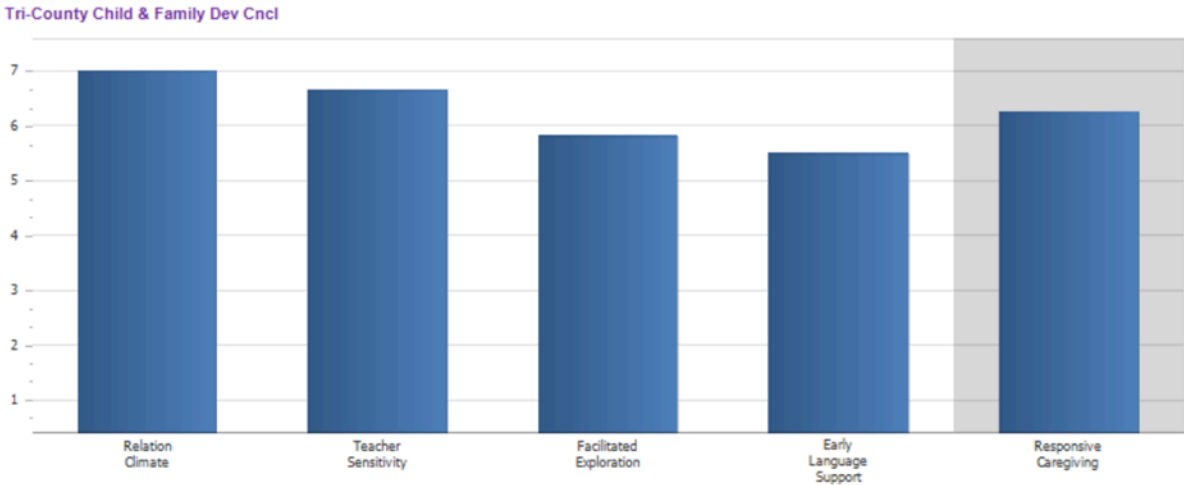




by [Dr. Latisho Smith](#), Educational Services Director

Hello families! This month I want to share data from our Infant, Toddler, and Pre-K CLASS® observations. Our education management team completed 56 CLASS® observations in EHS (Learning and Community Center and Lily only) classrooms and HS (agency-wide) classrooms. These observations examine teacher-child interactions in the classroom. The observer looks at positive relationships among teachers and children, enjoyment, engagement, problem solving, and language skills. Observations take place two times per year to monitor the quality of programming. Below is a summary and visual representation of the data.

Infant Classrooms
(Lily and LCC only)

