

# Newsletter

May 2023



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

Hello, families! We held our final Professional Development Day for the year on the last Friday in April. Staff spent the morning at Allen College and participated in three sessions. One session offered the opportunity to explore STEM kits shared by Angela Johnson, ISU Youth Outreach Coordinator. Staff enjoyed experiencing what the kits had to offer and discussed how to use them in their work with children and families. Another session addressed the integration of social justice into work with children through Sesame Street in Communities resources. Staff learned about developmentally appropriate ways to talk with young children and families about race and ethnicity. If you are interested, you may visit the following link for resources to use at home: [Race, Ethnicity, and Culture - Sesame Workshop](#). The final session related to curriculum training. Early Head Start teachers received CLASS© Infant and Toddler Social Emotional Kits to support emotional and behavioral regulation in the classroom. Home visitors reflected on the use of their new curriculum. Head Start teachers and assistants learned more about the Creative Curriculum CLOUD Digital Resources to enhance their lesson planning. We strive to continue learning and growing so we can offer high quality services to you and your children.

This month I also want to share data from our second GOLD checkpoint of the year. GOLD is the assessment each teacher completes three times per year for each child. This assessment provides an overall picture of your child's growth and development. Teachers use the information to help you understand your child's strengths and areas for growth and for individualizing weekly lesson plans. Agency-wide in both Early Head Start and Head Start, increases in social-emotional development were evident.

During the fall and winter months there was an emphasis on use of PBIS strategies in all classrooms. This included Mandt recertification in September for all staff which focused on relationships and a review of the crisis cycle when dealing with challenging behavior. In October, some staff had the opportunity to discuss trauma and ACES during an optional PD session. Additional efforts that may continue this trend into the Spring checkpoint include implementation of Second Step Curriculum (with check-in meetings) and training of Specially Designed Instruction with Head Start teachers at our Maywood site (including use of Peer-Mediated Intervention with a focus on teaching children social skills). In addition, January PD provided teaching staff and home visitors with either Infant/Toddler or Pre-K PBIS Refresher training.

There were also increases in the area of math and literacy for Head Start and math for Early Head Start. This may be attributed to a greater focus on lesson plan monitoring and more emphasis on the use of the curriculum.

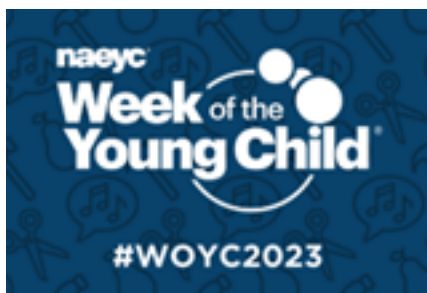
Although gains were made, language is still a low area for Early Head Start. Additional training and increased use of the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos has the potential to address the growth needed in this area. This may also address the area of cognitive development, where some percentages also showed a decrease from Fall to Winter.

It is important to note and celebrate gains made in our Waterloo Partnership classrooms. There was a significant increase in percentages associated with social-emotional development and also an increase in the area of math, which was the lowest area in the fall.

The final GOLD checkpoint is May 5th. After the checkpoint, your child's teacher will share final assessment data for your child and offer ideas for continuing to support your child's development in the summer months. The last day of school is May 31st. For families and children who transition out of our program, we wish you the best as you move on to kindergarten and/or other educational settings. For children and families continuing in the summer months, we look forward to more fun and many learning opportunities!

---

*Happy Teacher Appreciation Week to our amazing teaching Staff!*



Last month we celebrated NAEYC's Week of the Young Child. Thank you to all of our teaching staff for the work they do and the fun they had celebrating young children!



**Important Dates**

**Teacher Appreciation Week, *May 8 - 12***

**Policy Council Meeting, *May 15 from 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm***

**Happy Birthday Head Start, *May 18***

**Closed for Memorial Day Holiday, *May 29***

**Last Day of School, *May 31***

**Closed for Staff Appreciation, *June 1***

**Closed for Teacher Workday, *June 2***

**Summer Consolidated Care Begins, *June 5***



# ★HAPPY★ BIRTHDAY!

**Head Start celebrates its 58th birthday on May 18th!**

---

## Lily

by **Dusty Olson**, Program Manager

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



***In the Furry Friends (Lily B) classroom, Detorion, Shauntae and Maddie enjoyed a “meal” together.***

***In the Furry Friends classroom (Lily B), Lakyn enjoyed playing with vehicles.***



***Princeton from the Furry Friends classroom (Lily B) had fun playing with shapes.***

***Royal, Hunter and Brighton tasted red, yellow and green bell peppers in the Lively Lions (Lily D) classroom.***



---

## **Waterloo Schools**

by **Ashley Caldwell**, Program Manager

I cannot believe we are at the end of the year! To see the progress and growth of so many of the children has been amazing. This month classrooms are completing end of the year assessments, learning about plants and

insects, and preparing for preschool recognition programs and field days. Please look for flyers and messages regarding end of the year special activities.



**Our friends in Ms. Severson's class at Lincoln enjoyed classroom play with blocks and houses!**

### **Reminders & Important Dates**

- May 5th
  - Kindergarten Orientation (for children entering kindergarten in the fall)
- May 8th
  - Waterloo Schools snow make-up day (**children will have classes**)
- May 31st
  - Pre-K last day of classes

### **At Home Opportunities**

As you prepare for summer months at home, consider discussing "big feelings" with your child. As children prepare to transition to new schools, new classrooms, and even new grade levels, it is important to talk to them about how they feel. Are they excited? Nervous? Scared? Happy? Discussing these feelings and emotions with children not only reassures them, but it also allows them the space to share their feelings and what they need to feel at ease.

