



# NEWSLETTER

Northern Tier Community Action Corp.  
Head Start Program



September/October 2014

Kenneth P. Straub  
Executive Director

## From the Director . . .

Dear Parents,

Northern Tier Community Action Head Start is a pre-kindergarten program that provides educational and social opportunities to enhance the healthy development of children. Our program provides support for the families in Cameron, Elk, Potter, and McKean counties. It is our goal to help the children prepare for kindergarten and to reach their full potential in school as well as later in life.



Our program's philosophy is focused on meeting the needs of the children and families we serve. These needs include good health, high-quality food, warmth, love and security, development of a good self concept, successful daily learning experiences, freedom of exploration and expression, and character building.

Our program is dedicated to providing the highest quality comprehensive services in child development and school readiness. We strive for collaborative relationships with other organizations that provide services to young children and families. Our combined efforts provide the opportunity for parents to choose a nurturing learning environment that best suits the needs of each child and his or her family.



Thank you for choosing  
our program!  
**Welcome to Head Start!**

**Debra Sidelinger**  
Head Start Director

## POLICY COUNCIL

Chairperson:  
Robert Nortum (J)

Vice Chairperson:  
Cassie Bell (KII)

Secretary:  
Savanna Carpenter  
(PA)

Treasurer:  
Verna Bundy (STM)

Policy Council Meeting:  
October 9, 2014 @  
10:15 AM in NTCAC  
Conference Room.

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## Welcome to Northern Tier Community Action Corporation Head Start!

The start of a new year is an emotional time, full of anticipation of new friends, and new learning experiences. Whether your child is returning to Head Start or coming for the first time, he or she may experience separation anxiety. This is a feeling of fear and discomfort about being separated from familiar people. Separation anxiety is a normal reaction that most people feel at one time or another.

Each child expresses these feelings about leaving parents in a slightly different way. Some children may protest right away, crying loudly at school or complaining at home. Some may complain of aches, pains, or illnesses. Others may have difficulty after school has begun, when the initial excitement has worn off. Some children may show anger toward the new adults or children in their life.

It may help to remember that separating from home and becoming attached to new surroundings are vital parts of becoming independent. Children need our understanding and support as they make these steps towards independence.

The following are some suggestions to help the separation process:

### **\*Help your child anticipate what will happen each day of school.**

It is important to be prepared for the new day. Pick out your child's clothes for the next day before your child goes to bed.

Be sure that your child gets enough sleep every night. It is amazing how much sleep is required for preschool children. It is recommended that children 3-5 years get 11-13 hours nightly at regular scheduled time.

Parents are usually informed of events that will occur in the center. Please be sure that you review all the information in your child's backpack daily. You can talk to your child about special events that will happen at your child's center.

### **\*Be consistent.**

All the centers post a daily schedule. Preschool children like routines they can count on to feel safe and secure. It is important to give children a 1-3 minute warning before transitioning to a new activity. It may even be helpful to provide a chart for the day. This way a child will know what to expect.

### **\*Be excited about the day.**

Talk about what she might do and who she'll see. Stay upbeat, do not grill your child with questions, and if you sense the conversation is stressing her out, switch to small talk. Whatever you do, don't put ideas in their head or compare your child with another.

### **\*Acknowledge your child's feelings.**

"Acknowledge feelings" mean to make simple statement that labels the feelings. As you talk to your child, use a soft, calm voice and touch your child gently, to communicate that you understand. Pause and wait for your child's response. It is important to show you accept your child's feelings, even if his or her outbursts are upsetting to you. This acceptance will let your child know it is okay to have strong feelings about your leaving. Remain calm and stay positive. With your encouragement your child will fully express feelings of sadness or anger; this usually helps children "let go" of the feelings and begin to adjust to the new friends and environment.

### **\*If your child is not upset, avoid pressuring him or her to be sad.**

Instead, know that your child cares very deeply about you and that you can take pride in your child's independence.

Marcy Boswell, Family and Community Specialist



## 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!

### 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.

## There's No Place Like Home! (cont'd)

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 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**  
**Education/Transition Specialist**

## Information on Enterovirus

Enteroviruses are very common respiratory illnesses with more than 100 types resulting between 10 to 15 million cases occurring in the United States each year. EV-D68 infections are believed to occur less commonly than other enterovirus infections.

Enteroviruses can cause respiratory illness, rashes with fever, and neurologic illness like aseptic meningitis (swelling of the tissue covering the brain and spinal cord) and encephalitis (swelling of the brain). Many infections will be mild and require only treatment of the symptoms. Some people with severe respiratory illness caused by EV-D68 may need to be hospitalized.

While there is no specific treatment for EV-D68, individuals can protect themselves from EV-D68 - and other respiratory illnesses - by doing the following:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cough into your sleeve or a tissue.
- Avoid kissing, hugging and sharing cups, eating utensils, etc. with people who are sick.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.

For more information on EV-D68, visit the **CDC website**.

**Bonnie Halquist, Health/Nutrition Specialist**

## Positive Behavior Support



If a child doesn't know how to read...we teach!

