

HEAD START HAPPENINGS

STUDENTS CELEBRATE CHINESE NEW YEAR

On February 8, Head Start, Inc. will celebrate Chinese New Year in our program with food, music, arts and crafts, and cultural exploration. Supported by Chinese students at Montana State University-Billings, Head Start students at all sites will broaden their understanding of the world around them as they discover how children in China celebrate the Lunar New Year.

Traditionally, Chinese New Year is celebrated between January 21 and February 20 of each year. The holiday is celebrated in many countries, including China, Hong Kong, Thailand, and the Philippines, as well as communities in the U.S. with significant Chinese populations, such as San Francisco. Similar to Thanksgiving in the U.S., Chinese New Year celebrations are marked by families coming together to eat, celebrate, and prepare for the year ahead. Music, dance, paper lanterns, and fireworks are all common components of Chinese New Year celebrations. Homes are cleaned, dumplings are prepared and shared, and small gifts are given to signify good fortune for the year ahead.

At Head Start, Inc. sites in Billings, Lockwood, Laurel, Joliet, and Red Lodge, students will have the opportunity to see the Chinese New Year through the eyes of a preschooler. Meals will feature traditional Chinese foods such as porridge and rice. Students will have a chance to try their hand at chopsticks, tracing basic Chinese letters, and at making paper lanterns, dragons, or kites. Decorations, music, and books will round out the celebrations.

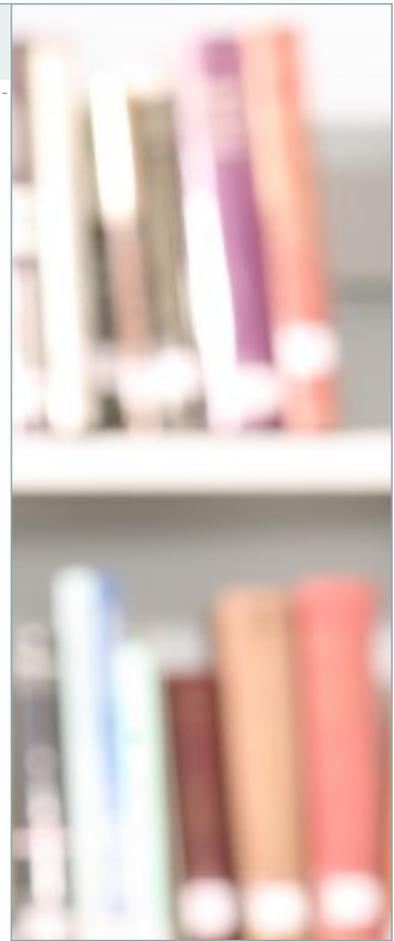
Parents and community members are welcome to join us for the festivities. Parents can speak with their child's teacher and community members can contact 245-7233 for more information.

YOUNG ARTISTS DEVELOP CREATIVE SKILLS

Head Start, Inc. students will once again have the opportunity to put their artwork on display at the Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings.

Each year, YAM staff and volunteers welcome Head Start classes to the museum for a specialized learning opportunity that includes exploring the museum and creating art of their own. Each child's creation is placed on display in the museum during the month of March, allowing parents, teachers, and the community to see the wonderful creativity of preschool students in our area. Each child also receives a book of his or her own focused on art and creativity.

Head Start parents and children are invited to celebrate art during a special reception at the YAM on March 31. More details to follow.



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OUR MISSION

Head Start, Inc. provides comprehensive services for young children and their families to achieve school readiness and lifelong success.

OUR VISION

Encourage, Empower, and Educate All Children

OUR VALUES

Children First
Respect
Positivity
Empathy
Competence



HEAD START READING CHALLENGE BEGINS!

Developing early literacy skills is a key factor in a young child's ability to succeed in school. To help preschoolers get ready to read, the Head Start Reading Challenge will begin on February 10!

The Reading Challenge urges parents and children to complete 20 reading activities in 20 days, including:

- Rereading a book that was read in the classroom
- Predicting what will happen in a book, or what will happen next during a story
- Child retelling a story to a family

member based on a book read in school

- Reading a book that is related to a classroom study,
- Child tells a story to family members from his or her imagination.

