

# SIU Carbondale Head Start Family Connections Newsletter February 2024

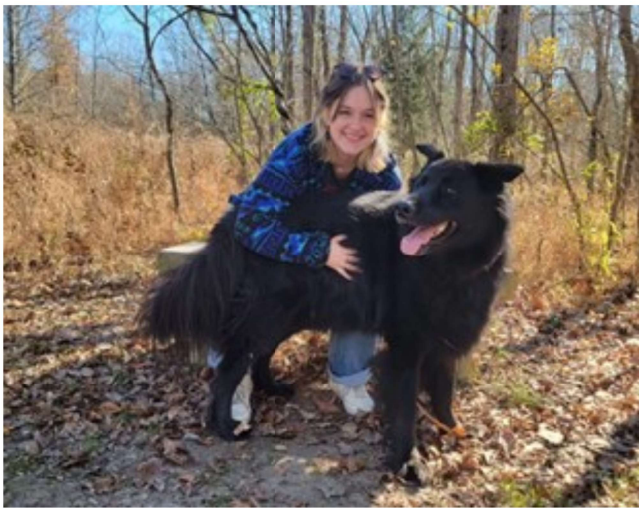
## From the Director's Desk

February is always a busy month for our Head Start program! Firstly, February is Family Involvement month, and we invite you to visit your child's classroom to assist with activities, eat a meal or snack, or just be present with your child. You are your child's first and foremost teacher and your involvement in your child's learning is so important.

Centers have been experiencing a lot of illness over the course of the past month — flu, strep, and COVID has been spreading with both children and staff. Please keep your child at home if they are not feeling well. Hopefully spring will help reduce the amount of illness going around.

This month is also Dental Health month, and our Health and Nutrition Coordinator has planned some special activities for the children about the importance of taking care of their precious teeth. Dental health bags will be going out with goodies for the children. Lastly, Remember that there's no school on February 19th!

— Dr. Lea Maue



## Get to Know... Emily Reese

Hey there, I'm Emily Reese! I started here at SIU Head Start last August working in the kitchen. I am now head cook and I love making meals for the kids and seeing them periodically throughout the day. I graduated from Southeast Missouri State University with

a bachelor's degree in Anthropology, which I hope to one day put to good use.

In my free time I enjoy crafting, getting little treats, watching spooky movies or cringey tv shows, and hanging out with my cats."

***We want to thank Emily for her hard work and dedication to the children and families at the Carbondale Head Start center.***

## From Your Disabilities & Mental Health Coordinator

Dear Head Start Families,

Your mental and emotional wellbeing is one of the most important factors to determine your overall health. Handling day to day stress, managing emotions, maintaining relationships, and persistence are all mental and social-emotional skills that you must use throughout the day. If these skills are not consistently used in a positive manner, it can affect your physical health. These effects could include high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, weight gain or loss, and digestive issues.

If you are in need of support for yourself or your child, please contact your teacher or community worker. We can connect you with one of our Mental Health Consultants. They can work with you to identify concerns, find possible solutions, give suggestions, or connect you to an outside agency. This support can be a one time thing or ongoing, based on your need.

Your wellness matters— you need to take care of yourself so you can care for your child! If you need support, please let us know— we're here to help.



# Developing Social Skills

Having good relationships with a range of people is very important for a person's mental health. To develop these relationships, children must learn social skills, such as:

- communication skills – using the right words for the situation, smiling and facial expressions, using eye contact and listening
- entry skills – knowing how to join a group
- being part of a group – sharing, taking turns, following rules, cooperating, managing conflict, helping others
- being a friend – supporting friends, being kind, helpful and affectionate, being willing to follow requests and participate in group decision-making.

Ideas to help your child develop good social skills:

- Show children what good social skills look like. They learn by watching as well as participating. Your child is probably copying the way you behave when you're around other people.
- Be consistent when teaching social skills. Keep telling your child things like, "Everyone gets a turn," and "He is frustrated, you know how that feels." As your child becomes older, your explanations can get more complicated, but the messages should stay the same.
- Talk with your child about his feelings and your own. Talk about situations that make us feel bad and those that make us feel good.
- Give your child lots of opportunities for imaginary play such as: dress-up, telephone play, playing shop, acting out stories and rhymes, playing with other children, constructing things with bricks, cut-outs and dough, and helping around the house with simple chores.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's social skills, please contact your child's teacher or family community service worker.

## Community Resources

### LIHEAP

#### **Need help affording your utilities? You may qualify for bill assistance!**

If you cannot afford your utilities, you may be eligible for financial assistance through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program—or LIHEAP.

LIHEAP helps low-income consumers pay their electric and gas bills. About 350,000 Illinois households get LIHEAP funding of some kind, although that number is expected to increase as a result of the current economic crisis. Funding is currently available and potential program participants are encouraged to apply. To see if you qualify, call the LIHEAP Hotline at 1-877-411-9276 (WARM).

**You can also visit their website:**

<https://www.citizensutilityboard.org/blog/2020/07/02/need-help-affording-your-utilities-you-may-qualify-for-bill-assistance/>





# 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 are the link to building a child's social and emotional wellness.

