

NEWSLETTER



Parents as Teachers Early Head Start Head Start



December Important Dates

7	10:00-11:00 am	Playgroup @ Russell Library
7	9:30-10:30 am	Playgroup @ Hays Public Library
9	9:00 -10:00 am	Playgroup @ LaCrosse Barnard Library
14	10:00 -11:00 am	La Leche League Contact Monique

Hays, Ellis & Russell Connections

Classrooms will be closed

December 21, 2022 to January 3, 2023



Buddy Bench Dedication

The children and staff helped to dedicate a “Buddy Bench” on each playground. The Buddy Benches were donated by the Family of Ella Dechant, past Foster Grandparent, and Thunder on the Plains Car Enthusiasts. The purpose of the Buddy Bench is to help eliminate loneliness, foster friendships and when a child sits on the Buddy Bench it signals to other children that someone may need a friend or an invitation to play.

Check out our Buddy Benches on each playground and ask your child about them!

“A friend is one of the best things you can have and one of the best things you can be.” Winnie the Pooh

Baby, It’s Cold Outside

The kids still need to burn off that extra energy, but what to do?!

1. Turn up some music and dance (adults join in!) Change it up and play freeze dance when the music stops so do you.
 2. Stretch or do yoga with your child. Check out an exercise DVD from the library.
 3. Make a ball with a sock and use the laundry basket for goal.
 4. Use a hand-towel or paper towels and jump or step from square to square—as the time goes on move the squares farther apart for your child. Encourage your child’s imagination — are there sharks or alligators in the waters below?!
 5. Time it. Use a timer and time how long it takes your child to go upstairs, get a tissue and come back, or go around the dining room table and back...use caution and keep in mind your child’s abilities as you plan this safe indoor activity. “On your marks, get set, GO!”
 6. Make an obstacle course—have your child crawl over, under, around, and through.
 7. Play trick show. Simply be an enthusiastic audience for your kids, and let them show off their stunts (front rolls, amazing jumps, etc. within reason) one at a time.
 8. Blow up a balloon and hit it around the room. Make it a game and help your child keep it off the ground. (BE AWARE OF THE HAZARDS OF BROKEN BALLOON PIECES AND YOUNG CHILDREN.)
 9. Bundle up and go out—even if just for a few minutes. Encourage your child to jump, scream, yell, march, during this time.
- ENJOY YOUR CHILD INSIDE OR OUTSIDE!**

Break Free of TV

Don't let the TV displace what's important: family conversation, exercise, play, reading, creating, thinking, and doing.



Helping Children Find Balance During the Holidays

During the holiday season, presents can easily become a big focus. Opening gifts certainly brings joy, but children can easily feel overwhelmed by the materialism they are exposed to, and develop unrealistic expectations around receiving gifts. Parents can help their child by providing experiences that highlight the true meaning of the holidays and their own special family celebrations. Here are some suggestions for maintaining balance at this time of the year.

Your Baby / Toddler / Preschooler:

Take a little time to help your children make their own gifts. An infant or toddler can press a painted print onto a piece of paper, or draw a simple picture that can be mailed to a family member. As your child gets older he will be more capable of planning his own gifts to make, sharing holiday joy with others in very creative ways.

Involve your preschooler in collecting some containers of food, or in buying a toy that will be donated to charity. Explain there are less fortunate families who would be made very happy by these things. Understanding why it is important to share with others in need may encourage your child to have greater appreciation for the gifts she receives.

Consider making edible gifts for seasonal birds and other small creatures. A simple way to practice caring about and giving to others as they play outside.

Make time together to talk about holiday festivities. Sing favorite songs and enjoy picture books about the season. Infants and toddlers may not understand every word, but they will love to listen to stories about their family and about special traditions. They will have a sense of their role in their celebrations.

Take photos of family celebrations and make a special holiday album. This can be a way to talk about what is happening in the pictures, to remember each different family member to describe the emotions that were experienced. Discuss the importance of enjoying cherished rituals together.

Always Looking for some Great Ideas!

If you have any ideas for possible project ideas, themes, or activities that can be done at school or on your next home visit, please visit with your child's teacher / parent educator and let them know your ideas. Parents are a wonderful resource because families know what their child is most interested in doing and learning about!

Baby Brain Map

This site allow you to choose an age and an area of the brain. It will give a question or two about that area of the brain, answer it and then give you ideas on what you can do in the day to day life to assist and encourage your child in that particular area. Great resource!

<http://www.zerotothree.org/baby-brain-map.html>



Because kids don't come with instructions!

www.haysparents.com

Check out this site for other local resources and a wealth of information!

