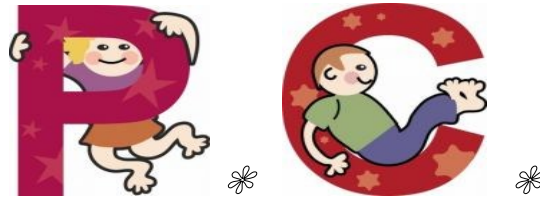




# PARENT NEWSLETTER



Dear Parents,

Ever wonder what Parent Policy Council is all about and how you can participate? Please accept our invitation to come and learn more about Policy Council and the opportunities it presents. We welcome any parent to attend our monthly meetings to get a glimpse of what happens at Policy Council, find out more about the council's work, and meet other parents from around the agency that serve on this committee. Here are just a sampling of some of the things that Policy Council does:

- ⇒ Approve hire and termination recommendations including participating on interview teams for open positions
- ⇒ Work with Head Start Managers to develop and monitor budgeting, and program options we offer.
- ⇒ Participate in the review of personnel policies and benefits offered to Head Start staff
- ⇒ Ensure parent perspective on important policies, parent satisfaction surveys and our annual self-assessment
- ⇒ Attend regional conferences ( or other parent leadership opportunities) representing our agency, bringing back important information to share with our program

We generally meet from 9:30-11:30 at a central location for our service area which is Hancock and Washington counties. If you would like more information or help arranging carpooling please speak with your center staff or call Ellen Savage, one of CFO's Health and Family Partnership Managers who works with Policy Council at 1-800-834-4378, ext. 234. We hope to see you at a meeting in the near future.

## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP . . . .

CFO's Head Start and Early Head Start Federal Grants require that 20 percent of budgeted expenses come from donations made by the communities and individuals that are served by CFO.

While cash donations are one way to support the program, there is another way that you can help—with *In-Kind* donations. *In-Kind* refers to donations of non-cash items such as donated time, materials, services, etc., and is described as “anything given to a Head Start program that is an allowable expense that would normally be paid for by grantee (CFO)”.

**VOLUNTEER!** Volunteer services provided by current or former Head Start/Early Head Start parents is a great way to help. Not only does it provide a wonderful way for you to stay connected to the Head Start program which also benefits your child/children, it also assists CFO in meeting Head Start in-kind requirements. You might volunteer in the classroom, at meal times, help with cleaning, snow shoveling and/or salting walkways.

Professional, technical, and consulting services are also welcomed and needed.

**DONATE!** Material goods or supplies which will be used by the program are another great way to assist in meeting grant requirements. All donations must be documented, so when you volunteer or donate items, please ask someone at your center for an In-Kind form. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of children. Thank you in advance for your help.



## IDEAS FOR VOLUNTEERS

- ⇒ Assist in the classroom or kitchen
- ⇒ Donate supplies
- ⇒ Participate on the curriculum planning committee
- ⇒ Classroom preparation: repair broken toys or equipment, labeling or straightening materials, mending books, making nametags or placemats
- ⇒ Cleaning, vacuuming, dusting, washing, planting, raking, shoveling, painting, yard clean up, maintenance and repair, maintain the parent area
- ⇒ Donate time as a professional — librarian, fireman, doctor, dentist, mental health provider, trainer or speaker.
- ⇒ Donate time for recruitment activities, prep for parent meetings or parent/child activities
- ⇒ Become a member of Parent Policy Council
- ⇒ Attend Health Services Advisory Committee, and Child Development Committee
- ⇒ Mileage in-lieu of reimbursement for time spent attending meetings listed above may also be donated as in-kind.

### CFO's Policy for Exclusion of Sick Children

When your child shows any sign of illness, please keep your child at home. You will be called to come for your child if he/she becomes ill while at the center. It is our policy that children returning to the center after having a communicable disease must bring a physician's release. The center will notify you at once if your child becomes ill or injured during the day. The staff will give emergency care or first aid until you arrive. If the situation warrants, your child will be taken to the hospital or ER and we will contact you to meet us there. It is very important that you or a designated person can be reached at all times in case something does come up. Please make sure classroom staff have your most current contact information. A copy of the full Policy for Temporary Exclusion of Sick Children is available to parents upon request.

