

SIU-Carbondale Head Start Family Connections Newsletter February 2025



From the Director's Desk

February is always a busy month for our Head Start program! Firstly, February is Family Involvement month and we appreciate your commitment to playing an active role in our program! As always, you are invited to visit your child's classroom to assist with activities, eat a meal or snack, or simply be present with your child. February is also Dental Health month. Laura Duckworth, our Health and Nutrition Coordinator, has planned activities for the children which focus on the importance of taking care of their teeth. Each child will be receiving a bag of dental health goodies, so look for those to come home soon! Lastly, parent/teacher conferences are scheduled this month. As your child's first and foremost teacher, your involvement in your child's learning is so important. Please take advantage of this opportunity to meet with your child's teacher and discuss their progress.

- Dr. Lea Maue
SIU-C Head Start Program Director

Important Dates



Parent Meetings

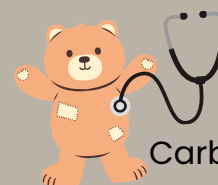
Wed, Feb 12

Carbondale: 5:30
John A. Logan: 5:00
Marion: 5:00

Thurs, Feb 13

Murphysboro: 5:15

Topic: Oral Health Wellness



Doll Clinic

Thurs, Feb 13

Carbondale Center

Fluoride Varnish

Fri, Feb 14, 10am - 2pm

Murphysboro Center



Parent-Teacher Conferences

Mon, Feb 17

**NO SCHOOL due to parent-teacher conferences*



Policy Council Meeting

Mon, Feb 17, 6:00

Carbondale Center



Nutrition Activity

Fri, Feb 21

All Centers



Test Your Knowledge Parent Handbook Trivia

The Parent Handbook provides Head Start families with information about the program's services, policies, and procedures, as well as various resources. It is intended to serve as your guidebook throughout the year.

Family involvement is a cornerstone of Head Start's work. Do you know the answers to these questions? If not, look through pages 8-14 to find the answers.

- * What are three ways community workers support families?
- * Family Needs Assessments are required to be completed within how many days of a child's enrollment?
- * Where do you find this year's Involvement Calendar?
- * What percentage of annual funding is the program required to generate from in-kind (volunteer) hours?



It's National Oral Health Month!

Cavities (also known as caries or tooth decay) are one of the most common chronic diseases of childhood in the United States. Untreated cavities can cause pain and infections which can lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing, and learning. This month, your child will be receiving a dental goody bag which contains a toothbrush, toothpaste, flossers, and a toothbrushing chart. We have also included a dry erase marker for your child to use in tracking how many times they brush their teeth! If you have any concerns with dental health or need help following up with a dentist, please contact your center's community worker. *Happy brushing!*



- Laura Duckworth
and Julie Reese
SIU-Carbondale Head Start
Health & Nutrition Team

Oral Health Tips

1. Brush teeth *at least* twice daily.
2. Use only a pea-sized amount of toothpaste.
3. Spit toothpaste out rather than swallowing.
4. Help your child brush their teeth! Allow children to practice brushing first and then follow up to ensure thorough brushing, especially on the back teeth.



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: using the right words for the situation; making facial expressions; using eye contact; 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 willing to follow requests and participate in group decision-making; being kind, helpful, and affectionate

Ideas to help your child develop good social skills:

- * Model it! Children learn by watching as well as participating, often mimicking what they see.
- * Be consistent. Keep telling your child things like, "Everyone gets a turn," and "He is frustrated, you know how that feels." As they age, your explanations will get more sophisticated, but the messages should stay the same.
- * Talk with your child about their feelings and your own. Talk about situations that make us feel sad and those that make us feel happy.
- * Provide opportunities for imaginary play which may include practicing social skills during the play. Examples may include: dress-up; telephone play; acting out stories and rhymes; 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.



