From the Director’s Desk —Dr. Lea Maue

Happy Holidays to our Head Start families! I am truly thankful for the efforts our parents, children, and staff have made in keeping everyone safe during the COVID pandemic. The program was able to begin the school year on September 8th with both center-based and fully-remote options, and we have been successful in keeping centers open due to everyone’s efforts.

When local school districts recently closed, we decided to keep our centers open. This decision was not made lightly and was based on guidance from the Department of Children and Family Services, University, and the Policy Council. I have been asked about plans to transition to fully remote learning, especially after Thanksgiving. At this point, center-based children will continue to attend in person. Please know, however, that things can change very quickly. Make sure your contact information is up-to-date so you can be notified through School Messenger and ClassTag. Also note that the start date for the children in the new year has been pushed back to January 12th. You can find important dates on the last page of the newsletter. I hope you enjoy the holidays and spending time with your children!

Get to Know. . .Caitlyn McKay

Hello! My name is Caitlin McKay. I started working for Head Start in January 2019 as a Substitute Teacher in Murphysboro. In August 2019, I was hired as a Child Care Assistant. I am currently working at the John A Logan Center and I am loving it! I graduated from SIU in May 2018 with a Bachelor’s Degree majoring in Psychology with a minor in Sociology. I am currently taking classes to earn another Bachelor’s degree in Child and Family Services to hopefully continue my work with children. During my free time, I like to read, listen to music, and spend time with my family. My husband and I have two fur babies to keep us busy, our dog Charlie and our cat Louis. I really love the mission of Head Start and I love learning more about teaching children everyday. I can’t wait to see what the future holds for me in this program.

We want to take this time to thank Caitlyn for her work with the children and families in our program.

From your Policy Council

Hello, my name is Dorian. I have a 5-year-old son in kindergarten, and a 4-year-old daughter that attends the Carbondale center. This is my second child in the program. I feel that both my children have grown both academically and socially. My daughter is in remote learning. She has learned so much and has adjusted well. I have been actively involved with both my children. I spent time in the classroom reading, helping teachers, and participating in program activities and events. Now that we are in the midst of a pandemic, things have changed. I really miss being at the center. I am still involved in remote learning with my daughter. It has always been important for me to be actively involved as a parent. This is my first year serving on the Policy Council. I have an opportunity to meet other parents, have a voice, and make decisions about what is going on in the program.

I know that you are busy, but I want to encourage you to be involved. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Email: dorian.allens@gmail.com.

Dorian Allen Sr.
Ready Or Not, Kindergarten Here we Come!

While many of us focus on the basics of letter and number recognition or reading skills, kindergarten readiness encompasses more than these few isolated skills. We need to look at the child as a whole, while keeping in consideration the skills and strengths each child has developed.

Here are some tips to help you prepare your child for kindergarten:

- **Help them to develop independence at home.** Encourage your child to dress himself, take his coat on and off and hang it up, use the bathroom without assistance and wash his hands and put on his own shoes.

- **Teach responsibility.** Start transferring small responsibilities over to your child, if you haven’t already. Even when it may be easier for you to complete the tasks, let him accept the responsibility.

- **Develop and follow routines.** Set up morning routines that will transfer into a school setting.

- **Read aloud to your child.** Get your child a library card, take her to the library to check out books, and be sure to read to your child every day.

- **Acknowledge his feelings.** Your child may express being nervous, not wanting to go, or feeling very excited to start school. Whatever they feel, take time to acknowledge those feelings. If they are nervous, talk about why they feel that way and maybe take a school tour to relieve some stress about the move to a new school.

- **Communication with your child’s teacher is key.** Take initiative and communicate with your child’s teacher about your hopes and dreams for your child. Discuss what goals you want your child to achieve before Kindergarten.

Rather than worry about whether your child is ready to read and write, think about his or her skills as a whole. What can they do well that will help them succeed?

**COVID–19 Response Resources**

Below is a resource that can be of help to you if you are in need of assistance with food, employment, rent/utility aid, emergency services, and more.

211 is an easy to remember three-digit telephone number that families can use for quick and easy access to information about health and human services. Just dial 211 and a trained professional will answer your call and help identify and connect you with the human services provider that may best meet your needs.
Your Journey Together: Building the Resilience of Children and Families (Building Your Bounce)

As adults, we want to be happy and achieve in life. But where do we start? Life comes at us and knocks us down at times, with situations and circumstances that are beyond our control (like a pandemic.). In the midst of the pandemic, we find the strength or try to keep moving forward. But how do we do that? You may know people in your own life who have faced or are currently facing great risk, but continue to find success and happiness despite the odds against them. Resilience is the ability to “bounce back” from misfortune or change. Resilient people tend to have something in their lives that help them overcome challenges and move forward in positive ways. The strength that help resilient people bounce back are called protective factors. Protective factors can be strengthened throughout life and have an impact not only on ourselves, but also on the people with whom we interact on a daily basis, such as our family members, co-workers, and friends.

Four Adult Protective Factors Related to Resilience:

1) Relationships—The mutual, long-lasting, back-and-forth bond we have with another person in our lives.

2) Internal Beliefs—The feelings and thoughts we have about ourselves and our lives, and how effective we think we are at taking action in life.

3) Initiative—The ability to make positive choices and decisions and act upon them.

4) Self-Control—The ability to experience a range of feelings, and express them using the words and actions.

Parents: In this newsletter you will find a copy of the Devereux Adult Resilience Survey (DARS) to complete and return in the envelope provided in your child’s backpack, learning packet, or with the bus driver. The information will be used for parenting education and professional development. The instructions are provided on the survey. Thank you for completing and returning the survey.

Each month in this section of the newsletter we will feature tips, strategies, activities, and information from Your Journey Together and Building Your Bounce. Stay tuned as we dive deeper into Your Journey Together and Building Your Bounce!

From “The Devereux Center for Resilient Children (DCRC).”

“Educating Children, Empowering Families, Strengthening Communities”

618-453-6448    headstart.siu.edu  SIU Carbondale Head Start
Recipe: Nutrition Activity: Salsa

Hello Parents! On December 11th the children will be making Tomato Salsa in the classroom for our Nutrition Activity for this Month. Here is the recipe for you to try at home.

INGREDIENTS FOR TOMATO SALSA:

- 6 plum tomatoes
- 1/2 white or yellow onion
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro
- 1 Tablespoon lemon juice
- Dash of garlic powder or 1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic

DIRECTIONS

1. Chop tomatoes, onion, and cilantro into small pieces and mix together in a bowl.
2. Add lemon juice and garlic powder or chopped garlic.
3. Mix all ingredients together.
4. Serve with baked tortilla or corn chips.

Safety Tip: An adult should slice the ingredients.

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Book of the Month: Llama Llama Red Pajama by Ann Dewdney

Activity: Read the book aloud or watch the story being read aloud on YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HD1g3P-nKWo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HD1g3P-nKWo)

Use the sheet included (with llama and quilt) in the newsletter to write random uppercase letters in each quilt square-write one uppercase letter per square. Use the other sheet included (empty quilt squares without llama) to write either the matching uppercase or lowercase letter (A-A or A-a), depending on your child’s level of letter knowledge. Color each square on the second sheet a different color. Explain to the child that s/he will be matching letters to one another in order to complete Llama’s quilt. You may need to model the first quilt square for your child by naming the letter on the quilt then finding its matching square and placing the square onto the quilt pattern.

School Readiness Goals Aligned To This Activity:

- Children will recognize letters and letter sounds and demonstrate phonological awareness.
- Children will demonstrate persistence and engagement in a variety of creative experiences.