Cold Weather Rule in Effect Nov. 1- Mar. 31

The CWR prohibits disconnection of service when the local National Weather Service forecasts temperatures to fall below 35 degrees in the next 48 hours. To prevent disconnection when it's 35 degrees or above, or to be reconnected, customers must make payment arrangements with Midwest Energy.

For residential customers to avoid service disconnection or to restore service during the CWR period, they must:

- Inform Midwest Energy of inability to pay the bill in full;
- Provide sufficient information to Midwest Energy to allow the company to make payment arrangements;
- Make an initial payment of 1/12 the past due amount, plus 1/12 of the current bill, the full amount of any disconnection or reconnection fees, plus an applicable deposit, and enter into an 11-month plan for payment of the remainder (or enter into a payment plan as negotiated with Midwest Energy for payment of the past due amount); and
- Apply for any assistance funds for which the customer is eligible. This can include governmental assistance, as well as private programs such as Midwest Customer Care. Customers may request Midwest Energy to send a copy of all bills and notices to a third party.

Midwest Energy will send written notice 10 days before disconnection, plus attempt a phone call or personal contact the day before.

For more information about the CWR, visit www.kcc.ks.gov.

Poison Facts:

Seasonal Poisoning Hazards: Winter



Cough and Cold Medications:

- Children's medicines often taste good, so children may drink or eat large amounts of them. Keep medicines out of the reach of children.
- Many cough and cold medicines contain antihistamines, decongestants or cough suppressants, which can cause either drowsiness or extreme agitation (excitement), depending on the amount ingested.
- Many contain aspirin, acetaminophen or alcohol in addition to the ingredients specifically from cough or other cold symptoms.
- Follow label directions for dosage very carefully. Medicines come in different strengths (child and adult) and forms (chewable tablets, pills, and liquids).

Holiday Decorations

- Bubble lights containing methylene chloride can be poisonous if a child drinks the fluid (even if labeled non-toxic.)
- Snow sprays may be harmful if the aerosol propellants are used improperly.
- Christmas tree needles can cause painful cuts in the mouth and throat when swallowed.
- Angel hair (made from finely spun glass) and ornament hangers may cause cuts or irritation.
- Tree ornaments, icicles and tinsel may block the airway or cause choking.

Alcohol

- During the holiday season, children are at increased risk for alcohol poisoning. Children imitate adults, so they may drink the beverages they see grown-ups drinking at holiday parties.
- Take care to remove all empty and partially empty cups as soon as possible.
- Store alcohol in a locked cabinet out of the reach and sight of children.
- Very small amounts of alcohol can be dangerous to children.

For more poison prevention and first aid information, call the

Poison Control Center
Serving the Residents of Kansas

Toll-free Hotline
1-800-222-1222

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS HOSPITAL
KUMED

Severe Weather Reminder

If USD 489—Hays cancels school; all Early Childhood Connections classrooms, offices, meetings, home visits, and play & learn dates will be cancelled as well. If any of the districts listed below cancel school; all home visits, classrooms, and play & learn dates *held within those districts* will be cancelled.

USD 407-Russell

USD 395-LaCrosse

USD 388-Ellis

USD 432-Victoria,

USD 270-Plainville

USD 271-Stockton

If roads are snow-covered or icy, please allow your Parent Educator, Teacher, or your Family Worker a few extra minutes to arrive for your home visit, due to the increased travel time.

Please keep your porch & walk-way as clear as possible by removing snow and/or sprinkling salt to remove the ice. If your home visits are held after dark please remember to turn on your porch light.

Family Activity Night/ Parent Committee

Early Childhood Connections programs are responsible for facilitating and seeking the engagement of families of participating children in activities designed to help families become full partners in the education of their children. Your input ensures that the program achieves the goals of engaging families and communities to support families and boost children's school readiness. If you are interested in helping plan our future FAN please contact your child's teacher or Parent Educator.

EASE HOLIDAY STRESS!

To assist parents and families, use these important tips to help ease holiday stress and promote a more enjoyable time of year.

Helpful hints for the holidays

Make a holiday plan with your children. Gather the family and discuss all the upcoming school, church, community and other holiday activities. Talk about what events mean the most to each family member. Schedule in the most important and cut back on the ones that will cause stress in terms of money, time, transportation and energy. Let your kids be a part of the process. If something has to be missed, they are more likely to understand why.

Relax with your family. Set aside “family time.” Enjoy the season in a simple way. Go for a walk or drive and look at holiday decorations. Read a holiday classic or watch a holiday movie together. Spend time making holiday crafts that you and your children will all have fun creating.

Learn to say "no". Set limits. Say “yes” to activities that matter but decline those that put you over the top. Remember, you do not have to attend every party, volunteer at every function, and buy your kids every toy they want. Do what is important and realistic for you and your family.

