

# Head Start Family News



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

## Director's Corner

## Not the Way We Wanted to End the Year



Hello, Head Start Families!

I hope you are all doing well and you are staying safe and healthy in the midst of the Coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic. My message this month is a difficult one.

The month of May is here and our Head Start centers must remain closed. As you know, it was Friday March 13, 2020 when we received federal and State instructions concerning the pandemic. We had to act swiftly, and close our Head Start centers.

While it has been very difficult not seeing our children and families, it is for everyone's safety. We have remained committed in providing services for you and staying connected was important!

We developed Facebook pages for each of our directly operated centers to help staff and families interact. I hope you have been able to see and participate in all of the wonderful learning activities the staff have provided. It has been a joy to see the interaction with staff and families! Thank you for all of your posts and feedback.

The Facebook pages are not permanent and will be removed as we come to the close of the school year. However, please stay connected through our website and we will ensure all information is current as we work toward our next program year.



**Griswold Head Start teacher Martha Evans-Harris read this story to her class via Facebook recently.**

As we end this year, it saddens me to say that we are unable to conduct our annual "Bridging" activities. This was always the highlight of our year as we recognized all of our children. That being said, we will recognize children in a different way this year.

I want to tell you how much I appreciate each and every one of you for choosing the Head Start program.

Best wishes!

Shauna Matelski, Ed.D.

Head Start Director

***I wanted to say thank you from the bottom of our hearts for not only teaching her but inspiring her and loving her. - Head Start Parent***



**Head Start Works!**

[www.lccaa.net](http://www.lccaa.net)

1-888-245-2009



# Certificates to be Mailed, Send in Photos!

Although LCCAA Head Start centers cannot hold their traditional Bridging ceremonies this year, teachers and staff want to make sure every child is celebrated.

Staff are preparing packets for each child with Bridging certificates, T-shirts and other items. Please take one or two photos of your child with their T-shirt or certificate or both! Where to send the photos, deadlines and other details will be included in the packet.

Photos will be compiled into a video specific to each Head Start Center and shared on our Facebook groups, which will remain active through June 30.

“We know a lot of parents love these ceremonies and we know how hard they have been working with their children at home,” said Education and Disabilities Specialist Jennifer Bartlebaugh. “We want to make sure



**Firelands Head Start teacher Shannon Smith high fives a student at the center’s 2019 bridging ceremony.**

every child feels special while keeping everyone safe. We haven’t forgotten anyone.”

Head Start is also sending more home learning activities to students. All children will receive a kit directly from Lakeshore Learning. Those moving on to kindergarten will receive a slightly different kit than those who will be returning to Head Start, Bartlebaugh said.

Anyone who has recently moved should contact Bartlebaugh to make sure their address is up to date to receive the packets. Email [jbartlebaugh@lccaa.net](mailto:jbartlebaugh@lccaa.net) or [info@lccaa.net](mailto:info@lccaa.net) to make sure your information is correct in our database.

## Ideas for Celebrating at Home

Be as specific as you can when talking about what your child has accomplished.

Create a Theme Day! Our centers are great at coming up with fun themes for bridging.

Dress up! Lots of our students dress their best for the Bridging ceremony.

Hold an online “ceremony” using Zoom or another platform to invite grandparents to watch you present your child with their certificate.

Make their favorite meal or snack.

Use sidewalk chalk or a sign in your yard or window to announce a “Head Start Star Lives Here.”

## Enroll Now for 2020-2021 Head Start Year

It’s time to register for Head Start for the 2020-2021 school year!

If your Head Start student will be returning this fall, contact your family service worker or home visitor to update your paperwork and reserve your child’s space. If a younger sibling will be joining us, your family service worker or home visitor can help with that too.

One of the best ways parents find Head Start is through other parents. Share your experience with LCCAA Head Start and let them know that registration is now open.

Registration can be started online at [lccaaforms.net](https://lccaaforms.net).