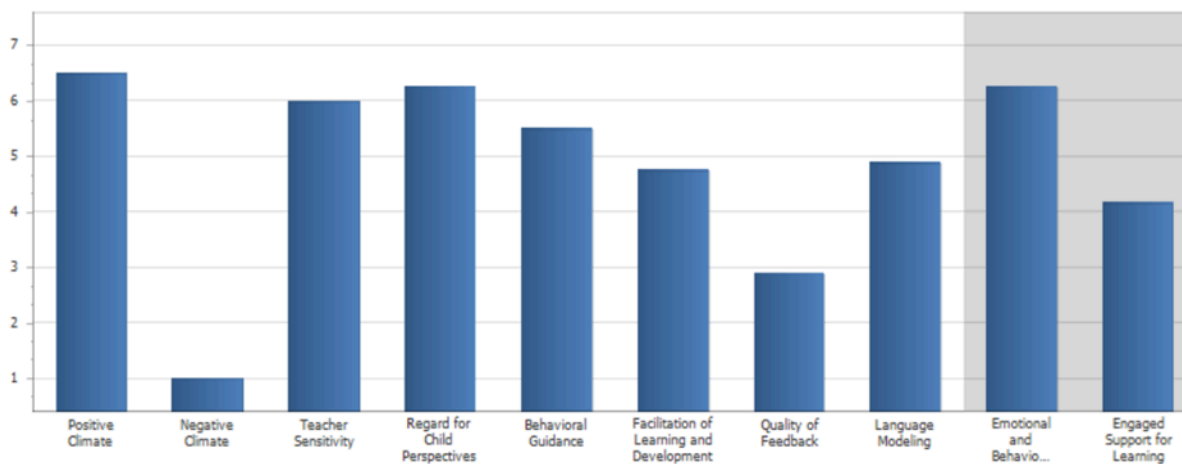


- The overall score in responsive caregiving increased (from last year) to 6.25 out of 7.

- The highest area remained relational climate which includes teachers showing affection, using respectful communication, smiling, and using a gentle approach to caregiving.
- The lowest area was early language support. This includes evidence of teacher talk, providing support through communication (such as imitating sounds) and extending communication.
- Moving forward, early language support will be an area of focus for future professional development for EHS teachers.

Toddler Classrooms (Lily and LCC only)

Tri-County Child & Family Dev Cncl

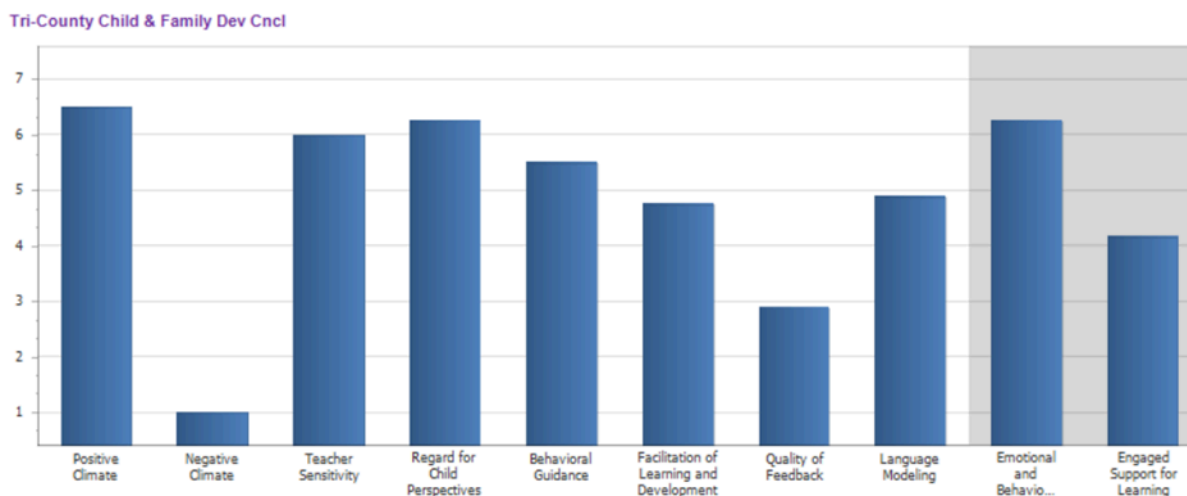


- The overall score for emotional and behavioral support was 6.25 out of 7 and 4.17 out of 7 for engaged support for learning.
- Emotional and behavioral support increased while engaged support for learning decreased (from last year).
- The highest area remained positive climate which was evidence of teachers and children smiling and laughing, teachers using physical and verbal affection, and the use of calm and respectful voices with children.
- The lowest area was quality of feedback. This includes scaffolding for young children, providing information by expanding conversations, and encouraging children's efforts.

- Moving forward, quality of feedback will be an area of focus for future professional development for EHS teachers.

