



Newsletter

May 2022

by **Dr. Latisha Smith**, Educational Services Director

On Thursday, April 28th, our agency celebrated children moving on to kindergarten. It was an exciting event with 37 kindergarten-ready children in attendance. Overall, we had 117 children and family members attend the event. Wow! Families had the opportunity to hear a presentation on kindergarten readiness, take kindergarten photos, register their child for school, and enjoy supper. Children had fun with STEM and art activities and each one received a special cookie and backpack full of learning materials. Thank you to all who joined us! The children who were unable to attend still receive their backpack in the very near future. If you have questions, please reach out to your Family Service Worker. Here are some fun photos of the event!



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It is hard to believe the last day of school is quickly approaching. Summer will be here before we know it! Similar to the first day of school, the last day can be just as exciting. Think of how your child has grown during the year and how much he or she has learned! My own children enjoy celebrating the last day and we often do so with a picture. I like comparing the first and last day's

pictures to see how much they changed. I am always amazed! What can you do with your child? Here are some fun ways to celebrate the end of the school year.

1. *Take the last day of school photos, of course!*
2. *Offer a special breakfast. How about chocolate chip pancakes?*
3. *Give your child a new book to start off their summer reading.*
4. *Make a sign/banner to hang or use sidewalk chalk and write, Welcome Summer! Your child will enjoy this when they arrive home from school.*
5. *Go out for ice cream.*
6. *Treat your child to a special dinner by cooking his or her favorite meal.*
7. *Create a summer bucket list with things your child wants to do during the summer.*

Source: <https://www.signupgenius.com/school/celebrate-end-of-school.cfm>

The last day of school is Thursday, May 26th. Thank you to all of our families for sharing their children with us. We wish you a happy, healthy, and enjoyable summer! For EHS and HS wrap children, we look forward to having you here for the summer beginning June 1st. All families eligible for EHS and HS wrap care will receive a letter with more information. If you have questions about summer care, please contact your Family Services Worker.



Staff Shout Out



A huge THANK YOU to everyone who helped make the Kindergarten Kick-Off a successful event!

Tri-County Important Dates



- ❖ **May 5th**
 - *Cinco de Mayo*
 - ❖ **May 16th**
 - *Policy Council, 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm*
 - ❖ **May 26th**
 - *Last day of school*
 - ❖ **May 27th**
 - *Agency closed for staff appreciation*
 - ❖ **May 30th**
 - *Agency closed for holiday*
 - ❖ **May 31st**
 - *Agency closed to prepare for summer program*
 - ❖ **June 1st**
 - *Summer consolidation care for HS/EHS begins*
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Lily

by **Dusty Olson**, Program Manager

We are wrapping up our regular school year in May. As we move into the summer session, I am excited for those of you going on to other placements and schools and I look forward to continuing to see some of you throughout the summer.

Spring is here! We are in store for some warm, sunny days. However, with spring comes rain, cool mornings and other weather challenges. Make sure to layer clothing and jackets so our little ones are prepared for anything.

Here are some photos to share the fun and learning happening at Lily!



Inaya, JaRyah and Lucas enjoy playing in the Gentle Giraffes classroom. (EHS-A)

KamDyn is about to enjoy his cereal in the Furry Friends classroom. (EHS-B)



Khari is having a great time making music in the Kangaroo Krew classroom. (EHS-C)



Londynn, Brailyn and a friend add some color to their eggs in the Lively Lions classroom. (EHS-D)



*Max and Ariyah help plant tomatoes
in the Leapin' Llamas classroom. (HS-1)*



Maywood

by **Angie Barth**, Program Manager

Last month a few of our classrooms planted seeds for peppers in the garden carts. Check out the cart in the entryway to see how they are sprouting!

Our agency also participated in the Week of the Young Child. Children participated in an activity that represented a theme for the day. The themes included: Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday, and Family Friday.

Hopefully, this month the children will be able to be able to get outside more as the weather warms up!

Reminders

- Please make sure your child has spare clothing that is weather appropriate.
- Don't forget to order your child's school pictures!



Here are some photos showing how the children at Maywood spend their days!







At Home Opportunities

As the pandemic has raised awareness and concerns about mental health, it is important to understand the impact mental health plays on early development. Children's early experiences help shape their brains and they process emotional and traumatic events differently than adults and older children.

