Hello EHS Parents!

There are lots of great things happening this month at Early Head Start and many of them are because of input and ideas from parents on the Policy Council.

Your Policy Council is working with Early Head Start staff to make Play & Learns better for you and your child. Together we are creating Play & Learns that are more fun for your children, more helpful to parents, and that have child-friendly environments that make it easier for you to connect and explore with your child.

Members of the Policy Council are also working with the management team to find ways for more parents to be involved with Policy Council.

Right now we provide on-site childcare during Policy Council meetings or we pay for childcare that you select for your child. We also pay $.575 per mile to reimburse Policy Council members for transportation costs.

The Policy Council is also looking at ways to add the ability to connect to our meetings via internet conferencing on tablets or iPads.

Parents on Policy Council make decisions and provide ideas and input that make a difference in the services you and your children receive.

Every parent that has a child enrolled in Early Head Start has something to offer the program. Please think about running for Policy Council. Elections will be happening in May so start thinking about it now.

I am looking forward to meeting YOU on Policy Council.

Carolyn Sola
EWU EHS Director

---

**February Policy Council Meeting Highlights**

Eight Policy Council members met Thursday, February 5th. The Executive, Community Assessment and Self Assessment, Budget, Ad-Hoc Socializations, Policy and Bylaws and Hiring Committees all met before the general session.

EHS Director Carolyn Sola provided program information and updates including:

- EHS continuing to be fully enrolled with a wait list.
- EWU EHS spending continuing to be on track.
- EWU EHS moving forward with activities to lease office space for 3 EHS Home-Visitors at the Valley School District and plans to move in the end of February.

Policy Council Members reviewed and acted to:

- Accept the 2015 EWU EHS Self-Assessment Results
- Approve the EHS Community Assessment Update 2015
- Approved candidates for hire for a Fiscal Program Assistant student intern position.

The annual EWU EHS grant application will be brought forward for approval at the next Policy Council meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 5, 2015.
You Can Participate on Policy Council!

The EWU Early Head Start Policy Council gives parents great opportunities to help make decisions about the EHS program!

Here is some information about this important part of EWU EHS.

Q: What is the EHS Policy Council?
A: Policy Council is a group of parents and community members that works in partnership with the EWU EHS management staff and the EWU EHS Governing Board and share in making decisions about how the EWU EHS program works.

Q: Who is on the Policy Council?
A: The Policy Council is made up of 14 parent representatives and 4 community representatives who are elected by the parents of children in the EWU EHS program. They are people just like you!

Q: How are members selected?
A: Policy Council members are elected to one year terms by EWU EHS parents. And you will have a chance to nominate yourself! The nominations and elections are held each spring.

Q: When does Policy Council meet?
A: Policy Council usually meets once a month. Special meetings may be called to address urgent business, but are very rare. The meeting date is on the monthly calendar that goes out in this newsletter. Meetings are open to the public and all parents are welcome to attend.

Q: Is there training for members?
A: Absolutely! There is orientation at the beginning and training throughout the year for the elected Policy Council members.

Q: What about travel and other costs for the meetings?
A: EWU EHS provides reimbursement to Policy Council members for their mileage and child care costs for meetings and meals are provided at each Policy Council meeting.

Talk with your EHS Home-Visitor and look for more information about being on Policy Council in the April issue of the EHS Exchange newsletter.
As parents, we want our little ones to grow up and be happy, healthy and capable of handling whatever may come their way in life. Did you know that you, the parent, are the most important person to teach your baby or toddler how to be a confident and capable child, teenager and adult? You are!

The ways that you talk with and interact with your baby and toddler every day can help them learn that they are valuable and that they have some control over themselves and their world. This is called building positive self-esteem.

Here are three ways you can encourage your child and help develop healthy self-esteem.

**Encouraging By Letting Them Know You Care**

From the first time your baby was in your arms, you made them feel important. Your hugs, kisses, smiles and comforting all told her “You are loved and special!” When you show your child affection it helps them feel secure, safe and connected to you and is a great way to build positive self-esteem.

Plan time to play together. **YOU** are your child’s favorite toy. When you make time to focus all your attention on them, it communicates to them that they are valued and important.

