



December 2020

Blue Mountain Early Learning HUB

bluemountainearlylearninghub.org

Newsletter

MORROW UMATILLA UNION COUNTIES

Early Childhood Partnership Team Meetings (ECPT)

Umatilla County

Tuesday, February 9

1:00 - 2:30 pm via Zoom

<https://imesdmeet.zoom.us/j/99622448120>

(December Meeting Cancelled)

Union County

Wednesday, December 9

1:00 - 3:00 pm via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89982819395>

<https://www.facebook.com/Union-County->

ECPT-836224543130112/

Morrow County

Thursday, December 10

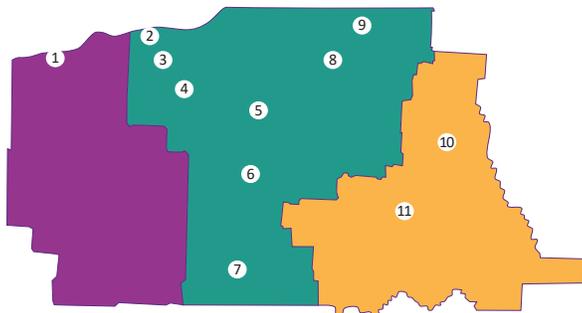
12:00 - 1:30 pm via Zoom

Zoom: [https://umchs-org.zoom.us/j/86979452767 ?](https://umchs-org.zoom.us/j/86979452767?pwd=Nmx0UEtZVnJBbzC1Uys2ajRZZhodz09ID=86979452767)

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Coordinated Enrollment for Preschool Promise

Are you looking for a free, high quality preschool for your 3 or 4 year old? Preschool Promise has slots across Morrow, Umatilla and Union counties waiting to be filled. Preschool Promise provides 900 hours of high quality preschool during the academic year. This program is open to families whose household income is at or below 200% of the FPL. Preschool Promise is available in the following communities:



- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Boardman | 5. Pendleton | 8. Athena-Weston |
| 2. Umatilla | 6. Pilot Rock | 9. Milton-Freewater |
| 3. Hermiston | 7. Ukiah | 10. Elgin |
| 4. Echo | 11. La Grande | |

To apply for Preschool Promise or to learn more about preschool programs in our region, please visit our coordinated enrollment website: <https://www.BlueMountainKids.org>



Save the Date: Family Voice Listening Session

The BMEL Hub is hosting listening sessions for families to share their successes and challenges in parenting and in accessing resources. Join us at our next session:

- Tuesday, December 15 6:00-7:00 pm via Zoom
- To join: : <https://imesdmeet.zoom.us/j/97580992321>
- A door prize will be given!

For more information, contact Hannah Williams: Hannah.williams@imesd.k12.or.us

Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub Staff:

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Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub Governing Board:

Umatilla County:

Lori Hale, *Education*
Lidwinnner Machado,
Human & Social Services
Kim Huling, *Business*

Morrow County:

Health: Vacant
Erin Stocker, *Education*
Dorothy Powell, *Migrant & Second Language Education*

Union County:

Robert Kleng, *Chair, Education*
Jess Hagedorn, *Parent*
Ashleigh Meeks, *Health*

Other:

Jon Peterson, *InterMountain ESD Lead*
Maureen McGrath, *Umatilla-Morrow Co. Head Start Lead*
Linda Watson, *Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization Rep*
Lloyd Commander, *Tribal Representative*



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Parent Article: *Turning Them into Us during the Season of Giving: Here are Some Ideas to Bridge Cultural Divides with New Traditions* by Erin Bartsch

Even though we are in the midst of the holiday season, right now, it seems more than ever that we have an “us vs them” problem. Whether it is with politics, religion, race, economic status or even sports team, we at times lean in to our opinions & create more division. This can be harmful because as we create this division, we start to have less understanding, perspective taking and empathy for others (and vice versa). Further, we are modeling this to our children; we are teaching them to perpetuate the division.

The reality is we are all in this together. So the more we see “them” as part of “us”, the more we are likely to do what is helpful for everyone. One of the best ways to break down the walls of “us vs them” is to learn more about “them”. With the various cultures and holidays that take place in December and January, children have the ability to see a world and perspective beyond their own. This may help them learn how to see from another perspective and become more empathetic. Which in turn, will make them a more helpful person.

