



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

Hello families! Last month our agency recognized Dual Language Learner Celebration Week. This was a time to celebrate children in our programs that are dual language learners and their families. We welcomed family members into our classrooms to share lessons with the children. These lessons took place in classrooms at the Learning and Community Center and Lily. Lessons also took place in the home through our Home-Based program. Thank you to the family members and Irene Sanchez for offering these wonderful experiences to the children we serve. Here are some photos to enjoy!



Please join our agency in celebrating *National School Social Work Week March 3 - March 9*. This year's theme is Pearls of Wisdom. We want to recognize the work and dedication of our Family Service team and Home-Based team. Thank you to these individuals for all they do for our children and families!



Tri-County Calendar

- March 11, 2024 - March 15, 2024
 - *Closed for Spring Break*
 - *Families who signed up in February are eligible for consolidated care this week: Learning and Community Center open from 6:30 am - 5:00 pm*
- March 18, 2024
 - *Policy Council Meeting, 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm*
- March 22, 2024
 - *No School due to Professional Development Day*
- March 29, 2024
 - *No School due to Holiday*



Save the Date

Tri-County will honor all children going to kindergarten with a graduation ceremony on May 9th. More information to follow!



The National Mississippi River Museum visits Tri-County!

Classrooms at Lily and the Learning and Community Center had the opportunity to participate in an Outreach Program titled Tails and Tales. Megan shared a book with the children and they were able to meet a gecko and touch a turtle! Here are some pictures of this engaging experience!



Waterloo Schools

by [Ashley Caldwell](#), Program Manager

Highlights & Happenings

This month classrooms will be exploring author studies. This will allow children to learn more about popular authors such as: Dr. Seuss, Eric Carle, and Mo Willems, among countless others. Story settings, characters, and sequencing will guide children to increase their knowledge of print concepts.

Reminders & Important Dates

- March 11th - March 15th: No School due to Spring Break
- Information will be coming out this month about Kindergarten Registration for the 2024-2025 school year.

At Home Opportunities



As the weather transitions from winter to spring, one thing that can brighten any day is looking at the clouds in the sky! While taking a walk, discuss with your child what they think each cloud looks like. An ice cream cone? A tree? Maybe a dinosaur? You and your child can make a fun story out of it, and even retell it to your friends and family. Little Cloud by Eric Carle is a fun book about what happens when clouds enjoy a day of visiting others.



Lily

by [Dusty Olson](#), Program Manager



Center Happenings

Spring is right around the corner, and with the crazy winter we have had, most of us are ready for it. With spring approaching, we will have more opportunities to get outside and enjoy nature!

At Home Opportunities

In March, we celebrate Dr. Seuss and the joy of reading. Children of all ages, but particularly young children, benefit greatly from being read to regularly. This promotes language development, imagination, and a love for books. This in turn leads to greater outcomes in school and life. March is an excellent time to get into the habit of reading regularly to your child.



Cedar Falls Schools, YMCA, Hawkeye, and Rural Partnerships

by [Angie Barth](#), Program Manager



February brought some much needed sunshine and hopefully your family was able to soak up some time in the warmer temperatures! Reading and literacy is often a hot topic in classrooms throughout March as Dr. Seuss's birthday is celebrated nationwide. 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!

Read Across America!

- 📖 Visit a local library (many libraries have activities on, or around, March 2nd for Dr. Seuss's birthday).
- 📖 Read a book with rhyming words – put your finger on your nose when you hear a rhyming word.
- 📖 Before or instead of reading, encourage your child to tell you what they see in the pictures. Predict what will happen in the story or what it is about.
- 📖 Questions you can ask your child while reading:
 - How do you think they feel (pointing to a character)?
 - Label the emotion: happy, sad, mad, etc.
 - Can you remember a time you felt...? (use the same emotion they said for the previous question)
 - What do you think is going to happen?
 - What do you think that word means?
 - More questions you can ask before, during, or after reading:
<https://meandmythrees.blogspot.com/2014/11/questions-to-ask-while-reading.html>
- 📖 Have your child make their own story. Write down what they say and then help them illustrate/draw pictures to match the story!



"You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and **read to a child."**

-Dr. Seuss

Home-Based Program

by [Sarah Ross](#), Program Manager

Greetings from the Home-Based team! The month of February has flown by and we had so much fun at socialization events, Family Fun events, and with our special guest visitors from the Mississippi River

Museum. If you attended one of our events with your family, we thank you for your continued support of the Home-Based program and Tri-County Head Start.