The Backpack Connection Series article, "How to Help Your Child Understand and Label Emotions", offers ways to help your child at home with managing their emotions by allowing them to state their emotions, state how others feel, and state how they are feeling. Talking to your child's teacher about what strategies are used in the classroom can help children to better understand and label their emotions.

The Book of the Month, "Stomp, Wiggle, Clap and Tap", helps children to release the energy and develop balance and coordination. (See page 4).



All families are invited to attend the monthly "Power-Up with Parents" parent meetings. Join us for this month's Valentine's Parent and Child Activity (PACT). Each month we have fun-filled activities for parents/caregivers and children to enjoy. Come out to the monthly meetings where all are welcomed. Looking forward to seeing you there!



During Family Involvement month, we are celebrating 100 Days of Head Start. Parents, staff and children show your support of the program by wearing your "100 Days" shirts during the month of February.



*Each month 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"*



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SIU Carbondale Head Start



## Important Dates

### Family Involvement Month



**Dental Health Awareness Month!**  
February is National Oral Health Month



**Feb 1:** Celebrate 100 Days of Head Start (See Pg. 3 for more information).

**Feb 2:** Self-Assessment  
Carbondale Civic Center  
9:00—3:00 pm

**Feb 7:** Fluoride Varnish at MB center 10-2 pm

**Feb 12:** Carbondale Parent Meeting at 5:30 pm

**Feb 13:** Marion Parent Meeting at 5:30 pm

**Feb 14:** John A. Logan Parent Meeting at 5:30 pm

**Feb 15:** Evening Parent Teacher Conferences!

**Feb 16:** Daytime Parent Teacher Conferences!

**Feb 19:** Centers Closed  
**PC Meeting at 6:00 pm**

**Feb 21:** Murphysboro Parent Meeting at 5:30 pm

**Feb 22:** Nutrition Activity



## Recipe: Nutrition Activity:

Hello Parents! On February 22nd the children will be making Apple Nachos in the classroom for our Nutrition Activity. Here is the recipe for you to try at home.



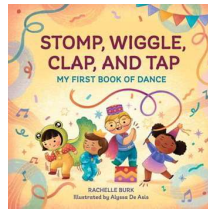
### INGREDIENTS:

- Apples, dried cranberries or raisins, mini chocolate chips, and honey or caramel

**DIRECTIONS:** Once apples have been washed, Teachers will cut apples into slices for children. Children may then arrange apple slices on their individual plates and may top apples with variety of toppings, then eat and enjoy!

## Book of the Month: Stomp, Wiggle, Clap and Tap

**Activity:** Read the book aloud to your child or watch it on YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2DtUxFEWso>



As you read along and listen to the story, try moving along to help stimulate the brain and provide a fun, creative way to build spatial awareness. Tons of colorful pictures offer children visual clues for the movements, and rhyming words make reading aloud feel like music! Notice how the body parts of the characters in the story are moving like their hands, hips, arms, and toes. Keep the fun going by actively participating in the story-time movement. Pay close attention to the rhyming words throughout the story. Explore a list of online dance videos and resources to help keep moving and developing even when the book is finished. Set the stage for an active experience for all in the family to enjoy.

### School Readiness Goals Aligned To This Activity:

- Children will demonstrate fine (gross) motor strength and coordination.
- Children will listen to and understand increasingly complex language.
- Children will demonstrate persistence and engagement in a variety of creative experiences.





# How to Help Your Child Understand and Label Emotions

Brooke Brogle, Alyson Jiron & Jill Giacomini

You can help your child expand her emotional vocabulary by teaching her words for different feelings. Once she knows and understands these words you can help her to label her own feelings and the feelings of others. For example, do you remember a time when your child had a meltdown at the grocery store or other public place? Perhaps you tried soothing your child by telling her to “calm down” and felt confused and unsure of what to do next when she continued the tantrum. Next time you can better help your child understand and deal with the emotions she is feeling by saying, “You look sad and disappointed. Sometimes I feel that way too. I wonder what we can do to feel better?” Teaching your child about her emotions can be a fun and rewarding experience and prevent challenging behavior from occurring in the first place.



## 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](http://ChallengingBehavior.org).

### More Information

More information and resources on this and other topics are available on our website, [ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org).

### Try This at Home

- Simply state how your child is feeling. “You look really excited! I see your eyes are big and your mouth is open.”
- State how others are feeling, “Wow, that little boy is really mad. I see he is crying and making fists with his hands. I wonder why?”
- State how you are feeling. “I am really frustrated that the lawn mower is broken. I think I’m going to take a break and come up with some solutions to this problem.”
- Use books as teaching tools. There is a huge selection of children’s books that focus on emotional literacy. Visit <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html#list> where you will find a book list, book activities and other resources for teaching emotional literacy.

### The Bottom Line

Children with a strong emotional vocabulary:

- Tolerate frustration better
- Get into fewer fights
- Engage in less destructive behavior
- Are healthier
- Are less lonely
- Are less impulsive
- Are more focused
- Have greater academic achievement

### Practice at School

Talk with your child’s teachers to see how they are teaching your child about emotions at school. Many emotions are seen and experienced at school. With adult help, children are taught how emotions look and feel on their bodies. Through books and real experiences, teachers show that a child looks sad because he is crying or mad because her fists are tight. As children begin to recognize what emotions look like, they can begin to manage their own emotions and show empathy toward others.



[ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org)



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