

SIU Carbondale Head Start Family Connections Newsletter December 2024

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. 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!**



The Importance of Sleep

Children need sleep to be their best. Children who receive enough sleep each night on a regular basis show improvements in

- ✓ Attention
- ✓ Emotional Regulation
- ✓ Learning
- ✓ Mental Health
- ✓ Physical Health
- ✓ Behavior
- ✓ Memory
- ✓ Overall Quality of Life

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends the following:

- 4 to 12 months.....12 to 16 hours, including naps
- 12 to 24 months.....11 to 14 hours, including naps
- 2 to 5 years.....10 to 13 hours, may include a nap
- 6 to 12 years.....9 to 12 hours per night

A consistent, predictable sleep schedule sets the foundation for a routine that leads to regular attendance at school. The benefits of regular attendance are outlined in the column to the right.

DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

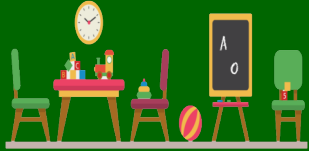
The full day sessions in our school include a time for napping. Staff set a relaxing environment by dimming the lights, playing quiet music, tucking children in, and providing physical touch to the children who prefer to be rocked, or have their back patted or rubbed. Some children prefer to fall asleep independently without touch. Staff respect children's sleep preferences and respond accordingly.



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.

Head Start Supports Mental Health

SIU Carbondale Head Start employs mental health consultants to assist with family support issues such as substance abuse, domestic violence, challenging behaviors, or stress-related issues.

Supports include phone conferences, home visits, and referrals to community agencies. If a parent or child needs support, they should contact their Community Worker, Teacher, or Center Director. The primary role of the Head Start Mental Health area is:

- A. Support social-emotional development in children at school and home
- B. Support adult resiliency through ongoing consultations, training, and coaching
- C. Connect families with needed resources related to mental health support
- D. Screen child social-emotional development at school and home
- E. Develop individualized supports to prepare children for public school

Receiving mental health support through SIU Carbondale Head Start is easy and free.

These are the steps:

1. Speak with one of the helpful staff at your center to let them know you are interested in taking advantage of the option to speak with a mental health consultant.
2. The helpful staff member will help you complete the Mental Health Assistance Request Form.
3. The form will be shared with the mental health consultant assigned to your center.
4. You will be contacted by the mental health consultant to schedule an appointment to meet via phone or in-person.

It really is that easy to receive mental health support through Head Start!



Age Appropriate Defiance in Preschoolers

Preschoolers often showcase defiant behaviors as they assert their growing independence and test the boundaries set by caregivers. This behavior is a normal part of development and includes actions such as refusing to follow instructions, expressing a strong preference for autonomy, and occasionally arguing with adults. Defiance helps preschoolers learn about limits and develop self-control. Typical defiant behaviors include:

Saying “No” Frequently: Preschoolers may often say “no” to requests, expressing their newfound sense of self and independence.

Ignoring Instructions: Deliberately ignoring instructions or pretending not to hear could be a way to exert control over their environment.

Temper Tantrums: While less frequent than in toddlerhood, preschoolers might still throw tantrums, particularly when they are frustrated by limits or denied independence.

Testing Boundaries: They may push limits by engaging in minor rule-breaking, such as taking extra time at bedtime or sneaking extra cookies.

While defiance can be a normal and healthy part of development, parents should become concerned when behaviors become extreme or persistent, indicating possible underlying issues. Signs that might necessitate professional advice include:

Excessive Aggressiveness: Continual physical aggression towards peers, siblings, or caregivers beyond typical squabbles signals a need for concern.

Frequent and Prolonged Tantrums: Tantrums that are prolonged (lasting over 20 minutes) and happen multiple times per day might indicate deeper emotional or developmental issues.

Consistent Non-Compliance: A child who persistently refuses to follow instructions and seems unable to adhere to routine tasks and rules, even with age-appropriate expectations and consistency, could benefit from further evaluation.

Disruptive to Daily Life: If defiance significantly disrupts daily routines, causing constant stress and difficulty for the family, professional support may be necessary.

Self-Harm: Any behavior that includes self-injurious actions, such as hitting their head on walls or biting themselves, warrants immediate attention from a healthcare provider.



Understanding the nuances of age-appropriate defiance can empower parents to set reasonable boundaries, provide consistent discipline, seek help when necessary, and ensure their child’s well-being and healthy development.

“Educating Children, Empowering Families, Strengthening Communities”



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SIU Carbondale Head Start



Important Dates

Parent Meetings

MN—Dec. 11 at 5:00

MB—Dec. 12 at 5:15 pm

JALC—Dec. 11 at 5:00

Carbondale—no meeting

Friday Fun Days!

Dec. 6, 13 & 20

Dec. 20: Nutrition Activity

Dec 16: Policy Council
Meeting, 6 pm

Holiday Break

Dec. 23-Jan. 3

No School

Children return January 6



Recipe: Nutrition Activity: Healthy Gingerbread Houses

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

MAKES 20 SERVINGS

Prep Items Needed: child plate, child knives, napkins

Ingredients:

* Graham Crackers

* Cream Cheese Spread

* Variety of dried fruit, fresh fruit, chocolate chips, mini marshmallows, whole grain chex, etc. to decorate house

DIRECTIONS

1. Place graham cracker flat on the plate.
2. Use the knife to spread a layer of cream cheese on the graham cracker.
3. Decorate using the remaining ingredients.
4. Enjoy!

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-KBs>

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 you 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.

