

TCOC HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PROGRAM

PARENT NEWSLETTER



WELCOME!

We are honored that you have decided to entrust your child to us for a few hours each day. We are committed to provide him/her with an enjoyable school experience. We also aim to provide each family with the support and resources they need to accomplish the goals they have set for themselves.

Head Start/Early Head Start cannot achieve this without the parent's involvement. We count on you to help us make this program what you want for your family.



TCOC LIHEAP PROGRAM

For many Illinois households, energy costs place a severe and continuing stress on the family's budget. In some instances, the household is forced to make painful decisions regarding which bills to pay and which necessities to survive without. The Low-Income Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is designed to help eligible low-income households pay for the rising cost of winter energy services.

Who is Eligible?

You may be eligible to receive assistance under the LIHEAP Program if your household's combined income is at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (*to see the guidelines, go to our website; www.tcochelps.com*).

NOVEMBER 2011						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

8th Policy Council
11th Veteran's Day – No School
17th-18th Parent/Teacher Conferences
24th – 25th Thanksgiving – No School

DECEMBER 2011						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

6th Policy Council
16th All Staff Inservice – No School
23rd – 30th Christmas Break – No School

JANUARY 2011						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

1st New Years – No School
3rd Teacher Work Day – No School
 Policy Council
16th Martin Luther King's Birthday – No School

FEBRUARY 2011						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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26	27	28	29			

7th Policy Council
17th Teaching Staff Inservice – No School
20th President's Day – No School

TEACH YOUR PRESCHOOLER ABOUT BEING THANKFUL ALL YEAR ROUND

Your young child may be able to tell you the story of Thanksgiving. But she is probably not ready yet to understand the real meaning of the holiday – being truly thankful and appreciative for the people in our lives and for what we have. This is a lesson children learn as they mature. And parents are the perfect teachers.

Here are some ways to teach thankfulness:

- **Make “thank you” a habit.** Your child should always thank a person who does her a kindness or gives her any kind of gift. Again, now she may not fully understand why. But later the habit of saying “thank you” will remind her that another person made a sacrifice (time, money or both) for her.
- **Thank your child.** To truly appreciate others, it helps to know the good feeling of being appreciated. Say things like, “Thanks for taking your plate to the sink. That is very helpful.” “I like the way you put your coat and jacket | on the hook instead of the floor. Thank you!”
- **Share your thanks as a family.** This is a nice mealtime ritual. You can say, “I am thankful for my children. They make me happy.” Then ask your child to name one thing she is thankful for.
- **Show your thanks by giving.** One way to be thankful for all we have is to give what we can spare. The holiday season is a perfect time to have your child help you collect a few canned goods from your pantry or donate clean clothes that no longer fit. Take them to a local service organization, house of worship or charity that collects items for the needy.



Source: H. Tavangar, “10 Ways to Raise a Grateful Kid,” PBS.org, www.pbs.org/parents/special/article-ten-ways-raise-grateful-kid.html.

A HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START PARENT CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS JOB

Basic Rules:

- NEVER physically strike a child. Even your own.
- Use polite language and quiet tone of voice (inside voice) while in the classroom.
- Assist in maintain safety of children. (No running, pushing, kicking, hitting, throwing, etc.)

If you are unable to volunteer at the last minute or if an emergency comes up, it is YOUR responsibility to find a substitute for yourself. You can call the classroom to ask for next week’s volunteers that you might be able to switch with. Or use your class list to find someone to take your place.

Bus Volunteer:

When you sign up to volunteer in the classroom, you are also a volunteer on the bus.

Jobs a Volunteer can do in the Classroom:

- Assist in bringing children into classroom
- Sit with children at circle during large group and encourage children to participate
- Assist Teachers in helping individual children while at small group
- If comfortable to do so, read a story to the children
- Assist Teachers with playground supervision
- Demonstrate and encourage children to eat during snack and lunch time



Parents are never pushed into doing things they do not want to in the classroom. Please, let the Teachers know if you are not comfortable doing something.

HAVE APPROPRIATE EXPECTATIONS ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S ATTENTION SPAN

Paying attention to the teacher and the class is important for success in school. But your child is still at an age when you can expect her to focus for only short periods of time.

