I am thrilled to be on board as the new program director and am looking forward to working with you and your children. After only a month in this new role, I can see how dedicated parents and staff members are to the growth, development and happiness of each one of our Head Start children.

As we look toward the end of the year (which will be here before we know it), I would like to ask your help in a couple of ways. First, children’s daily and regular attendance is critical to the success of the program and for preparing your child for Kindergarten. When children are not present, they are missing critical opportunities for learning. Unless your child is ill, please do everything possible to send your child to school.

Next, I would encourage parents to participate in the program. There are a number of ways that parents can be a part of the SIU Carbondale Head Start program and in the continuous development of their children. We welcome parent input, presence and assistance, which is an essential component of Head Start.

One way to participate is to volunteer at the center that your child attends. Another way is to represent your center on the Policy Council. Participation in the Policy Council allows parents to be a part of the decision making process for the program. Lastly, continue to work with your children at home to reinforce skills necessary for successful transition to Kindergarten. This includes reading to children, increasing language development through talk and developing basic counting and sorting skills.

As SIU Carbondale Head Start prepares for its annual self-assessment this month, we welcome your contributions, thoughts, and feedback to improve and strengthen the program. Thank you for all that you do for your children and Head Start!
Building Literacy Every Day

Every time you read a book, write a note, sort the laundry, check the TV listings, or recount the day's happenings, you are using skills young children need to have to be ready to learn to read and write. Here are some simple activities you and your child can do together.

Listening for Letters and Sounds

Nursery Rhymes
Read, sing, or say nursery rhymes from your childhood. Help your child learn them. Point out the parts that rhyme or have words you like to say or hear.

Beginning Sounds
Point out ways words begin or end. Compare words that start with the same sound, for example, tomato and taco. Ask: "Tomatoes and tacos begin in the same way. Can you hear the "t" in tomatoes and tacos?"

Rhyming Books
Read books with rhyming words, such as those by Dr. Seuss. Let your child fill in the words as you read them again and again.

Rhyming Riddles
Make up riddles and guessing games using words that rhyme or words that start with the same sounds. For example, "What kind of cake would a snake make? He might make a lake cake." The rhymes can be silly and fun and will get your child thinking about words and listening for rhymes.

Beginning Reading and Writing

Letter Search
Point out words on signs and in stores. Begin a search for the letter that begins your child's name. Read the stop signs and the other traffic signs aloud when you are driving with your child. Find letters on products, on signs, and on television. Match the letters with the child's first or last name. Play "letter of the day," in which you decide on a letter and go on a hunt for it.

Labels
Label a few belongings with your child's name, for example, a cup or a favorite book. Read the labels together.

Notes
Write simple notes to your child. For example, write "I love you" or "Let's take a walk." Your child can "write" notes back to you using words or pictures. Take turns reading the notes to each other.

Getting your child to school every day, unless they are sick, is something that you can do to ensure your child has a chance to succeed in school.

While others can help, you are the bottom line. You can promote good attendance when you:

Establish and stick to the basic routines (going to bed early, waking up on time, etc.) that will help your child develop the habit of on-time attendance.

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Flavorful Healthy Eating

March is considered National Nutrition Month and this year’s theme is “Savor the Flavor.” To celebrate this year’s theme, try a few of these tips.

Taste the Rainbow!
- Eat foods that are a variety of different colors.
  - Orange: sweet potato or carrots
  - Red: tomatoes or red bell peppers
  - Green: spinach or asparagus
  - Brown: potato or whole wheat bread
  - Blue/purple: plums, blueberries or eggplant

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- USDA recommends for Americans to make half of their plate filled with fruits and vegetables in order to receive the needed amounts of vitamins and other daily nutrients.

Avoiding Picky Eaters

1. Give your child small amounts of new foods to try
   ➞ Start out by introducing the new food item in small quantities. This will help prevent the child from getting overwhelmed.

2. Be a positive role model
   ➞ Children are more likely to eat new foods if they see their parents and peers eating them too.
   ➞ Eat the same foods together during meal time.

3. Avoid giving children sugary foods and drinks before meals
   ➞ Giving children sugary foods and drinks makes a child less interested in eating other types of foods.

4. Limit the amount of sugary and salty foods eaten daily
   ➞ Children who become accustomed to eating a lot of sugary and salty foods will find healthy foods unpleasant.

5. Praise your child when he/she tries a new food
   ➞ Praising children with positive reinforcement allows them to associate positive feelings when trying new foods.

Add spice to your life.
- Including spices in your food can increase flavor and make healthy foods more delicious.
- Spices and herbs are also wonderful ways to avoid excessive salt and sugar in meals.

Make trying new foods a family tradition:
- Trying and eating new foods can be fun!
- Tip: Try to make it a fun activity for the family to try one new food item at least once a month.
- Trying new foods together will increase a child's openness to eating a variety of foods.
# March Menu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Snack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Banana, Biscuit with Honey</td>
<td>Milk, Broccoli Quiche, Boiled Potatoes, Pineapple Tidbits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Mixed Berries, Waffles, Pancake Syrup</td>
<td>Milk, Beef Taco, Corn, Peaches, Lettuce, Tomato, Shredded Cheese, Sour Cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Warm Apple Slices, Scrambled Eggs, and Wheat Toast with Apple Butter, Margarine</td>
<td>Milk, Turkey Sausage Pizza, Salad with Tomato, Carrots and Ranch Dressing, Fruit Cocktail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Orange Juice, Frosted Mini Wheat Cereal</td>
<td>Milk, Tuna Salad Sandwiches, Pickled Beets, Tropical Fruit Salad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Banana, Kix Cereal</td>
<td>Milk, Corn Dog Nuggets, Baby Carrots, Fruit Salad, Ranch Dressing, Ketchup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Blueberries, Oatmeal</td>
<td>Milk, Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes, Tropical Fruit Salad, Yeast Roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Orange Juice, Sausage Patty, Biscuit, Apple Butter</td>
<td>Milk, Chicken &amp; Noodle, Peas, Apricots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Mango, Bagel with Cream Cheese</td>
<td>Milk, Fish Sandwich, Baked Beans, Peaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td>NO SCHOOL — SPRING BREAK</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Grape Juice, Kix</td>
<td>Milk, Chicken Sandwich, Potato Salad, S-Way Fruit Deluxe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Banana, Wheat Toast, Apple Butter</td>
<td>Milk, Spinach Lasagna, Green Beans, Pears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Mandarin Oranges, English Muffins, Cream Cheese</td>
<td>Milk, Chez Burgeroni, Peas &amp; Carrots, Peaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Apple Juice, Rice Crispies</td>
<td>Milk, Chef Salad, Grapes, Cracker Medley, Ranch Dressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td>NO SCHOOL — STAFF TRAINING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Banana, Toasted Oats</td>
<td>Milk, Turkey Meatball Sub, Hot Dog Bun, Mixed Vegetables, Pears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Applesauce, Bran Muffin</td>
<td>Milk, Fish Sticks, Mac &amp; Cheese, Peas, Fruit Cocktail, Tarter Sauce</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Mixed Berries, Waffle, Light Syrup</td>
<td>Milk, Stir Fry Chicken, Sugar Snap Peas, Apricots</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td>Milk, Raspberries, Biscuit with Gravy</td>
<td>Milk, Spaghetti, Green Beans, Tropical Fruit Salad</td>
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</tbody>
</table>