Welcome to Head Start/Early Head Start

Fall signals the change between seasons as well as other changes and transitions. Many of last year’s Head Start children have begun Kindergarten; certainly a change, a transition for children and their families of no small meaning.

New Head Start children, are attending centers, making new friends, riding a school bus and eating with many other children in a lunch room. They are all new and exciting events. For Early Head Start families, the notion that a teacher will come to your home to work with you and your child is an exciting change that adds to your lives.

There are as many changes and transitions as there are children and families. Changes are inevitable; look on them positively. Build on them, grow with them. Change gives us the opportunities to learn some important things, and learning itself should ALWAYS be positive.

Head Start and Early Head Start staff will do their part to add to each child’s growth and development as well as support families.

Feel free to contact me at mcarlson@nwcaa.org or 218-528-3227.

Our Mission

Northwest Head Start/Early Head Start seeks to assist children in achieving appropriate physical and developmental growth, increase self-confidence, and to improve and expand each child's ability to think, reason, and communicate with others.

Northwest Head Start/Early Head Start also seeks to assist parents and families to improve their parenting skills, self-sufficiency, and the conditions in which they live, learn, and work.
The Importance of Cooking with your Child
by Linda Blackburde, Roseau Head Start Home Visitor

It is never too early or too late to teach your child to cook. For instance, babies watch and absorb the activities of their surroundings. Naming foods out loud and hearing the whir of the blender stimulates babies learning. The toddler figures out how things work and learns from simple tasks such as pouring and mixing ingredients. Not a tidy task to take on, but nevertheless a fun and stimulating one for toddlers. Preschoolers have fine motor that allows cracking eggs and measuring dry/wet ingredients. Grade schoolers can take it up a notch with basic techniques such as whisking, chopping or even cooking over a hot stove (with supervision).

Wisdom can be passed through cooking in the different forms such as:

- Math - counting, adding and division such as simple fractions.
- Comprehension - reading and understanding step by step directions
- Real life science - too much salt, not enough flour...what happens?
- Self esteem - cooking allows for instant feedback which helps them learn and grow in self knowledge
- Communication - a key element, an opportunity to talk in an easy setting.
- Life skills - transition to adulthood will be easier
- Fun - last but not least, cooking is fun. Having fun with your child in the kitchen builds positive memories, good vibes, and good food.

With all the benefits of teaching kids to cook and no limits with starting, what are you waiting for. Go for it!!

Roseau Head Start Class
by Tiffany Otto, Roseau Head Start Teacher

This week at playtime we offered the option for our students to make fruit salad. We talked about recipes and how to follow one. We let the children use plastic knives to help cut fruit into bite size pieces. They were eager to help and our table was full of anxious 4/5 year olds! After the children got done cutting fruit and adding it to the bowl, they quickly cleaned up the table so we could try it. It was GREAT!

Skills learned through cooking:
Fine Motor-Cutting (safety too as we talked about how to safely use a knife)
Pre-Reading- using a picture recipe with text to follow
Social Skills- Working together to create one product to share.

Fruit Salad
2 cups of mini marshmallows
Slice fruit into pieces;
3 bananas
1 box strawberries
1 box blackberries
1 can oranges (drained)
1 can crushed pineapple (drained)
Several Head Start and Early Head Start staff participated in the Family Service Credential (FSC) training during the 2018-2019 program year. The purpose of the FSC is to train staff to understand family systems and develop skills to support families as they work toward achieving their goals and to support parents to be their child’s first and most important teacher.

Reading with Young Children
by Roseau EHS Teachers: Sylvia Christianson, Michelle Knochenmus, Sara Ziegler

When reading a book to a child, choose colorful books with large, simple pictures. How you read to a one or two year old is different than how you read to a three or four year old. When “reading” to very young children, make up your own simple version using a phrase or short sentence (depending on the talking level of your child) for each picture—rather than actually reading what is written on the page. Point out the action in the picture and the things you talk about.

Also, remember that a young child’s attention span is much shorter than that of an older child’s. Keep turning the pages at a faster rate when “reading” to a very young child if you want to hold his attention to the book.

