

HEAD START HAPPENINGS

CHILDREN BENEFIT FROM FULL-DAY CLASS

Head Start, Inc. has begun offering families the opportunity for a full-day classroom, extending instructional time from four hours to seven. These additional hours provide children more opportunities for learning and development, social skill building, and practicing healthy habits.

As a part of ongoing federal efforts to strengthen the overall quality of Head Start programs nationwide, agencies like Head Start, Inc. are moving towards increased contact time with students. By August 2021, all Head Start programs across the country will be expected to offer full-day programs, defined as 1,020 hours of class time per year. Research suggests that extending hours in a high quality early childhood education program will improve student outcomes for school readiness while also offering parents more options in managing the high cost of child care.

In our community, Head Start, Inc. has six classrooms currently offering full-day education, while our remaining 16 classrooms are part-time. Beginning in August 2017, our agency will transition at least two additional classes to full-day.

In addition to extending the duration of Head Start classes, new federal regulations issued this September are designed to provide robust direction to programs to improve quality, enhance innovation, and ensure that Head Start remains a leader in early childhood education. Here in our community, Head Start, Inc. is proud to have a highly qualified and trained staff that delivers the very best in child development, family engagement, and health services to the 360 children and families that we serve. As we transition our program to meet these new expectations, we welcome inputs and guidance from families and community members as to how we can best serve Yellowstone and Carbon Counties for years to come.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION FOR FAMILIES

All Head Start children and families are invited to attend a Holiday Celebration, Dec. 12 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m., at the North Park site. Food, photos, and a visit from Santa Claus are all on tap as we come together to celebrate the holiday season as a community.

Also, mark your calendars for the second annual Head Start Holiday Bazaar! Head Start families may sign up for a table to sell handmade goods and holiday treats by calling 245-7233. The bazaar is open to the public on Dec. 15 from 10 a.m.—4:30 p.m. at North Park for holiday shopping.



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MISSION

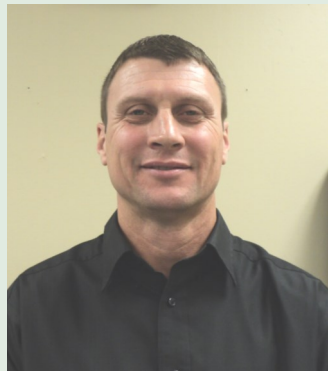
Head Start, Inc. provides comprehensive services for young children and their families to achieve school readiness and lifelong success.

VISION

Encourage, Empower, and Educate All Children

VALUES

Children First
Respect
Positivity
Empathy
Competence



HEAD START, INC. ADDS TWO TO MANAGEMENT TEAM

Head Start, Inc. is pleased to welcome Lloyd Shangreaux to our organization as Operations Director, and to announce the promotion of Megan Martin from Family Advocate to Community Relations Director.

Lloyd comes to our program with nearly 15 years of Human Services experience, including stints in Texas working in mental health and child care. He holds a Bachelor's in Sociology and Masters in Public Administration from Montana State University– Billings. Lloyd also has an background in construction and building trades.

Lloyd and his wife have eight children and six grandchildren. When not working or spending time with family, Lloyd enjoys golf, running, and outdoor time.

Megan has been a part of the Head Start family for more than two years and continues her professional growth by moving into the role of Community Relations Director. Megan has a Bachelor's degree in Community Health and previously worked in the mental health field before coming to Head Start, Inc.

In her free time, Megan and her husband enjoy playing with their two dogs, listening to music and rooting for the Bobcats.



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HEAD START LAUNCHES NEW PROGRAM

Beginning in January, families enrolled in Head Start, Inc. will have the opportunity to participate in the highly successful *Incredible Years* parenting program. These classes will be offered to Head Start parents free of charge, thanks to a generous \$15,000 grant from the Montana Children's Trust Fund, awarded to Head Start, Inc. earlier this year.

The *Incredible Years* program is designed to give parents of preschoolers

the skills to promote social, emotional, and language skills in the home, while reducing unwanted behaviors and conflicts between parents and their children. The program fosters parent-child attachment and focuses on the foundational skills that young children need to be successful in school.

Families interested in participating in the program should speak with their Family Advocate about enrollment.

FAMILIES WELCOME TO SHAPE HOLIDAY LEARNING

During the month of December, Head Start classrooms often celebrate holiday traditions, based on the rich diversity of cultures and backgrounds present in our program. Families are encouraged to share with classroom staff and family advocates the unique customs and celebrations that shape their holiday experiences. Our program is designed to reflect the community in which we serve, and we invite our parents, employees, and volunteers to share with the children in our program the array of traditions that are celebrated during this time of year. Family members are welcome to share songs, stories, rituals or customs that reflect their backgrounds in their child's classrooms.



