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# St. E hands off child-care unit

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

St. Elizabeth Medical Center will turn over its Edgewood day-care program to an outside business.

Little Red School House, a preschool with 13 locations in Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio, is building an 11,000-square-foot facility on the campus. It will replace the St. Elizabeth-run Toddler Inn child-care program when it opens in July.

"We are getting out of being in the management and owning of a day-care center and preschool," said Mark Riedinger, St. Elizabeth's vice president of business development. "Our specialty is taking care of patients, and we thought we should look to someone whose specialty is running preschools."

**ADVERTISEMENT** Riedinger also said the hospital wanted to consolidate its child care into one facility - currently it is in two leased buildings.

"We can use capital to do other things - clinic services," he said.

The new building will be paid for by Little Red School House. Officials would not divulge the cost, but pointed out that there is no financial connection between the school and hospital.

The building will have 13 classrooms to handle infants to kindergartners, said Ben Eilerman, an associate at Hub+Weber, which is designing the building. It will have 9-foot ceilings and, Eilerman said, be "brightly lit with windows at every opportunity." It will have a computer lab and a cafeteria with kitchen.

After a nationwide search, the hospital found the replacement in its own back yard.

"I did a lot of research - reading and talking to people - and Little Red School House is one name that kept coming up as to who is a quality provider," Riedinger said. "They were a good fit for us. They had a good reputation."

Little Red School House owners Jan and Chip Malley say the facility will be more than just day care.

"We aren't baby-sitters," said Jan Malley, who founded the school in 1975 after becoming disillusioned with teaching in the public schools. "We're educators."

Chip Malley, a former Ford Motor Co. executive, handles the business side while Jan is the education coordinator.

Little Red School House is also the only private preschool accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The association is an accrediting body in 30 states and 65 foreign countries - 24,000 schools in all.

The new facility will be open to the public. There will be three different pricing levels.

"Any parent that is a St. E associate gets a discount," Jan Malley said. There are also discounts for other corporations and a regular tuition rate. "The change in tuition for Toddler Inn parents will be within a 5 percent range."

Toddler Inn will run the school until May. Little Red School House will start a summer session in those buildings.

It will transition over to the new facility during that period.