I remember teaching at a preschool where there was a family from Denmark. They brought in some traditional Christmas tree decorations to show the other children. Candle holders with real candles!!! This was definitely a lesson in learning about their culture, before saying “you can’t do that”. Turns out, they actually have a lot of safety precautions they take and the risk of burning your house down is very low.

We ended up having several families share some cultural traditions around Christmas and the children enjoyed learning each of them. In the process, the children started to feel more connected to the other children as they learned about their culture.

With Christmas being one of the major holidays celebrated around the world, every house and every culture has their unique and beautiful traditions. It can be easy to think that yours is the right one (I don’t understand people who open presents on Christmas Eve!). But really, that’s just because they are familiar and comfortable. There are many wonderful traditions to explore. In addition, might I add, a lot of wonderful food to eat.

Pick a culture or denomination, do a little research with your kids and find an interesting tradition. Learn about the story behind it, find out why it holds value to those who practice it

and watch those who do it (YouTube can be very helpful for this). This can be even more meaningful if you have a family member or friend who has brought traditions from their culture. (Thanks to an Uncle from Holland, my family writes poems to go with the presents we give to the other adults.)

Beyond just Christmas, there are several holidays this time of year that children would also benefit from learning about. And remember, learning about it doesn’t mean you celebrate it but rather just understand the history and perspective. Some of the other major holidays are Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Boxing Day, and various New Year’s celebrations.

There are also many lesser-known holidays throughout the months such as Saint Lucia’s Day, Yule, Epiphany and Old New Year. These holidays each offer us a chance to look into the past and learn about others.

It is in this learning about others that we offer our children a real gift, the gift of love. We can teach them to practice understanding and empathy with those who might at first seem different. We can show them how to listen and learn even if it’s not something you believe or practice. We can instill that we are all in this together regardless of where we come from.

Here are some helpful resources to start your journey:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_multinational_festivals_and_holidays

https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/how_can_you_teach_your_young_child_about_different_holidays

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/sharing-your-creativity>

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-teach-children-about-cultural-awareness-and-diversity>

<https://www.kids-konnect.com/blog/the-importance-of-sharing-holidays-you-dont-celebrate-in-preschool>

<https://www.smartertravel.com/12-tasty-holiday-foods-around-world-make/>

Erin Bartsch is the P-3 Coordinator for the Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub and a part of the UMCHS team, working to bridge early childhood resources and prepare children for kindergarten. For more information visit www.bluemountaineearlylearninghub.org.



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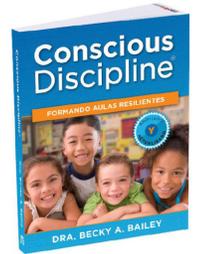
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Conscious Discipline Books in Spanish Available Upon Request

The Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub now has multiple copies of “Formando Aulas Resilientes”. We would love to provide you with a copy of this book and will fill the first 20 requests. If interested, please complete the following request form:

English: <https://forms.gle/avtD3rymLNeK6uMX6>

Spanish: <https://forms.gle/BBsk6Lm15ecVpQtG8>



NAEYC’s New DAP Statement

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is excited to announce that the fourth edition of the Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) position statement is now available. First published nearly 40 years ago, this foundational position statement is one of five created by NAEYC in collaboration with the early childhood profession. This edition of DAP reflects new research that—more extensively than in previous editions—ensures each piece of the position statement underscores the importance of social, cultural, and historical contexts of development and elevates the need for active engagement through play, exploration, and inquiry in ways that support the whole child. Below is the revised position statement. For more information on developmentally appropriate practice, visit <https://www.NAEYC.org/DAP>

Each and every child, birth through age 8, has the right to equitable learning opportunities—in centers, family child care homes, or schools—that fully support their optimal development and learning across all domains and content areas. Children are born eager to learn; they take delight exploring their world and making connections. The degree to which early learning programs support children’s delight and wonder in learning reflects the quality of that setting. Educators who engage in developmentally appropriate practice foster young children’s joyful learning and maximize the opportunities for each and every child to achieve their full potential.

Local Coat Drives

Due to COVID, Coats for Kids and other local coat drives look much different this year. Here’s what’s happening in each county:

Umatilla County:

West (Umatilla, Hermiston, Stanfield, Echo and Irrigon): A gape House has several coats available for families in need. Call 541-567-8774 to make a request. There will also be a yard sale on December 16 from 10:00am-1:00pm. This is a great opportunity for families needed clothing.

