From the Director’s Desk

Happy Spring to our Head Start Families! The children always enjoy increased opportunities to play outside at the centers. Keep in mind that the weather varies greatly this time of year (especially in southern Illinois), and children should be sent in clothing for outdoor play every day.

The end of the school year is quickly approaching and many of our Head Start children will be heading off to an exciting new adventure in kindergarten. One factor important for school readiness is attendance. Children who are on time and attending every day have been shown to do better in school. Head Start children learn pro-social skills in addition to academic skills that are critical for their success. Head Start views children who miss more than 10% of school as a “chronic absentee.” For children who began in August, that’s only 16 days! Kids who miss more than 10% of school run the risk of not being as prepared for school as they could be. If your child is missing school because of barriers that you need assistance with, please call your Community Worker or Center Director. Let’s work in partnership to promote the success of every child in Head Start! — Dr. Lea Maue

Get to Know . . . Ms. Massa Kiatamba

Hello everyone! My name is Massa Kiatamba. I am originally from West Africa (Liberia). I am the oldest of 4 siblings. My family and I came to the United States a little over 15 years ago with my aunt and cousins. I graduated with my Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education from SIUC 2018. I have been employed with this program for about four years. I started as an Assistant Teacher at the Murphysboro center. After two years of hard work and determination, I was promoted to Lead Teacher. Now I am serving as Interim Center Director/Lead Teacher. What I love most about my job is coming to work every day and knowing that I’m making a difference in the lives of my students. The morning greetings, hugs, and interaction with my children are what keeps me going everyday.

During my free time, I enjoy cooking food from my country, watching television shows, traveling, and hanging out with my 11 year-old daughter and sister. I love working at the Murphysboro center because it allows time for me to form relationships with the children and their families. I have been blessed to build relationships with staff and parents outside of work too.

We want to thank Ms. Massa for her years of service to our families and children at the Murphysboro Head Start Center.

From your Policy Council

My name is Sonya Clark. This is my first year as a Policy Council member. Firstly, I love being on the council because I feel like I can represent the CD center, and secondly, I am informed about what is going on in the program. It is important for me to be involved in my son’s education. Being a member of the PC has been a great experience. I have learned a lot about how the program works. I like how transparent the agency is in sharing information and that we get to learn about how the agency functions. I also love how laid back and how welcoming the staff are.

My son is in his second year at the Carbondale Center. He is in Ms. Cherrelle and Ms. April’s class and has learned a lot. He loves going to school and making friends. He likes talking about the environment and how important solar panels and recycling are for the environment.

I want to encourage parents to stay in touch with your children’s teachers by checking their backpacks, volunteering in the classroom, and communicating with your Community Workers because they have lot of resources to share with you.

When our children see us participating, it sends a message of how important learning is. Remember you are your child’s first teacher and your participation is vitally important.

Sonya Clark
You & Your Preschool Child

Ensuring That Your Child Is Ready to Learn

Research shows that many things affect how well preschool children perform in school, including meeting their physical needs with a healthy diet, exercise and good medical care. Young children also need social and emotional help that will build their confidence, independence and cooperation skills. Families of preschoolers need to show their children how to behave by being dependable, setting a good example and using appropriate, consistent discipline. Children also need opportunities to play and ask questions, and to be read to and introduced to a variety of learning activities. Allow time each day for these things to happen in the life of your young child.

Needs of Your Preschooler:

Babies need loving parents or caregivers who respond to their cries or noises, making them feel safe and comfortable. They need to be able to play in safe areas, move around, play with safe objects, and hear and make sounds.

Toddlers need opportunities to make choices within clear and reasonable limits. They need activities that allow them to use their muscles, experience their senses and develop language skills. As a toddler reaches three years old, they will need to work with their hands, learn to do things for themselves, play with other children, continue to learn about their body's movements, and build their vocabulary and knowledge about their surroundings.

Four- and five-year-olds will require even more opportunities to use things like books, games and songs, and the chance to do science, math and art activities. Families and caregivers can find these opportunities at their local community centers, libraries or schools. Children need to build their self-reliance and language skills, as well as their awareness of the world and people around them, as they prepare to enter school.

