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OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHENANGO, INC.

Head Start Newsletter



Computers and Young Children

In this age of technology, we recognize the value in introducing computers to young children. Computers in an early childhood setting are another way for children to explore, to investigate and to master. Beginning in March, Young Explorer Computers will be introduced into four of our Head Start centers, with the long term goal of equipping all centers with these units by the end of 2004.

We believe that computers are a valuable asset to our program, but only because our approach to computer use is geared to the way young children learn and develop. For example, we know that young children are developing social skills during these years, so we place the computer where children can interact as they work with it. At least 2 children can sit and work side-by-side on the cozy, comfortable bench that accompanies the child-friendly unit. This arrangement allows for collaborative problem solving and sharing of ideas.

Children need to have opportunities to work independently of adults. The computer software allows for independent use. We chose software with verbal instructions or picture menus that allows children to work with little adult intervention.

Children learn by doing. The software they'll use will allow them to explore concepts, determine the pace and the direction of the experience, and use their creativity. It will be open ended and will call for thinking and active problem solving. The computer station will be introduced to children, just like any of the other areas in the room. Rules will be established for its use. Children will learn how to access programs and how to take care of the unit.

Just like blocks and paints, computers are a beneficial tool in any early childhood setting. Children will have the freedom to explore this tool in a supportive environment that encourages active exploration. All of these experiences help prepare them for their transition into the next learning environment.

Dates to Remember

- * March 17 – Policy Council

Dates to Remember

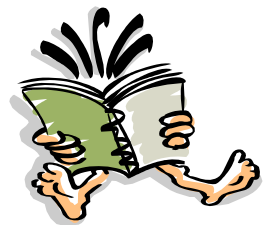
- * April 19 – 23 Spring Break – No Preschool Head Start
- * Policy Council – To Be Announced

How Can I Promote The Literacy Development Of My Child?

Parents are the first and most important teachers in their children's lives. Listed below are some of things that you can do with your child to help him or her get on the road to reading well.

1. Talk! Talk! Talk! – This is one of the simplest and most important things you can do to help your child learn new words and how to communicate their thoughts and feeling. Children learn from experience. Even before your baby is born, he or she is listening to voices around them. Talking with your child also builds their self-esteem and helps them feel confident when talking with others.
2. Reading with your child. It is never too early to begin reading with your child. Spending special time reading a favorite book with a child not only exposes them to how a book works, it is also a great way to spend some quality one-on-one time with your child. When reading with a child, make it a fun time. If your child isn't interested, try again at another time. Making reading a fun time will help your child develop a love for reading.
3. Name activities. Children love activities that have to do with their name. Some activities are: 1) Write your child's name on a plate with pancake syrup and then let them stick dry cereal on it. This is a fun and tasty activity. 2) Make up funny words using the first letter of your child's name. Talk about that all the words start with the same letter, just like their name. 3) Label your child's toys, books, or clothes with their name and point it out at every opportunity.
4. Help your child make their own book. This is a great activity for toddlers and preschoolers. You can use just about any type of material. For example, construction paper, brown paper bags, or washcloths. Cut it and/or fold it into the shape of a book. Let your child "write" their on their book's pages or they can tell you the story and you can write it for them. When you are all finished, take turns with your child reading their story.
5. Counting socks. As you match and fold your family's socks, count and match them with your child. Talk about how every sock has a mate, making it a pair. This activity helps your child develop math skills and learn new words.

These are just a things that you can do with your child to help him or her learn skills that will help them as they begin to read and write. Playing and talking with your child helps to build your relationship with him or her. Making learning fun can make a child want to learn even more, so have lots of fun!



Staying Healthy



This year's cold and flu season has been a challenge for many people. At Head Start we have noticed very low attendance due to illness. There are a few things that we are doing in the classroom and on home visits that you should be aware of. Many of these procedures may help reduce the chance of catching or spreading cold and flu germs in your own home.