[lccaaforms.net](https://lccaaforms.net). Please be patient as our staff will be processing applications remotely due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Head Start and Early Head Start serve low-income children ages 0 to 5 and pregnant women.

Head Start families must live at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL). Families receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) or SSI (Supplemental Security Income) are automatically eligible. Homeless children and children in foster care are also automatically eligible.

Head Start and Early Head Start also serve children with disabilities.



# Families Share Ideas, Stay Connected

LCCAA Head Start teachers and families have adapted to home-based, remote learning with wonderful attitudes.

Getting creative is one of the things this group does best and they have been creating all over the place. Teachers have embraced recording stories, science experiments, nature walks and even a morning meeting in a chicken coop! They have read books, played instruments, and even put on masks so the children would know masks aren't scary.

“Our teachers have dug deep into their training and leaned on each other,” said Jennifer Bartlebaugh, Education and Disabilities Specialist. “Ideas are coming fast and furious from every direction and the care and compassion they have for their students and families is really shining through.”

LCCAA has set up a Facebook group for each center. If you have not found yours, please contact your teacher or family service worker or email [info@lccaa.net](mailto:info@lccaa.net) to be connected.



Parents have shared the progress their children have been making in various skills such as a LaGrange student matching upper and lowercase letters using Play-Doh, a Griswold student writing her name and a Cascade student working on his grip by coloring, writing and cutting. Meanwhile, a Wellington family shows how they are adjusting to wearing masks after their teacher demonstrated in a video.



Several classroom projects were abruptly halted by the crisis, including hatching butterflies and planting seeds to watch them grow. A Hopkins-Locke classroom planted beans that this student has been caring for at home. He couldn't wait to show his classmates when the plant began to produce.



Home-based teachers usually get to see what their students lives at home are like but students don't often get to see what teachers' homes are like. Home-based teacher Teresa Pagan has been checking on her families by stopping by at a distance and using FaceTime. Meanwhile, Firelands' Jenny Ketcham recently “broadcast” her morning meeting from her farm's chicken coop.

# Talking to Your Kids about Coronavirus

If you are a parent struggling to talk to your child about the COVID-19 crisis, you are not alone.

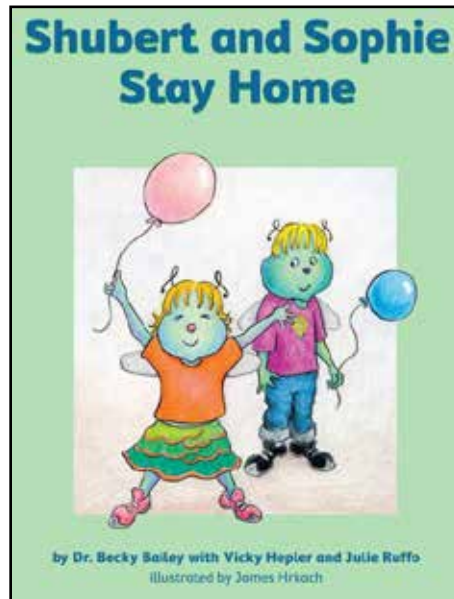
News reports, people wearing masks and the complete disruption of routine create anxiety and frustration. Sudden change is often scary and leaves children – and adults – feeling anxious.

Anxiety is soothed with information, which is why so many of us are glued to the news. It's also helpful to answer children's questions and explain why their usual routines have changed.

LCCAA Head Start staff have compiled some resources for parents to help discuss coronavirus and the changes it has necessitated.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) provides general tips and guidance <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>.

Piplo Productions collaborated



with the National Child Traumatic Stress Network to create a story about two children experiencing common changes brought about by the crisis. "Trinka and Sam Fight the Big Virus" includes common questions and a parent guide. <https://piploproductions.com/trinka-and-sam-virus/>

Conscious Discipline, used in

LCCAA Head Start classrooms, has several resources including a page devoted to "answering difficult questions."

