

SIU Carbondale Head Start Family Connections Newsletter December 2023

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 50 volunteers consisting of parents, community members, and high school organizations came out in force to read to Head Start children at all sites. We are extending the volunteering and reading throughout the program year. 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. . .Hannah Turner

Hello all! I am from Kentucky, and now I live in Carterville with my Fiancé and our cats. I am 30 years old and have been working with children directly for the past 12 years. I began working as a Child Care Assistant in the Fall of 2021, and now I am a Child Development Associate teaching alongside Ms. Cherrelle in the Yellow room at the Carbondale center. I am pursuing an associate's degree in Early Childhood Education and would love to become a Lead Teacher. My other interests include Elementary and Special Education. My hobbies outside of work are crocheting, reading, and playing board games with friends.

I love sitting down and interacting with the children during playtime, whether in a group or one on one. I find myself laughing all throughout the day at some of the things the kids do and say; they are so funny! That is my favorite part about my job – the interactions and conversations I have every day with the children. What I love about our program is the community. I feel we have a great community of teachers and staff, families, children, and volunteers. I love being able to share in family's cultures and traditions and make sure everyone feels included.

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



From your ERSEA Coordinator



KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

Our program's average
daily attendance for
November was 81%.

As we approach winter,
follow these tips for keep-
ing your child healthy and
in school every day
until winter break

- Keep a regular bedtime and morning routine
- Wash hands often and cover coughs/sneezes
- Encourage your child to be active for 60 minutes a day

We look forward to seeing
your child when school
resumes on Thursday,
January 4. If you have any
questions contact your
child's teacher, school, or
Community Worker.

Have a safe and restful
holiday season!

Christina Lewis
ERSEA Coordinator

Ready Or Not, Kindergarten Here We Come!

Although 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, 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.



Promoting Resilience for Children and Families

In our monthly newsletters, you will find resources and strategies that are useful in providing support and guidance on how to promote social emotional competence, ways to strengthen resilience, and support for children and families. Being resilient and healthy adults is critical to building a child's social and emotional wellness.

In this newsletter, The Backpack Connection Series article entitled, "How to Help Your Child Learn to Share" is included (See page 5). The series highlights useful information to help children to build the skill of sharing. There are tips to try at home like reading books about sharing, talking to children before planning activities with others, and ways to build the skill of sharing. One way is to practice different classroom scenarios for children that find sharing difficult. The book, "Llama Llama Time to Share" by Ann Dewdney, is featured in this month's newsletter (See page 4).

Here are more ways to help children learn more about sharing:

1. **Ensure safety.** Providing support when aggressive behaviors occur (grabbing, hitting, and throwing things). Move close and talk through the situation with the children involved.
2. **Use a timer or clock.** It can be helpful to use a clock or timer so that the children get a sense of time by using a visual sharing aid.
3. **Guide children to come with solutions.** You can help children to come up with different solutions to work through issues involving sharing. The more children are allowed to work through their own issues, the more children can be empowered to be kind, compassionate, and can become their own problem-solvers.

Find more information visit: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/helping-young-children-with->

December Power-Up with PACT/Parent Meeting!

Join us for a FUN packed event, **Movie Night, Popcorn, and PJ's** (See page 4). The center with the highest parent meeting attendance each month will win the traveling parent meeting attendance trophy. Congratulations Murphysboro center who had the most parents/caregiver attendance at their November meeting! Shout out to the Saluki Dog winners at each center! Each month flyers are sent home with children and posted on **ClassTag**.

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

"Educating Children, Empowering Families, Strengthening Communities"



618-453-6448



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SIU Carbondale Head Start



Important Dates



Parent Meetings

CD—12/11 at 5:30 pm

MN—12/12 at 5:30 pm

JALC—12/13 at 5:30 pm

MB—12/14 at 5:30 pm



Thursday, December 7th

Male Advisory Panel Meeting
for Fathers & Father Figures
Carbondale Head Start Center
Dinner Provided!

No Childcare Available!

Dec 18:

Policy Council Meeting, 6 pm

Dec 21:

Nutrition Activity

Dec. 25-29:

No School

Jan. 1-3:

No School/Staff Training

Nutrition Activity:

Healthy Gingerbread Houses

Hello Parents! The children are making Healthy Gingerbread Houses for our Nutrition Activity this Month on December 21st. Here is the recipe to try at home.