Preschool Classrooms

(Agency-Wide)



- The overall scores for preschool classrooms (agency-wide) were as follows: 6.15 for emotional support, 5.83 for classroom organization, and 3.76 for engaged support for learning.
- Scores remained fairly consistent when compared with last year.
- The highest area continued to be positive climate.
- The lowest area continued to be concept development which includes teachers asking how or why questions, encouraging children to use problem solving skills, and making learning applicable to the lives of children.
- Similar to agency-wide results, the Head Start classrooms at the LCC scored the lowest in concept development and language modeling while the Tri-County Waterloo Head Start classrooms scored the lowest in concept development, quality of feedback, and language modeling.
- As was the case last year, instructional support will continue to be a focus for future professional development for HS teachers.

After Round 2 observations in February and March, data will be examined to inform Preservice Professional Development.

Tri-County Calendar

➤ February 9, 2024

- *No School due to Professional Development Day*

➤ March 11, 2024 - March 15, 2024

- *Closed for Spring Break*
- *Families eligible for consolidated care will receive a letter from their Program Manager*

➤ March 18, 2024

- *Policy Council Meeting, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm*
-

Welcome!

My name is Cathy Ramirez. I recently joined the Tri-County Head Start team. My role is an Assistant Teacher. I am from Waterloo and excited to work with the children and families from this area. I have several years of experience in child care. I look forward to learning and growing with the children and families at Tri-County!



Visit the Waterloo Public Library and celebrate Black History Month!



On Wednesday, February 28th from 10:30 am - 11:30 am, the library will highlight Black History Month with a special book and storytime. All families are welcome!

Join author Joshalyn "Rocki" Hickey Johnson for a special storytime featuring her book, "Susie Clark: the Bravest Girl You've Ever Seen," as part of our Black History Month celebration! Learn more about Susie Clark, the first Black person to integrate a public school by court order in the United States. Her case, decided by the Iowa Supreme Court in 1868, gave all Iowans the right to attend public school regardless of race or religion. Susie's case was instrumental to the landmark decision in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, which made racially segregated schools illegal in the United States in 1954.

The National Mississippi River Museum is coming to Tri-County!

The children at Lily and the LCC as well as children and families in our Home-Based program will have the opportunity to participate in an Outreach Program titled Tails and Tales. The Program, originally scheduled in January, is now scheduled for Tuesday, February 20th. Children will learn about animals with tails and how their tails are used. They will also get to meet live animals up close!

Waterloo Schools

by [Ashley Caldwell](#), Program Manager

Highlights & Happenings

This month classrooms are focusing on friendship, how we are alike and different, winter animals, and patterns. Classrooms are also completing their winter assessments with beginning and ending letter sound recognition, what does not belong, and rhyming words.



Friends in Ms. April and Ms. Jennifer's classroom at Lowell enjoying some outdoor fun and reading!



Reminders & Important Dates

- February 22, 2024
 - No School due to Waterloo Schools Conferences
- Please remember to send children with outdoor attire (snow pants, boots, hats, and gloves). If you need any assistance with these items, please reach out to your family service worker.

At Home Opportunities

With the weather being cold and snowy outside, take some time this month to create a family recipe book. This could include favorite recipes and dinner ideas that the whole family enjoys. To extend it,

pick a night where everyone in the family can help prepare one of the recipes and enjoy it as a family. This will increase back and forth conversations, utilize math skills with measuring and counting, and even work on patience while cooking all the ingredients!

Lily

by [Dusty Olson](#), Program Manager

Center Happenings

- The postponed Outreach Field Trip with Tails and Tales Mississippi River Museum will take place at Lily on Tuesday, February 20th.
- Classrooms will be celebrating friendship this month. See you classroom teacher if you would like to volunteer and participate in your child's classroom.

Reminders

- Winter is still upon us. Remember to dress warmly and with snow in mind. If you need any winter clothes or accessories, check with your teachers, Trista, or Dusty to discuss how we can help.

At Home Opportunities

- Several themes take place in our classrooms throughout the year. This month we focus on friendship and social activities. We also celebrate Black History Month in February. Teachers will send home materials and activities to work on with your children.



