

# Head Start Family News



News from Lorain County Community Action Agency Head Start • April 2020

## Director's Corner

## Adapting to Social, Learning Distances



My prepared greetings for April were full of hope for spring events and activities. As we face the COVID-19 crisis, the events have been cancelled and the activities have changed BUT we still have HOPE.

As LCCAA Head Start and the rest of Ohio educators adapt to this unique time, I want to encourage you to remain hopeful. Spring is not cancelled! Flowers are still blooming. There are approximately 12 hours of daylight to enjoy. New life is everywhere even in the midst of this pandemic.

We are committed to serving our Head Start children and families. We are just doing it differently today.

We mailed thousands of learning activities and have reached out through phone calls, emails and Facebook. If you are not yet in one of our newly created Facebook groups, please email or call me (smatelski@lccaa.net, 440-204-3148) and I will make sure you are added.

Our teachers and staff are doing a great job posting pictures and videos and even holding virtual story-

times. They are also posting lots of great ideas for keeping little ones learning while they are at home.

LCCAA Head Start has also created a Learning Resources page on our website: [https://www.lccaa.net/programs/head\\_start/learning\\_resources](https://www.lccaa.net/programs/head_start/learning_resources).

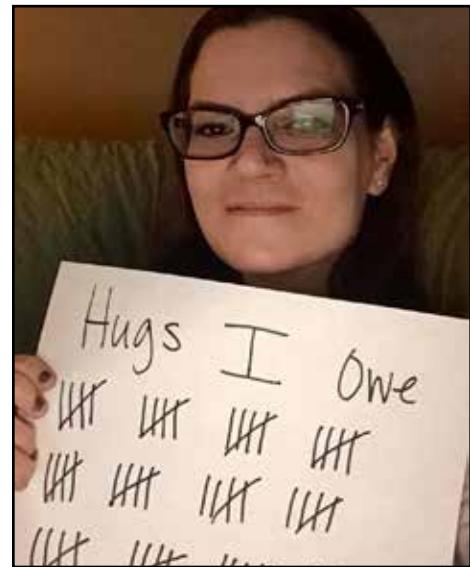
If you need help with food or other resources during this time, visit our Crisis Resources page: [https://www.lccaa.net/resources/crisis\\_resources](https://www.lccaa.net/resources/crisis_resources).

Our agency is open with modifications made for safety. If there is something you need, reach out to your Family Service Worker, me or email [info@lccaa.net](mailto:info@lccaa.net). We are here and ready to help.

It is my hope and prayer that everyone is doing well and keeping safe. This is an unprecedented event we are experiencing and I hope everyone is taking all precautions to stay safe.

Be Well!

  
Shauna Matelski, Ed.D.  
Head Start Director



**Wellington's Brenda Robbins posted in the center's Facebook Group a count of "hugs owed." One of her students agreed and is making plans to erase her hug debt too!**



# Head Start Spirits, Learning Stay Strong

As the COVID-19 crisis continues to unfold, Head Start teachers and staff have taken to cyberspace to maintain relationships and learning.

Staff created groups on Facebook for each center and have been posting daily. Posts range from “We Miss You” to full phonics lessons now available “on demand” for parents and children.

Staff also organized a Virtual Spirit Week to stay connected. Other resources being shared come from everywhere from Sesame Street to Dolly Parton. As more and more ideas develop, Head Start is staying current and staying in touch.

Everyday, staff members are proving that Head Start Works - even remotely.



## April 11 Kicks Off Week of the Young Child

The Week of the Young Child is an annual event designed to focus on early childhood education. Sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, this year's event is set to kick off Saturday, April 11.

Themed days for this year will include plenty of online tools. Watch your center's Facebook group for specific details or visit <https://www.naeyc.org/events/woyc/overview> for resources.

The themed days are:

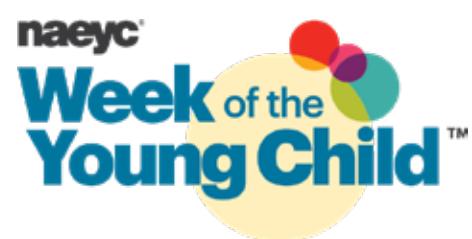
Music Monday: When children

sing, dance, and listen to music, they develop their language and early literacy skills while being active and encouraging movement.

