

HEAD START HAPPENINGS

SCIENCE NIGHT HELPS FAMILIES EXPLORE

On March 9, Head Start families at the North Park site will participate in a fun and exciting science-themed Family Fun Night. Families will learn and explore simple science activities they can do in the home to help preschoolers build key school readiness skills such as experimentation, prediction, investigation, observation, problem-solving, and logic.

Activities planned include making moon sand, color mixing, volcanos, and a classification station. Kids will also get to predict what happens when corn kernels are heated up, so snacks will be available for everyone!

Head Start Inc.'s school readiness goal for science is "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." At Head Start, we focus on teaching children the life cycle of plants, the concept of cause and effect, and how to predict, experiment, and reflect on what is learned. At the heart of our project-based approach to learning is the idea that discovery begins with preschoolers deciding what they want to learn about a topic and then, with adult guidance, tackling hands-on projects to investigate the answers to their questions.

All Head Start children will get an observation journal when they arrive, allowing them to document, through writing or drawing, what they learn as they move from station to station. Kids and family members of all ages are welcome for this family event.

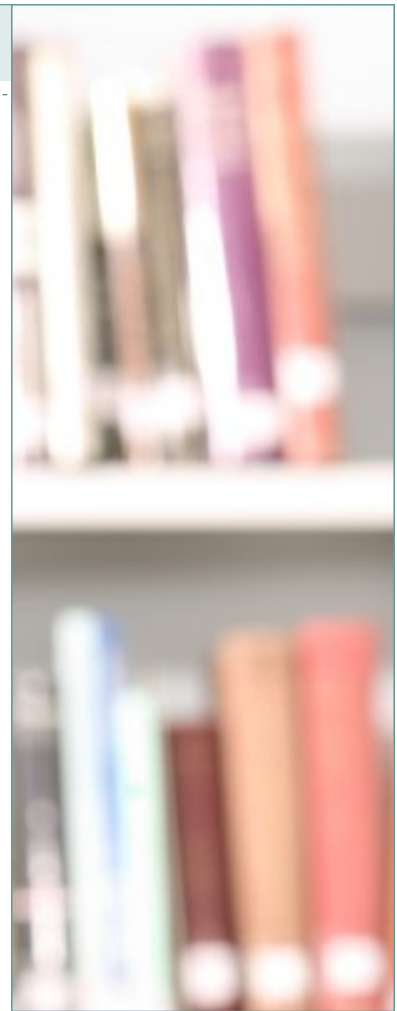
Science Night begins at 5 p.m. and concludes at 7 p.m. Families can arrive at any time to take part in the activities. A special thanks to the North Park Parent Committee who planned and organized the event, as well as to all the Head Start employees who are participating in the evening.

MIZZOU STUDENTS PLAN BILLINGS TRIP

For the third year in a row, students from the University of Missouri will travel to Billings to volunteer in the Head Start program at the North Park site. Through the Mizzou Alternative Break program, approximately 12 students give up their spring break and instead come to Head Start to work with children and families in the area. Mizzou students volunteer in the classroom, ride the bus, and do small projects during the week, with the intention of serving communities and making meaningful differences in the lives of children.

The program benefits Head Start children, who love making new friends and welcoming guests in the classroom. Mizzou student volunteers from past trips have discovered a passion for working with young children or serving families in need. Many college students have described the experience of volunteering at Head Start as life-changing.

We look forward to welcoming this year's Mizzou students at the end of the month!



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MISSION

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

VISION

Encourage, Empower, and Educate All Children

VALUES

Children First
Respect
Positivity
Empathy
Competence



BOARD WELCOMES NEW MEMBER WILL SELPH

During its January meeting, the Head Start, Inc. Board of Directors unanimously elected William Selph as its newest member.

Will is a fifth-generation resident of Billings, Montana, whose family has owned and operated the same business in the Heights for the past 45 years. He also is active in his church, and serves on the staff of Montana American Legion Boys State. Will is a member of the Knights of Columbus and Billings Breakfast Exchange Club. He is also proud to say he is an Eagle Scout.

Will has worked for three members of Montana’s congressional delegation, currently serving as the Community Liaison of Congressman Ryan Zinke. Will also served as the Finance Director of several statewide campaigns in Montana.

He attended the University of Montana, where he studied Political Science and History, with the goal of becoming a classroom teacher. He completed his undergraduate education receiving a B.A in Broadfield-Social Science and his licensure as a Secondary Education Instructor.

As a member of the Board, Will will have a three-year term and serve as a member of the Development Committee.

HEAD START PREPARES FOR FEDERAL REVIEW

During the week of March 21, 2016, the Head Start, Inc. program will be evaluated by a team of reviewers contracted by the Office of Head Start. The focus of the review will be Comprehensive Services and School Readiness.

This review is part of an ongoing effort from the Office of Head Start to ensure the quality of programs across the nation. Head Start programs receive federal funding for a five-year period, during which a program can receive up to five federal reviews. Each review focuses on a specific component of the program to ensure compliance with all federal regulations and seek evidence of excellence in Head Starts around the country.

Last year, Head Start, Inc. underwent three such reviews: one which focused on

fiscal management and enrollment procedures, one which focused on the health and safety of the program, and one which evaluated the quality of adult-child interactions in the classroom.