If a child doesn't know how to swim...we teach!

If a child doesn't know how to drive...we teach!

If a child doesn't know how to behave we....**Punish?**

That's quite a sobering thought isn't it? We tend to punish because yelling at them may seem to work, at least initially. Punishing does nothing to help in the long term. It may teach them the way to deal with these things is to be aggressive, physical and sometimes downright violent. The behavior will return and many times worse than ever.

You may need to model **appropriate** behavior yourself so that the child can see it in action. You can also set up little "mini plays" where

you are acting out taking turns, sharing, inside voices, gentle touches ect. Offer this training when you and your child are both calm and in a good mood. Teaching appropriate behavior skills can and should be fun! It's just something that is so very important to do but very few parents do it. There is also many videos and books that address the topic of teaching social skills.

Another very important related parenting tip is to always "**catch the child being good.**" Give plenty of praise that is often and **specific**. Instead of saying "I like how good you were today" say "I like how you put your toys away." This is again a way of teaching appropriate behaviors. Its human nature to relax and rest and not offer praise when a child is behaving and to pay attention to them when they are not. This will cause inappropriate behaviors to increase and you certainly do not want that so, again...**Catch the child being good!**

A few other nuggets:

Talk with the child, not at them. Eye contact and smile! Back and forth conversation.

Give lots of encouragement.

Teach children what to do. Sometimes they need to be taught the correct way. Teach appropriate alternative behaviors.

When possible give the child options for following directions. It's easier to follow directions when you feel you have a choice in the matter.

Increase your child's vocabulary by introducing new words. Especially "feeling words" such as disgusted, embarrassed, thrilled, uncomfortable, relaxed ect. This will make it easier for your child to talk with you when they are upset. Have them "use their words" when upset.

Make more "do requests" than "don't" Try to eliminate "don't" from your vocabulary!"

Consider making a chart tracking everything positive you say to your child. This alone will increase your positive comments and reduce inappropriate behavior. Offer "Caught being Good" certificates.

Not one of us was given a parenting plan when our child was born We love them and do the best we can. There's no shame in trying a few of these suggestions. There are also many agencies out there to assist you in your parenting journey. Contact your local Head Start staff and they will help you connect.

**Mike Kuleck, Disabilities Specialist**

# Teaching Your Child Self-Control

Self-control means being able to express and cope with strong emotions in appropriate ways—for a toddler, this may mean saying “I’m mad at you” instead of biting. Self-control also involves thinking skills, as we decide feelings to act on. Developing self-control begins at birth and continues across our lives. It is a skill that is critical to children’s school success and overall healthy development. It helps children cooperate with others, to cope with frustration, and to resolve conflicts. Young children learn these skills through interactions with others and guidance from parents and other caregivers.

Toddlers have minds of their own and strong feelings that they express strongly. “No!” becomes a favorite word and a way to feel independence. At the same time, toddlers can become easily frustrated because there are still many things that they want to do but cannot. Teaching beginning self-control skills can be very simple. Here are some every day ideas to help;

## TODDLERS

- Give your child opportunities to choose. Giving children, even young toddlers, opportunities to choose lets them know you trust them to make good decisions. It also helps them feel in control. Let your child make decisions about what to play, what to read, or what to have for snack (give him two healthy snacks to choose from). Give child two simple choices at a time that you feel are appropriate. Do not just ask what you want to eat as they may name something you don’t have; which will lead to frustration on both your parts. Instead ask your child if they want pizza or chicken, or if they want their food on the red plate or blue plate.

- Label and recognize your child’s feelings. Letting children know their feelings are understood helps them calm down and regain control. This doesn’t mean you give in to their demand. “I know you are mad that you have to go to bed, but hitting me is not okay. You can hit this pillow; or we can read this book together instead.” Naming and recognizing his feelings helps your child learn to manage his emotions, a important skill necessary for later school success.

## PRESCHOOLERS

Older toddlers are still unable to stop themselves from acting on their wants. Again, recognizing their feelings and suggesting other ways they can express themselves is still the best response at this age. As they grow, encourage them to think about what else they can do—throw the balls into the laundry basket instead of at the wall. The ability to trade an acceptable action for one that is not acceptable is essential for functioning well in school.

- Give your child opportunities to choose. Present him with two acceptable options and let her choose, “Would you like to brush your teeth or put on your pajamas first?” Rather than telling her to get her rain boots, help her think it through on her own: “It is raining out. What will you need to bring to child care today so you can go on a rain-walk with your class?” If a decision is really yours, don’t offer a choice. Say, “its bed time,” not “Are you ready to go to bed?”

- Help your child learn to wait. Waiting helps children learn self-control. And it teaches them that others have needs, too. Make the wait-time short and give your child something to do in the meantime. Also, playing with friends offers many opportunities to help your child learn to wait, to share, and to take-turns. With your help and lots of practice, your child will be able to work out conflicts with his school friends later on

Taken from: 2014 ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families

Jodi Guisto, Education Specialist