Be open to change. Keep in mind that life requires flexibility. Be prepared to change plans if something comes up. Be prepared for something new that may arise and that your family may want to do. The holiday season is about making memories for you and your children, whether by celebrating a tradition or creating a new one.

Give back to others. Include in your family plan an activity that gives back to others and involves your children. As a family, donate holiday gifts, visit a nursing home, serve meals at a food bank, or join an event sponsored by your church, community center, place of work, or local family organization.

Remember you're not alone. Being a parent is tough. When you feel overwhelmed, it's important to remember that you are not alone. Talking to someone can make you feel better.

1-800-CHILDREN

Provides 24/7 Support

Without Judgement

No question is too big or too small when it comes to parenting.

Find helpful resources and supports near you or connect with a

Real person by calling 1-800-CHILDREN(800-332-6378). They

Offer free and confidential support in English and Spanish as well

As multiple other languages.

Stronger Families = Stronger Children

October 27, 2022 | By Child Care Aware of Kansas

Stronger Families = Stronger Children: Head Start's Holistic Approach to Early Education

By *Jennifer Adhima, MSW, Executive Director, Kansas Head Start Association*. Originally published in the Fall 2022 issue of Kansas Child Magazine. The term “holistic,” according to the Oxford Dictionary, applies when the separate parts of something are understood to be “intimately interconnected.” Families are most definitely intimately interconnected in the lives of children — and their caregivers.

Since Head Start's inception in 1965, the program has taken a holistic approach to working with the nation's youngest children and their families. Head Start recognized early on that young children exist within the context of larger systems — their families and their communities — and that authentic, positive, goal-orientated relationships between parents and providers are key to both children's and families' success.

Head Start programs work in partnership with families to achieve seven key outcomes, which are fully explained in “Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework.” But simply stated, Head Start wants families to be:

- Healthy and safe
- Developing nurturing, positive relationships with their children
- Lifelong educators for their children
- Active learners themselves
- Engaged in their children's transitions and milestones over their lifespan
- Connected to peers and social supports

Involved as advocates and leaders in their family, program, and community

Research has shown that these seven specific family outcomes have positive impacts on the outcomes we all desire for children, such as good health, developing brains, positive relationships, and success in school and life.

The Parent's Role at Head Start

So what does this holistic approach look like in practice?

Continue....



Parents are respected and valued as their child’s first and best teacher.

Parents set goals for their child’s development, and Head Start staff are there to support those goals throughout their time in the program. Positive parent-child relationships are the foundation for a child’s lifelong learning, and this fact is emphasized with parents during home visits, daily interactions, or parent-child events. When parents struggle with a child’s challenging behaviors (think toddler temper tantrums), Head Start staff work collaboratively with the parents on strategies to manage their child’s behaviors in a positive way.

Parents experiencing poor health are connected to a regular, ongoing source of health care, so that any immediate health concerns can be addressed and negative health outcomes can be prevented. If a parent is struggling with concerns related to their emotional well-being, the programs’ mental health consultant or family support staff can work with the family to recommend resources to address these needs.

Parents develop goals for their family, and staff assist them in navigating the complicated systems of social services, continuing education, and economic mobility programs that can help them achieve their goals.

Parents are encouraged to get involved. They can volunteer in their child’s classroom, attend parent-child events, or serve on parent committees or the programs’ Policy Council.

Continue....

These opportunities give parents a chance to build their existing leadership skills and social support networks.

This holistic approach is what sets Head Start apart from other early education programs.

By building stronger families, we build stronger children.

We continue to see these impacts on children and families as they leave Head Start and move on to achieve bigger and better dreams!

Want to know more about Head Start in your community? Visit www.ksheadstart.org/locations to find your local program.



Parents who are afraid to put their foot down usually have children who step on their toes.

Chinese Proverb

nubites™

nutrition tips for today's families



No. 196

on top of a cracker

Use whole grain crackers to make a variety of tasty finger foods for your next party.



Cucumber Hummus Rounds -

- Peel cucumbers and cut into ½ inch rounds.
- Place a cucumber round on top of each cracker.
- Top each cracker with a tiny spoonful of hummus.
- Sprinkle with dill weed.

Tomato Crackers -

- Cut cherry tomatoes into slices.
- Put a couple tomato slices on each cracker.
- Top with a tiny spoonful of low fat cottage cheese.
Sprinkle with a dash of black pepper.

Peanut Butter and Fruit -

- Spread a little peanut butter on each cracker.
- Top with chopped strawberries or kiwi slices.

Deli Crackers -

- Cut deli ham or turkey into small squares or triangles to fit on top of crackers.
- Layer a couple slices of meat on each cracker.
- Top with a tiny amount of finely chopped dill pickle.

Shrimp Crackers -

- Place a small slice of mozzarella cheese on each cracker.
- Top with 1 or 2 tiny shrimp.