Each child will receive a booklet in his or her backpack on February 10 where parents can document each activity over the 20-day Reading Challenge. Students who return the booklet will be entered into a classroom drawing for prizes, as well as a Grand Prize drawing to be announced during the Yellowstone Art Museum reception for Head Start families on March 31.

Head Start, Inc. provides support to families in creating the best environment for children so that those students can succeed. Accessing resources for housing, transportation, mental health, substance abuse, parenting, and job training is all part of how we help parents be their child's first and best teacher

READ TO ME, DADDY MOVE WITH ME, MOMMY

Head Start, Inc. is proud to continue its successful mentoring groups for parents—Read to Me, Daddy and Move with Me, Mommy. Designed to provide support to parents in fostering strong relationships with their children, each group has a specific focus for parents.

Read to Me, Daddy welcomes fathers and their children to come together to read to books, do crafts, and spend quality time together. Move with Me, Mommy encourages moms to get physically active with their children, engaging in exercise and big body play together.

Read to Me, Daddy and Move with Me, Mommy programs are available to parents at all Head Start, Inc. sites. For dates and times, or to sign up for the free program, please contact Joni Ackerman at 406-869-1227.

LICE IN PRESCHOOL: NO REASON TO PANIC

A common cause of concern for parents and teachers is the discovery of lice in a child's hair. In child care settings, as well as educational environments such as Head Start, the discovery of head lice is not uncommon and is not a reason for panic.

Head lice are spread by direct, head-to-head contact. Head lice do not jump or fly—they crawl and thus are spread only by direct contact. Less frequently, head lice can be spread by sharing clothing or belongings onto which a louse has crawled.

In order to ensure that children in our program are healthy and ready to learn, Head Start teachers and teaching assistants are continually observing children for signs of illness and injury. During this ongoing observation, head lice are occasionally discovered. In this event, the parents of the child are notified and measures are taken in the classroom to clean materials and reduce the risk of transmission.

Head Start, Inc.'s policy on Head Lice states:

“To prevent the spread of lice infestation, children with live lice or untreated nits will be sent home and may only return to the classroom when they have been treated. The intent of this policy, however, is not to exclude children from the Head Start, Inc. program. If a child has more than one week of absences due to head lice, health and family services staff will work with the family on an individualized plan to prevent the spread of lice to other children. The objective will be to get rid of the lice so the child can return to class as quickly as possible while educating the family to reduce further infestation.”

Absent special circumstances, parents of other children in the classroom or program will not be notified that a child has been observed with head lice. Transmission risk of lice is relatively low and the program takes precautionary measures to reduce the spread of head lice. Widespread notification risks stigmatizing a young child without reason and increases the likelihood of unnecessary absences from the program.

Families who are struggling to manage lice infestation in the living environment or with the cost of head lice treatment are urged to reach out to their family advocates for support and assistance. In limited cases, financial assistance for cleaning and shampoos is available.

SCHOOL READINESS: OUR PRIMARY GOAL

Head Start, Inc. is designed to prepare young children for success in school and in life. Developing those foundational cognitive, developmental, and social/emotional skills is our daily work. Through providing high quality learning and instruction, creating warm and caring environments, and regularly assessing individual progress, Head Start, Inc. ensures that each one of our 360 preschool students make significant progress on all of the below goals:

Social & Emotional Development

Our focus for social and emotional skill development is RESILIENCY.

- ◆ Children will show increasing development of **initiative**, using independent thought and action to get needs met.
- ◆ Children will show increasing levels of **self-regulation**, recognizing and expressing emotions and managing behaviors in healthy ways.
- ◆ Children will demonstrate an increasing ability to form healthy **relationships** and have appropriate **attachment** with peers and significant adults.

Language & Literacy

Our focus for language and literacy development is VOCABULARY.

- ◆ Children will practice language and vocabulary skills through **meaningful conversations** with adults and peers.
- ◆ Children will have the opportunity to develop **early reading and writing skills**, grounded in exposure to a vocabulary-rich environment.

Cognition & General Knowledge

Our focus for cognition and general knowledge is EXPLORATION and RELATIONSHIPS.