Tasty Tuesday: Cooking together connects math with literacy skills, science and more.

Work Together Wednesday: When children build together they explore math and science concepts and develop their social and early literacy skills.

Artsy Thursday: Children develop creativity, social skills and fine motor skills with open-ended art



projects where they can make choices, use their imaginations and create with their hands.

Family Friday: Engaging and celebrating families is at the heart of supporting our youngest learners. NAEYC applauds family members' role as young children's first and most important teachers.

# Two Teachers Earned Bachelor's Degrees

Two LCCAA Head Start teachers completed their bachelor's degrees at the end of 2019, demonstrating once again the culture of lifelong learning within the program.

Christina Villar, a bilingual teacher at Griswold Head Start, earned her bachelor's degree in education from the University of Cincinnati. Villar teaches in the center's only bilingual classroom, often speaking Spanish to students and their families.

She completed her degree with the help of an Early Ohio College scholarship and regularly made the Dean's List, she said. Villar, who has two young children, said the process of working toward her degree even helped her son develop good study habits.

"Going back to school has helped my family see the importance of staying in school," she said.

Trinity Barajas, a teacher at LCCAA's newest Head Start center in LaGrange, earned her bachelor's degree

in early childhood education from Ashford University in California using an accelerated online program.

Barajas earned her degree while juggling both her full-time teaching job and a part-time job cooking at the VFW in



North Olmstead. She completed her associate's degree at Lorain County Community College as she joined LCCAA Head Start in 2012 and said she decided to keep going to keep up with her son who was attending Kent State University.

"I wanted to show my children that school could be a possibility at any stage of life if they wanted it badly enough," she said.

"These two teachers are among the many lifelong learners in our Head Start program," said Education and Disabilities Specialist Jennifer Bartlebaugh. "LCCAA Head Start proudly supports them as they work to further their education and we couldn't be happier for their success."

Both teachers praised their families and many supportive friends who cheered them on throughout the difficult process.

"They believed in me even when I didn't believe in myself," Barajas said.



## Appreciating Teachers and Staff During Crisis

May 4 through 8 will mark Teacher Appreciation Week nationwide and at LCCAA Head Start we are including appreciation for all our hard-working staff.

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, our no-cost appreciation ideas included thank you hugs and high fives. At this writing, we are closed through May 1 and there is much speculation in Ohio regarding the remainder of the school year for all grade levels.

We have set up Facebook Groups for each of our directly operated Head Start centers and encourage you to take time during Appreciation Week to leave a message there thanking any and all staff members.

All staff also have access (some limited) to their LCCAA email accounts and your notes of appreciation can be sent there as well.

If you don't know their email

address, send a note to [info@lccaa.net](mailto:info@lccaa.net) with the teacher's name and center and we will make sure it gets through!

Our agency is also still receiving mail with no disruption. You can send cards, drawings and other greetings to 936 Broadway Ave., Lorain, Ohio 45052.

We look forward to seeing your greetings and to the day we can high five and hug again!

# Head Start Staff Members Highly Credentialed

Head Start staff are committed to their own education.

Everyone who comes in contact with the children and families we serve has a significant impact on them. Experienced, credentialed, educated teachers have a positive impact on achievement for children's learning and development.

They set the climate for learning, improving skills, and enabling children to engage in their world. For this reason, our staff are committed to their own education as much as they are the children's.

Including all directly operated Head Start sites and collaborative programs, we have:

- 14 staff who hold a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential
- 46 staff with associate's degrees
- 61 staff with bachelor's degrees
- 15 staff with masters degrees

The growth doesn't stop there. There are currently four staff enrolled in a Child Development Associate training program to help them earn the credential and 10 who are working toward earning



a degree. In addition, the teachers spent an average of 21 hours in workshops so far this school year.

"We are very proud of our staff's commitment to their growth and professional development," says LouAnn Rhodes, the Head Start Professional Development Specialist.

"All of this benefits the staff but it means the most to the children and families we serve as we learn the best methods and ideas for supporting them."



## Five Staff Earning Child Development Credential

Five staff members renewed or received their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential since January.

