

SIU Carbondale Head Start Family Connections Newsletter March 2023

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. . .Kendra Crews

Hi! My name is Kendra Crews and I am a Coach Specialist here at SIU Carbondale Head Start. I started working for Head Start in 2020 as an Assistant Teacher. The following year I moved up to a Lead Teacher and as of the beginning of 2023, I moved into the role of Coach Specialist for the program.

My favorite part of working at Head Start of course was working with the children. But also with the teachers. I've made many great friendships with my co-teachers and have learned a lot from each and every one of them. We're all so unique in our teaching methods and personalities, and I enjoy collaborating with everyone and getting a different perspective on a topic or issue I may have had. The teachers were my main motivation to take on the role of a coach, so that I can help them in any way that I can.

I currently live in Du Quoin, where I was born and raised with my husband of 15 years, Darren. We also have two girls, Shelby and Kensley and a granddaughter, Violet. In my free time I spend most of it as a rodeo mom, and with my dog Cowboy, or my daughter's horse, Arrow.

We want to take this time to thank Kendra for her work with the children and families in our program.



From your Education Coordinator

Hi Head Start Families,

It is that time of year where we start thinking about the next school year. Some of you have children going to kindergarten. In this newsletter, you will find a flyer that has kindergarten expectations for your child to work on before they enter kindergarten.



Here are some things you can do at home to prepare your child for kindergarten.

- Have a consistent bedtime and morning routine to help your child get off to a good start for school.
- If your child is going to kindergarten, read a book about kindergarten to help them understand and feel more comfortable about transitioning to a new school.

In the upcoming months your community worker will be working with you to get your child transitioned to kindergarten or help your child get ready to come back to Head Start in the fall. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to your community worker.

Abigail Moberly

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, Child Tax Credit, Food, Utility Bills, Housing, & Employment Assistance

Contact the following at ides.illinois.gov:

- Online Cash Assistance: (800) 843-6154
- Child Tax Credit (IRS Help Line): (800) 829-1040
- Food Programs and Food Banks (IDHS Help Line) (800)843-6154
- Utility Bill Assistance (LIHEAP Hotline: (877) 411-WARM (9276)
- Illinois Housing Assistance/Rental Payment Program (866) 454-3571
- Job Training and Career Services: Contact: [Illinoisworknet.com](https://illinoisworknet.com)





Parent Curriculum Corner

The Pyramid Model Innovations

How to Help Your Child During Transitions

Children and families experience transitions on a daily basis. When children move from one activity to another like arriving to school from home, moving from dinner to playtime, finishing playtime to cleaning up, brushing teeth and then taking a bath, and going from bath to bedtime can be difficult. Transitions like those above can be hard for children for a number of reasons, such as when children are tired, hungry, confused, or not ready to end an activity.

Why are transition times important?

Safely navigating transitions in the early years is crucial to a child's healthy development and wellbeing and can lay the foundation for a future of learning and better outcomes. Likewise, children are able to grow, develop, and learn best when they are feeling safe, secure, and a sense of belonging.

In this newsletter you will find the Pyramid Model Backpack Connection Series entitled, "How to Help Your Child Transition Smoothly Between Places and Activities" and also some strategies to help children as they move between activities.

Here are a few helpful tips :

- 1. Give your child a heads up:** Give children a few moments to wrap up activities or shift their attention to a new one. Announcing a change out of the blue will only make it more difficult for children to move from one activity to another.
- 2. Pick a good time:** When you need to move from one activity to the next, do so at a good time. The right timing makes for easier transitions on you as well as your children.
- 3. Make transitions fun:** Play a game, play music or sing a song when moving from one activity to another can make it easier.

Announcements

Monthly In-Person Parent Committee Meeting

You are invited to attend the monthly In-Person Parent Committee Meetings

This month we are celebrating—National Nutrition Month! Topic: *Healthy Eating for Families*

Guest Speakers: Nick Brown & Staff from the U of I Extension Office

Each family attending will receive nutritional resources!

See CLASSTag for more information.

Information Coming Soon!

We are planning an all program community SPRING Event for the families of our SIU Carbondale Head Start Program.

"Educating Children, Empowering Families, Strengthening Communities"



618-453-6448



headstart.siu.edu



SIU Carbondale Head Start



Important Dates

March is National
Nutrition Month!



March 2: Health Advisory
Committee Meeting
11:30 – 1:00 p.m.
Carbondale Head Start
Center—RSVP Required!

March 3
*SIUC Dental Hygiene
Give Kids a Smile Day*
8:30 am—4:30 pm

March 9: Carbondale
Parent Meeting, 5:30 pm

March 13—17: No School,
Spring Break

March 21: Murphysboro
Parent Meeting, 6:00 pm
Murphysboro Youth Center

March 22: John A. Logan
Parent Meeting, 5:30 pm
Building H, Room 132

March 28: Marion
Parent Meeting, 5:45 pm

March 20:
Policy Council
Meeting, 6 pm



Attention Parents!
Open enrollments for new
students will be held Fri-
day's in April. Contact any
center to schedule an
appointment .



Recipe: Nutrition Activity

Hello Parents! On March 23rd the children will be making Mini Graham Crackers & WOW Berry Nut Butter in the classroom for our Nutrition Activity.

INGREDIENTS FOR MINI GRAHAM CRACKERS & BERRY NUT BUTTER

- 16 oz Bag Frozen Whole Strawberries, unsweetened, thawed, drained (Use more based on servings needed)
- 14 oz. Wow Butter
- One 10 or 12 oz Box of Mini Bear Graham Crackers (Based on servings)

DIRECTIONS

Combine strawberries, almond/soy butter into a blender. Blend ingredients until smooth. Place 1/2 cup strawberries-butter mixture in a cup or bowl per each family member. Top with 1/4 cup of mini graham crackers. Serve immediately and enjoy!

Book of the Month: The Crayon Box That Talked by Shane Derol

Activity: In the story, the box of crayons learned that each color was unique and had a purpose. Draw your own picture using as many colors as you like. For example a rainbow, a house, or a big lake with boats.

YouTube Read Aloud: <https://youtu.be/ri1lNeucMZo>



This book is amazing for helping kids see the importance of accepting others despite differences, as well as working together. While listening or reading the story, ask the following questions:

- If you were a crayon, what color would you be?
- What if there was only one color crayon in all the world, how would you feel if you could only use one color to create your art masterpiece?

School Readiness Goals Aligned To This Activity:

- Children will listen to and understand increasingly complex language.
- Children will use language to express their thoughts and needs and engage in conversations