Mental Health America recommends the following basic needs for helping build a good mental health foundation for your child:

- Unconditional love from family
- Nurture self-confidence and high self-esteem
- The opportunity to play with other children
- Encouraging teachers and supportive caretakers
- Safe and secure surroundings
- Appropriate guidance and discipline



How do I nurture my child's self-esteem and self-confidence?

- *Praise them*
 - Encourage them to take risks and try new things, praise their efforts and abilities, allow them opportunities to explore and try

new things, and be an active participant/give them your attention

- *Set realistic goals*
 - A realistic goal matches the child's ambitions and abilities
- *Be honest*
 - Don't hide your failures/mistakes from your children, show them everyone makes mistakes
- *Avoid sarcastic remarks*
 - Children don't totally grasp sarcasm, so when a child makes a mistake, loses a game, or is upset, find out how they he or she feels and give a pep talk or reassurance
- *Encourage them*
 - Motivate your child when trying new things and cheer them on to enjoy the process; new activities can promote and teach teamwork, self-esteem and new skill development

Signs that may indicate the need for professional assistance:

- Decline in school performance
- Regular worry or anxiety
- Repeated refusal to go to school or to take part in normal children's activities
- Hyperactivity or fidgeting
- Persistent nightmares
- Persistent disobedience or aggression
- Frequent temper tantrums
- Depression, sadness or irritability

Continue to read about different ways to make time for play, suggestions on guidance and discipline, where/when to seek help and other resources at:

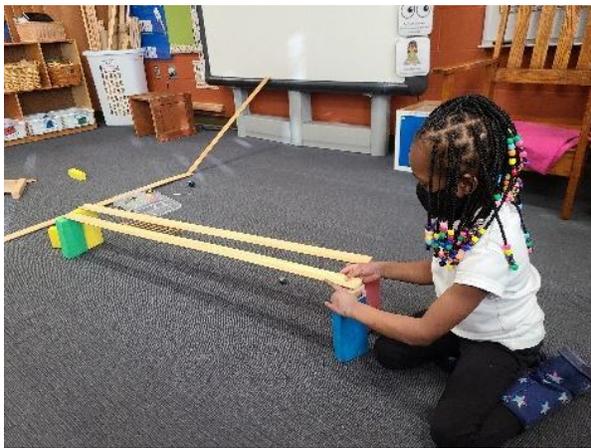
<https://www.mhanational.org/what-every-child-needs-good-mental-health>

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Waterloo Schools

by [Ashley Caldwell](#), Program Manager

I can't believe we are close to the end of the school year! Seeing the growth in all of your children has been rewarding and wonderful! As the year comes to a close, classrooms are preparing for their celebrations and transitions to kindergarten. This is a great time to talk with your child's teacher about summer learning opportunities in the community.



Our friends in Mrs. Fredericksen's classroom at Highland exploring blocks and ramps!

Reminders

- Make sure you complete your kindergarten registration for the 2022-2023 school year. If you need assistance, please contact your family support worker.
- May 6 is Kindergarten Round Up
 - 9:30-11:00 or 1:30-3:00
 - Cunningham is 12:30-2:00
- May 26 is the last day of Pre-K classes

Introductions

We would like to welcome Ms. Jenny, Ms. Danielle, and Ms. Angela to our partnering sites. They are helping in our 4-year-old classrooms at Becker Elementary and Kittrell Annex, respectively. Thank you ladies for all your help and dedication.

At Home Opportunities

As the year comes to an end, it is important to think about how to continue keeping routines and transitions active in your daily schedule. Making a summer daily schedule with your child will help them stay in a routine and keep the fun and learning happening before it's time for school to begin in August.

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Home Base Program

by **Mariah McCabe**, Early Head Start Home Visitors Home Base Program:

Summer will be here before you know it! Here are some tips for safety in the sun:

- Infants under 6 months of age should be kept out of direct sunlight.
- 6-12 month olds are now safe to wear sunscreen!
- Don't forget hats and sunglasses!



Here are some fun activities offered by the community (most are free or inexpensive for families):

Splash Pad

- o Locations include Liberty Park, Lafayette Park, Place to Play Park, Seerley Park, Exchange Park, Orchard Hill Park, El Dorado Heights Park, Lookout Park, Prairie Grove Park, Orange Elementary School Park, Kittrell School Park, Byrnes Park, and George Wyth Park.

Petting Zoo

- o Located on the Cattle Congress grounds. Families can walk around, see the animals, and feed them too!

Local Parks

- o A fun way to burn some energy and interact with other children.



