

What opportunities are there for parents & families to become engaged in Head Start?

- *Attend Center Activities for parents and families.*
- *Get to know the center staff.*
- *Read the materials sent home from school.*
- *Attend and participate in parent meetings.*
- *Participate in home visits. Recognize that they provide you a UNIQUE opportunity to help your child learn and grow.*
- *Work with your child on the home learning activities she or he will bring from school.*
- *Read to your children!!!!*
- *Attend parent/teacher conferences.*
- *Visit the center. Volunteer when you can.*
- *If you have questions, ASK!*
- *If you have concerns—if you think something is wrong—let us know!*
- *Unusual or difficult things at home can impact children. If you are experiencing problems, please talk to us so that we can better understand & help your child.*

What can you do before Head Start to help your child get ready?

- Let your child know what to expect. Talk about where he'll be going, what he'll be doing, and who will be with him. Visit before classes start—take advantage of the opportunities provided to visit the center, meet the teacher, look at the bus, etc. Your child's teachers will be happy to show you around and tell the child about what he will be doing during the day.
- Start getting your child into the daily routine as soon as you can and at least a week before classes start. This means making sure she gets enough sleep—preschoolers need 10-12 hours per night. Start practicing the morning routine—getting up at a certain time, bathing or washing up, brushing teeth, getting dressed, etc. Be sure to give yourself enough time so that you aren't rushed.
- If you don't eat meals together at the table, please start doing so. Your child will be eating "family style" at Head Start with his friends and teachers. Children learn to serve themselves and use "good" table manners. They also help clean up after meals.
- Expect that your child will be anxious about starting school. Talk to him about school. Let him know that you (or your sitter) will be at home when the bus comes back or that he will be picked up when school is over.
- Visit your local library and read books about starting school.
- Even if your child is potty-trained, she may still be a little frightened of going to the bathroom at school. Work with her on pulling up pants and buttoning them if needed. Work with her on washing and drying hands afterwards. If your child still needs help in the bathroom or if she is not potty-trained, talk to her teacher about what you can do at home and what the staff will do at school.
- Talk to the Head Start staff about any concerns you have. We are your partners!

GET READY! GET SET! GO!

Thank you for wanting your child to attend Head Start. We are here to help your child get ready for kindergarten. We expect you want your child to....

- Learn letters and sounds
- Learn numbers & how to count
- Learn to hold a pencil and start learning to write
- Learn to get along with others
- Behave appropriately
- Learn about music and art
- Learn about physical fitness
- Learn about foods that are good for them
- Be able to take care of personal hygiene needs
- Be creative
- Be curious
- Be persistent
- Be and feel safe and secure

But here's the deal.....

YOU are the expert on your child and YOU are your child's 1st & most important teacher! What YOU do now has a lasting impact on your children's growth and well-being.

We are ready to be your partner to give your child a great Head Start. Let's get started!

Here's the story.....

Long ago, in 1965, a group of very smart people got together to create a program that would help make a difference in the lives of young children and help them get ready for kindergarten. They called the program Head Start. They knew that parents & families had to become engaged in the program for children to get a real Head Start because the most important teachers children have, the ones who mean the most to a child's overall development, are their PARENTS & FAMILIES!

Today, we know the Head Start founders were right because studies show....

- *Children with supportive home learning environments show increased literacy, better interactions with other children, fewer behavior problems, more motivation, and more persistence.*
- *Daily parent-child reading prompts children to learn as well as early vocabulary gains that lead to more reading and vocabulary growth. This "snowballing" growth continues throughout life.*
- *It is important that families are engaged and remain active throughout the children's school years. It is clear children do better in school and in life when this happens.*

We at Ozark Action, Inc. Head Start share responsibility for preschoolers' positive learning and growth with the children's parents, families, and communities. We pledge to provide a safe center and a positive classroom where children can learn and grow. Our staff are caring and well-trained. We use the High/Scope Curriculum which has been proven time and time again to be one of the very best and most effective learning systems for young children.

Ozark Action, Inc. Head Start is privileged and honored to be a part of your children's early years and we pledge to help your children get ready for kindergarten. But, in the end, it comes down to this...

Parents and families shape their child's lives—their sense of self, others, and the world—over the years and across the miles.



Children learn and grow when we join hands and work together!

What do we mean when say "family engagement?"

First and foremost we mean that YOU are the lead partner in your child's Head Start experience.

We believe that engaging parents in Head Start will help to promote...

- Family well-being
- Positive parent-child relationships
- Families as life-long educators
- Families as learners
- Readiness to go (or transition) to kindergarten
- Family connection to other families with young children and with the whole community
- Families' roles as advocates who speak up for themselves and their children
- Families' roles as leaders in Head Start and their communities

We believe family engagement is most important in achieving the outcome we all want....

Children are ready for school and sustain development and learning gains through the 3rd grade.