

# NEWS YOU CAN USE

Week of  
December 2, 2024

Kentwood Head Start  
616-735-5345

## Site Happenings

## Calendar of Events



Kentwood Head Start  
*Winter Showcase*  
Thursday  
Dec. 12th  
At 3:30-  
5:00pm

Winter Break  
Dec. 23, 2024  
Jan 3, 2025

Return January 6, 2025

## Reminders

### SMART tag Parent Portal

- SMART Alerts – sign up for SMART Alerts and receive emails or text messages when your child is approximately 10-15 minutes from their stop.
- SMART Locate – allows parents to view a map showing the bus as their child is being transported.
- Authorized guardian release feature. This tool allows parents to update authorized guardians through the Parent Portal.\*



All changes to the Smart Tag guardian release needs to be complete by  
9:00am

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/hs4kc/events>  
[www.hs4kc.org](http://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

## 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 gain early reading and math skills.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Ask family members or neighbors for assistance if you need help.

Visit Attendance Works at [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org) for free downloadable resources and tools!

### Car Seat Guidelines

Using the right car seat is the best way to protect children when traveling by car. The best seat is not the most expensive one – it's the one that best fits your child's weight, height and age, as well as your vehicle. Michigan law requires children to be properly buckled in a car seat or booster seat in the back seat until they are 8 years old or 4-feet-9-inches tall.

Recommendations based on your child's age and size:

- **Rear-facing Car Seat:** Children under age 1 should *always* ride in a rear-facing car seat. Children 1 – 3 years of age should ride in a rear-facing car seat for as long as possible – until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by the car seat manufacturer.
- **Forward-facing Car Seat:** When your child outgrows their rear-facing car seat, they should ride in a forward-facing car seat that has a harness and a tether. They should ride in this car seat until they reach the manufacturer's height or weight limit.
- **Booster Seat:** When your child outgrows their forward-facing car seat, they should ride in a booster seat that uses the car's lap belt to secure your child. Your child should use a booster seat until he or she is big/tall enough to fit in a seat belt properly.

**Family Collaborations:** These monthly activities help Head Start for Kent County parents advocate for and promote successful kindergarten transitions for their children.

## December



### Preschool Activities

Have a conversation with your child about preschool. "What do you see when you first walk in? What do you hear at mealtime?" Talk about sights and sounds that are different from home.

### Family Activities

Focus on writing skills with your child over the winter break. Try different ideas, like painting the names of friends.

Include family traditions in your child's learning with songs, stories, or dances.

### Kindergarten Activities

Read children's books about kindergarten with your child. It's not too early to be excited about going to kindergarten!

Watch for information about a kindergarten open house.



## 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](http://ChallengingBehavior.org).

### More Information

More information and resources on this and other topics are available on our website, [ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org).



[ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org)

# How to Help Your Child Have a Successful Morning

Brooke Brogle, Alyson Jiron & Jill Giacomini

Do you struggle with stressful mornings when you want to lay your head down and cry before 8:00 a.m.? Do you often leave the house in an angry, frantic rush? Mornings can be a particularly challenging time for parents. Getting your entire family up and out the door is no easy task! It is important to understand that your morning routine serves as the foundation for your family's entire day. You can create a morning routine that not only helps your day to begin more smoothly, but also teaches your child important skills that he needs to become more independent and confident. A morning routine can also reduce challenging behavior such as crying, whining and tantrums.



### Try This at Home

- Use a visual schedule with items such as photos, clipart, or objects that shows your child the steps in his morning routine. This visual schedule can help him to understand the expectations of the morning routine. To learn more about how to create a visual schedule, go to [challengingbehavior.org](http://challengingbehavior.org) and search the site for "visual schedules" in the search box located in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.
- If your child has trouble waking up in the morning, it might be because he is not getting enough sleep at night. Set a consistent bedtime and stick with it. When a child's bedtime changes it can make it harder for him to wake up in the morning. For more information on bedtime routines, go to [challengingbehavior.org](http://challengingbehavior.org) and search the site for "bedtime routines" in the search box located in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.
- Plan ahead. Use your bedtime routine to plan for the next day together.
  1. Lay out the clothes your child will wear.
  2. Pack his backpack.
  3. Discuss the morning routine, show him pictures and talk about the day ahead.
- Give your child some power over his morning routine by offering reasonable choices. For example, "First, get dressed. Then, you get a choice! Would you like to have cereal or pancakes for breakfast?"
- Include bonding time in your morning routine. Time to read, bathe or snuggle will help your child feel loved and calm as he begins his tasks for the day.

- Encourage your child. When your child completes a task and follows the routine, provide positive and specific encouragement. For example, say "Wow! You got up and got dressed all by yourself! Now we will have a few extra minutes to play with trains. What a great way to start the day!"

### Practice at School

Teachers use routines to provide a predictable structure to your child's day. When a child understands what she should be doing and what will come next, she feels less anxiety and more excited to participate. While the specific activities in the classroom might change, the routine does not. For example, while 10:00 may always be art time, the specific craft (painting, cutting, gluing) may vary from day to day. Children become eager to try new activities because they are confident and comfortable with the routine.

### The Bottom Line

A morning routine is a daily opportunity for you to build and nurture a positive relationship with your child. When you follow a repetitive morning routine you allow your child to gain practice with important skills such as dressing, bathing and grooming and give him a feeling of confidence and success. A calm, loving morning routine at home sets the tone for the entire day for both you and your child.



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