The organization also uses a series of stories featuring Shubert and Sophie in its work and created a special story for the crisis: [Shubert and Sophie Stay Home](#).

Conscious Discipline uses Social Stories to teach difficult concepts and has developed several for this crisis including [Coronavirus is a Big Word](#) and [Why Can't I Go to School?](#)

Tara Tichel at Autism Little Learners created the story "[Wearing a Mask](#)" to help children.

If you have specific questions or are looking for additional resources, please reach out to your Head Start teacher or family service worker. If you do not know how to contact them, email [info@lccaa.net](mailto:info@lccaa.net) and we will connect you.

## Kindergarten Registration Processes Different



Educators and parents across the country are wondering what the 2020-2021 school year will

look like thanks to the COVID-19 crisis.

Head Start students ready to transition to kindergarten still need to make sure they are registered. Each district in Lorain County is handling the crisis, kindergarten registration and the upcoming school year differently.

If your child will attend one of the 15 public school districts in the county, phone numbers and links to each district's website can be found at <http://www.loraincountyesc.org/OurDistricts.aspx>.

Be sure to verify the age of eligibility because it does vary by district. For instance, Lorain City Schools requires students to be 5 years old by August 1, 2020,

but Elyria City Schools has the requirement of 5 on or before September 30.

Each process is a little different under normal circumstances and the crisis will create additional issues. Generally, parents can expect to need the following documents:

- Parent Photo I.D. (license or state I.D.)
- Child's Birth Certificate
- Immunization Records
- Custody Papers, if applicable
- 2 Proofs of Residency
- Emergency Contact List

Your Head Start teachers and family service workers are your partners in preparing your child for this next big milestone. If you aren't sure what district you are in or what to do, we are glad to help make this transition a successful one for you and your child.



# Safety Tips from the LCCAA Bike Shop

Getting your bikes out while you're home? Be safe! Check your bike with the ABC Quick Check!

Air - pinch the tires, which should be hard.

Brakes - make sure your brakes work.

Chain - check the chain to make sure it's not loose.

Quick - take a look, make sure wheels and bolts are tight.

Check - the rest of your bike, make sure nothing is broken.

And, don't forget your helmet!

LCCAA's Bike Shop is open by appointment only during this crisis and we have bikes available for sale. Buy a bike from LCCAA's Bike Shop and receive free gifts including a helmet, repair kit and lock.

Our bike shop can also repair any problems you find



in your ABC Quick Check.

Contact Bobby Taylor at [btaylor@lccaa.net](mailto:btaylor@lccaa.net) for an appointment for purchase or repairs.

## This Summer Wear Sunscreen, Drink Water



Young children are more vulnerable than adults in the summer heat.

Sunblock should be applied about 30 minutes before going outside so it has time to be absorbed so it can do

its job! Children's skin is thinner so it gets sunburned easier.

Using sunblock now will protect skin even into adulthood. Spray on sunscreen is dangerous if it is inhaled accidentally, so lotion is safer for kids.

Drinking enough fluids protects a child's insides, just as sunblock protects the outside. Sometimes kids get busy playing and need to be reminded to drink fluids, so it is important to have water available all day.

Warning signs of dehydration in a child include cracked lips, no tears when crying, low energy, and infrequent urination.

Be safe this summer by taking these simple precautions and you can play all day without worry.

## Use Chalk to Transform a Sidewalk into a Game Board!

Warm weather and sunshine are good reasons to take learning outdoors. For a variety of fun activities, use chalk to draw either a number line from 1-10 or letters A-Z on the ground. The following are ways to practice identifying letters and numbers as well as order:

- Have your child walk on the chalk line, saying each number or

letter as they go.

- Stand facing the chalk line, call out a number or letter and have him or her jump to it or toss a bean bag.

- Have your child collect small objects and place the same number of objects to match each numeral.

- Match the beginning sound of an object to the corresponding letter.



