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### Mercer County Head Start / Early Head Start

1901 Memorial Drive  
Farrell, PA 16121

Tel: 724-346-4482  
Fax: 724-346-4431



## Dates to Remember

### Tuesday, October 7, 2008 @ 10:00 a.m.-12:00:

Mercer County Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Meeting in the Board Meeting room at the Farrell Area School District.

### Wednesday, October 8, 2008: @ 10:00 a.m.:

Sharon Early Head Start Play Group at the Sharon Salvation Army, 660 Fisher Hill, Sharon, Pa.

### Thursday, October 9, 2008 @ 10:00 a.m.:

Mercer Early Head Start Play Group at 8484 Sharon Mercer Road, Mercer, Pa.

Tuesday, October 14, 2008: "Autumn Fest" at the 4H Park, (Mercer Co-operative Extension) Route 19, Mercer, Pa. from 5:00 p.m.-7:00.

### Wednesday, October 22, 2008 @ 10:00 a.m.:

Sharon Early Head Start Play Group at the Sharon Salvation Army, 660 Fisher Hill, Sharon, Pa.

Thursday, October 23, 2008 @ 10:00a.m.: Mercer Early Head Start Play Group at 8484 Sharon Mercer Road, Mercer, Pa.

### Tuesday, November 4, 2008 @ 10:00 a.m.:

Mercer County Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Meeting in the Board Meeting Room at the Farrell Area School District.

### Wednesday, November 5, 2008 @ 10:00 a.m.:

Sharon Early Head Start Play Group at the Sharon Salvation Army, 660 Fisher Hill, Sharon, Pa.

### Thursday, November 6, 2008 @ 10:00 a.m.:

Mercer Early Head Start Play Group at 8484 Sharon Mercer Road, Mercer, Pa.

### Tuesday, November 19, 2008 @ 10:00 a.m.:

Sharon Early Head Start Play Group at the Sharon Salvation Army, 660 Fisher Hill, Sharon, Pa.

### Thursday, November 20, 2008 @ 10:00 a.m.:

Mercer Early Head Start Play Group at 8484 Sharon Mercer Road, Mercer, Pa.



## UNITY NEWSLETTER

### Mercer County Head Start / Early Head Start

A Community Action Partnership of Mercer County Program; affiliated with the Farrell Area School District

Fall 2008

Volume 4 Issue 1

Serving the Children and Families of Mercer County ages Birth to 5

### Dear Parents/Guardians:

#### Greetings!

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your children to the Mercer County Head Start/Early Head Start Program. It is our desire to make this a very rewarding, successful learning experience for you and your family.

One of Head Start's main goals is to acknowledge and respect parents as equal partners in the education of their children. Therefore, it is our hope that you will allow us to partner with your family to enhance the development of your child's education. This can only be accomplished through your active participation and involvement as a member of the Head Start/Early Head Start family.

Opportunities for parents to become involved include, but are not limited to the following:

- \* Participating in home visits with your child's Family Advocate or Classroom Teacher
- \* Keeping your scheduled home visits with your Early Head Start Home visitor and participating in monthly socializations
- \* Attending parent meetings
- \* Becoming a member of the Policy Council and serving on different subcommittees
- \* Being a classroom volunteer or becoming a classroom substitute

In whatever capacity you chose, we encourage you to stay actively involved in your child's education. After all, you are the first and most important teacher of your child. We are looking forward to working with you throughout the year. If you have any questions or concerns, call our toll free number 1(866)284-1059 and we will be happy to address them.

**Have a Great Year!**

### If your child is being transported on school vehicles, you are subjected to the following rules:

- \* The bus will wait at the scheduled stop for **one minute only**.
- \* The child **must** be escorted to meet the bus by a parent or other designated adult authorized by the parent. The adult must be listed on the bus release form.
- \* All children and parents must board and unload at assigned points.
- \* All parents /guardians are responsible for the safe delivery of their child to the vehicle in the morning and receiving the child when they return from school.
- \* If no designated adult is present to receive the child at the assigned stop and previous arrangements have not been made, the child will be returned to the classroom. It will then be the responsibility of the parent /guardian to come to the school and transport the child home.
- \* Parents must notify the classroom teacher when the child is not attending school.
- \* Parents transporting their own child must escort the child to and from the classroom following the sign-in procedures of their respective school building.
- \* Children must arrive at their scheduled start time and picked up at their scheduled ending.