“Our challenge is to reach all children early so that every child starts school with the skills needed to learn.”
—Laura Bush

Source: https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/parenting/article/you-your-preschool-child#Ensuring

COVID–19 Response Resources

Financial Assistance for Food, Housing, and Bills

Get temporary COVID-19 help from government programs to pay rent, funeral expenses, and student loans. Food stamps and federal meal programs also changed their rules to provide extra help during the coronavirus pandemic.

Visit this website for more assistance on COVID Rental Assistance, Advanced Tax Credit, Homeless Services and Resources, COVID Funeral Assistance, COVID Student Loan Forbearance and other information! Dial 211. In most areas of the U.S., this will connect you with local social services and referrals for emergency housing.

Your Journey Together: Building the Resilience of Children and Families (Building Your Bounce)

Throughout the program year, we discussed resilience and strategies to strengthen our within protective factors (positive characteristics and inner strengths that allow us to “bounce back” from adversity or difficulties in our lives), that set the stage for resilience building. Daily caregiving practices dramatically impact how children and adults think, feel, and behave in the environment where these interactions take place. Caregiving practices focused on loving interactions within a safe environment are important to help children to learn, live and play. Quality caregiving focuses on the adult’s caregiving (i.e. parenting) practices and skills to support consistency, attuned relationships and creating a safe and loving environment.

During our February parent meetings, we discussed “The Impacts of Trauma on Child Behaviors: How Adverse Child Experiences (ACE’s) and Positive Childhood Experiences (PCE’s) affect Resilience. Parents that attended the February parent meeting are receiving a copy of their Child’s DECA which they completed with their child’s teacher, and The Devereux CAREgiving Checklist for Families: Promoting Positive Parenting Practices for Young Children to complete for homework and to discuss during the March parent meetings.

Consistency, Attuned Relationships and Environment represent the CARE in the items highlighted on the CAREgiving checklist for families.

- **Consistency**—Being consistent are those simple rituals and routines that you do the same way on a regular basis every day with your child, which includes how you provide care to your child (i.e. Creating a consistent bedtime routine, reading stories together before bedtime).

- **Attuned Relationships**—Having an attuned relationship with your child means you are in sync with his or her wants and needs during challenging and happy times (i.e. Providing safe and gentle affection to help children with expressed needs as you engage in one-on-one interactions).

- **Environment**—The environment includes having a safe, healthy, and loving home setting both inside and outside. Try getting down on the child’s level so that you can look at things through the eyes of your child. (i.e. Creating an environment that offers activities that match children’s skills and interests as they continue to develop confidence to become curious explorers).

CAREgiving practices create building blocks for supporting the within-child protective factors of attachment/relationship, initiative, and self-regulation. These practices are related to social emotional competencies that help children become more resilient. During March’s Parent Committee Meeting strategies will be reviewed to support needs and or concerns centering around these CAREgiving practices.

“Educating Children, Empowering Families, Strengthening Communities”

618-453-6448
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SIU Carbondale Head Start
Recipe: Nutrition Activity

Hello Parents! On March 23rd the children will be making a Strawberry-Peach Milkshake in the classroom for our Nutrition Activity. Here is the recipe for you to try at home.

**INGREDIENTS FOR STRAWBERRY-PEACH MILKSHAKE**

- 1/4 cup Milk
- 3 tablespoons Sugar
- 2 cups Sliced peeled peaches or frozen unsweetened sliced peaches, thawed
- 2 cups Halved, fresh strawberries
- 2 cups Vanilla yogurt

**DIRECTIONS**

Place milk, sugar, strawberries and peaches in a blender; cover and process until fruit is pureed. Add yogurt; cover and process until blended. Serve immediately and enjoy!

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**Book of the Month: Iggy Peck Architect by Andrea Beaty**

**Activity:** Read the book aloud to your child or watch it on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dz1zd-vkrew

After reading the book, tell your children to get creative! Use materials around the house and build a structure of their own. Throughout the activity, ask your children questions about their structure. What are they working on? What materials are they using? How tall is their structure? What can they use to measure the height of the structure? Write down their words and take a picture of the structure they made.

**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 persistence and engagement in a variety of creative experiences.
- Children will express their thoughts and needs in clear and complete sentences using varied and complex vocabulary.
- Children will demonstrate beginning math skills (counting, numeral recognition, quantifying, measuring, and shapes).