Five Easy Steps for Sharing Books with Your Baby
1. Pick the best time - A time when you and your baby are in a good mood
2. Show Baby the book - Point to the pictures and talk naturally and cheerfully
3. Talk and have fun - Remember to touch and love your baby the whole time
4. Watch what Baby does - Let your baby play with the book if he wants to and stop for now if he gets upset
5. Share a book with your baby everyday - Even just a few minutes a day is important
Karlstad Head Start Welcomes Fall 2019

by Crystal Peterson, Head Start Educator

Head Start classrooms use Creative Curriculum to guide learning experiences in the classroom. The Karlstad classroom was full of questions and exploration in a recent discussion about the Fall harvest. Teacher Crystal asked the children “What are some things we can do with the crops that surrounds us?” Sunflower heads were brought into the classroom for a great sensory experience. Children investigated this crop asking many questions including: “How does the head feel? How much does it weigh? Why is it fuzzy on top and underneath bumpy? How can we get the seeds out? What are they used for? What about the stalks they grow on, why are they rough, prickly, and strong? How tall do they grow?” The questions were endless! Discovering the answers was interesting and exciting. Parents, go outside and investigate with your children. Use the outdoors as a learning tool for math, science, and literacy. Happy fall!

Intergenerational Learning has many benefits for both children and older adults. Research shared on edutopia.org sited benefits of improved well-being, self-esteem, and overall health. The Karlstad Head Start class recently visited with residents at the local senior care facility. The children and adults enjoyed singing songs and doing craft activities together. Everyone is looking forward to the joint Halloween party at the end of October and the November pizza party!

NWCA Energy Assistance Program

Northwest Community Action’s Energy Assistance Program helps homeowners and some qualifying renters pay a portion of their heat bills and emergency heating system repairs. For an application call us at 1-800-568-5329 or visit our website at www.northwestcap.org and click on Energy Assistance Program. Return your Energy Assistance application as soon as possible. Applications are processed on a first come first serve basis.
**Sensory Play Benefits for Children**

*by Roseau EHS Teachers: Michelle Knochenmus, Sara Ziegler, Sylvia Christianson*

From birth through to early childhood, children use their senses to explore and try to make sense of the world around them. They do this by touching, tasting, smelling, seeing, moving and hearing. Children and even adults learn best and retain the most information when they engage their senses. Many of our favorite memories are associated with one or more of our senses.

What is sensory play? Sensory play includes any activity that stimulates a young child's senses of touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing, as well as anything which engages movement and balance.

Some examples to get you started are: playdough, sensory bags, blowing bubbles, water/sand play, finger painting, (for babies& toddlers use an edible paint like cool whip or pudding), rice, oatmeal, snow, music, pots and pans w/spoons, other instruments, flash lights, interaction with animals, going for walks, etc. Probably the simplest way to help children engage their senses is by playing outside with nature, full of colors, movement, textures, sounds and smells.

**Benefits of sensory play**

1. Sensory play builds nerve connections within the developing brain’s neural pathways. This increases a child’s ability to complete more complex learning tasks.
2. Sensory play supports language development, cognitive growth, fine and gross motor skills, problem solving skills, and social interaction.
3. Sensory play aids in developing and enhancing memory functioning.
4. Sensory play is great for calming an anxious or frustrated child.
5. Sensory play helps children learn vitally important sensory attributes (hot, cold, sticky, dry, etc).
Many studies show that attending a high quality early learning program like Head Start strengthens school readiness and long term academic performance. Regular attendance is critically important for children to become successful life-long learners. Not only will good attendance help build good habits for the children, it can also help prevent academic problems later on.

Head Start centers are a time for building the social, emotional, cognitive, and language skills needed for school readiness. Research shows that children who are chronically absent (two or more days per month) show these missed days lead to weaker reading skills in elementary school. (Attendance in the Early Grades: Why it Matters for Reading).

Here are a few tips of encouragement from attendanceworks.org:

- Avoid letting your child stay home unless he or she is truly sick. Sometimes complaints of a stomachache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- Talk to your Head Start teacher, family advocate, or other Head Start staff for advice on how to alleviate a child’s anxiety about going to school or other issues.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor or another parent.
- Avoid scheduling medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

Families who have a child who is absent more than 10% of the time are considered “chronically absent” and will receive attendance updates from their teacher and/or family advocate. Attendance will also be discussed at conferences. Teachers and family advocates are here to help set up an attendance success plan for families.