INGREDIENTS FOR HEALTHY GINGERBREAD HOUSES: MAKES 20

Prep Item needed: child plate, child knives, napkins

Ingredients:

- 1 box of graham crackers
- Cream cheese spread
- Variety of dried fruit, fresh fruit, chocolate chips, mini marshmallows, whole grain chex, etc. to decorate your house

DIRECTIONS:

Children will be able to use graham crackers, cream cheese spread, and variety of ingredients to create their own gingerbread house. Center staff should work together in conjunction with kitchen staff to decide exactly what ingredients they would like for their gingerbread houses.

Have fun making your own gingerbread house at home. Take pictures to and share with your teachers and friends in your classroom.



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>

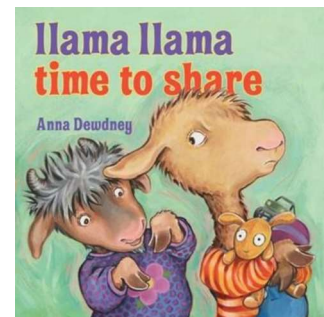
Activity: Social Skills

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.





Backpack Connection Series

About this Series

The Backpack Connection Series was created by TACSEI to provide a way for teachers and parents/caregivers to work together to help young children develop social emotional skills and reduce challenging behavior. Teachers may choose to send a handout home in each child's backpack when a new strategy or skill is introduced to the class. Each Backpack Connection handout provides information that helps parents stay informed about what their child is learning at school and specific ideas on how to use the strategy or skill at home.

The Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is a framework that provides programs with guidance on how to promote social emotional competence in all children and design effective interventions that support young children who might have persistent challenging behavior. It also provides practices to ensure that children with social emotional delays receive intentional teaching. Programs that implement the Pyramid Model are eager to work together with families to meet every child's individualized learning and support needs. To learn more about the Pyramid Model, please visit ChallengingBehavior.org.

More Information

More Information and resources on this and other topics are available on our website, ChallengingBehavior.org.



ChallengingBehavior.org

How to Help Your Child Learn to Share

Brooke Bragie, Alyson Jiron & Jill Giacomini

Learning how to share is a big challenge for all children because it often means putting aside one's own needs in order to make someone else happy. Sharing is not a skill children have when they are born—they need to be taught how to share and how to see that their efforts have helped someone else feel happy or solve a problem. In order to learn this skill, children need adults to provide them with many different opportunities where they can practice how to share with others and see other children in the act of sharing. When a child learns how to share with others she feels more confident and is better able to play with other children independently. Additionally, learning how to share gives a child a very important and solid foundation of successful friendship skills she can continue to build on as she grows.



Try This at Home

- Read books about sharing with your child. Talk about how the characters might feel as the story unfolds. All feelings are healthy and normal. A character might be feeling a variety of emotions—from frustrated and sad to happy and joyful. A good example is the CSEFEL Book Nook based upon the book *I Can Share* by Karen Katz. This resource has many activities that go along with the book to teach about sharing. http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/docs/booknook/BookNook_share.pdf
- Notice and point out when other children are sharing. "I see that those girls are sharing their snack."
- Notice and let your child know that you see the many moments in the day when he is sharing. "Thank you for sharing your crayons with me. I feel happy when you share." Or "When I came to pick you up from school, I noticed that you were sharing the toys with Sophie. What a good friend!"
- Plan ahead if sharing might be a concern. "Avery is coming over to our house today for a play date. I know how special your blanket is to you. We can put your blanket in a special place that is just for you and all the other toys will be shared with Avery."
- Find opportunities to teach sharing to your child. "Oh no! For dessert tonight we only have three cookies left for you, Joey, me, and Daddy. I wonder what we can do?"

Practice at School

At school, children are taught how to share and learn about how sharing makes friends feel. Children learn about sharing through stories, role-playing and puppets. One way teachers help children learn how to share with each other is by pointing out how a friend looks and feels when a child does, or does not, share. Teachers also encourage children to begin to solve problems by themselves. "I see you have five cars and Ryan has none. I wonder what we can do?" Or "I wonder which car Ryan can use?" Most importantly, teachers congratulate children when they solve sharing problems and recognize how proud they must feel after they share.

The Bottom Line

Sharing is a skill that your child will use throughout her life to get along with others during activities and build friendships. Children who learn how to share are better able to understand other's feelings, negotiate difficult situations with confidence and feel secure in their ability to solve problems by themselves.



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