ECC, Cedar Falls Schools, and Rural Partnerships

by Angie Barth, Program Manager



We survived January and all the inclement weather it had to offer! With a large amount of snow still on the ground, here are some ways to enjoy the snow indoors and outdoors! In-kind was explained in last month's newsletter along with referencing ways families can help at home. Below are a few activities you can do at home with your family and earn in-kind for the Head Start

program! If you try any of these activities, ask your child's teacher for an in-kind form and record the amount of time spent learning!

'Snow' many possibilities!

- * Build a snowman as a family.
- * Make snow angels and decorate them with items from inside or items around your yard.
- * Each snowflake is unique. Catch falling snowflakes and study them!
 - o One way to do this is to find a piece of black paper (or any dark paper) and put it in the freezer (no really, put it in your freezer for at least 2 hours). Once the paper is ready, go outside and catch the falling flakes.
 - o How are they alike? How are they different? Draw what it looks like. Draw your own unique snowflake.
- * Snow paint. Draw in the snow with colored water using spray bottles, brushes, markers, or water colors. Snow can even be brought inside to color!



- * Juice slushies. Find untouched snow and scoop it into a cup. Add your favorite juice to the cup!
- * Measure the water content of snow. Is a cup of snow a cup of water after it melts? Find out!
- * Colorful Ice Orbs from balloons. Put a few drops of food coloring into balloons (optional), fill up balloons with water, tie and place outside. Once frozen, if the balloons have not broken, peel off the balloon. (Warning, they will melt, so place somewhere you don't mind possibly staining due to the food coloring).



Other ideas:

- * Blubber Gloves (Learn how animals stay warm in the winter):
<https://www.childrensmuseum.org/blog/saturday-science-blubber-gloves>
- * Snow Lantern (A Swedish wintertime tradition called a 'snolykta'):
<https://www.countryliving.com/life/news/a41641/swedish-snow-lantern/>
- * Snow Volcano (Make a volcano with snow and household materials):
<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/school-success/learning-toolkit-blog/snow-play-make-frozen-volcano.html>
- * Blow frozen bubbles (With some practice, freeze bubbles in time):
<https://www.popsoci.com/how-to-freeze-soap-bubbles-into-ice-orbs/>





Home-Based Program

by **Sarah Ross**, Program Manager

Greetings from the Home-Based team! We hope everyone is staying warm and well during these winter days. While we are all facing the winter weather, your Home Visitors kindly ask that you remember to clear a path to the door to prevent any slips and falls. As a reminder, our agency follows the Waterloo School District for weather closings and events. You can find information on school closures on KWWL. Please be sure that your email and phone numbers are up to date with your Home Visitors as program-related messages will be sent regarding closures and other important information.

This month the Black Hawk County Early Head Start Home-Based program will have two socialization events. The first one will be held at the Learning and Community Center (LCC) on Tuesday, February 13th, from 5:00 pm until 6:30 pm. We will be providing a meal at this event as well as a time for children and parents to get together to celebrate friendship. Our second event will be Thursday, February 29th, at LCC from 10:00 am until 11:30 am. We look forward to seeing our families coming together to socialize and share experiences.

Our Grundy County Head Start Home-Based program will be having story time at the Grundy Center Library on Friday, February 16th, beginning at 10:15 am. The next Family Nest will be Tuesday, February 20th, beginning at 10:00 am at Operation Threshold. Please reach out to your Home Visitor if you have any questions about our program or upcoming events and as always, we thank all of our families for allowing us to be a part of their parenting journey!

Health

by **Pauline Jones**, Head Start/Early Head Start Health Coordinator;
Shana Smith and **Darcie Stone**, UnityPoint Contracted Nurses



Oral Health

Oral health is just as important as your child's physical, mental, and hearing health.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease and the most preventable. That is why a child having a dental home and regular dental exams are part of the Head Start Performance Standards. We are here to help you with any barriers you may have in obtaining a dental exam or dental treatment for your child.