### Can You Help Spread the Word?

We currently have openings for childcare. **Pre-school childcare openings** are available in our full-day child care centers, as well as some Head Start openings in some centers. Contact Enrollment the central office at 667-2995 or 1-800-834-4378 for more information.

We are still accepting applications for Head Start and child care in all of our centers. If a center is full, the applications are processed and placed on a waitlist. Applications are pulled from the waitlist as soon as an opening becomes available. Thank you!



### Let it Snow

**Head Start Only Centers:** As a rule if Public Schools in your area are closed for a snow day, our centers will also be closed. Local Radio Stations may also announce Head Start closings in stormy weather. If your center needs to close due to bad weather once the day has begun, we will call you or your emergency contact to pick up your child. Please be sure to have someone available who can pick up your child if you cannot under these circumstances.



**Head Start and Child Care Centers:** Generally our full day/year centers remain open, even during snow events. In the rare event of a severe storm we may not open full-year centers at all or close early. We will make every attempt to notify parents as early as possible and will post the closing on local radio and television stations.



## **CELEBRATING HOLIDAYS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN**

Most toddlers and preschoolers have hazy memories when it comes to the holidays, so each year is new for them. Taking a little time to consider your child's point of view during the holiday season can help you plan experiences that are meaningful and satisfying for the whole family.

### **HIGHLIGHT THE FAMILIAR AND INTRODUCE CHANGES GRADUALLY**

Young children thrive when they can count on regular routines, predictability, and most of all, the loving support and presence of their parents and other loved grown-ups. Just being there for a quiet story or a walk in the woods is a comfort to young children during stressful times. Try to let your children know what to expect when changes in their routine are planned.

### **HONOR YOUR CHILD'S FEELINGS ABOUT NEW SITUATIONS**

For many families, the decorations, celebrations, and visits are a valued part of the warmth and joy of the holiday season. Try to remember that often, toddlers and preschoolers would rather meet new people (Santa, Great Uncle Fred from Arizona, etc.) from the safety of their parents' arms. The comfort and security you provide for your young child will help them to adapt to new situations (sometimes slowly!)

### **GO EASY ON THE IDEA THAT ONLY "GOOD" CHILDREN RECEIVE GIFTS**

Children will naturally make mistakes because it's an important part of learning for all of us. We all have moments when our behavior may not be all we want it to be. During the holiday season (and always), try to focus on the positive things your child is doing, and provide gentle guidance when help is needed. Spending time together as a family enjoying your own customs and traditions will be motivating for your child.

## **FINDING A SENSE OF CALM DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON (and other stressful times)**

- \* Just be there for your child. Your presence and loving support will always be the greatest gift your child can receive.
- \* Try to stick with regular routines as much as possible. Reading a story, going for a walk, playing a favorite game together, or cooking together can be a welcome break from busy holiday preparations (for you and your child!)
- \* Let your child know when there will be a shift in their regular routine. Talk about what will be happening, listen and watch for any signs that your child may be anxious or worried. Most of us will adapt to new situations given time to sort it all out.
- \* Try to resist the emphasis on commercialism and materialism that can be present during the holiday season. Parents can be pressured to overspend on gifts that are popular. Remember, most young children enjoy simple toys and games (especially home-made!)
- \* Try to limit screen time. Instead of watching television or playing video games for hours, children will be happier and healthier playing outside in the snow! The commercials alone during the holiday season can be overwhelming for kids and adults alike!
- \* Remember what you love about the holiday season and try to create those experiences for your children.
- \* Take care of yourself, too!





### Toys for Older Infants:

- \* For Pretend Play: Baby dolls, puppets, plastic and wood vehicles with wheels, water toys.
- \* To drop and take out: Plastic bowls, large beads, balls and nesting toys
- \* To build with: Large soft blocks and wooden cubes.
- \* For large muscle development: Large balls, push and pull toys, and low, soft things to crawl over.

### Toys for Toddlers:

- \* Things for solving problems: wood puzzles, blocks that snap, objects to sort and things with hooks, buttons, buckles and snaps.
- \* Things for pretend building: blocks, transportation toys, construction sets, child-sized furniture, and puppets.
- \* Things to create with: large, non-toxic washable crayons or markers, large paintbrushes, finger paint, large paper, colored construction paper, blunt tipped scissors and rhythm instruments.
- \* CD & DVD players with a variety of music.

