



What's up?



JCCDC Newsletter for Parents, Providers, Community Partners & Staff

From the Executive Desk.

Submitted by Dr. Earlene Reynolds

Culture and Language

Parents did you know Head Start programs such as JCCDC are committed to providing equitable access to comprehensive services that prepare children for school and life. An important part of this commitment is recognizing and respecting the culture and language of the children and their families.

Head Start programs put into practice an equity-focused mindset in several ways. They implement anti-bias and nurturing environments. They promote protective and supportive factors for children's and family's health and well-being. And they provide educational opportunities, systems, and policies that position each child to reach their highest level of learning and life potential.

Programs do this while emphasizing children's cultural and linguistic strengths and holding high expectations for all. Administrators, teachers, providers, caregivers, and families can use these resources to promote a positive experience for all children and by emphasizing children's cultural and linguistic strengths, Culture and Language | ECLKC.

The JCCDC team takes pride in offering cultural diversity to you and your child. We look forward to continuing our approach to culture and language in the year 2025.

Thank you.

January

- 1/4 - Trivia Day
- 1/6 - National Technology Day
- 1/15 - M.L. King Day
- 1/17 - National Kid Inventor Day
- 1/24 - Compliment Day

February

- 2/1 - National Optimist Day
- 2/3 - Elmo's Birthday
- 2/11 - International Day of Women & Girls in Science
- 2/14 - Valentine's Day
- 2/17 - Random Act of Kindness Day



- | | |
|--------------------|------|
| Debora Goree | 1/1 |
| Vicky Craig | 1/27 |
| Willie Glass | 2/7 |
| Barbi Moore | 2/11 |
| Tynetta Henton | 2/17 |
| Elveria Sturdivant | 2/19 |

CONGRATULATIONS!

to the

2024-2025 Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Council Officers

President – **Brianna Jackson**

Vice – President – **Destiney Jones**

Secretary – **Kimberly Hardy**

Asst. Secretary – **Carson Green**

Parliamentarian – **Ashley Wilson**

Community Representative – **Lehman Harris**

Members at Large: Vianca Alvarado, MariElena Sabino,
Ashley Thomas, Mykia Webb, & Sha'Niethia Wright

**We Look Forward to Seeing You
at the
Policy Council Meeting
on January 21st !!**

February is National Children's Dental Health Month!

by Malkia "Kia" McLeod, Maryland State Department of Education

In February, dental care professionals, health care providers, educators and families come together annually to raise awareness about the importance of oral health. This year's theme is "Brush, Floss, Smile."

Healthy smiles build confidence in children and later in adulthood. That's why it's critical that healthy oral habits start early. For example, experts recommend that families gently clean [infant gums](#) with a wet cloth to get them used to the brushing sensation. Families should schedule their little ones' first dental visit by the first birthday. By age 12, brushing and flossing their adult teeth twice daily should be the routine to prevent any painful and costly issues.

Did You Know? Children up to age 19 can get x-rays, fluoride treatments, dental sealants, fillings and more with free or low-cost coverage from Medicaid and CHIP. Find [dental coverage](#) or a [dentist](#).

According to the AAPD (American Association of Pediatric Dentistry), cavities are four times more common than childhood asthma and three times more likely than childhood obesity. The AAPD recently released its [State of Little Teeth Report](#), which examines the epidemic of tooth decay among children and found:

- Tooth decay is the number one chronic infectious disease affecting children in the United States and is on the rise, but it is largely preventable.
- By age 5, about 60% of children will be affected by tooth decay.
- Children with oral health problems are three times more likely to miss school due to dental pain than those without oral health problems.
- Delaying dental care to age 2 or 3 can have a negative impact on children's oral health.
- Among the parents and caregivers surveyed, 40% said they would wait to schedule their children's first visit until after 2 years old.

Did You Know? [Untreated tooth decay](#) can negatively affect a child's physical and social development, and school performance.

For National Children's Dental Health Month, educators and families are helping spread the word about the benefits of a healthy smile. During this month-long national observance, celebrate by hosting various events and educational activities at school and programs promoting children's healthy oral habits.



MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

1929 -1968



Martin Luther King Day is celebrated the third Monday in January each year. The influential American civil rights leader can be your inspiration for a fun, educational preschool at home activities.

You're probably thinking civil rights are a pretty deep topic for preschoolers. You're right — a deep dive into American history should be saved for when they're older. However, you can choose other activities that embrace the ideals of the civil rights movement and introduce the man who made such an impact for change.

Break out the books!

First, consider reading age-appropriate books about Martin Luther King Jr. and his fight for equality. [Scholastic Books](#) offers some great recommendations for youngsters that you could check out of your local library or add to your classroom collection. For example, *The Story of Martin Luther King Jr.* by Johnny Ray Moore is ideal for teaching 3- to 4-year-olds about Dr. King.

Sharing

Sharing is ideal for introducing new concepts and encouraging discussion. Use this time to talk about Martin Luther King Jr. and how he dedicated his life to making sure everyone was treated equally. Ultimately, he wanted peace and is considered a hero by many, which is why he is honored with his own special day.

I have a dream: Craft edition

Cut cloud shapes out of white construction paper. Then, ask your child a simple question: What could be done to help everyone be friends? You'll be surprised how creative youngsters can get! Then write down each of your child's answer. Finally, let the your child glue cotton balls on the edges to create "dream clouds." Display proudly in your child's room or anywhere in the home that you think is good.

Make a Unity Paper Chain

Encourage your preschool students to create a unity chain with the following materials and instructions. Cut strips of colored paper.