Kids will also like helping to clean up by using a spray bottle to wash away the chalk. Call out a letter or number and have them spray it with water.

# May is Community Action Month in U.S.

May is Community Action Month and 2020 marks the 56th year since the Community Action Network was established to help American families and communities overcome obstacles and rise out of poverty.

Lorain County Community Action Agency is proud to be part of the network of more than 1,000 agencies across the country. The agency's mission to serve and empower Lorain County residents in need has never been more important, said President and CEO Jackie Boehnlein.

"We are proud to be part of this movement to empower people," Boehnlein said. "I want to thank our amazing staff, especially during this time of crisis. Because of them, the promise of Community Action is real and alive and well in Lorain County."

Community Action Agencies serve 99% of all American counties with life-changing services to help families achieve financial stability. All agencies are locally controlled and represented by the private, public and low-income sectors of the community.

Each agency creates programming in response to needs that are determined at the local level. LCCAA is proud to collaborate with many other nonprofits in our



Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

community to serve the unique and changing needs of our residents.

Annually, LCCAA serves approximately 20,000 people. Nationwide, the Community Action Network touches more than 15 million.

## Early Head Start Celebrates 25 Years



Happy birthday, Early Head Start! This year, the Office of Head Start is celebrating 25 years of providing family-centered services to pregnant women, infants and toddlers.

LCCAA's EHS program serves 40 families. Children receive up to 40 hours each week of care and instruction. Early Head Start serves children

from birth to age 3 as well as providing support to pregnant women.

Since 1995, the EHS program has improved child and family outcomes through comprehensive services. These services support the role of parents, foster parent-child relationships, and improve family self-sufficiency.

Learn more about the success and history of this groundbreaking program: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/programs/article/early-head-start-25th-anniversary>

## Book of the Month: *Kindness is Cooler*

May 4 through 8, 2020 is Teacher Appreciation Week so what better book to read than one about an awesome kindergarten teacher? Kids will love "Kindness is Cooler, Mrs. Ruler" by Margery Cuyler.

Mrs. Ruler motivates her class to perform 100 good deeds. This book includes a list



of ideas for your own kids to do. The list of deeds makes this a counting book as well as a way to talk to kids about getting ready to go to kindergarten.

Teacher Appreciation Week is the perfect time to write a letter to your child's teacher to say thanks or have your child draw a picture for them.



# Income Limits for Some Programs Raised

More Lorain County residents will be eligible for some LCCAA programs under new eligibility rules announced by the federal Department of Health and Human Services and the Ohio Office of Community Assistance.

In response to the COVID-19 Crisis, income limits for programs funded by the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) have been raised from 125 percent of the Federal Poverty Line to 200 percent. For a family of four, the new upper limit is \$52,400.

This change affects eligibility for LCCAA's By Car, Tech Connect and Getting Ahead programs, said Planning and Community Services Director Frank Prihoda.

"This change will make many more people eligible for these programs," Prihoda said.

"Anyone who has recently lost



their job or who previously applied and was found over-income is encouraged to apply."

To verify eligibility, residents need to supply just the last 30 days of their income. That change is also in response to the crisis, Prihoda said. Furthermore, the stimulus payments prompted by the crisis are not considered income for these programs.

"Many affected by the crisis are finding themselves in new territory," he added. "These updates will make help available to them."

President and CEO Jackie

Boehnlein said the agency often turns away people who don't qualify under the lower income limit but who are still desperate for help.

"The limit of 125 percent is too restrictive and doesn't reflect the struggles of Lorain County residents," she said. "The new threshold is much more appropriate."

During the COVID-19 crisis, the By Car program is available. Applicants can apply and save. A financial literacy class is required and will be offered in a safe manner.

LCCAA's next Tech Connect class is currently scheduled for August. Getting Ahead classes are now being offered online.

For more information on By Car or Tech Connect, contact Colette Park at 440-204-3151 or [cpark@lccaa.net](mailto:cpark@lccaa.net). For information on Getting Ahead, contact Amy Steele at 440-204-3121 or [asteele@lccaa.net](mailto:asteele@lccaa.net).