### Fire/Candle Safety Tips

If you are fond of candles and plan on burning them, you should consider the risks candles pose and take precautions. While candles can be beautiful and smell wonderful, users should remember that a candle is an open flame, and it can ignite anything combustible nearby according to the National Fire Protection Association. **Here are some candle fire facts:**

- \* An estimated 18,000 home fires started by candles were reported to fire departments. These fires caused 130 deaths, 1,350 injuries and property losses of \$333 million.
- \* Forty percent of home candles fires started in the bedroom, resulting in 30 percent of the deaths by candle fires.
- \* Almost half of candle fires start when some form of combustible material is left too close, candles were left unattended, abandoned or inadequately controlled. Five percent were started by children playing with the candle.
- \* Home candle fires almost double in December, with Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day being when most home candle fire occur.

#### The National Fire Protection Association recommends the following candle safety tips:

- Make sure all candles are extinguished before going to sleep or leaving the room.
- Keep candles away from items that can catch fire, such as clothing, books and curtains.
- Use sturdy candle holders that won't tip over easily and that are made from material that won't burn. They should also be large enough to collect dripping wax.
- Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids.
- Keep candle wick trimmed to one-quarter inch and extinguish taper and pillar candles when they get to within 2 inches of the holder. Votives and containers should be extinguished before the last half-inch of wax begins to melt.
- During power outages carry flashlights, not candles.



To All Parents!!!

Our program is a recipient of the United Way Day of Caring campaign for 2008-2009. Several local agencies will be donating hats and mittens for our HS/Pre-K children to have during the winter months.

Thanks to a great local community!!!



### NOTICE TO ALL HEAD START PARENTS/GUARDIANS!

**There will be NO classes for Head Start Students Friday October, 10th and Monday October 13th. Also Head Start will not be in session Friday, October 24, 2008.**



**How To Help Your Child Learn: Use praise**

When your children master something in life, it is your job as a parent to show them that you admire the accomplishment. It really doesn't matter what the achievement is, it could be something very simple or something extremely complex. The important thing for your child's development is that you recognize it.

Let your children know that you think their achievements are marvelous. Think about your own experiences and you will probably find that some of your happiest experiences in life have been when you were recognized for something you had accomplished.

Praising your children teaches them that learning and achieving are inherently valuable in life. Giving your children the gift of feeling satisfaction at what they have accomplished by your reactions to their efforts and success is the right thing to do. These feelings of success throughout life are linked to those early experiences with parents, when parents praise children for trying hard and reaching goals.

Some people worry that their children will think that their parents' love is conditional if they praise them for their achievements. According to experts, if you give your child affection at other times that are not linked to worldly achievement, praising them for their accomplishments is a good thing to do. The way you praise is also important and you shouldn't link your praise to your affection for your child.

You should make your praise accomplishment specific as possible. That means you'll want to say "You've done a great job coloring within the line" and not "I love it that you are so good at coloring." The reason is the last statement links your affection for the child to the accomplishment and that is not something you want to do. Stay away from comparing your child to other children's accomplishments.



Tammy Ross was born in Sharon, Pa. and raised in Farrell with the greatest grandparents, mother and aunt. She is a graduate of the West Middlesex Area School District. After graduation she

attended the Mercer County Career Center where she took Business Administration Courses.

Tammy is the Administrative Assistant for the Mercer County Head Start/Early Head Start/Pre-K Counts Program. She enjoys working for the Victim Advocacy Program for Abused Women and being the Secretary for her church, New Light Missionary Baptist. Tammy is a very spiritually driven woman of multi-talents. She has been employed with the Head Start Program for seven years. Tammy resides in Sharon with her husband and son. She is very devoted to her family.

Tammy interests include reading, church activities, shopping, traveling, spending time with her family and close girlfriends. When entering the John Hetra Building, seeking information, the first person you will see and talk to, is Tammy Ross.

**WHY IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IMPORTANT?**

Physical activity goes hand-in-hand with healthy eating and provides many health benefits, including maintaining a healthy weight. Children who are active at play one to two hours a day can eat a wider variety and amount of food, making it easier to get the nutrients and calories they need to grow, learn and play. **Encourage your child to be active from an early age.** Physical activity, ranging from simple play to family outings to all kinds of sports, provides many health benefits. In addition, remember that children are always watching, so set a good example by exercising yourself!



**Healthy, Happy Kids**

**Starting and Staying Stress-free while Attending School**

The start of school brings excitement-and sometimes stress. To help your child cope, try this advice

- **Keep it physical**—Engage in outside active play together.
- **Relax**-Teach your child to deal with stress by taking three slow deep breaths or by closing his eyes and imagining a favorite place.
- **Make time for play**-Offer "stress-reducing" tools, such as paint, clay or sand. Children love the sensory quality of paint, clay and sand.