**Encouraging By Providing Opportunities for Positive Experiences**

Children become more self-motivated when their natural curiosity is encouraged and supported. When they realize that their actions have certain outcomes, they start to develop a sense of control and feelings of security and confidence. For example they might learn: **When I touch the button on the toy it lights up; when I cry, daddy comes and picks me up.** These actions bring about positive results that make them feel capable, good about themselves and motivates them to try more things.

When the activities your child experiences match where they are developmentally, there is a greater likelihood that they will experience successes. There are many activities that are always good for young children, like using play dough or crayons, because there aren’t really any “mistakes” to make.

You may have to resist the urge to jump in to help your child overcome a difficulty, and give them time to try and figure out how to overcome it themselves. Balance helping them with the more challenging parts while allowing them to develop the self-help skills that lead to independence and self-confidence.

Accepting and encouraging your child’s **efforts** at a task or activity, even if they aren’t able (yet) to fully do it, teaches them what they are doing well. And it’s good for us to remember that each experience they have is a part of their learning, and is helping to wire their brains for that and similar experiences in the future.

References used: Parents As Teachers™ handout “Your Child’s Developing Self-Esteem” and Australian Early Childhood’s Kid’s Matter booklet, “Encouraging and Praising Children.”
Encouraging Through Effective Praise

Though it can be okay to praise children using general statements like, “Good Job!”, “Way to Go!” “You’re So Smart,” it is far more effective to encourage them by stating the specifics of what they did that made you want to say those things.

Try avoiding saying things to children such as, “You are such a good girl for picking up your toy” as it focuses on the child’s sense of self as being “good” or “bad” depending on their performance, rather than on their efforts and the process of the activity. Such comments may make children (especially older children) relate how they feel about who they are to their achievements. They might assume they are not “good” because they haven’t solved a problem or completed an activity. This can de-motivate a child to try new things.

Speaking words of genuine praise to your child can be a great way to encourage and motivate them. Praise is more effective when it focuses on their efforts and achievements. When praise is specific and refers to the process of completing an activity or solving a problem it helps to develop the child’s learning and motivation.

Examples of specific praise would be,

- “You picked up your toy and put it back in the bin so nicely”
- “You’ve used so many bright colors in your painting”
- “You were really trying hard at building that tower” or
- “Wow! Look how smoothly you’re rolling out that play dough!”

These kinds of praise are effective as they refer to the process of completing an activity.

Below are just a few examples of how encouragement and praise can be done well, and not so well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less Effective Encouragement/Praise</th>
<th>Effective Encouragement/Praise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluates Children</td>
<td>Acknowledges Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You’re such a good counter Emma.”</td>
<td>“You’re excited about doing counting today Emma.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is General</td>
<td>Is Specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Great work on the painting Jacob.”</td>
<td>“You’ve used so many colors in your painting Jacob.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compares Children With One Another</td>
<td>Focuses On The Growth Of The Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Look how Emma used all the page in her drawing Jacob.”</td>
<td>“You have drawn on so much more of your page than last time Jacob.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving Children Rewards For The Outcome</td>
<td>Link Activities With Feelings Experienced Doing Them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“You caught the ball Emma. You deserve a star!”</td>
<td>“You tried to catch the ball three times Emma. You seem to like playing catch.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Come and invite friends to enjoy the fun activities, learning experiences and great things happening around EWU Early Head Start! Here are some pictures from recent Play & Learns, Home Visits and other EHS activities. Make sure to check the EHS calendar for the times and locations and join us for the Play & Learns this month in Colville and Newport!
Don’t miss out! At EWU EHS Play & Learns in March we’ll be focusing on:

- Social and Emotional Development: Relationships With Other Children
- Health and Safety: The Benefits of Encouragement
Children graduate and transition out of EWU Early Head Start once they turn 3 years old.

EHS graduation celebrations were held recently for is Lorelai Hammons, pictured below left with her mom Elizabeth, and Alexandria (Alex) Fletcher pictured below right with her Dad and Mom, Justin and Adara and her little brother Karston.