- ◆ Children will use math in **everyday situations** to represent basic concepts such as quantity, pattern, size, shape or relationships.
- ◆ Children will express a **joy of discovery** and experimentation, using the language of scientific inquiry and demonstrating familiarity with basic ideas from physical, life, and earth sciences.
- ◆ Children will understand that they are a part of the **social world**, shaped by the past and able to influence the future.

Approaches to Learning

Our focus for approaches to learning is creating diverse and engaging LEARNING EXPERIENCES.

- ◆ Children will exit the program knowing **how to be a learner**.
- ◆ Children will engage with peers and adults to create **emotionally safe environments** where curiosity, creativity, independence, persistence, and risk-taking are encouraged.

Physical Well-Being and Motor Development

Our focus for physical well-being and motor development is establishing the FOUNDATION for learning and development.

- ◆ Children will display **age-appropriate well-being** and practice safe and healthy habits.
- ◆ Children will demonstrate **control** of large and small muscle groups necessary to explore and function in their environment.



School readiness skill development for children and families is at the heart of the mission of Head Start programs here and across the nation.

SHARING THE MISSION

Parents are a child's first and most enduring teacher. As a parent, guardian, family member, community volunteer, or caring adult involved in the life of a child, you have an important role in helping children learn and grow. Here are some simple things you can do to help young children get ready for school:

- ◆ **Attendance Matters:** Children can only learn and grow if they are present. Families can contribute to school readiness by establishing a habit of attending school daily.
- ◆ **Read, Read, Read :** One of the most important things a parent or loving adult can do to help a child succeed is to read with that child. Seeking out everyday opportunities to read and practice new words will give children exposure to thousands of vocabulary-building experiences and make the child feel important and valued.
- ◆ **Count, Sort, Organize:** Take every chance to show a child early math concepts in action – count the number of people in a line, sort mixed veggies by type, and organize clothes or toys by color. These simple, everyday activities build the basics of number comprehension and help a child's brain prepare itself to learn math skills for life.
- ◆ **Ask Questions:** Ask a child why and how questions often. These questions give children a chance to build basic learning skills by thinking about how to answer questions, and strengthen vocabulary and speech skills. Urge a child to explore why things might be the way they are, and how things might happen – these are the early steps toward scientific experimentation and prediction.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- ⇒ Volunteers are welcome to spend time in classrooms at all sites—Billings, Lockwood, Laurel, Joliet and Red Lodge. Meal helpers are particularly welcome, joining us for our family-style meals during the day.
- ⇒ Join our Germ Annihilators! Saturdays at Head Start sites, volunteers help us clean and disinfect toys and materials, as well as deep clean our rooms to ensure that children have a safe and healthy environment in which to learn and grow!
- ⇒ Interested? Call Tera Clough at 245-7233 for more info.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- ⇒ **Substitutes Needed!** Substitute teachers, bus aides, and kitchen aides needed at all sites. Contact Dee Dee Kane at 245-7233 for more details and qualification information.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- ◇ February 2: Cooking Classes for Parents, North Park
- ◇ February 5: Read to Me, Daddy, Joliet High School Library
- ◇ February 6: Read to Me, Daddy, North Park and Lockwood sites
- ◇ February 8: Chinese New Year Cultural Celebration
- ◇ February 8-19 : Teachers are conducting home visits for Head Start families
- ◇ February 12-15: Program Closed—Winter Break
- ◇ February 18: Career Workshop for Head Start Parents, North Park Conference Room
- ◇ February 27: Move with Me, Mommy, Limber Tree Yoga Studio, Billings (all sites welcome)
- ◇ March 5– April 3: Children’s artwork on display at the Yellowstone Art Museum
- ◇ March 14: Community Impact Night at Pizza Ranch to benefit Head Start, Inc. Everyone welcome!
- ◇ March 25-28: Program Closed– Spring Break
- ◇ March 31: Reception at the YAM for Head Start families
- ◇ May 2: Hawaiian and Polynesian Cultural Celebration
- ◇ May 19: Last Day of School!
- ◇ May 20: Staff Appreciation Day

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Serving Billings, Lockwood, Laurel,
Joliet, and Red Lodge

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