

# NEWS YOU CAN USE

Week of  
January 20, 2025

Leonard Head Start  
(616)735-5319

## Site Spotlight

I'm Ms. Cristy and I am the enrollment advocate for your sites Henry + Leonard. I've been with Head Start for 2 years now and I started in the classroom and loved it! Fun fact about me is I was born in the Philippines but was raised here in GR. I moved back there to complete my studies in Bachelors in Elementary Education in 2021. I recently got married and moved. I'm so happy to be working alongside my Henry + Leonard work family!

## Site Reminders:

**\* Please call within 15 minutes of the start time if your child will be absent or arriving late.**

**\* Improved communication allows us to better support you and timely updates help ensure child safety, maintain appropriate staff ratios, plan meals, and provide quality experiences for all students.**

**\* For arrivals more than 60 minutes after the start time, families must contact the site in advance to make arrangements**

## Calendar of Events

**Martin Luther King Jr Day:  
Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup> – NO  
SCHOOL**

**Family Engagement Event:  
Cultural Celebration  
Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup> @  
Leonard 5:00pm-6:00pm**

**World of Winter- Friday,  
January 31<sup>st</sup> Ah-Nab-Awen  
Park @10am**

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

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

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

## Six Ways to Beat the Winter Blues

Here are 6 scientifically proven ways to lift your spirits and ease the mid-winter doldrums.

1. **Make your environment brighter:** Open blinds and curtains to let in the light and catch that rare ray of sunshine we get in the winter.
2. **Eat smarter:** Certain foods, like chocolate, can help to enhance your mood and relieve anxiety.
3. **Exercise:** Studies have found that exercising, especially under bright light in the winter, improves general mental health, social functioning, and symptoms of depression.
4. **Turn on the tunes:** listening to upbeat or cheery music improves mood.
5. **Help others:** Serving food at a local shelter or volunteering your time can improve mental health and life satisfaction.
6. **Get outside:** Talking yourself into taking a walk when it's cold outside isn't easy, but the benefits are big. Spending time outside, even when it's chilly, can improve focus and mood and lower stress levels.

## Help Your Child Succeed in Preschool and Kindergarten

### Build the Habit of Good Attendance

#### DID YOU KNOW...

Make the most of early grades by encouraging your child to attend every day.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.

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

# HONORING THE REAL MEANING OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY!

This month, we celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. — a great figure of American and Black history. Back in the 1950s and 1960s, Martin Luther King, Jr. led the peaceful fight for Black Americans to live with equal rights in the United States through marches, nonviolent protests, and powerful speeches.

**Dr. King's leadership helped secure equal voting rights and end racial segregation across America. He was a hero for us all — big and small. But the story of Dr. King might feel complicated to discuss with our children. His story involves the tough realities of racism and violence in America. It can be tempting for grown-ups to tell our kids the easiest, and happiest version of history, but we lose some of the most important pieces that way. How can your family honor this hero and his life without glossing over the hard stuff?**

Tell a bigger (and more honest) story

To acknowledge the full story of Dr. King is to acknowledge racism, violence, and the inequalities faced by Black Americans throughout our nation's history. It can feel overwhelming, but it's possible to tackle hard topics without causing our children excess worry or pain. Chances are, our kids are already seeing, hearing about, or experiencing complicated truths in their big worlds, and they need us to help them navigate it. So don't shy away from the hard stuff — just be sure the conversations you're having are developmentally appropriate for your children.

For younger children, you might talk about how people don't always treat other people kindly, and Martin Luther King, Jr. knew it wasn't right that people with light skin didn't treat people with dark skin with kindness. For older children, consider recognizing Dr. King as an example for how to peacefully work for a better community, and talk about the ways Black people and other marginalized groups still experience inequality in your own community today. For all ages, you can explore the ways your favorite fictional PBS KIDS characters practice courage, and connect this to the real-life courage Dr. King and the people around him showed when they marched for what they knew was right. When we recognize Dr. King as a fellow human, the kind of bravery he practiced becomes achievable for our little humans, as well.

Other conversation ideas to have with your children:

- Talk about the ways Dr. King worked to make our country a place where everyone is respected.
- Wonder together about how Dr. King might have felt when people were unkind to him because of the color of his skin.
- Discuss what might have helped Dr. King do brave things even when it was hard.