1. Staff, volunteers and visitors coming in to a Head Start center to work with children (not if you are just picking up or dropping off your child) are reminded they must wash their hands as soon as possible upon entering the building.
2. Staff, volunteers, visitors and children are reminded to sneeze and cough into their arm - instead of covering with your hand.
3. Staff, volunteers, visitors and children are reminded to wash hands after using a tissue, coming in from outside and after toileting.
4. Staff are reminded to remove toys as soon as possible from the classroom area (where many different children have access to the toys) if the toy has been in a child's mouth. The toys must be cleaned before being put back out in the classroom.
5. Staff replaces toothbrushes 3 times a year and after a child has been sick.
6. Staff are reminded to not hold hands as part of the routine before mealtime. (After hand washing has been completed.)

We know that there is no way to totally stop the spread of germs. We can only use the best health practices we are aware of to help keep your children and your family as healthy as possible.

Playing With Blocks

When you see your child playing with blocks either at home or at a Head Start center or Early Head Start socialization he/she is learning so much! Some of the skills that are developed and enhanced are:

- ⇒ Discovering about size, shape, weight, balance and form
- ⇒ Learning about numbers and fractions
- ⇒ Strengthening big and small muscles
- ⇒ Learning how to work with others

Remember that by playing *with* your children you provide them with many opportunities to develop skills, but most importantly you strengthen the bond between you and your child.



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We're on the web!
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Big and Little

Are your children big, or are they little? How about their toys, their pets, their school? Through fun activities, children can discover that “big” and “little” are fluid ideas. What’s little in one setting may not be in another. Four –year-old Hakim may be little compared to his teacher, but compared to his baby brother he’s big.

Teaching children about big and little helps them develop math and reading skills. It’s easy to see how math fits in. Math is a way to order, to see differences and similarities. But reading? Big and little activities come into play here, too, as you help children learn language to describe what they are observing. The children can then sort objects into relationships and comment on these relationships.

Remember that “big” and “little” can refer to quantity, volume, or height. Try these activities as a starting point for you own sizable adventures:

- ⇒ (Music) Sing the itsy-bitsy spider song, and show your child hand movements that accompany the song. Then make up your own words for “the great big spider” song. What movements represent the big spider? What other words could you substitute for big and little? Try varying the words in other favorite songs, too. Maybe Mary could have a tiny lamb or a gigantic lamb.
- ⇒ Talk! Have a conversation with your child about big and little. Find out how your children perceives themselves. Perhaps in comparison to you, they are little, but next to a puppy, they are big.

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Head Start Contact Information

Preschool Head Start Sites			Early Head Start		
Site	Phone Number	Family Advocate	Site	Phone Number	Home Visitor
Bainbridge	(607) 967-8582	Brenda Oralls	Bainbridge & Guilford	(607) 967 – 3725	Jody Kenyon
Guilford	(607) 895-6248	Joyce Tanner	Greene	(607) 656 – 4829	
Greene	(607) 656-9367	Rhoda Kinne	New Berlin	(607) 847 – 8587	Rindy Cummings
New Berlin	(607) 847-8587	Pat Kellogg	North Norwich	(607) 334 – 7114	Julie Palmere
North Norwich	(607) 334-4324	Barbara Pierce	Norwich	(607) 334 – 7114	Peggy Asma
Norwich	(607) 336-6219	Abigail Cortez	Otselie Valley	(315) 653 – 7514	James Fletcher
Oxford	(607) 843-9990	Becky Vanderhiede	Oxford	(607) 843 – 7028	Michelle Deady
Otselie Valley	(315) 653-7514	Paulette Paliana	Sherburne	(607) 334 – 7114	Joe Palmere
Sherburne	(607) 674-5197	Jennifer Palmer	Combination Option	(607) 336 – 8957	Karyn Paul
Afton Pre-K Program	(607) 639 – 8234				