- Have each child decorate a strip with drawings or messages.
- Connect the strips to create a paper chain, symbolizing unity and interconnectedness



Themed music time

Some of children's favorite tunes can be transformed into songs that embrace the important messages of Martin Luther King Jr. Here are a few excellent examples:

You Are a Hero! *sung to "You Are My Sunshine"*

You are a hero to many people
Of your dream for peace, we love to sing
You said we should be kind to each other
Your name is Martin Luther King

Martin Luther King Had a Dream *sung to "If You're Happy and You Know It"*

Dr. King had a dream, yes he did!
Dr. King had a dream, yes he did!
He dreamed we'd live as brothers,
Having love for one another
And his dream is still alive through you and me ... you and me!

Bottom line: Have fun celebrating with your child! Kindness, caring and sharing are all important concepts at this young age, and they align perfectly with the important messages that Dr. King wanted us all to hear.

3-Ingredient Energy Bars

Ingredients

- 1 cup nuts
- 1 cup dried fruit
- 1 cup (12-15 whole) pitted dried dates.

Equipment

- Food processor
- Plastic wrap or wax paper
- Sharp knife



Instructions

1. **Roast the nuts (optional).** Nuts can be used raw or roasted; roasting will add a toasty, nutty depth to the bars. If desired, roast the nuts at 350°F for 10 to 12 minutes, until fragrant and golden. Allow to cool before using. (See: [How to Roast Nuts in the Oven](#))
2. **Combine the nuts, dried fruit, and dates in a food processor.** Combine all the ingredients in a food processor. Pulse a few times just to break them up. Separate the dates if they start to clump together.
3. **Process continuously for 30 seconds.** By this point, the ingredients should all have broken down into crumb-sized pieces. Scrape the edges of the bowl and beneath the blade to make sure nothing is sticking.
4. **Process continuously until a ball is formed, 1 to 2 minutes.** Continue processing for another 1 to 2 minutes, until the ingredients clump together and gather into a ball.
5. **Press into a thick square and chill.** Lay a piece of plastic wrap or wax paper on your work surface and dump the dough on top. Press the dough with your hands until it forms a thick square, roughly 8"x8" in size. Wrap and chill for at least an hour or overnight.
6. **Divide into bars.** Unwrap the chilled dough and transfer to a cutting board. Cut into 8 large bars or 16 small squares, as desired. Wrap each bar in plastic wrap or wax paper.
7. **Store the bars.** Store the bars in the fridge for several weeks or in the freezer for up to 3 months. The bars can be eaten straight from the fridge or freezer and will be firm, but chewy. Room-temperature bars are perfectly fine to eat and can be kept in a lunch bag or backpack all day, but will be more soft and paste-like.

Try these combinations! Cherry-almond, apricot-almond, cranberry-pecan, apple-cinnamon-walnut

Try these add-ins! Shredded coconut, chia seeds, chocolate chips, cacao nibs, cocoa powder, crystalized ginger, ground cinnamon, ground nutmeg, ground cardamom, lemon zest, lime zest

Parent Involvement

Submitted by Tena Sales, HS/EHS Director

In the JCCDC Head Start/Early Head Start program, parent involvement is a core element where parents are actively encouraged to participate in their child's education by attending events, volunteering in the classroom, providing feedback, and even contributing to program decision-making through committees, essentially acting as partners with the staff to support their child's development and well-being; this is often referred to as "family engagement" within the Head Start framework.

Key aspects of parent involvement in Head Start:

- **Active participation:** Parents can volunteer in the classroom, help with activities, and participate in field trips.
- **Communication with teachers:** Regular communication with teachers through conferences, updates, and open dialogue is encouraged.
- **Policy involvement:** Parents can join committees like the Policy Council to provide input on program decisions and policies.
- **Home learning support:** Staff can provide guidance and resources for parents to support their child's learning at home.
- **Family engagement events:** Programs often organize family events to build community and foster connections between parents and staff.

Benefits of parent involvement in Head Start:

- **Improved child outcomes:** Research shows that active parent involvement leads to better academic and social-emotional development for children.
- **Empowered parents:** Parents gain knowledge and skills to better support their child's learning.
- **Stronger family-school partnerships:** A collaborative approach between parents and educators can enhance program quality.

Important considerations for effective parent involvement:

- **Cultural sensitivity:** Programs should be mindful of diverse family cultures and communication styles when engaging parents.
- **Accessibility:** Providing support like transportation and childcare can help overcome barriers to participation.
- **Parent leadership opportunities:** Empowering parents to take on leadership roles within the program.



A random act of kindness is a small, unexpected gesture that can make someone feel happy and joyful. Here are some examples of random acts of kindness:

- **Help someone:** Offer to help a friend with a chore, babysit, or walk their dog. You can also help an elderly neighbor with groceries.
- **Show appreciation:** Tell someone you love and appreciate them, or send them a handwritten note. You can also send a motivational text or inspirational quote to a friend.
- **Be kind to others:** Greet people by name, say "hello" to strangers, and smile. You can also compliment someone, or leave a positive comment on a news article.
- **Be kind to the environment:** Pick up litter, or donate a book to a local Little Free Library.
- **Be kind to yourself:** Tell yourself something positive when you have a discouraging thought.
- **Be kind to your community:** Host a get-together for your neighbors, or bring treats to your local fire station.
- **Be kind to animals:** Purchase extra food for an animal shelter, or spend quality time with your pet.

Being kind can have many benefits, including:

- Decreasing blood pressure and cortisol
- Boosting feel-good neurotransmitters in the brain like serotonin and dopamine.