Cedar Valley Arboretum & Botanic Gardens

- o Enjoy Summer Storytime at the arboretum in Waterloo. There will be a variety of story time topics this summer with the Cedar Falls Police Department, Diane the Pioneer Woman and the Cedar Falls Public Library. Admission to the 40-acre arboretum and botanic gardens is \$5/adult and \$2/child (ages 5-17). Children age 4 and younger enter free.

Grout Museum

- o The District hosts many events throughout the year for children such as themed tea parties, star parties and Weekly Wonders. Visit their website for information about admission fees. They also have summer camps!

<https://www.groutmuseumdistrict.org/education/educational-programming.aspx>

Education Specialist

by **Angela Shylman**

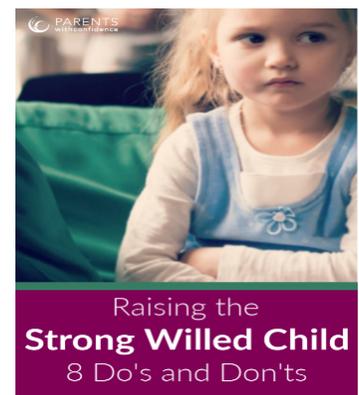
Tri-County Head Start uses PBIS and Second Step to teach and reinforce social emotional skills. Ask your child's teacher, Program Manager, or the Education Specialist for more details or support.

Here are the first four Do's and Don'ts. Stay tuned next month for the next four.

Do: Practice what you say

Don't: Play the 'do as I say and not as I do' card

Your child is smart and they're going to call you out. You know, like when you repeatedly communicate to your child to *stop yelling at their little brother*, in a manner similar to yelling.



Do: Embrace personal growth

Don't: Remain closed off to new ways of doing things with your child

“Sometimes when you’re in a dark place you think you’ve been buried, but you’ve actually been planted.” This quote from Christine Caine speaks volumes about raising a strong willed child.

Do: Have an open mind when it comes to discipline

Don't: Remain stuck in what's not working with your child

You had the best intentions (as most of us do before we actually *have the children*) when it came to **how to discipline a child** but are realizing now that putting your child in time out usually does not work. The healthiest way to discipline (teach) any child, is by *building them up*.

Do: Remember you know your child better than anyone

Don't: Let the judgments of others get to you

One of the hardest aspects of raising a strong willed child is dealing with judgment from others. You are your child’s first and most important teacher so do what is best for your child!

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Disabilities Services Coordinator

by **Melissa Edwards**

Can you believe spring has actually sprung and the weather is getting nice enough to spend time outdoors? Take care of yourself and get some much needed sunshine into your day. Try spending time outdoors with your children taking walks, playing games, using sidewalk chalk, blowing bubbles, or even going on a picnic. The great outdoors is good for both our mind and body!

Speaking of mind and body, the month of May is Mental Health Awareness month...

What is Mental Health?

“Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.”

You can learn more about mental health through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm>

Basically, mental health affects every aspect of our lives. People who pay close attention to their mental health, and work on its improvement, tend to live happier and healthier lives. Consequently, the opposite is also true – neglecting to nurture your mental health can have negative impacts like increased stress, suppressed mood, decrease in self-esteem, and more. Here are a few simple ways you can quickly boost your mental health:

1. **Track gratitude and achievement in a journal:** Get out a pen and paper and write down three things you are grateful for and three things you were able to accomplish every day. Seeing your accomplishments on paper can help remind you of how great you are doing.
2. **Take time to laugh:** Laughter helps reduce anxiety and is linked to elevated moods. Perhaps try some laughing yoga. It’s fun, we promise!
3. **Go off the grid and take time for yourself:** Disconnect from social media, emails, alerts, and interruptions. Allow yourself some “me” time.
4. **Dance while you do your housework:** Turn everyday chores into an opportunity to celebrate and let loose.
5. **Spend some time with a furry friend:** If you don’t have a pet, spend some time with a friend who does. Animals are amazing stress relievers.
6. **Go on a nature walk:** Studies show that being surrounded by nature can help reduce depression and increase wellness.



Community Offerings

by **Trista Hill**, Family Services Program Manager

The community offers some great resources for families. Here are a few to check out!

Parents Achieving Success with Support (PASS)

A free education and support group for parents ages 20 to 35. Parents meet others in similar parenting situations, learn more about educational and employment opportunities, develop strategies for self-sufficiency and positive parenting, and learn about child development and how to prepare their children to be ready for school.

Transportation is provided at no cost. Participants also earn attendance points to purchase family need items.