Early Childhood Service Workers Brenda Towner and Tracy Bailes from Hopkins-Locke and home-based teacher Sabrina Osborne completed their CDAs through the CDA Council for Professional Recognition's Amnesty Renewal program.

Two more Early Childhood

Service Workers completed a CDA training program through the University of Cincinnati. Alicia Rosa from Griswold and Shayna O'Neal were finalizing their credentials when Ohio schools closed for the COVID-19 crisis. They both received scholarships from TEACH Early Childhood Ohio.

The CDA is a nationally recognized and most widely accepted early childhood credential. It is considered the "best first step"

in an early childhood professional's career.

To receive the CDA, candidates need at least 480 hours of professional work experiences. They must complete 120 clock hours of formal early childhood training and a professional portfolio showing their skills and knowledge.

They also must complete an observation by a CDA Professional Development Specialist and the CDA Exam.

# Early Intervention a Must for Children

Just like great structures, children need a strong foundation on which to build. The early childhood years lay the foundation for all future development, so the sooner we can screen children (ex. heights, weight, lead, hearing, vision, milestones, dental, etc.) to identify any potential developmental or health concerns, the stronger your child's foundation and future transition to kindergarten will be.

There are many factors that influence a child's learning and development. This can include the child's temperament, personality, learning style and capacity, culture, health, well-being and their life experiences. Early intervention services can play a part in offering

children and their families the support they need to reach their fullest potential.

## What is early intervention?

It is the term used to describe the services and supports that are available to families with babies or young children with developmental delays and

disabilities. Services may include speech, physical therapy, behavioral supports or other types of services based on the needs of the child and family.

### Benefits of Early Intervention:

**Purposeful play-** Play is a child's work and essential to brain development. Opportunities for play with an early intervention specialist can facilitate the development of the skills needed for problem-solving, self-control, socialization and communication to help children overcome their challenges.

**Reduce the need for specialized instructional support during a child's school years-** Early intervention can be effective in helping a majority of children make progress toward achieving age-appropriate developmental milestones before entering kindergarten.

**Early intervention services are provided at NO COST to families-** Through available funding, children can receive early intervention support in a comfortable familiar setting (home, school, Head Start classroom, etc.).

**Early intervention empowers families to help their child reach their fullest potential-** As a parent, you are your child's primary teacher. Through early intervention services, you will be empowered with the tools necessary to help you advocate for your child's needs. Additionally, you will gain the tools to help your child reach his or her fullest potential.

All children deserve the best possible start in life. Together, as a partnership, we can build a strong foundation for your child!



## Book of the Month: *Eating the Alphabet*

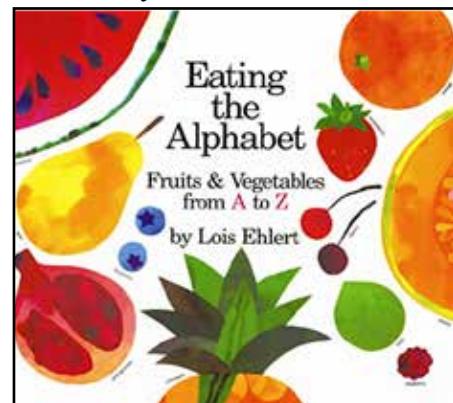
At Head Start, we are WILD about healthy fruits and vegetables and the alphabet, so *Eating the Alphabet* by Lois Ehlert is perfect!

ABC books help reinforce letter order and help build phonemic awareness when there are objects that start with each letter's sound. Sometimes children don't recognize fruits and vegetables

in their natural form, such as a potato, when they only see processed foods, like French fries.

This book is guaranteed to have at least 1 or 2 foods that even mom and dad have never seen (xigua), but don't worry because there is a glossary in the back that tells you how to say each name, whether it is a fruit or vegetable,

and where it originated or is commonly eaten.



# Teachers Report Success with Conscious Discipline

LCCAA Head Start classrooms have embraced the use of a social/emotional classroom management program that empowers not only the teachers, but also the students.

Conscious Discipline is based on the idea that a strong connection must first be established with a child before an adult can teach needed skills.

