



**Northern Tier Community Action Corp.
Head Start Program**

March/April 2017

**Dave Greene
Executive Director**

From the Director . . .

Dear Parents,

Thank you for sharing your precious children with our Head Start Program. It has been an exciting year filled with learning, laughter, and love!

Since Head Start began in 1965 the program has always focused on helping children from low-income families be ready to enter school. However, within the past few years this has become even more important. **“Head Start views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life.”** There is a new emphasis being placed on assuring that this is happening for all children in all Head Start programs. This also means there are some new things we have to do and record about how the children are doing. Your role in helping us do this is more important than ever! There are 3 areas where we need your help in the next few months. All of these are very important steps in helping your child get the most out of the Head Start Program.

1) ATTENDANCE- It is very important that your child attend the program regularly. This is a basic for school-readiness. If/when your child is not present they cannot learn what they need to be ready for school! The Office of Head Start expects individual children that attend center-based program to be present at least 85% of the time. This is why Family Service Workers o call you when your child is absent. As parents, it is your job to make sure your child attends regularly. We know that children get sick and there are guidelines for when a child should stay home due to illness. Except for child illness we are asking you to do everything possible to send your child to the program daily. This is also a good preparation for kindergarten. Please help us increase your child’s opportunities to learn and our program goal of increasing our attendance.

2) PARTNER WITH STAFF-In order to help your child learn all they can we need your help. Staff needs your ideas about how your child is learning and growing at home. They need you to help set goals for your child for the rest of the year. You are the one who knows your child best. When staff call you on the phone, come for home-visits or ask you to send information back to them, please do all you can to respond. We know you are all busy but we can’t do the best for your child without you helping us. Remember, you are always welcome in the classrooms/sites.

3) WORK WITH YOUR CHILD- Since you are the 1st and most important Teacher of your child, you also can be helping him/her learn every day at home. As a part of our school-readiness goals, we will be giving you more ideas of what you can do at home to work with your child. This may be in the classroom newsletter, on a separate piece of paper, or discussed during a home-visit. Please always make sure and check back-packs and pockets for information sent home. Not only will this help your child but we can use your hours for in-kind.

*Debra Sidelinger
Head Start Director*



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Next meeting:

April 20, 2017

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There's No Place Like Home

Children are usually most comfortable in their homes – and why not? That is the place where they are loved most of all! A family's home is already a rich environment full of learning opportunities! Whether a family is enrolled in a home visiting option or they participate in a preschool classroom, their child will still spend much of their time at home. Both teachers and home visitors have the important job of helping families see all the opportunities for learning that already exist in their own home.

Helping families create home environments where their children can thrive is an exciting way home visitors can support parent and child relationships in the home. Here are ways that you can support your child's learning with things you already have in your home!

Everyday materials that support learning:

Empty food containers (egg cartons, cereal boxes, spice tins, cracker boxes).

Boxes to serve as blocks (shoe boxes, tissue boxes, etc.).

Clean, empty laundry detergent tops or yogurt containers make excellent toys for stacking and nesting.

Empty egg cartons or muffin tins provide opportunities to explore one-to-one correspondence and pretend play (shopping or cooking).

Fabric of various textures like scarves, bandanas or scraps of old clothes can be fun to touch, snuggle, or use as a baby blanket in pretend play.

Empty containers and a bowl of water over a cake pan for dump and fill water play with minimal mess.

Safe-to-throw items such as soft balls, shower scrubbers and balled up socks.

Cushions or pillows on the floor to crawl over or jump on top of.

A "cozy" area (blanket or scarf laid over a table, or large cardboard box) that children can crawl into and use as an indoor tent.



To create a home environment that supports gross motor skills:

Use a step stool (to wash hands, brush teeth, see the kitchen counter).

Take a walk.

Create a child-friendly obstacle course with cushions to climb over, a cardboard box tunnel to crawl through, hopping over a handkerchief on the floor, etc.

Practice walking (or crawling!) up and down stairs with your child.

Play outside as often as possible!

To create a home environment that supports fine motor skills:

Provide supervised experiences with paper and pens/pencils/markers/crayons/scissors – children as young as twelve-months-old will want to try writing like adults do.

Offer junk mail or old newspapers to crumple, crinkle and tear.

If you don't have paint brushes you can paint with Q-Tips, apples, potatoes, and plastic forks!

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There's No Place Like Home (Cont'd)

To create a home environment that supports social skills:

Provide the knowledge and skills to help families recognize that the most important part of their children's environment is the relationships they grow together.

Get on your child's level and really listen to them when they have something to say.

Play turn-taking games—for example, the child may hand the parent a ball, and the parent hands it back. Board games are another great way to teach sharing, taking turns, and how to be a good sport.

Use a paper plate to make a "stop" sign on one side and a "go" sign on the other. Play stop-and-go games in a hallway; this helps children learn self-control and listening skills.