PASS is currently meeting:

- Tuesdays in person from 12:45 pm - 1:45 pm
- Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month for a virtual option from 4:30 pm - 5:45 pm

For information on upcoming women's support circles and wellness activities offered in the fall, please contact us.

No pre-registration for the program is required.

For more information contact Jessica Ruiz Hemmen at (319)234-7589 ext 228.

Partially funded by RJ McElroy Trust and the Guernsey Foundation.

Multicultural Services

Our bilingual staff provides services to non-English speaking families or those working with the non-English speaking community. Services include translation, interpretation, referrals and job assistance. Most services are free; some fees may apply.

Please feel free to call Glenda at (319)234-7589 ext 240 during these hours. You may also leave her a voicemail at any time.

Monday 11:00am-4:00 pm

Tuesday-Thursday 12:00-5:00pm

Wednesday from 9:00-5:00 pm

Friday 10:00am-1:00pm

Partially funded by the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa.

English Class

Free to all individuals who are not proficient in English. Come and learn English together with others from the community. This group also provides community resource information, community activities, wellness information and group support. We provide free transportation.

Classes are ongoing. You can begin at any time. For more information, please call Glenda at (319)234-7589. (Spanish spoken.)

Mondays 5:00-6:30 pm

Tuesdays 10:00-11:30am

Wednesday 6:15-7:30 pm

Thursday 10:00-11:30 am

Partially funded by the Cedar Valley United Way, Guernsey Foundation, and the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa. In collaboration with the UNI Department of Languages and Literatures, providing UNI students to assist with lesson planning and as conversation partners during our English classes.

Health

by **Trista Hill**, Family Services Program Manager



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

<p>1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year</p> <p>1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year</p> <p>1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year</p> <p>50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24</p> <p>Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-34</p>

It is important to understand that individuals affected by mental health are not alone. In addition to the above statistics, NAMI reports following:

- **21%** of U.S. adults experienced mental illness in 2020 (52.9 million people). This represents 1 in 5 adults.
- **5.6%** of U.S. adults experienced serious mental illness in 2020 (14.2 million people). This represents 1 in 20 adults.
- **16.5%** of U.S. youth aged 6-17 experienced a mental health disorder in 2016 (7.7 million people).
- **6.7%** of U.S. adults experienced a co-occurring substance use disorder and mental illness in 2020 (17 million people).



The National Council for Mental Wellbeing offers five tips to practice self-care as a family (Mental Health First Aid):

- a. **Eat more fruit, vegetables, lean protein and whole grains.** Eating healthfully will help you and your family take care of your physical health and have energy for the day ahead.

- b. **Get moving every day.** Exercising can help alleviate symptoms of depression and anxiety. Focus on increasing your heart rate consistently for at least 20 minutes once a day. Take a walk together as a family, stretch together in the living room, or play games outside.
- c. **Spend quality time together.** It's important to spend time together as a family every day doing something everyone enjoys, such as cooking or listening to music.
- d. **Develop a bedtime routine.** According to the [National Sleep Foundation](#), going to sleep at the same time every night can help regulate the body's internal clock and improve sleep quality – for adults as well as children. It's also important that everyone in the family gets enough sleep – about seven to nine hours each night for adults and at least [nine hours](#) for children.
- e. **Talk about how you're feeling.** It's important to talk as a family about how everyone is feeling, and address any questions or concerns children may have.



Source:

<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/2020/07/tips-to-practice-self-care-as-a-family/>

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Nutrition

by **Tracey Sauke**, Dietitian

Sometimes New Foods Take Time

In May we'll be learning about radishes. Radishes are very easy to grow and are great for young children because they are ready to pick and eat in about 21 days. Radishes might be a fun new



food to introduce to your child. Oftentimes trying new foods takes time. Kids learn to like new foods by:

- *Having them offered over and over*
- *Having them served with familiar foods*
- *Seeing friends, older kids, and grown-ups eating these foods*
- *Tasting them prepared in different ways*
- *Choosing foods to try themselves*
- *Starting with new foods*

For more information on radishes, including kid friendly recipes ideas, don't miss the [May Nutrition News!](#)



Check out our Facebook pages for more information about Tri-County!

Tri-County Head Start:

<https://www.facebook.com/tcheadstart/>

Lily Furgerson Head Start:

<https://www.facebook.com/LilyFurgersonHeadStart>

Maywood Head Start:

<https://www.facebook.com/MW.HeadStart>

Our mission is to inspire every child and support every family.

Our vision is changing the world one mind at a time.

