From the Director’s Desk

Happy Spring to all of our Head Start families! It’s hard to believe that the end of the school year is right around the corner on May 19th. With about eight weeks left in the school year, now is the time to start thinking about next year. For some families, this means making the big transition to kindergarten and for others, it will be preparing for another year at Head Start. The program will be providing a number of transition activities for those children going to kindergarten in the fall and will start the transition curriculum this month. April is also when we start enrollment applications for new children. We count on our families to spread the word about the quality services we provide in the community. If you know anyone with a pre-school aged child that may be eligible for Head Start, please refer them to us. The main office contact number can be found on page 3. Thanks to all of our parents for their commitment to their child’s education and for their patience this school year.

-Dr. Lea Maue

Get to Know... Cherrelle Robinson

Hello. My name is Cherrelle Robinson. I completed my internship and graduated with my bachelor’s degree in Education Childhood and Family Services from Southern Illinois University Carbondale in December of 2018. I began working with the program as a substitute teacher in January 2019, and I am now a Lead Teacher in the Yellow Room. A little info about myself. I have a twin sister. I was born in Detroit Michigan and raised here in Carbondale IL. I am married and even though I don’t have any biological children, I have a room full of children that I love like they were my own.

In our classroom we are having so much fun. The class loved making sensory bottles out of recycled containers filled with water, oil, glitter, and any small manipulative items they choose to add to their sensory bottles during our curriculum Tubes and Tunnels Study. Take time to do other science or art activities like this with your children at home. They learn so much when they are building and creating things. Let me know if you need any ideas about more activities you can do at home. I want to take this time to thank the staff at the Carbondale center and all of the parents. It has been a pleasure serving as your children’s teacher and being a part of your lives. Teaching children is not new to me. I have been in the childcare field for the last 15 years. I enjoy spending time with my family, friends, and my coworkers.

Thank you Cherrelle for your love and care for the children and families at the Carbondale Head Start Center.

From your Policy Council

My name is Sharee. I am a newly elected Policy Council Alternate representing the John A. Logan Center. I am involved because I can have a hands-on approach to my child’s development and learning. What a better way to be involved than with a program that has been established for over 50 years.

I am so happy to see that my son Matthew is thriving on his own. He is my second oldest of four children and he did not have a chance to shine. Now that he is around peers his own age, he is showing a lot more self-esteem and is growing to be more self-sufficient. He loves his teacher Ms. Chrisden, and calls her “Momma Chrisden.” He also loves Ms. Eunice who cooks at the center and he calls her “Grandma.” As a mother, it eases my mind having staff I can trust with my child. Not having to worry about him being safe and knowing that he is being treated with love and care is important.

I would like to invite parents to try to be involved as best you can. We are our children’s role models, and they pay attention to the sacrifices that we make no matter how small. The smallest amount of time we can participate in the program can make the biggest difference. Thank you all.

Sharee Frieson
Transitioning to Kindergarten

By Janis Strasser

Starting school can be scary and exciting for both you and your child. Effective kindergarten teachers know that children are individuals who each start kindergarten with a wide range of skills. You do not need to drill your child with letters, numbers, and facts, before school starts. But there are some things you can do to prepare both you and your child for kindergarten. Here are some ideas.

Before school starts

Send a note to the nurse and to the teacher if your child has allergies or special needs. Do this even if you have indicated this on other forms already. It may be critical for teachers to know that your child reacts to bee stings, has food allergies, or has hearing or vision modifications. As a parent, you have the responsibility to advocate for your child’s health and safety.

Visit the school and meet the teacher. If there is a visiting day to meet your child’s teacher and visit her classroom before school starts, make sure to participate. If you missed visiting day or the school does not offer one, call to see if you can arrange a quick visit to see the school and to meet the teacher with your child.

Start your school routine early. To reduce stress and get used to new routines, adjust new bedtimes or wake up times a few weeks before school begins. Routines are comforting for us and for children. Read a soothing bedtime story every night to help your child fall asleep with comforting thoughts. Do not watch the news or violent programs in the evening.

Label everything. Make sure to label backpacks, lunch boxes - everything your child brings to school. This includes her! If your child’s school has not supplied a nametag, make one. It should have your child’s name, address, and a phone number where a parent/guardian can be reached, the name of the teacher, and how your child gets home from school.