The month of March brings the next round of conferences for parents/guardians and Home Visitors. During this time, your Home Visitor will discuss your child's development based on observations they have made during the winter months. If you have any questions or concerns about how your child is developing, do not hesitate to reach out to your Home-Visitor to get connected with information and resources. This month, the Black Hawk County Early Head Start Home-Based program will offer socialization events on Friday, March 8 and Thursday, March 21 from 10:00 am - 11:30 am at the Learning and Community Center. The Grundy County Head Start Home-Based program will attend Grundy Center Storytime on Friday, March 8 at 10:15 am and Family Nest on Tuesday, March 19 at Operation Threshold at 10:00 am. Please let your Home Visitor know if you plan to attend any of these events.



Health

by [Pauline Jones](#), Head Start/Early Head Start Health Coordinator;
[Shana Smith](#) and [Darcie Stone](#), UnityPoint Contracted Nurses

Early Childhood Health Services News



**National Center for
Healthy Housing**

The National Center for Healthy Housing (NCHH) develops practical strategies to make homes safe from hazards and to alert families

about housing-related health risks, and to help families protect their children. This month's website topic is lead exposure.

What can I do to prevent my child's exposure to lead?

Take these steps to reduce your child's exposure to lead in your home/environment:

- *Keep your child away from painting and repair work that disturbs paint, and make sure no paint chips or dust remain in the work area before your child enters.*
- *Pay attention to peeling paint: report it to your landlord if you're a tenant so repairs will get made (and call code enforcement or legal aid if there's no response); and repair it safely if you're a homeowner.*
- *Wash your child's hands, toys, bottles, pacifiers, and any other items your child often puts in his or her mouth.*
- *Regularly clean floors, windowsills, and dusty places with wet mops or wet cloths to pick up any dust.*
- *Use only cold tap water for making baby formula, drinking and cooking. Let the water run for a few minutes first.*
- *Avoid using products from other countries such as: health remedies, eye cosmetics (i.e., kohl, kajal, surma), candies, spices, snack foods, clay pots and dishes, painted toys, and children's jewelry. These items may contain high levels of lead.*
- *Remove shoes before entering your home.*

For more information visit the NCHH website at www.nchh.org.

Lead poisoning is preventable! A simple blood test can detect lead. Find out more from your state or local childhood lead poisoning prevention program!

For city of Waterloo eligible residents, the Lead Hazard Control Program is available:

- *Offered to homeowners and landlords where a child under six*

either resides or visits a significant amount of time (at least 2 days/week, 3 hours/day).

- *Home must be in Waterloo and built prior to 1978.*
- *This program helps low to moderate income families receive improvements such as new windows, siding, doors and/or paint where lead hazards are present as well as other healthy home items.*
- *Homeowners may benefit in improvements up to \$40,000 in the form of a five-year forgivable loan.*
- *Owner must be current on property taxes and not be in a flood plain.*
- *Contract buyers are not eligible.*

To submit an application online, visit the [City of Waterloo](#) website.



Nutrition

by [Tracey Sauke](#), Dietitian

This month we will be learning about whole grains (oats, wheat and rye) and honey, all products that can be locally sourced in Iowa! Whole grains are packed with essential nutrients, fiber, and antioxidants that are important for overall health and wellness. For a tasty recipe that includes whole grains oats and honey try making these easy [Peanut Butter Balls](#) with your child (don't forget to turn in the completed worksheet for 15 minutes in-kind credit)! It is important to remember babies should not have honey until they are 12 months old to help prevent infant botulism. To learn more about infant botulism visit: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/botulism.html>.

Picky eating is common among young children. Many children need to taste a food more than a dozen times before they are willing to eat

it without a fuss. Be patient as your child explores and samples new foods. If your child continues to reject a food even after a dozen-plus tries, perhaps he just doesn't like it. Consider trying a different food. For more information read: [Tips for Picky Eating \(English\)](#), [Tips for Picky Eating \(Spanish\)](#)

PICKY EATING: TIPS FOR PARENTS



be patient, you may need to introduce a new food 10+ times before your child accepts it

parents decide what, when & where to eat



kids decide whether to eat & how much



everyone eats the same thing - have 1 item you know your child will eat