### Toys for Preschoolers:

- \* Things for solving problems: puzzles with 12-20 pieces, blocks that snap together, collections and other smaller objects to sort by length, width, shape, color etc.
- \* Things for pretend building: blocks for complex structures, transportation and construction sets, child-sized furniture, dress-up clothes, dolls with accessories, puppets and simple puppet theaters.
- \* Things to create with: same as for toddlers but large and small crayons and markers.

### Safe Toys Around Your Home

- Cardboard Boxes of all sizes . Children can stack them, crawl inside or pretend they are tables or ovens.
- Cooking items such as plastic bowls and lids, small pans, measuring cups, spoons, and safe utensils.
- Dress up clothing such as: Adult Shoes, hats, dresses, shirts, purses and wallets.
- Use sofa cushions and pillows to stack and climb on or to build walls of houses.
- Newspapers and old magazines, toddlers can “read” and tear these and preschoolers can cut with child-safe scissors.
- Clean out empty packages boxes and plastic bottles (not bags) from food or grooming products for a play “store.”

Remember to check all toys regularly because they can become unsafe from typical wear and tear. Remove or throw out any that are no longer safe.

### *“How can I tell if a toy or object is too small to give my baby?”*

The fourth leading cause of death in young children is from choking! Here’s a simple way to tell if a toy or object is too small for children under the age of three:

- \* Save an empty cardboard roll from toilet paper and cut so it measures 2 1/4 inches long.
- \* Try to stick the toy or object inside. If it fits in the tube, then you know it is too small.
- \* It could fit into a child’s mouth and get stuck in his or her throat.

### *Small Parts or Pieces are Dangerous!*

Never let your child play with things like safety pins, coins, pen and marker caps, buttons, batteries, or bottle tops.

- \* Do not give children necklaces and ties and other things that might break or that they will put around their necks.
- \* Do not give your child objects that have electrical cords or hinges. Always stay nearby and supervise young children when they play.



## SOME BEDTIME ROUTINES

Bedtime routines are important for young children. Getting plenty of rest can help keep your child healthy and happy. Having a schedule and being consistent are the keys to a successful bedtime routine. Here are a few suggestions for bedtime:

- Create a quiet atmosphere for about ½ hour before bedtime. This is a good time for the TV to be off. Instead play a quiet game or read a book with your child.
- Prepare your child ahead with words like: "In five more minutes we will start to get ready for bed."
- A snack of protein like peanut butter and crackers or cheese right before bed can help with getting better sleep at night. Cut out any caffeine foods, such as soda or chocolate.
- Be firm with bedtime hour. Make a pretend clock with your child and set the time for bed. When that matches the real time clock, your child will know that bedtime has arrived.
- Your child may need a transition into bed and from the rest of the family. Read a story together after he or she is in bed. A very successful tip is to record a favorite story in your own voice and play the recording after you have left the room.

- Keep a stuffed animal in the bedroom only to be slept with at nap or bedtime. The child looks forward to bedtime and being reunited with that stuffed toy.

Have the rest of your living area fairly quiet after your child is in bed respecting his or her need for quiet in order to fall asleep.

### 7 SUPER THINGS PARENTS CAN DO!

- Talk often with your children from the day they are born.
- Hug them, hold them, and respond to their needs and interests.
- Listen carefully as your children communicate with you.
- Read aloud to your children every day even when they are babies. Play and sing with them often.
- Say “Yes” and “I love you” as much as you say “No” and “Don’t.”
- Ensure a safe, orderly and predictable environment, wherever they are.
- Set limits on their behavior and discipline them calmly, not harshly.



### **Strategies at the Store for Saving Money — Check the “Unit Price”**

The “unit price” of a food is the price per pound or per ounce. When comparing the cost of two different sizes of the same food, or two different brands that are of different weights, it can be hard to figure out which one is a better buy. The tag on the shelf should tell you the total price and the unit price — this way, you can get the best deal.

You will find that often the larger container is cheaper. Even though you pay more up front for the large size, you are getting a cheaper price overall. Buy larger sizes of staple foods if you have the storage space and money in your food budget.



***For volunteer, and monetary or in-kind donation information, please visit us at***

***www.childandfamilyopp.org***