**Stress Test**

**Children responding to stress may:**

- Act cranky, irritable, or moody.
- Become clingy or show regressive behavior.
- Experience nightmares or difficulty sleeping.
- Have problems concentrating on schoolwork.
- Withdraws from friends or family members.
- Complain of stomachaches or headaches.

If your child shows any of these symptoms and they interfere with her enjoyment of school, talk to her teacher to learn more about what's going on in class and possible solutions. If symptoms persist, consult a mental-health professional.

**Make Breakfast Quick and Easy For Family**

Good mornings start with breakfast. Our mornings can be a rush. We hurry to get ready for work, school and day-care. Help your child learn healthy eating habits. Start every day with breakfast. Try some of these quick and easy ideas for your family:

- ◆ Top a warm tortilla shell with ham slices, scrambled eggs and salsa.
- ◆ Spread peanut butter on raisin toast and top with sliced bananas.
- ◆ Cheese and crackers or a grilled cheese sandwich.
- ◆ Oatmeal with applesauce, sprinkled with nuts.
- ◆ Yogurt and fruit smoothies and graham crackers.
- ◆ String cheese, whole-wheat crackers and fruit.
- ◆ Bagels with cream cheese and raisins.

Studies confirm that students who eat breakfast each morning are more attentive in school and perform better on their schoolwork.



**KIDS IN THE KITCHEN**

**"Pumpkin Pudding"**

Taste like pumpkin pie without the crust.

- 1 package (3.5 ounce) instant Vanilla pudding
- 1 cup canned or mashed pumpkin
- 1 1/2 cups skim milk
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Beat pudding mix and milk together until well blended, about 2 minutes. Stir in pumpkin and cinnamon. Chill before serving.

**"Honey Nut Granola"**



Delicious snack for holiday gifts!

- 6 cups container old fashioned oats

- 1 cup sliced almonds
- 2 cups sweet flaked coconut
- 1/2 cup margarine
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 cup raisins

Mix oats, almonds and coconut together in a large bowl. Pour onto a large baking sheet.

Melt margarine. Combine margarine, sugar, honey, vanilla, and cinnamon together in a medium bowl until smooth. Pour over oat mixture. Stir with a fork to coat. Bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes. Stir every 10 minutes until granola is toasted brown. Remove from oven and cool for 1 hour. Stir in raisins. Store in an airtight container.

**For Your Information**

Our program encourages healthy eating for our children. Please call Tracy Norris in the Health Office if you have any nutritional concerns regarding your child or would like to be involved in nutrition services for our program. Tracy may be reached at (724) 509-1321.

**A Message From the Nurse!**

Welcome to Head Start!

We look forward to a great year with your children. Vision screenings will take place in September and the SMILE dental program will take place during the months of October & November. All children **MUST** have a recent physical and dental exam on file in the Health Office. If you have not yet turned these in, be sure to mail them to the Head Start Office: 1901 Memorial Drive, Farrell, Pa. 16121 or give them to your child's teacher immediately. This year, parents will be entered into a drawing if you have turned in both a current physical and current dental exam for your child to the Head Start Health Office by November 20th, 2008. **For those parents having children in the Early Head Start, please return current physical to your home visitor as soon as possible.**

**One \$100 and two \$50 gift cards will be given away.** We hope you win. Please call the Health Office if you have questions or concerns for your child. I may be reached at (724) 509-1342. **Have a great year!**

Cindy Micsky BSN CSN  
Health /Nutrition Manager



**Be Cool...Immunize For School**

While you can't protect your children from everything, you can protect them from vaccine preventable diseases such as:

- Tetanus/Diphtheria/Pertussis (Whooping Cough) which is spread by coughing and sneezing.
- Polio-Can paralyze or cripple your child.
- Measles/Mumps/Rubella-The incidence of measles and mumps is increasing in the United States.
- Hepatitis B-This is recommended for children to prevent long term liver disease and death.
- Hepatitis A-This disease could result in severe illness and is commonly spread through contaminated food and water, improper food handling and person to person contact.

For more information, contact your primary care physician.

**Tap water may be better than bottled for kids:**

Delta Dental of Tennessee encourages parents to reconsider the value of tap water in this age as the trend to drink bottled water grows. The problem with most bottled water is it does not meet the daily needs of fluoride, an additive that helps prevent tooth decay. Parents should be aware of the importance of fluoride to children's health as tooth decay occurs faster in children than in adults. "Delta Dental believes that tap water may be one of the primary defenses to help children maintain their healthy smiles."

**Flu Vaccines**

The American Academy of Pediatrics has changed their recommendations for flu vaccines for children. Check with your child's physician to determine if the flu vaccine is needed for your child this fall.