Parent Curriculum Corner

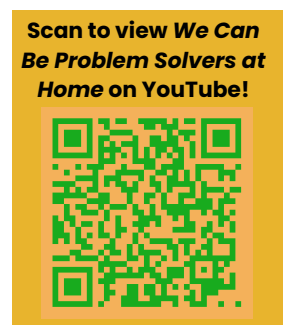
How to Help Your Child Recognize & Understand Frustration

Attached to this newsletter, you will find “How to Help Your Child Recognize & Understand Frustration”, a handout from the Pyramid Model Backpack Connection Series. The “Try This at Home” section of the handout can be helpful while working through moments of frustration, sadness, or confusion.

Below, you will see a QR code which links to a social story titled, “We Can Be Problem Solvers at Home!” We have attached a copy of the solution kit and instructions which connect to the social story and support practicing problem-solving skills. If you would like a printed copy of the story, please let your child’s teacher know and one will be provided.

As the story describes, the problem-solving process involves these four steps:

- Step 1: Identify the problem.
- Step 2: *Think, think, think* of some solutions.
- Step 3: Consider outcomes of the possible solutions.
- Step 4: Give it a try!



Sometimes, the problem will be solved! Other times, a solution may not have worked and you may need to *think, think, think* about a different solution. Keep practicing and you will become an expert problem-solver!

MENTAL
health
MATTERS

ASKING
— for —
HELP
IS OK

Dear Head Start Families,

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

If you are in need of support for yourself or your child, please contact your teacher or community service worker so we may connect you with one of our Mental Health Consultants. They can work with you to identify concerns, find possible solutions, give suggestions, or refer you to an outside agency. This support will be tailored to your needs and can be short-term or ongoing. *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 are here to help.

– Laura Lindsey

Disabilities & Mental Health Coordinator



Recipe of the Month

Apple Nachos

On Fri, Feb 21, this month's nutrition activity will be implemented in the classrooms. The children will be making apple nachos. Here is the recipe for you to try at home!

Prep Items Needed:

plate
cutting board
serrated knife
napkins

*Ingredients:

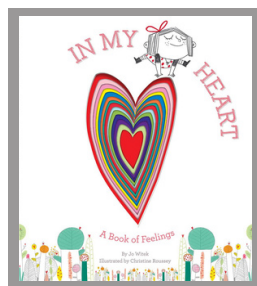
5 apples (half apple per serving)
1/4 cup dried cranberries or raisins
1/4 cup mini-chocolate chips
5 1/2 tablespoons of honey or caramel
*ingredients total 10 servings

Directions:

Wash apples
Cut apples into slices
Arrange apple slices on individual plates
Add desired variety of toppings
Eat and enjoy!



Book of the Month



In My Heart: A Book of Feelings

Author: Jo Witek

Activity:

Scan the QR code below to view the read aloud video. After listening to the book, talk with your child about the feelings they have in their heart. Ask questions such as:

What feelings do you have living in your heart?

What do those feelings feel like?

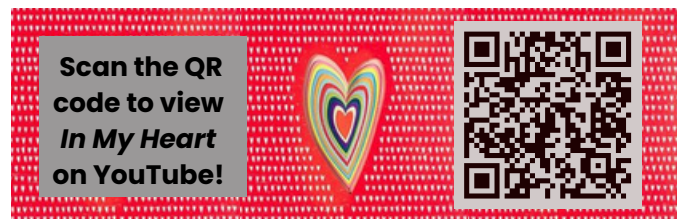
When do you feel that way?

Encourage your child to write and/or draw about the feelings in their heart, what types of situations bring those feelings about, and how they can share their feelings with others (emotional expression). Reinforce the idea that all feelings are valid and important as is learning to express them in a healthy and safe way.

School Readiness Goals:

Language & Literacy: *Children will use language to express their thoughts and needs and engage in conversation.*

Physical: *Children will demonstrate fine-motor strength and coordination.*



Connect with us!



SIU Carbondale Head Start



headstart.siu.edu



Carbondale 453-2440
John A Logan 985-2828
Marion 997-4255
Murphysboro 967-2118