

NEWS YOU CAN USE

**Week of
December 16, 2024**

**Springhill Head Start
(616)791-9894**

Site Happenings

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We are writing to inform you that Head Start For Kent County maintains a policy of not celebrating specific holidays in the classroom to ensure inclusivity and respect for all students' diverse cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs.

This means that there will be no holiday-themed parties, decorations, or activities during school hours. While we encourage families to share their holiday traditions at home, we will focus on teaching age-appropriate concepts related to cultural celebrations in a general sense, highlighting the importance of community and shared experiences. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or the school administration.

Thank you for your understanding!



Calendar of Events



Dec 19th

Family Engagement Event

Winter Concert

5-7pm

Winter Break Begins

Monday Dec 23rd

Children return to school

Monday Jan 6th

Reminders



Our agency partnered with **United Way** for this year's "Stuff the Sled" campaign. This campaign raised enough funds to purchase a gift for all children enrolled in Head Start for Kent County. These gift bags contain a hat, gloves, a book, a toy, and a game for the whole family to enjoy! We are so grateful for this partnership!

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/hs4kc/events>
www.hs4kc.org

These materials were developed under a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential."

 **Head Start
for Kent County**
Connecting Families and Community Resources

 **Readiness Program**
Michigan's Nationally Recognized Pre-K Program

These materials were created under a grant awarded by the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential.

Help Your Child Succeed in Preschool and Kindergarten

Build the Habit of Good Attendance

DID YOU KNOW...

Missing 10% of school (1 or 2 days every few weeks) can make it harder to develop good attendance habits.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If your child seems anxious about preschool or kindergarten, talk to the program director, teacher, your doctor or other parents for advice.

Visit Attendance Works at www.attendanceworks.org for free downloadable resources and tools!

Car and Truck Safety

- Choose a car seat that is right for your child's age, height and weight.
- Choose a seat that fits in your car or truck and use it all the time.
- Ask your Head Start staff where you can go in your community to learn how to install your child's car seat safely.
- Be sure that children younger than 13 only sit in the back seat.
- Never leave your child in a car without an adult.
- Teach children that vehicles are never safe places to play. Even if the windows are open, young children can become dangerously overheated within the first 10 minutes.



Backpack Connection Series

About this Series

The Backpack Connection Series was created by TACSEI to provide a way for teachers and parents/caregivers to work together to help young children develop social emotional skills and reduce challenging behavior. Teachers may choose to send a handout home in each child's backpack when a new strategy or skill is introduced to the class. Each Backpack Connection handout provides information that helps parents stay informed about what their child is learning at school and specific ideas on how to use the strategy or skill at home.

The Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is a framework that provides programs with guidance on how to promote social emotional competence in all children and design effective interventions that support young children who might have persistent challenging behavior. It also provides practices to ensure that children with social emotional delays receive intentional teaching. Programs that implement the Pyramid Model are eager to work together with families to meet every child's individualized learning and support needs. To learn more about the Pyramid Model, please visit ChallengingBehavior.org.

More Information

More information and resources on this and other topics are available on our website, ChallengingBehavior.org.



ChallengingBehavior.org

How to Help Your Child Transition Smoothly Between Places and Activities

Alyson Jiron, Brooke Brogle & Jill Giacomini

Transitioning, or moving, to new places, people and activities is something we do many times during the day. However, change can be overwhelming and seem unpredictable for your child, especially when she is not ready to move on to the next place or activity. Children make many transitions each day—from parents to teachers, from home to car, or from play time to the dinner table, for example. When and how often transitions occur are usually decided by an adult and children often act out with challenging behavior when they feel unable to control their routine. When you help your child prepare for transitions you are helping her to learn a valuable skill. The good news is that you can teach her this important skill while you are enjoying time together.



Try This at Home

- Use a timer, an instrument or a funny noise to give your child advance warning of routine transition events. If possible, ask him to help "alert" everyone to the upcoming event. For example, let your toddler bang a pot with a wooden spoon to let the family know it is time for dinner.
- Let your child pick out a special object or toy to transition with to the next activity or place. "Would kitty like to come with us to the grocery store? I wonder if she could help us find the items on our list?"
- Use a visual schedule to show your child the plan for the day. "First, you have school and then we are going to take Aunt Rachel's gift to the post office and mail it to her."
- Make the transition a game or activity where the child has the opportunity to move around. "I wonder if today we can use this big shovel to scoop the cars into the bucket while we clean up?" If possible, let him think of the game. "I wonder how we could get to the car today?" You might be surprised at his creativity and how much fun you have roaring like a dinosaur or hopping like a rabbit.
- Sing songs as you transition. Children love to hear songs as they move about their day. Make up silly songs together about what you are doing or where you are going. You are sure to get a laugh and likely a smooth transition.
- Give your child a job. Children are more cooperative when they can be part of the process. Perhaps he can help stir something for dinner, unlock the car doors with the remote or pick out a diaper before a diaper change.

Practice at School

Children transition from one activity to the next throughout their day at preschool. Teachers plan for transitions in advance by creating special routines. These routines help to prepare children for transitions, engage them in the change that is taking place and help them to move smoothly to the next activity. Teachers might use a special instrument or song to let children know it is clean up time. Teachers might read books to the children while they are standing in line waiting for a turn to wash their hands before snack or create an obstacle course or morning routine to help children and parents transition at drop-off. When children are able to participate in or lead the transition, they are excited and eager to move to a new activity.

The Bottom Line

The more a child can predict and participate in the schedule and activities of her day, the less likely it is that challenging behavior will occur and the more likely it is that she will eagerly engage in transitions to new people and places. Taking the time and making the effort to teach her what to expect, when it will happen, and what happens before the transition occurs can be a rewarding experience. Most importantly, it is also an opportunity for quality time that can help lead to smoother transitions.



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Kwanzaa

WHAT IS IT?

Kwanzaa celebrates African American and African history, culture, and community. The holiday is celebrated from December 26 to January 1 and was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga.

One part of Kwanzaa is lighting the kinara, which holds seven candles: one black, three red, and three green. During the weeklong celebration, family and other community members gather each day to light a special candle representing Nguzo Saba,

The Seven Principles:

- Umoja (Unity)
- Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)
- Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)
- Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)
- Nia (Purpose)
- Kuumba (Creativity)
- Imani (Faith)

Why is Kwanzaa Celebrated?

Kwanzaa is a cultural, not religious, holiday named after the Swahili phrase "matunda ya kwanza," meaning first fruits or harvest. Many countries celebrate the harvest season, making Kwanzaa open for families from all races, religions, and ethnicities to learn about Black culture and the importance of community service and unity.

How to Celebrate Kwanzaa

There are many ways to celebrate with family and friends. Volunteering, attending local Kwanzaa events, and supporting Black-owned businesses are just a few. One of the most important ways to celebrate Kwanzaa is to learn about the holiday.