Teachers throughout LCCAA are forming and strengthening connections through the use of classroom tools such as:

- Feeling Buddies
- Job Charts
- Morning Greeters
- “Wish you Well” song and board
- “School Family” terminology
- Activities to breathe
- Kindness charts
- “I Love You” Rituals
- Creating a safe place in the classroom
- Visual schedule

Hopefully you have seen some of the Conscious Discipline components in action or heard about them from your child. Conscious Discipline has also been a topic at Parent Meetings, with techniques being explained and practiced.

Once the connection is made, the teacher will have better success in coaching children through new skills by introducing logical consequences. The end result is children who learn to work through

**Many Conscious Discipline resources are free during the COVID-19 Crisis. Visit their website to learn more.**



# Kidney Beans a Hit!

February's Try Day included bean dip made from kidney beans. It was a hit!

In addition to tasting the bean dip, parents could win a door prize. Tamar Warkentien won a food chopper at Griswold.

At Hopkins-Locke, one class planted some beans, which are now sprouting.



# Head Start Showed Great Seuss Spirit

Silly hats, crazy socks and a little green eggs and ham made for a special week at LCCAA Head Start centers. Spirit Week coincided with Dr. Seuss' birthday on March 1 and each day involved a theme and a special story time with a favorite Dr. Seuss book. A good time was had by all!



# Three Centers Renew Five Star Ratings

Wellington Head Start, Firelands Head Start and LaGrange Head Start have all had their Five Star rating renewed by Step Up to Quality.

All of LCCAA's directly operated centers have earned the highest rating from Step Up to Quality: five stars. Most of our partner centers are also rated at five stars and none has fewer than three.

As LCCAA's newest Head Start center, LaGrange Head Start received a temporary Five Star rating based on the strong track record of the overall program. Now, LaGrange has earned five stars in its own right, said Education and Disabilities Specialist Jennifer Bartlebaugh.

Ohio created its five-star rating system to recognize and promote early learning and development programs



that meet quality standards over and above the minimum health and safety licensing requirements.

The program has been voluntary; however, beginning in 2020, all early childhood programs must be rated, or they will be ineligible for public funds.

Higher ratings are given to programs employing teachers with more specialized training as well as enhanced parent, family and community engagement, among other criteria.

For additional details on the program, visit [www.earlychildhoodohio.org/sutq.php](http://www.earlychildhoodohio.org/sutq.php).

Step Up To Quality is administered by the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

## Utility Help Deadlines, Procedures Changed

Ohio's Winter Crisis Program has been extended through May 1 and LCCAA has installed a secure drop box at LCCAA's Lorain office for providing documentation.

Modifications to service delivery have been made in response to the COVID-19 crisis. LCCAA has suspended face-to-face appointments and closed its satellite offices. Online applications are encouraged and can be made at [www.energyhelp.ohio.gov](http://www.energyhelp.ohio.gov).

These applications are being directed to LCCAA and you will be advised if additional documentation is needed. Residents can also

call 1-855-806-9620 to make an appointment, which will be conducted by phone.

Documentation can be dropped off at 936 Broadway Ave., Lorain using the drop box by the rear door near the parking lot. Copies of your documents should be left in the drop box. Original documents should not be placed there. For a list of required documents, please visit our website at [www.lccaa.net](http://www.lccaa.net). Please place everything in an envelope and date it.

Applications are also being taken for HEAP which has been extended to June 1, year-round Percentage of

Income Payment Plan (PIPP) and First Energy fuel funds, which are available until they are depleted.

To be eligible for Winter Crisis or HEAP help, residents must live at or below 175% of the federal poverty line. All utilities regulated by the State of Ohio have placed a moratorium on shut offs. This includes First Energy and Columbia Gas in Lorain County.

The Winter Reconnect Order has also been extended to May 1. Eligibility for PIPP begins at or below 150% of the federal poverty line. For fuel funds, residents must live at or below 200% of the FPL.

## Have You Been Counted in the 2020 Census?

The 2020 US Census is here! You should have received an invitation to respond to the Census and many reminders from LCCAA about the importance of being counted.

The COVID-19 Crisis has not stopped the Census (although some field work dates have changed) and the crisis demonstrates the importance



of a complete count. The resources being directed to Lorain County by various federal stimulus packages are based in part on the data collected in the 2010 Census.

Each person missed equates to hundred or thousands of dollars in funding for our community. Be counted! Visit [www.my2020census.gov](http://www.my2020census.gov).