We look forward to seeing your child whenever Head Start is in session!
Promoting Independence
by Melissa Kostrzewski, GMR Head Start Teacher

3 - 5 year olds still need plenty of parental help, but preschoolers are typically able to do more than many of us think. Here are some ways to encourage your preschooler to become more independent.

1. **Expect more.** Preschoolers have a way of living up to expectations. At school we expect them to empty their tray, open their milk carton, put on their jacket, and even zip it up. Raise the bar and your child will probably stretch to meet it.

2. **Resist doing it for them when they can do it for themselves.** While it may be quicker and easier to do it yourself, it won't help to make your child more self-sufficient. Have them try first and assist to get them started.

3. **Don't redo what they've done.** If your child makes the bed, resist the urge to smooth the blankets. If they dress themselves in stripes and polka dots or colors that don't match, compliment them on their style. If they notice, it may discourage them from trying again.

4. **Let them solve simple problems.** If you see your child trying to fix a toy or get a book from a shelf that they can't reach, pause before racing over to help (provided that they are safe.) The moments when you don't rush in, when you give children a moment to solve things for themselves, those are the character-building moments.

5. **Assign a chore.** Putting your preschooler in charge of a regular, simple task like watering the plants or emptying the clothes dryer, will build their confidence and sense of competency. It's important that the chore you assign is manageable.

6. **Praise is key.** Children repeat behaviors that get attention.

7. **Develop predictable routines.** The more consistent you are, the more cooperative your child is likely to be. Decide on a few routines and stick to them: everyone gets dressed before breakfast, no bedtime stories until all kids are in pajamas. Eventually, following these routines will become second nature to your child.

8. **Lighten up.** If your child refuses to do something, try turning it into a game.

9. **Warn of transitions.** Give your child enough advance notice when it's time to switch to something else, so they have time to finish whatever they're doing.

10. **No ifs.** Make requests in language that assumes cooperation. Use "when" instead of "if".

11. **Do it to music.** Set a task to music, race a song. "Can you get dressed before Trolls finishes singing "Can't Stop the Feeling'?"

12. **Let your child work out minor squabbles.** Instead of sweeping in to settle disputes, stand back and let them work it out (unless they're hurting each other).

13. **Involve them in righting their wrongs.** If you find them coloring on the walls, have them help wash it off. If they knock something over, have them help pick it up.
Northwest Community Action provided comprehensive Head Start services to 177 children and their families in our four county service area. A total of 167 families were served in Lake of the Woods, Roseau, Marshall and Kittson counties. Of this group of children, 67 were 3 years old, 99 were 4 years old, and 11 were 5 years old but not ready to start kindergarten. 37 children were identified with special needs and individual services meeting their needs were provided in conjunction with each area school district. Services include home visits, centers at area schools, and nutritious breakfasts, snacks or lunches. Also provided are medical screenings done with each county's Nursing Service, oral health screenings, and follow-up work. Head Start is the payer if the child is not covered by MA, MN Sure or other insurance.

Northwest’s Early Head Start program provided EHS services to 121 children, 0-3 years old, in all four of our counties. This number includes children funded by Federal funds as well as ones funded with Minnesota funds. A total of 98 families were served. 33 of the children were 0-12 months, 42 were 1-2 years, and 46 were 2-3 years old. 15 children had identified special needs and received coordinated services with Nursing Services, schools and other service providers. All traditional services were supplied to these children and families in the same fashion as with 3-5 Head Start. Due to families’ relocation and schedules, some dropped and moved before all services could be supplied. Additionally, 4 pregnant women were provided EHS services that included pre-natal referrals and support. In Head Start, 99% of eligible children that we identified were provided services. In Early Head Start, 98% of eligible children were served.