Head Start, Inc. does not profess a particular culture or religion in our program. At the same time, we encourage our little learners to embrace the spirit of celebration, joy, and kindness during the holiday season. We strive not to avoid recognizing the differences that shape our community, but rather to enjoy the richness of learning and understanding that comes from finding commonality in our unique traditions and beliefs.

MANAGE HOLIDAY STRESS THIS SEASON

As the holidays near, many parents are dealing with complex emotions—joy from the cheer in the air, worry over finances, anxiety about family gatherings (or missing gatherings), sadness over losses, and frustration over increased behaviors from kids whose routines are disrupted with holiday events and activities.

Here are a few tips for navigating holiday challenges and stress:

- **Talk with your children about gift-giving.** No parent wants their child to be disappointed on Christmas morning. Dealing with financial challenges around the holidays can be extra challenging. Manage your child’s expectations. Tell him or her that it is ok to wish for things, but in life, we don’t get every single thing we wish for. Limit TV time—the excess of commercials pushing new toys and games creates massive wish lists. And remind your child that the holidays are about giving, not getting—focus their attention on making simple gifts for family members, helping a neighbor in need or volunteering.
- **Maintain regular routines and expectations.** Preschoolers thrive on routine. Predictability helps them function in a grown-up world. Holidays can mean rushing from one school concert to the next, family coming in and out, and

holiday movie nights that go way past bedtime. All of these things can make the holiday season fun, but remember that young children get overwhelmed easily and struggle to control their emotions and bodies when they are stressed. Try to maintain as much normalcy as you can in their days, even when holiday chaos reigns.

- **Model good behavior.** Young children repeat what they see. If a family member is pushing your buttons, try to express your feelings calmly and appropriately. Your child will learn that everyone has strong feelings, but that even adults have to manage those emotions in healthy ways. Avoid excessive consumption of food and alcohol, so that your child understands choices, even in the holiday season. Be patient in long lines, so that your child sees kindness in daily practice.
- **Give yourself the gift of self-care.** No matter what present is wrapped under the tree, parents are their child’s most important and meaningful gift. So take care of yourself. Ask for help if you need it—whether that means resources to make ends meet this time of year or just seeking out a friend to talk. Get plenty of rest, don’t overschedule holiday activities and events, and make time for activities that bring you joy.

Head Start, Inc. provides much more than preschool education to children. Our comprehensive services include health, nutrition, mental health, family support, transportation and more.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES STRETCHED TO THE MAX

Head Start, Inc. provides limited busing services for families who are unable to transport their children to school daily. Demand for these services often exceeds available seats, and this year we have a lengthy waiting list for busing. Parents, please make sure that if you have transportation, your child is riding the bus daily. Be reminded that your child must be escorted to the bus by someone at least 13 years of age and signed in, as well as escorted off the bus by a person listed on your Child Release Form. Thank you for your cooperation!



EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

- ⇒ Congratulations to Teachers **Kayla Brown** and **Saygar Christenson**, Teaching Assistant **Karian West** and Payroll Specialist **Sarah Moyer**, each of whom has welcomed a new baby boy into their families this fall.
- ⇒ Welcome to **Heather Beddes**, who has joined the Head Start team as a Family Advocate at the Lockwood site.

HELP WANTED

- ⇒ Head Start is hiring! Current job postings are available at www.billingsheadstart.org/employment-opportunities/
- ⇒ Substitutes needed! We need individuals interested in serving as subs in our Education, Nutrition, and Transportation departments. Contact 245-7233 for more information.

Head Start, Inc.
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Serving Yellowstone
and Carbon Counties

Phone: 406-245-7233
info@billingsheadstart.org



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- ◇ December 9: Employee Holiday Party
- ◇ December 12: Holiday Dinner for Families, 5:30–7 p.m., North Park
- ◇ December 15: Holiday Bazaar, North Park, 10:00-4:30
- ◇ December 19: Blankets & Bears at all sites
- ◇ December 26—January 2: Program Closed
- ◇ January 9: *Incredible Years* classes start in Laurel
- ◇ January 16: No Classes; All Staff Training
- ◇ January 17: *Incredible Years* classes start at North Park
- ◇ January 20: ACEs training for parents
- ◇ January 30—February 2: Asian Cultural Celebration at all sites