Preventing Dental Caries (Cavities)

- Brush teeth, tongue, and gums twice a day for 2 minutes with fluoridated toothpaste.
- Have your child eat a well balanced diet. Limit or eliminate sugary/sticky snacks.
- Consult a physician/dentist regarding supplemental use of fluoride or sealants.
- Take your child to the dentist by 1 year of age.
- Maintain regular check ups every 6 months.

Our Oral Screen includes Fluoride Varnish

How fluoride works!

- **At Birth**
 - Teeth are forming, but are not in a baby's mouth yet
 - Fluoride makes them grow stronger
- **Teeth in the Mouth**
 - Fluoride makes teeth stronger

- Protects teeth from acid that germs make
- Stops germs from making acid
- Helps fix places where acid started to eat holes (cavities) in the outside layer (enamel) of teeth
- Slows cavities down

Resources for your Family

If you are experiencing barriers to your child having a dental exam, please contact Pauline Jones, Head Start Health Coordinator, at 319-235-0383. We can share resources with you. We have a list of providers that accept Medicaid, information regarding the Hawkeye Dental Clinic, and I-Smile services.

Dental Partnerships - Our program partners with Dr. Fontaine Walker to provide oral health services to our children and families. We provide dental exams in our centers and on home visits throughout the year. We also provide fluoride varnish applications every three months.



Give Kids a Smile Day in the Cedar Valley is happening February 23, 2024. This is free preventative dental services and treatment for children ages 1-13.

Book an appointment for this special event beginning February 5, 2024 by calling 319-235-6287. Appointments cannot be made prior to February 5th.

FEBRUARY 23, 2024 | 8 A.M.-1 P.M.
BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

Kimball and Beecher Family Dentistry
4015 Hurst Dr., Waterloo

Free Preventive Dental Services and Treatment
for Children Ages 1-13

Call to schedule an appointment:
(319)235-6287

Nutrition

by [Tracey Sauke](#), Dietitian

This month our focus food is animal protein foods. Animal protein foods (like beef, chicken, pork, fish, milk, yogurt, cheese and eggs) are important for your child's growth because they include complete proteins. Complete proteins have all 9 types of amino acids you need to get from foods. If your child follows a vegetarian diet you will need to pay close attention that you pair certain foods together to form a complete protein because most plant foods do not provide complete proteins.

Several animal protein foods are raised in Iowa. To learn more read the [February Nutrition Newsletter](#). You'll find in-kind activities and our center based menu.

Babies and children need zinc to grow and develop properly. Animal protein foods are usually good sources of zinc. The best sources of zinc are oysters, beef, fortified breakfast cereals and pork. Talk to your doctor if you suspect your child has a zinc deficiency. For more information:

- [Zinc Foods List](#)
- [Zinc Consumer Fact Sheet](#)
- [Zinc Recipes Using WIC Foods](#)

SIGNS OF ZINC DEFICIENCY IN CHILDREN

increased
cold and flu



slow healing wounds



rashes

low energy



slow
development



poor attention span

Tri-County is looking into an opportunity to partner with ISU to offer families free cooking classes. Please visit the link to indicate your interest! <https://forms.gle/cTsksnVc6UaDbo818>

Learning and Community Center

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



Irene Sanchez provides monthly DLL Spanish resources to our teaching staff. She also started visiting classrooms and delivering lessons. This month at the LCC classrooms completed murals inspired by Frida Kahlo. The Early Head Start classrooms engaged in a hands-on activity where they placed flowers and butterflies on the murals. They explored flower textures, smells,

colors, and worked on fine motor skills and coordination. The Head Start classrooms read a book about Frida and talked about her background, origin, language, and Mexico and New York. The children also decorated individual portraits of Frida with tissue paper flowers. They also learned colors in Spanish. On February 15th Irene will visit Lily to share similar activities. Thank you, Irene, for sharing these valuable experiences with the children!