Play games using stuffed animals, dolls, or action figures. The dolls can practice negotiating difficult issues like taking turns, needing space, and being polite. They can also sing songs and do silly dances!

Adapted from: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/cde/learning-environments>

Amanda Dempsey, Transition/Education Specialist

It's Hard To Be A Parent

Parenting

*Just when
you think
you've got
it all
figured out -
it changes.*

Sometimes all the advice from the "experts" can make you worry that you're not doing enough or not doing it 'right'. This guilt can make you over-protective and may stifle your child's growth. Try to be alert to how your behavior affects your child without becoming anxious about it.

If you make mistakes, try to learn from them and then let them go.

The wonderful thing about young children is that you get a new chance with them each moment: they don't harbor resentments.

Give your child a chance to be his or her own person. Don't do

things for your child that he/she can do or protect him/ her from the natural consequences of their own mistakes. Expect your child to take responsibilities for their actions, as this helps him or her learn to be responsible for their own actions.

Contributed by: Debra Sidelinger, Head Start Director

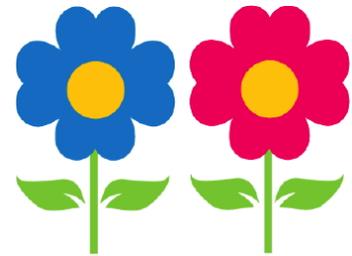
Applications Are Being Accepted for the 2017-2018 School Year



Northern Tier Community Action Head Start is currently accepting applications for the 2017-2018 school year. Parents letting other parents know about our WONDERFUL program are the best advertisement for Head Start. Please let all your family and friends of 3-4 year olds that we are taking applications for next year. Applications are accepted throughout the year.

We are hoping to make the application process easier. You can pre-apply to Head Start through FaceBook or our Website – Northern Tier Community Action Head Start. Applications can also be found at your local Head Start center or by calling the main office at 888 809-3704 Ext. 224. If your child is currently enrolled and is not kindergarten age, you will not have to complete another application. Head Start applications are good for 2 years.

Marcy Boswell, Family & Community Specialist



Thank you!

We are rapidly approaching the end of this 2016-2017 school year! This has been another great year! I would like to thank all of you for allowing us to become part of your family and serve you through our Head Start services. We count it a privilege and a joy to work with you and your child each and every day. We wish all of the families and children who will be transitioning to Kindergarten well and hope to see you in the future. For those families and children who will be returning next year, we look forward to more fun-filled learning experiences. Please be sure to get the information about all the events happening in center out of your child's backpack. We have many wonderful activities and events planned.

A special thanks to all our volunteers, community partners and staff, who make our program possible!

Enjoy the rest of your time the year and have a safe summer!

Marcy Boswell, Family & Community Specialist



Parenting Strategies for Managing Aggression in Very Young Children

How do parents moderate and channel their child's aggression without stamping it out by being too severe? While there is no exact recipe, here are 10 suggestions that may help you to provide your child with the guidance he needs.

1. **Limits are part of loving.** Putting reasonable restrictions on your child's behavior is part of loving him, just as are feeding, comforting, playing, and responding to his wishes.
2. **Try to figure out what triggered your child's aggressive behavior.** Ask yourself what might have happened that set him off—your behavior or that of another person, or something else in the situation; perhaps he is overtired or not feeling well physically.
3. **Use what you know.** Make use of what you know about your child's temperament, rhythms, preferences, and sensitivities. For example, if you know that he is irritable or ill-humored for the first hour of the day or gets very out of sorts when tired or hungry, you won't pick that time to ask a great deal in the way of control.
4. **Be clear.** Tell your child what you want him to do or not do in a specific situation (but try not to give a long lecture). Your child will be aware of your displeasure from your tone of voice as well as from what you say. It is important that you try to be clear about your disapproval. However, long lectures and dire predictions are usually counterproductive.
5. **Be a careful observer.** When your young child is playing with other children, keep an eye on the situation but try not to hover. What begins as playful scuffling or run and chase or sharing toys can quickly move into a battle between children, and they may need a referee. However, there are times when you can let young children work things out among themselves.
6. **Use redirection.** When your child is being aggressive in ways you don't like, stop the behavior and give him something else to do. You may either suggest and help start a new activity or perhaps guide him to a place where he can discharge aggressive feelings without doing harm to himself, to anyone else, to toys, or to the family pet..
7. **Be a coach.** When time permits, demonstrate how to handle a situation in which there is conflict between children. For instance, if your child is old enough, you can teach him a few words to use in order to avoid or settle a conflict.
8. **Use language.** If your child has language skills, help him explain what he is angry about. If you are able to guess and he cannot say, do it for him, such as, "I guess you're mad because you can't go to play with Johnny."
9. **Ask yourself if you are sending "mixed messages" to your child about his aggressiveness.** If you say "Don't hit" or "Be nice" while you are not so secretly enjoying your child's aggressive behavior toward someone else, he will be confused, and such confusions tend to make it more difficult to develop self-control.
10. **Be a role model.** Keep in mind that parents are the most important models for behavior. Avoid spanking. Think about the very real disadvantages of physical punishment for your child. Children often arouse anger in adults when they provoke, tease, behave stubbornly, or attack others. If your practice is to hit or physically punish your child in some other way for such behavior, you need to think very carefully about what he learns from that.