East (Pendleton, Athena, Weston, Adams, Milton-Freewater, Pilot Rock): Salvation Army will issue a voucher to clients to get a coat from their thrift store. To make a request, contact Major Toni Halstad at 541-276-3369.

City of Umatilla:

Coats for Kids Polar Bear Plunge. Buy a coat and take the plunge! Coats are available to children in need in Umatilla. This event will take place January 2, 2021 at the Umatilla Marina Swim Beach, and will run from 12 pm to 2 pm. Free Food and entertainment! Please visit; <https://yougivegoods.com/coatsforkids> to buy a BRAND NEW COAT for Umatilla area children! Each coat costs \$25.99.

Union County:

Coats are organized by the Lions Club and are available for case worker access at the Riveria Activity Center. Organizations requesting a building key to access coats for families they are serving, please contact 541-963-8571.

Morrow County:

Columbia River Health in Boardman is accepting donations to distribute to members of the community in need. For instructions on how to drop off donations or to request a coat for a family in need, contact Vickie at 541-481-7212.





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Special Needs in Special Times by Vikii Wenzel

Mind-boggling crises. Parenting as we knew it knocked on its side. Of course, if you're parenting a child with special health needs, past trauma or any sort of developmental delay, that's an old, familiar feeling. You may have even looked at new safety precautions with a nonchalant "Sure, whatever. Why not?" But special needs parenting has its special stresses, and your usual supports may be distant too. How to navigate through? Let's focus on the basics.

Growing up is a long job, and in the early years we construct foundations. Kids build who they are inside and learn to build bridges to the world outside. Dr. Becky Bailey's Brain State Model gives a succinct summary of everything we understand about this process. The human brain starts by seeking safety. First the parents provide it, and the child learns skills to take care of themselves. As soon as safety is felt, the human brain seeks connection. Again, this starts with family, but we teach our children how to reach outward to kin, friends and community. Once secure and loved, the mind is ready to ask "What can I learn?" or, put differently, "How do I choose?" Everything, all forms of higher study are simply increasingly sophisticated ways for the growing mind to take care of itself, connect with others and make good choices. These three are the basics.

A child with any developmental delay has a special learning path, but the basics are the same. A child with physical instability may need special equipment for safe movement. One with sensory issues may need help with calming and sorting out actual threats. One with speech delays may benefit from other methods of communication for safety and connection. Tools and strategies like these are the scaffolding needed for your child to build those bridges and their sense of self. If your family is just now figuring out what accommodations are needed, help is still available through doctors, therapists and public agencies like the ESD. The pandemic may have created obstacles, but we're still serving kids and families. Reach out and ask your providers. Brainstorm with them. Give the basics all the time and effort they need.

Families with scaffolding in place are feeling jolted by the crises. Systems of therapies, teachers, play groups have

been replaced by video consultations. Parks aren't as helpful when play structures are off limits. Though country folk are usually more fortunate in outdoor opportunities, the weeks of poor air quality cut us off from even that. We're distanced from our usual village, meaning both fewer opportunities to strengthen kids' skills and less respite time for parents. Children's access to building materials has thinned out considerably, as have their parents' opportunities to refresh and recharge. So... slow down. Focus on the basics. Other things will wait.

Safety and self-care first. Good food, exercise and sleep are crucial – for everyone. Build daily routines for all of these, and help your child join these routines as much as possible. Just watching, seeing colors, smelling smells, hearing vocabulary is beneficial. Any child that can stand safely can be part of most cooking and cleaning. Older kids can exercise physical and communication skills by fetching, pouring, stirring and wiping up. Kids terrified of the vacuum may feel powerful when they push it. Reducing stress benefits everyone's brain. We may do fewer chores, so we choose the ones that grow our kids' brains and bodies in the process.

Another effect of strong routines is a stronger sense of connection. Mistakes in recipes, imperfect cleaning jobs are repaid by shared times and skill-building. Narrate your actions and explain your purposes, to build your child's vocabulary and problem-solving. Or just reduce stress and develop rhythm by putting happy music on. Or do both by singing along.

Then, only after everyone is feeling safe and loved, let your mind turn to abstract concepts like rules, colors, counting and shapes. Find them in your home, find them in your routine. That is learning enough for times like these.

These are hard times, needing some hard choices. Prioritize basics. Let go of those little voices that tell you that's not enough. Focusing on important foundations is always enough.

Vikii Wenzel is an Early Intervention teacher with the IMESD, a partner of the Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub.