Read books together about starting school. Ask your local librarian for suggestions try these listed:

*Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten*, Joseph Slate (Illustrated by Ashley Wolff)
*Seven Little Mice Go to School*, Kazuo Iwamura
*Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes*, Eric Litwin (Illustrated by James Dean)
*Mom, It’s My First Day of Kindergarten*, Hyewon Yum
*Yoko Learns to Read*, Rosemary Wells

https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/transitioning-to-kindergarten

COVID-19 Response Resources

Looking for a Job? Man-Tra-Con can help!

If you are 18 years or older and looking for full-time employment, Man-Tra-Con Corporation can help. They offer “NO COST” career services to help you find a job that will allow you to support yourself and your family, plus be a good fit for your skills and interests. Whatever your situation, Man-Tra-Con will help ALL job seekers reach their career goals and find employment through Career Coaching and Job Search Assistance.

Contact Man-Tra-Con at 618-998-0970 for more assistance!

Search their website for more information:

http://www.mantracon.org/
Promoting the Resilient Adult Caregiver

*How Full Is Your (Resilience) Pitcher?*

Think of a time when your pitcher was empty and you were facing a significant challenge. Asking the question, “How Full Is Your Pitcher?” is important to consider when thinking about the way you cope with challenging times that you are faced with. It is important to think about the capacity to “give,” or to provide care and nurturing to others in your lives. When your pitcher is closer to “full” (making you more able to give) or “empty” (making you less able to give), this determines your ability to care for individuals in your lives.

As an adult caregivers you are in the position of giving of yourselves all day long (the liquid in the pitcher) to the children you care for (the small cups), or giving to your family members and friends (even larger cups). As you give and give, eventually your pitcher empties, leaving you less able to continue giving.

You need to be able to identify and practice things you can do to replenish and “fill your pitcher” so that you can continue to give to those that you care for. These “pitcher fillers” are different for everyone. Remember that each person fills their own pitcher in their own unique ways. Everyone is different and need to learn healthy ways to cope with the challenges faced each and every day.

Here are some ways to fill your pitcher:

- **Make time for yourself. Remember that Self-Care is not selfish!**
- **Taking time throughout the day to think of the people in your lives that bring you happiness.** (Think about calling someone that you have not talked to in a long while, or sending them a letter or card, text or email).
- **Find a hobby or read a book** (think of things you have been wanting to do but haven’t had time (remember small steps).
- **Take a few minutes throughout the day to relax by taking deep breaths to reduce stress and tension, or take a quick walk to get you mind off something that you have been struggling with.**
- **Spend more time in nature to recharge the body and soul.**

Adult caregivers are the pitchers to fill the cups of children, and those that we care for on a regular basis. When your pitchers are full, it increases your capacity to give in a more fulfilling way.

*Stay tuned next month as we feature more strategies for a Resilient You!*

Your Journey Together and Building Your Bounce

*From the Devereux Center for Resilient Children (DCRC).*

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*“Educating Children, Empowering Families, Strengthening Communities”*
Recipe: Nutrition Activity

Hello Parents! On April 21st the children will be making Fruit & Cheese Kabobs with Fruit Dip in the classroom for our Nutrition Activity. Prep items needed: Popsicle Sticks (Yields 12 Kabobs)

INGREDIENTS FOR FRUIT & CHEESE KABOB WITH FRUIT DIP

1. 1 cup Vanilla Yogurt
2. 1/2 cup Sour Cream
3. 2 tablespoons Honey
4. 1/2 teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
5. 2 cups Fresh Strawberries (halved)
6. 1 1/2 Cut cantaloupe or honeydew melon (or fruit of your choice).
7. 8 ounces Cubed cheddar or a combination of other cheeses

For dip, mix the first four ingredients. On 12 wooden popsicle sticks, alternately thread strawberries, cantaloupe, honeydew melon (or fruit of your choice), and cheese cubes. Serve immediately.

Book of the Month: The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle

Read the book aloud to your child or watch the book being read on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REjelYD16Os

Activity: Plant a seed and watch it grow! What does the seed need in order to grow? What do you notice about the seeds? How long is it taking for your plant to grow? ... What kinds of plants do the children like? Why do they think that flowers grow better in the spring? Why can’t a plant grow in the desert?

School Readiness Goals Aligned To This Activity:

- Children will use small muscles to manipulate materials with strength and coordination, including using art and writing tools to convey meaning through written symbols and letters.
- Children will demonstrate persistence and engagement in a variety of creative experiences.
- Children will express their thoughts and needs in clear and complete sentences using varied and complex vocabulary.
- Children will demonstrate beginning math skills (counting, numeral recognition, quantifying, measuring, shapes).

Kindergarten Transition

Kindergarten transition activities will be discussed during April Parent Teacher Conferences!