Knowing what to expect can help you work with your child on paying attention. Most young children:

- **Can pay attention** for about 15 minutes if the topic interests them. Expect attention to be less if it doesn't.
- **Are more attentive** at certain times of day, usually mornings. That is why most preschool classes take place in the morning. In elementary school, teachers often schedule the most challenging tasks in the morning too.
- **Stay more engaged** if they can talk. Is your child losing attention in a story? Ask her how she thinks one of the characters might sound. Then give her a short line (two or three words) from the book to repeat in the character's voice.
- **Stay more engaged** during a hands-on activity when a parent participates. Your child may spend more time on a jigsaw puzzle if you sit with her and put in a piece yourself now and then.

Source: Resource Library, "Understanding Attention Span in the Early Years," Children's Hospital of Richmond, www.childrenshosp-richmond.org/CMS/index.php/library/articles/457/.

PICK UP THE PITCH, TALKING TO YOUR BABY

When a stranger walks up to your baby and starts talking in a high pitched sing-song manner, "Hi Sweetheart, what a cute little girl you are!" your baby loves it. Many adults naturally approach a baby in this way with a higher pitch, shorter sentences, simpler grammar, and varied pitch with almost a musical quality. Stress and pauses emphasize important words, particularly at the end of a phrase or sentence. This is referred to as child-directed speech. Unlike baby talk, child-directed speech uses simple, grammatically correct sentences and accurate vocabulary words.



Parents don't have to use child-directed speech but it comes naturally to many moms, dads and certainly grandparents, and has its benefits. It not only maximizes communication but also shows affection.

There is evidence that babies actually prefer child-directed speech, since it gains their attention and they take in more language. The size and shape of his outer ear canal cause higher pitches to ring better so he can actually hear these sounds better when delivered in child-directed speech. A slower rhythm is easier for babies to follow since their nervous systems process auditory information slower than adults. Louder speech overcomes the fact that a baby's hearing is less sensitive than that of adults and the simpler sentence structure and contrasting pitch and loudness levels allow the baby to more easily distinguish parts of speech. Research has shown that when mothers used child-directed-speech, their babies had greater vocabulary and grammatical accuracy than those who did not. In addition, when babies are spoken to this way, they are better able to make fine distinctions between sounds and words.

TIPS FOR PARENTS MAKING HOLIDAYS SPECIAL

If you are a parent of young children, you probably share an almost universal desire to make holidays special for your children. You also may have to overcome certain obstacles in creating your own special experiences with your children such as finances, distance from family members, and other special circumstances. Many parents work overtime during the holidays only to find themselves frustrated by the experience and doubtful that the end "result" was particularly meaningful to their children. While it's difficult to determine exactly what special means to any one child, here are some guidelines which are most likely applicable to your family:

1. Develop traditions. Create activities which are special to your family. Traditions can be as simple as a special recipe that everyone associates with the family holiday or a special event in which everybody participates. Some family holiday meals consist of recipes that the parents enjoyed when they were children or foods that are reflective of their culture. Once formed, these traditional activities contribute to a sense of identity and uniqueness for your children about their family holiday.
2. Keep the scope of your plans within the scope of your resources. Holidays are double duty for most parents. What parent hasn't wondered where the extra time will come from to shop, wrap presents, cook, and plan and attend special events? If you are hurried and stressed your personal contribution to your children's holiday may be your short temper and irritability rather than your patience and enthusiasm.
3. Help your children understand the value and the meaning of the holidays. Don't rely upon others to convey the meaning to your children; do it yourself. Talking about your own personal meaning is important. If the holidays are a religious experience for you, impart that by your religious practice; if it's a sharing experience, provide your child an opportunity to share; if it's a predominant family reunion experience, provide a reunion of family for your child.
5. Finally, have fun yourself. Don't expect perfection. Remember just as your child doesn't need or want a perfect parent, neither do they need a perfect holiday... just a good enough day will do.

EASY ITALIAN PASTA BAKE

What you Need:

- 1 lb. extra-lean ground beef
- 3 cups whole wheat penne pasta, cooked
- 1 jar (24 oz.) spaghetti sauce
- 1/3 cup KRAFT Grated Parmesan Cheese, divided
- 1-1/2 cups KRAFT 2% Milk Shredded Mozzarella Cheese

Make It:

HEAT oven to 375°F.

BROWN meat in large skillet; drain. Add pasta, sauce and half the Parmesan; mix well.

SPOON into 13x9-inch dish; top with remaining cheeses.

BAKE 20 min. or until heated through.

