From the Director’s Desk

Happy New Year from your Head Start school family. We wish all of our families health and happiness in the new year! Who knows what 2021 has in store for us, but whatever it is, we are in this together. Attendance, both in-person and remotely, is important for the children so that they are school ready in August 2021. To start the new year, the plan is to continue our current practices of having both in-person and fully-remote options for our families in January. We will also continue our safety and cleaning practices to keep everyone safe. On January 5, you should be able to access the revised learning plan on the SIU Carbondale Head Start webpage. You can also access our Annual Report and COVID resources on the webpage, so if you haven’t done so already, check it out!

— Dr. Lea Maue

Get to Know . . . Gregory Cashman

Hello, everybody! My name is Gregory Cashman. I started working for Head Start in late November 2018 as a Bus Monitor at the Murphysboro Center. In the fall 2019, I was hired as a full-time Bus Driver for Murphysboro. I am still at the Murphysboro center and loving every moment I get to spend with our community and families. I have been a member of the Illinois Army National Guard as a truck driver since February 2015. Although driving military trucks is quite different from operating a school bus, I am still able to apply the discipline, confidence, and adherence to safety that I have learned through the military over to transporting our families and children. When I have the time, I like to play guitar and drums and making music with my friends. I also enjoy playing adventure video games and collecting/playing with Pokemon Trading Cards. I have been married to my wife, Bianca, for 2 years now and we have a lovely family of 4 cats. All our cats are named after Game of Thrones characters (Theon, Asha, Podrick, Aegon). I hope everyone is staying safe and healthy and I can't wait for another great new year at SIUC Head Start!

Thank you Greg for your service to the children and families at the SIU Murphysboro Head Start!
Promoting Language at Home

Head Start is a program that serves diverse families and children. Currently, the program provides services to families and children that speak four different languages. The program strives to assist in the development of English acquisition, while also promoting the development of the home language. Below is a list of strategies that all families can use to develop language with their child.

**Use your language at home:** The easiest, most important step is to use your home language every day. Many families worry that using their home language will confuse their children. Actually, children can easily learn several languages at the same time. They have an easier time learning English when they have a strong foundation in their first language.

**Continue using your language as your children grow older:** Sometimes children start to prefer English as they get older. Talk with your children about the benefits of speaking two languages. Continue using your home language, even if your children respond in English so you keep your lines of communication open.

**Don't forget that YOU are key to maintaining your home language:** Parents and other family members are the most important people in your children’s lives. What you value, your children will learn to value. Help them learn that your family’s language and culture are something to be proud of and treasure. Remember the benefits of your home language and remain committed to continuing to use it.

If you have any questions about how to promote language development at home, please feel free to talk to your child’s teacher. They can provide you with specific activities to support language development.

COVID–19 Response Resources

The Healthy Southern Illinois Delta Network (HSIDN) is a grassroots effort established to build consensus around the health needs of residents in southernmost Illinois. The Network brings together local health departments, area health centers, hospitals and others interested in improving the health of their communities. Members work together to support healthy communities in the lower sixteen counties in Illinois.

Please visit the HSIDN website listed for a links to COVID-19 resources in Southern Illinois.

[https://www.hsidn.org/covid19](https://www.hsidn.org/covid19)
Your Journey Together: Building the Resilience of Children and Families (Building Your Bounce)

Four Adult Protective Factors Related to Resilience: Relationships, Internal Beliefs, Initiative, and Self-Control. This month we are going to review the first Protective Factor: Relationships.

Relationships—The mutual, long-lasting, back-and-forth bond we have with another person in our lives. What is the pay-off for having healthy relationships in our lives? Relationships support in ways like: Laughing more, feeling healthy, nurturing hope, feeling supported, sharing our emotions, and being honest. What matters is what the relationships bring to our lives. Consider reflecting on the following for supportive relationships:

1. **I have good friends or someone who support me.** Supportive relationships pave the way for healthy, fulfilling lives. Relationships grow and strengthen through the course of life. The number doesn’t matter. You may have many strong relationships or maybe just a few. By acknowledging and supporting the good, positive people who surround you, you create a safety net for yourself.

2. **I have a mentor or someone who shows me the way.** A mentor is someone who offers support and encouragement to you in a specific area of your life. A mentor can be an important relationship. Mentorship can: Improve self-confidence, increase motivation, and encourage optimism about future opportunities. Mentors may be in your life for a short time or for a long time, and help us grow and move in new directions.

3. **I provide support to others.** Helping others is a benefit to them and you. When you lend a helping hand or a listening ear to someone, you can experience increased energy and warmth.

4. **I am empathetic to others.** Empathy is when we accurately recognize and can understand what another person is feeling. Empathy helps us connect at a deeper level in relationships.

5. **I trust my close friends.** Trust begins at home. We can’t control other people’s reactions to our feelings and behaviors, but we can be aware of how their reaction affects us. Trust is the cornerstone of healthy relationships.

Complete the enclosed “Relationship Chart” by filling in the names of those individuals in your life that are important to you. Keep the form and update the chart as your relationships change.

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.” — Maya Angelou

FINAL THOUGHTS: Relationships matter! This quote highlights the importance of human relationships. Relationships bring joy and stability to our lives.

*Stay tuned next month as we feature the next Adult Protective Factor: Initiative.*

Your Journey Together and Building Your Bounce. From "The Devereux Center for Resilient Children (DCRC)."

*“Educating Children, Empowering Families, Strengthening Communities”*
Recipe: Nutrition Activity:

Chocolate Banana Smoothies

Hello Parents! On January 15th the children will be making Chocolate Banana Smoothies in the classroom for our Nutrition Activity. Here is the recipe for you to try at home.

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 medium –sized ripe banana with a few brown spots is perfect
- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder
- 1/4 cup low-fat or fat-free plain Greek yogurt
- 1/4 cup low-fat or fat-free milk

DIRECTIONS
1. Put the banana, cocoa powder, yogurt, and milk into a blender.
2. Cover the top of the blender and blend the mixture until it’s smooth.
3. Pour the smoothie into cups or glass. Which ever you prefer.

Enjoy!

Book of the Month: “The Snowy Day” by Ezra Jack Keats

Activity: Read the book aloud or watch the story being read aloud on Youtube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NsAlTr4uho

Make snow dough with your child. You’ll need:
- 3 cups of baking soda
- 1/2 cup hair conditioner

Put both ingredients in a large bowl and encourage your child to mix the two ingredients together until they make a snow like texture. Once fully mixed, place snow dough in shallow container and encourage your child to explore the dough. Activities you and your child can do with the snow dough include:
- Mold dough into various shapes
- Use your fingers to practice writing letters or numbers in the snow
- Make snowballs or snowmen

When you are finished playing, store your snow dough in a Ziploc bag and seal closed until next time! If snow dough dries up, just add a little bit of conditioner.

School Readiness Goals Aligned To This Activity:
- Children will use small muscles to manipulate materials with strength and coordination, including using art and writing tools to convey meaning through written symbols and letters.
- Children will demonstrate scientific inquiry skills through observation, exploration, and use of simple tools and technology.