The program performed well in the reviews, having no findings on the health and safety review, and only two findings on the fiscal review which have since been resolved. The evaluation of classrooms returned strong scores, showing high levels of emotional support and classroom organization, and average skills in the category of instructional support.

The Comprehensive Services and School Readiness review will focus on the use of data to serve children and families, implementation of a high quality curriculum, and transitions out of the program.

FALL 2016 ENROLLMENT BEGINS FOR FAMILIES

March 1 marked the start of fall enrollment for the Head Start program. Head Start, Inc. serves 360 children in Yellowstone and Carbon Counties. Children who are 3 or 4 years old on or before September 10, 2016, and whose families meet income eligibility requirements, may apply for the program.

Applications for the program can be found at billingsheadstart.org/enrollment, along with more details regarding eligibility requirements and the enrollment process.

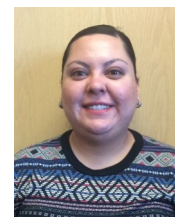
NEW STAFF MEMBERS



Nichole Peck is a teaching Assistant in Lockwood Room 408. Nicole was a volunteer at Head Start prior to her hire. Nichole’s background includes a degree in Equine Training as well as being a new mom of a baby daughter.



Rita Smith is a Teaching Assistant in Room 104A at North Park. Previously, Rita was a stay at home mom for years and then worked as a Dietary Aide and a substitute teacher for Billings Public Schools.



Theresa Williamson is a Teaching Assistant in Room 202P at North Park. Theresa has worked at Crow Agency Head Start as a co-teacher, has her Associates in Human Services and is proficient in the Crow language.

STUDENTS, FAMILIES MAKE PROGRESS ON GOALS

Head Start, Inc. partners with parents to ensure their children are ready for success in school and life. To do that, Head Start employees focus on developing school readiness skills with children and also develop Family Partnership Agreements to support families in achieving self-identified goals that support their child's school readiness. Head Start then gathers data to evaluate the program's success in working with children and families.

As of February 2016, 98% of all families had developed Family Partnership Agreements, with goals in place that include getting education, finding employment, improving housing and transportation options, and strengthening parenting skills.

Children in the program are also showing great progress. At the start of the school year, 82% of children observed were showing Beginning levels of school readiness skills, 13% showed Intermediate levels of skills, and 3% showed Advanced levels of skills. At the end of February, 40% of students showed Beginning levels of school readiness skills, 39% showed Intermediate levels of skills and 21% showed Advanced levels of skills.



On average, all Head Start, Inc. employees receive between 25-30 hours of ongoing training and professional development every year.

FOCUS AND SELF-CONTROL

Self-control and focus are both important skills for children to practice in order to succeed in school. Children play many fun games and activities in the classroom to help them learn these key life skills. Here are some that parents/grandparents and children can do together at home:

Swap in different words to favorite songs. Have fun singing songs with a twist. For example, sing “The wheels on the train go round and round” instead of “The wheels on the bus go round and round.” Does your child notice when you use different words? This game can help children develop listening skills.

Play games like Simon Says, I Spy, and “I’m thinking of something that starts with the letter . . .” These games help children practice focusing, paying attention, and remembering rules—all while having fun.

Play an opposite game. To help your child think flexibly, try playing a game where you do the opposite of what you say; for example, say “Simon says, touch your feet” while you touch your head. Or

say you will dance quickly to slow music, then put on fast music and dance slowly.

Play sorting games while cleaning up. Suggest picking up toys of a particular type, color, or shape. “Let’s pick up the blue crayons first, then the red crayons.” Even cleanup time can be fun and help children focus and think flexibly. Try singing a song while waiting in line or at a restaurant. Children who have tools to help them manage their behavior while waiting—like singing a favorite song—are ultimately more successful in pursuing goals with less frustration and distraction.

Choose books, games, and activities that reflect things your child finds interesting—whether it’s trucks, flowers, or bugs! Children focus best when they care about a topic. What does your child talk about? What themes come up as she plays?

This article adapted from the March 2016 edition of Teaching Young Children published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children



EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

- ⇒ Congratulations to Teaching Assistant **Jamie Slauch** who has been promoted to Teacher and will be taking over Classroom 202P at North Park in March.
- ⇒ Congratulations to Teacher **Rich Klein**, who received his Child Development Associate credential in February.
- ⇒ Congratulations to Teacher **Krystle Hatton-Grover**, who has completed the requirements for a Level 9 Certification on the Montana Early Childhood Practitioner Registry.
- ⇒ Cook **Patty Williams** attended the Montana Team Nutrition Program on Serving Up Success - Standardized Recipes.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- ◇ March 5– April 3: Children’s artwork on display at the Yellowstone Art Museum
- ◇ March 9: Family Fun Night at North Park—Science Night, 5-7 p.m.
- ◇ March 14: Community Impact Night at Pizza Ranch to benefit Head Start, Inc. Everyone welcome!
- ◇ March 19: St. Patrick’s Day Parade and Celtic Street Fair—watch Head Start in the parade & visit our booth!
- ◇ March 25-28: Program Closed – Spring Break
- ◇ March 31: Reception at the YAM for Head Start families
- ◇ April 8: Read to Me, Daddy at the Joliet Library
- ◇ April 11: Program Closed/Staff Work Day
- ◇ May 2: Hawaiian and Polynesian Cultural Celebration
- ◇ May 19: Last Day of School!

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