From "Zero to Three"

Submitted by Mike Kuleck, Disabilities Specialist

Healthy Eating



What should my child eat?

Just like adults, children need to eat a wide variety of foods. Every 5 years, the U.S. Government releases a set of guidelines on healthy eating. The guidelines suggest balancing calories with physical activity. The guidelines also recommend improving eating habits to promote health, reduce the risk of disease, and reduce overweight and obesity. The guidelines encourage Americans ages 2 years and older to eat a variety of healthy foods. Suggested items include the following:

- Fruits, vegetables, unsalted nuts and seeds, and whole grains
- Fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Lean meats, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, soy products, and eggs

The guidelines also suggest reducing salt (sodium), refined grains, added sugars, and solid fats (like lard, butter, and margarine). Added sugars and solid fats often occur in pizzas, sodas, sugar-sweetened drinks, desserts like cookies or cake, and fast foods. These foods are the main sources of high fat and sugar among children and teens. Another important guideline is to make sure your children eat breakfast to spark the energy they need to focus in school. Not eating breakfast is often linked to overweight and obesity, especially in children and teens.

How can I help my child eat better?

Use less fat, salt, and sugar

- Cook with fewer solid fats. Use olive or canola oil instead of butter or margarine. Bake or roast instead of frying. You can get a crunchy texture with "oven-frying" recipes that involve little or no oil.
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt. Keep the salt shaker off the table. Have fruits and vegetables on hand for snacks instead of salty snacks like chips.
- Limit the amount of sugar your child eats. Choose cereals with low sugar or with dried fruits as the source of sugar.
- Reshape the plate
- Make half of what is on your child's plate fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid oversized portions.

Bonnie Halquist, Health & Nutrition Specialist



Positive Solutions for Families

Practical Tips for Parents of Young Children with Challenging Behaviors

Many, if not most, parents find themselves struggling with challenging behaviors of their young children at some point in time. The good news is that there are effective strategies out there that can help you create positive solutions for your family.

1. Keep your expectations realistic: It is important for you to know and understand your child's abilities and limitations.
2. Plan ahead: Try to think of what your child may do in certain situations. Make sure that you plan ahead to make sure that your child is successful. If you know that you are going somewhere that will require a long wait, be sure and bring small toys, books or writing materials to keep your child occupied.
3. State your expectations clearly and in advance. Be sure to give your child clear instructions as to what you want them to do and when. Provide one expectation at a time so that the child is not overwhelmed. Give your child a clear warning when it is time to clean up or when you are transitioning so that they have time to prepare and adjust.
4. Offer limited, reasonable choices: Children are not born with the ability to make complex decisions and then accept the consequences. Offer them choices only when true choices exist and only offer one or two options to young children. Don't ask if they want to get dressed, but rather if they want to wear the blue shirt or orange for example.
5. Use "When...Then" statements: This simply means that you let them know that *when* they have completed the task you ask them to do *then* they may do the options they have chosen. For example; you could say that *when* you are finished picking up your toys *then* you may watch TV.
6. Try to catch your child being good: So often we spend our time telling our children what they shouldn't do or what they did wrong and we forget to notice their positive behaviors. Try giving specific positive attention when you see your child doing things that you want or when they are acting appropriately.
7. Stay calm: When your child's behavior is unacceptable you can decide to either react to it or ignore it. If you decide that you need to react make sure that you give the least amount of attention to the negative behavior as possible. Remember you are modeling behavior for your child and the more your child becomes out of control, the more calm and in control you need to remain.
8. Use Time away: Sometimes a child needs to be removed from a difficult situation in order to have time to calm down and think about what happened and what needs to happen. Give them time in a quiet place such as on a chair in a quiet area of the house, and when they are calm then you can approach them and help them figure out what happened and how you can work together to solve the problem and avoid it in the future.

All of these suggestions seem very simple, but we all know that when we are caught up in a stressful situation with our children that simple logic often goes out the window. These steps can help remind us how to avoid and deal with some of the everyday behaviors we encounter. Post this article on your refrigerator or somewhere visible just as a reminder to: plan ahead, give choices, be prepared and remain calm!



Adapted from "Strategies That help" copyright 2000 Regional Intervention Program

Contributed by: Jodi Guisto, Education Specialist

PHOTO SHARING!



Troopers fingerprinting the children ~ Emporium Center



Donuts with Dad ~ Port Allegany II Center



Otto Eldred & McKean County Home Base got a visit from Bwana Jim's Wildlife Show!

PHOTO SHARING!



Look what the children built by working together ~ Team Work in St. Marys Center



Green Day ~ St. Marys



Former Head Start student reading ~ Kane I