Funding for these programs consisted of federal HS/EHS funds of $2,149,686, $231,888 in state funds for services listed earlier and Parent Aware Pathway II Scholarship funds of $187,500 to extend program duration and services in all of our Head Start classrooms. Fund expenses included wages (54.4%) and benefits (22.2%) for the teachers, paraprofessionals, family services staff and costs for administrative support. Additionally, supplies for office, children's and parent's services (8.4%) are budgeted for as well as services as previously noted earlier. Other expenditure categories include contractual expenses for Oral Health, Mental Health and Nutrition consultants (2.0%) and also includes public health nursing services, travel (1.0%), equipment (1.5%) and other expenses (10.5%) such as insurance, rent, utilities and vehicle expense.

EHS maintained full enrollment throughout the year but HS was not fully enrolled for the entire year. Center-base attendance has averaged 90.4%. All children and families received the same services regardless of funding source. Federal funding for complete services for 2019-20 amounts to $2,639,135, state funds will be $236,206 and PA totaling $187,500.

A yearly Training and Technical Assistance plan has been developed in conjunction with a Self-Assessment and Professional Development plans that involved review and input from staff, parents and community members. Federal funding provided $40,291 for the additional training and technical assistance for Head Start and Early Head Start staff. For 2019-20, $40,291 is provided for Training and Technical Assistance for staff. Topics include child behaviors, curriculum fidelity and child abuse reporting training to name just a few.

With a waiting list of eligible 0-3 year olds, more than the 3-5 years old in our service area, we continued to see the demand for our Early Head Start program. Through staff discussion as well as Policy Council discussions, the decision was made to again request focusing Minnesota Head Start funding for Early Head Start. Following our Community Assessment, we provided Early Head Start services to 21 added slots for infants and toddlers in the Warroad area. We served 24 children and families with funding from Minnesota. Note: these 24 children are included in the 121 listed above. Services were uniform across all EHS areas regardless of funding. Minnesota funds used for this program were $231,888. The funding for the same program in 2019-20 will be $236,206 for 20 slots in Minnesota funding as noted earlier.
Our most recent financial audit was completed in September, 2018 by Brady, Martz Accounting Services. There were no findings and it was a clean audit. The yearly audit for the past year will be completed in September, 2019.

Our health-related services are well-received. 98.3% of our HS children and 100% of our EHS children have received an oral health screening. 96.0% of our HS children and 97.5% of our EHS children received a health screening. Immunizations were complete in 92.7% of our HS enrollees and 96% of our EHS enrollees. Percentages less than 100% are due to families being in the program a very short time before moving/dropping due to schedule conflicts before completion of the screenings. BMI, body mass index, was high in 58.8% of our HS children so we have training and activities planned for the new PY year to assist children and families with those health concerns.

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in HS classrooms as well as having parent meetings throughout the year. Additionally, 4 conferences are held with each family. In Early Head Start, a weekly (46 total) Home Visit of 1.5 hrs is done with each enrolled child and a parent. Also, a Buddy Group get-together is held for all EHS families and their members twice each month in each local area. Activities are provided for the children and parent information and education is shared. Parents are also encouraged to participate with our Policy Council. Parent engagement is emphasized. Literacy activities, budgeting education, mental health counseling and crisis assistance are a few of the parent support services provided.

Private foundation grants are received to enhance literacy materials in each classroom. IPads are also made available to HS children on a limited, rotating basis and utilizes an app designed to enhance each child’s literacy growth. Teachers are also provided an IPad for their own professional use with training provided. Head Start also continued using a classroom observation tool called CLASS which is designed to provide uniformity through excellence in classroom observations. Federal monitoring reviews incorporated the CLASS as well with no findings the prior year as noted above. EHS uses an tool called HOVRS for observations.

We continued our involvement in a project to aggregate child outcome data statewide using the Teaching Strategies Gold online. Data reports do not involve identifying any participant. The intent of the program is to document child growth success as well as point to areas for improvement. The results will also help refine our efforts to optimize each child’s development and for transitions to kindergarten as well as individual teacher growth.

Early Head Start continued to utilize the Child Observation Record Advantage for outcome and growth tracking. The COR has worked well to follow infant and toddler development.