## Getting Ahead Classes Offered Online

More than ever, people are feeling the tyranny of the moment during the COVID-19 crisis. For people in poverty, each day can bring a new crisis.

LCCAA's Getting Ahead program is designed to teach how to manage those tyrannical moments and, during this pandemic, the program is being offered online.

"We're adapting to the crisis by offering meetings through an online platform," said Client Services Coordinator Amy Steele. "Anyone with a tablet or computer and reliable internet can sign up right now."

Steele is one of the facilitators of the Getting Ahead program which uses a group setting to provide time and space for men and women to delve deeply into their lives to find strengths and identify their resources.

"Getting ahead gets you to the point where you can

**Getting**  
**AHEAD**  
in a Just-Gettin'-By World

say: 'Wait. Let's step back. Let's take a breath.' It allows you to see the bigger picture," Steele said.

The ten module curriculum helps participants build resources as the facilitator guides everyone in exploring solutions, practicing accountability, analyzing their

situations, assessing their own resources and making plans.

In the online class, meetings will be held twice a week. A book and set of needed materials is provided free of charge. Drop off arrangements will be made. Steele does not recommend using a smart phone for the class.

Residents who do not have a suitable device or reliable Internet should still contact Steele. When in person classes resume, people on the waiting list will be called. Contact Steele at 440-204-3121 or [asteele@lccaa.net](mailto:asteele@lccaa.net).

# Apply for PIPP or Fuel Funds by Phone



Ohio's extended Winter Crisis Program has ended but utility help is still available for Lorain County residents.

First Energy Fuel Funds are for customers who have already used their seasonal Winter Crisis Program benefit. Customer bills may be from First Energy, Ohio Edison or Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company. Customers must live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line and the maximum benefit is \$250.

Customers do not need to be in disconnect status to use these funds. Funds are available until they are depleted.

Applications are also being taken for HEAP which has been extended to June 1 and for the year-round Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP).

LCCAA has seen many residents avoid crisis by enrolling in PIPP, which allows you to reduce your monthly bill to a percentage of your income while paying off your arrearages.

Call the HEAP hotline at 1-855-806-9620 or go online at [www.capappointments.com](http://www.capappointments.com) to make an appointment. 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. Please place everything in an envelope and date it.

Documents can also be faxed to 440-245-3260. For a list of required documents, please visit our website at [www.lccaa.net](http://www.lccaa.net).

## Get Help Before the New Tax Deadlines

Federal, state and local tax filing deadline have been extended to July in response to the COVID-19 crisis, but organizers still plan to offer free tax preparation help.

The IRS moved the federal filing deadline to July 15 and the State of Ohio later did the same. Cities in Lorain County have also extended their deadlines to July 15.

Lorain County's Free Tax Prep Coalition was forced to close its tax sites on March 16 after having processed more than 1,000 returns. The coalition intends to offer help again once the state reopens more fully.

More information on the Lorain County Free Tax Prep Coalition can be found at [www.loraincountyfreetaxprep.org](http://www.loraincountyfreetaxprep.org)



org or by calling 2-1-1 or (800) 275-6106. Those interested in volunteering as tax preparers can call United Way of Greater Lorain County at 440-277-6530.

The Free Tax Prep Coalition is made up of numerous organizations across Lorain County that collaborate to help working families save money by providing free income tax preparation and filing. The coalition is led by United Way of Greater Lorain County.

## Have You Been Counted in the 2020 Census?

Millions of Americans have responded to the 2020 Census. Have you?

Some Census deadlines have been extended due to the COVID-19 crisis but you can still complete the census online or by phone.

If you have not responded online or by phone, you may have received a paper form to mail in.



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 hundreds or thousands of dollars in funding for our community.

Be counted! Visit [www.my2020census.gov](http://www.my2020census.gov).