," said Bill Phillips, assistant professor in special education at Eastern and director of the migrant program.

In addition to learning new skills that will enhance their oral and written language and reading and math proficiency, the students are learning to swim. "It is extremely important they learn to swim since the second cause of death among migrant children is drowning," said Phillips.

The students are also being taught about oral hygiene and have had their hearing tested.

While the program is being coordinated by Eastern's School of Adult and Continuing Education and College of Education, faculty from the College of Health, Physical Education and Recreation; School of Home Economics; and Departments of Communication Disorders and Sciences, Journalism, Botany and Zoology have collaborated on the project.

"It is hoped this will become an annual program if classroom space is available," Phillips said.