From the Director’s Desk —Dr. Lea Maue

The holidays are a great time to celebrate the children, families, and staff who make the SIU Carbondale Head Start program a wonderful place to learn. Celebrating our community is also important. November was Literacy Month, and over 75 volunteers consisting of parents, community members, high school organizations and sports teams came out in force to read to Head Start children at all sites. We sincerely appreciate the ongoing support and care provided by our community members. I hope your child shared how much they enjoyed the community readers.

Also, a big thank you to all the parents who attended parent-teacher conferences the week of Thanksgiving. Maintaining regular and open communication with your child’s teacher is important in building the skills necessary for success in school. If you missed your conference and want to come discuss your child’s progress, simply contact your child’s teacher to make an appointment.

From your Head Start family, I wish you all a safe and peaceful holiday season!

Get to Know... Kim Wiedemer

Hello! My name is Kimberly Wiedemer. I grew up in Salem, IL and I attended college at Lindenwood University-Belleville. I received my Bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education. Now, I am a lead teacher at the Carbondale center. This will be my fourth year teaching at Head Start. Being a teacher isn’t easy but it’s worth it! Every single day I get to come to work and make a difference in someone’s life. I love building life-shaping relationships and helping my students reach their full potential.

During my free time I enjoy reading, coloring, bowling, and spending time with family and friends. After work I go home to my two fur-babies. I have an Australian Shepherd named Kazuma and a cat named Luna.

We want to take this time to thank Kim for her work with the children and families at the Carbondale center.

From your ERSEA Coordinator

Did you know that every day your preschooler is in school builds their foundation for learning? Missing two or more days each month can make it harder for them to succeed.

Regular attendance helps your child:
• Learn numbers, letters, and shapes
• Learn to manage emotions and behaviors
• Learn early reading and writing skills
• Achieve future academic milestones

Let’s work together to make sure children attend school every day! Questions? Contact your child’s teacher, school, or Community Outreach Worker.

Christina Lewis
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?

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**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.
How to Help Your Child Recognize & Understand Anger

In this newsletter you will find the social story, “Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think at Home.” This is a fun interactive resource created to help children and families learn strategies to work through big feelings like anger. Tucker helps parents and caregivers support their children in learning what they can do to calm their body and emotions down. This user-friendly resource helps teach emotional regulation with a few simple steps. Tucker the Turtle also promotes emotional literacy, problem-solving, and self-regulation in an engaging way. So get ready to think like a turtle!

The Pyramid Model Backpack Connection Series is a framework that provides guidance on how to promote social and emotional wellbeing in children. Enclosed you will find the handout entitled, “How to Help Your Child Recognize & Understand Anger. Read the article for strategies that will guide you in recognizing ways to help your child to manage their anger, emotions and feelings. There are strategies to use at home and ways to practice different techniques to find a solution that helps children to feel in control of their emotions and confident in their ability to handle difficult situations.

You are invited to attend the monthly parent meetings and to meet other parents, caregivers, and staff in the program. The topic for January’s In-Person Parent Meeting is “Emotional Health and Well-Being.” Our Mental Health Consultants will be there to have engaging conversations about our emotional health and well-being. See you at the December in-person parent meetings!

Look inside for details!

SIU Carbondale Head Start Attendance Matters Weekly Contest!

Be an Attendance H.E.R.O.

See how your child can be an attendance H.E.R.O! Each child in their classroom that has the highest weekly Average Daily Attendance (ADA) during the month of December will receive attendance SWAG to take home!

Each month in this section of the newsletter we will feature tips, strategies, activities, and information from Your Journey Together and Building Your Bounce, and Pyramid Model.

“Educating Children, Empowering Families, Strengthening Communities”

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

Hello Parents! The children are making Strawberry Unicones for our Nutrition Activity this Month. Here is the recipe to try at home.

INGREDIENTS FOR STRAWBERRY UNICONES: MAKES 25 CONES

Prep Item needed: 2-3 cookie sheets and one serrated knife

Ingredients:
- 32 oz. Container of Strawberry Yogurt, Low-Fat
- 50 Fresh Strawberries
- 1 can of Whipped Topping
- 25 Waffle Cones

DIRECTIONS

1. Using the serrated knife, slice the pointed end of the waffle cone and save for later for the unicorn’s horn.

2. Place the pointed end of one strawberry inside the bottom of the cone. Fill the waffle cone with strawberry yogurt and top with whipped topping.

3. Place 2 strawberry slices across the back of the yogurt for the ears and the reserved cone tip at the front for the horn of the unicorn.

4. Safety Tip: An adult should slice the ingredients.

Book of the Month: Llama Llama
Time to Share by Ann Dewdney

Activity: Read the book aloud or watch the story being read aloud on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idD7Wt4-KB9

Activity: Social Skills

Before reading ask your child what sharing means. Have them give you examples of things that they can share. You can also point out that we share smiles and friendship. Play a sharing game and find things around the house that you can share. You can also ask your child if they can think of things that are in their classroom that they can share.

As you listen to the story online or if you have the book, talk about each item mentioned in the book and whether that item was shared.

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.