---

## Maywood

by **Angie Barth and Haley Bradford**, Program Manager

***Here are photos of learning and fun at Maywood this month!***



### MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS

- This past month we celebrated NAEYC's Week of the Young child with a new theme for each day of the week! We enjoyed Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday, and



Family Friday! Thank you to all the parents that came to be involved with their child's class for this event!

- The Marvel and Avenger superheroes made an appearance to each of our classrooms to help those in need and we were extremely excited to meet them! Thank you Mr. Deshan for encouraging our future leaders to be like superheroes and help others!

### CENTER HAPPENINGS

- Our classes have been growing beans and we have finally produced some beans of our own! It was great to talk about what plants need to grow and then to compare the growth week after week. Who knows what we'll grow next!

### AT-HOME OPPORTUNITIES

- Every first Saturday of the month, Home Depot puts on a kid activity that is completely free! All items are provided and children are taught how to build and create various things. This May, children will be able to build a flower planter and take it home with them!
- With the warmer weather, many animals that we've learned about that have been hibernating will be waking up! Go for a nature walk and see if you can find some of these sleepy creatures: frogs, snakes, ground squirrels, groundhogs, and box turtles!
- Exercise done outside is more helpful to your body and mental health than indoor exercise. Enjoy a walk or picnic outside with the new warm air!

### REMINDERS

- With the warmer weather, please be sure to appropriately update your child's cubby at school.
- Our school is a phone free zone, please be sure to leave cellphones in the car when dropping off/picking up your child.

---

## Nutrition

by **Tracey Sauke**, Dietitian

**Keep your kids healthy by including whole grains.** Whole grains are a source of essential nutrients including fiber, iron, and magnesium. **They help preschoolers feel fuller longer and promote a healthy weight.**

**Whole grains contain the entire grain** (bran, endosperm and germ) **and have the most nutrients and fiber.** Refined grains contain only part of the grain (the bran and germ are removed), so they do not contain as many nutrients and fiber. **At least half of the grains kids eat each day should be whole grains.** Check out this [Whole Grain Handout](#) for a list of whole grains you can include in your diet!

Have a tea party and try Whole Grain Radish Tea Sandwiches:

- Tea sandwiches are the perfect size for children.
- Have your child help cut the crusts off bread with a butter knife or pair of child scissors.
- Your child can also help spread the sauce and add the slices of radishes to each sandwich.

For more nutrition information make sure to check our [May Nutrition Newsletter](#) including:

- Monthly Focus Food: Radishes
- Cultural Celebration: Asian-American and Pacific Island Heritage Month
- Banana Split Recipe for Head Start's Birthday on May 18
- May Menu
- Family Meal Tracker

### Whole Grain Radish Tea Sandwich

Makes 2-3 servings

All you need:

1 container plain yogurt (6 oz)

2 teaspoons ranch seasoning (from packet)

Whole Grain Bread

Radishes, sliced thin



All you do:

1. Wash hands.
2. Mix yogurt and ranch seasoning together to make your sauce.
3. Remove crusts from bread and cut into 4 pieces.
4. Spread sauce onto each piece of bread.
5. Place radishes slices on top and then add top bread piece to form your tea sandwich.
6. Enjoy!

.....

*Check out this opportunity in the community!*

FREE FOOD AND DRINK! PATHWAYS PRESENTS LIVE MUSIC!


*The 1st Annual*

# UNITY IN THE COMMUNITY RESOURCE FAIR

SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2023  
11 AM - 2 PM

THE PAVILION AT THE NATIONAL CATTLE CONGRESS, WATERLOO

Kick off summer 2023 the right way by seeing what the Cedar Valley has to offer! Join us for free food, drink, entertainment and door prizes, and talk with local organizations about services, events and products at this fun event aimed at promoting connection in our community.

DOOR PRIZES! 

---

Thank you to everyone who attended our  
Kindergarten Kick Off!





According to NAMI, it is very common for young people to have a mental health condition. It is estimated 1 in 6 youth/adolescents will deal with a mental health condition at some point in their life and approximately 50% of these conditions begin before a child turns 14 years of age. Parents can look for the following signs that a child might need help.



- Difficulty with routine tasks such as social activities, school, and play
- Anxiety, excessive worrying, fear, and/or physical symptoms such as rapid heart rate and nausea
- Increased irritability
- Disruptions in sleep routines
- Lower self-esteem
- Change in appetite
- Changes in behavior due to use of alcohol or drugs
- Decline in performance at school
- Panic attacks due to trauma or stress that does not go away

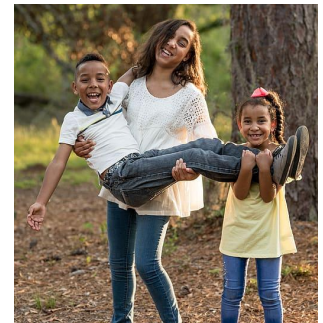
How can you help your child?

- Talk often about mental health so your child knows they can come to you when they have challenges
- Create a safe space by listening; avoid judgment
- Ask others (such as a teacher) if they notice changes in your child
- Talk to your child's pediatrician to see if they feel your child should see a mental health professional

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 with 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.



**Sources:**

<https://nami.org/Your-Journey/Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults/Kids/What-to-Look-For-and-When-to-Act>

<https://nami.org/Your-Journey/Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults/Kids>

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