During each school year, communications occur with kindergarten teachers in each school district to review expectations and discuss transition experiences. Developmental growth is shared as appropriate. Memorandums of Agreement that lay out transition activities and mutual school readiness goals are developed with each school district. Overarching goals and the developmental growth of Kindergarten-bound children are included below. Based on Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment scores, we saw growth from Fall to Spring of 27.9% in Social-Emotional scores, 19.5% in Gross Motor, 19.3% in Fine Motor, 20.1% in Language, 25.2% in Cognitive, 51.9% in Literacy and 41.3% in Math scores.
School Readiness Goals

**Domain: Physical Development and Health**
1. Children will acquire and maintain a high level of physical health, including being up to date on physical and dental checkups and immunizations.
2. Children will demonstrate an increased ability to care for their own needs appropriately. They will become more independent and resourceful getting needs met.
3. Children will demonstrate increasing control of large muscles for movement, navigation and balance consistent with their chronological and developmental level.
4. Children will demonstrate increasing fine motor strength, coordination and agility for use in self care, manipulation of materials and exploring their environment.

**Domain: Social Emotional Development**
1. Children will be able to manage feelings appropriately and self-regulate with regard to their emotions, attention span and behavior.
2. Children will demonstrate positive, appropriate social relationships with family members, peers and other significant adults.

**Domain: Approaches to Learning**
1. Children will demonstrate a positive approach to learning through persistence, attentiveness, engagement and curiosity.
2. Children will show an increasing ability to express themselves through sound, movement, visual media and role play.

**Domain: Language and Literacy**
1. Children will demonstrate increasing skills in comprehension and use of more complex and varying vocabulary.
2. Children will demonstrate increasing proficiency using language to communicate needs, wants and for self expression.

**Domain: Cognition and General Knowledge**
1. Children will use Math skills in everyday routines as appropriate for their developmental level with increasing competency in counting, comparing, relating and problem solving.
2. Children will engage in exploring their environment through observation, imitation, manipulation, and curiosity.
3. Children will demonstrate use of skills to solve problems, find multiple solutions and answer questions.
THE ABOVE GRAPH INDICATES GROWTH FOR CHILDREN ENROLLED IN NORTHWEST COMMUNITY ACTION’S EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM USING THE COR ADVANTAGE ASSESSMENT TOOL.
Go Ahead and Get Messy!
by Stacy Szczepanski, EHS Home Visitor

Many parents are put off by messy play. Just the thought of paint, glue, and glitter getting everywhere is exhausting! However, many studies have shown that messy play is one of the best ways for our children to learn and develop, so now is the time to embrace it and get messy!

Below are 5 reasons how messy play benefits young children’s development.

It Fosters Curiosity, Imagination and Exploration
There is no right way to carry out messy play, it is all about letting children explore and experiment with different objects and raw materials without any end goals to restrict them. By exploring how things feel, smell, and taste, messy play nurtures an awareness and understanding of the world that surrounds them.

It Encourages Communication and Language Development
Messy play becomes a sociable activity when done with family members or other children, so naturally, it will enrich communication skills through social interaction. Also, by describing sensations and textures to your child during messy play you can help them build their vocabulary.

It Practices Good Concentration and Nurtures Future Skills
High concentration levels are needed while engaging in messy play. Children are exploring objects and engaging all of their senses to think through their discoveries. This helps children to develop essential learning skills which then enables them to focus and concentrate when learning and practicing new skills.

It Promotes Physical Development
Hands-on play offers many physical benefits. When children squeeze play dough, scoop up sand, or make marks in crazy foam, they are refining their fine motor skills by using the small muscles in their fingers and wrists. When children jump in water or throw sand, they are enhancing their gross motor skills (large muscle skills).

It Supports the Ability to Play Independently
In today’s younger generation, children are losing the ability to be able to amuse themselves. With messy play, we teach children to make their own entertainment! In an unrestricted play environment where there is no right or wrong way to do things, it is the perfect situation to allow your child to play how they want to and create their own fun.

Messy Play Ideas: Painting, Play Dough, Dry Rice, Cereal, Finger Paint, Water, Sand, Shaving Cream, Slime, Cooked Spaghetti Noodles, Vinegar & Baking Soda, or Jello

What are you waiting for? Go ahead and get messy!