Congratulations and best wishes for the future to Lorelai and Alex and both their families from everyone at EWU Early Head Start!
Where can I go to get help with...

- Emergency assistance?
- Medical and Dental?
- Employment?
- Education?
- Housing?
- Food Banks?
- Disabilities?
- Counseling?
- Legal issues?”

As parents, we all need to work with agencies, schools and community groups in our area to make sure we get the resources our children need.

So how do you find out where to get help in your community?

One place to start is the 2014-2015 Resource Directory that was recently provided to all EWU EHS families.

This 68 page directory has the names, phone numbers and addresses of 100’s of groups that provide services in Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille Counties.

One of them might be right for you!

The directory is published by the Northeast WA Early Childhood Program and is updated each year with the most current information.

If you are new to EWU EHS or did not receive your new 2014-2015 Resource Directory yet, please let your home visitor know!
**Springtime means welcoming new birth, new growth, new beginnings and (hopefully)... warmer weather!**

At EWU Early Head Start, it also means beginning the process of nominating and electing new EHS Policy Council Representatives! Please consider getting involved with this great part of EWU EHS. It’s a great way for you to Make A Difference!
You want to do what is best for your children. You know about the importance of car seats, baby gates and other ways to keep them safe. But, did you know that one of the best ways to protect your children is to make sure they have all of their vaccinations?

1. Immunizations can save your child’s life.

Because of advances in medical science, your child can be protected against more diseases than ever before. Some diseases that once injured or killed thousands of children are no longer common in the U.S. – primarily due to safe and effective vaccines. Polio is one example of the great impact that vaccines have had in the United States. Polio was once America’s most-feared disease, but thanks to vaccination, there have been no reports of polio in the United States for more than 30 years.

2. Immunization protects others you care about.

Children in the U.S. still get vaccine-preventable diseases. In fact, we have seen resurgences of measles and whooping cough (pertussis) over the past few years. For example, so far in 2015, more than 100 people in the U.S. have been reported to have measles. It is important that you and your children who are old enough to get vaccinated are fully immunized. This not only protects your family, but also helps prevent the spread of these diseases to your friends, loved ones and your community.

3. Vaccination is very safe and effective.

Vaccines are only given to children after a long and careful review by scientists, doctors, and healthcare professionals. Vaccines will involve some discomfort and may cause pain, redness, or tenderness at the site of injection, but this is minimal compared to the pain, discomfort, trauma, and possibly severe outcomes of the diseases these vaccines prevent. Serious side effects following vaccination are very rare. The disease-prevention benefits of getting vaccines are much greater than the possible side effects for almost all children.

4. Immunizations can save your family time and money.

A child with a vaccine-preventable disease can be denied attendance at schools or daycare facilities. Some vaccine-preventable diseases can result in prolonged disabilities and can take a financial toll because of lost time at work, medical bills or long-term disability care. In contrast, getting vaccinated against these diseases is a good investment and usually covered by insurance. The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children from low-income families. To find out more about the VFC program, visit http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/index.html, or ask your child’s healthcare professional.

5. Immunization protects future generations.

Vaccines have reduced and, in some cases, eliminated many diseases that killed or severely disabled people just a few generations ago. For example, smallpox vaccination eradicated that disease worldwide. Your children don’t have to get smallpox shots anymore because the disease no longer exists. By vaccinating children against rubella (German measles), the risk Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Updated February 2015 that pregnant women will pass this virus on to their fetus or newborn has been dramatically decreased, and birth defects associated with that virus no longer are seen in the United States. If we continue vaccinating now, and vaccinating completely, parents in the future may be able to trust that some diseases of today will no longer be around to harm their children in the future.

For more information about the importance of infant immunization, visit http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines.
Did you know that EWU Early Head Start is available to families like yours throughout the Tri-County area including Republic, Northport, Onion Creek, Kettle Falls, Colville, Chewelah, Valley, Springdale, Newport, Usk, Ione and Metaline Falls?

It is, and you can invite those you know in those areas to come join! You can tell a friend, relative or neighbor that is pregnant or has a child under 3 years of age about your experience in Early Head Start and what you like about the program.

You can invite them to come to an EHS event, to talk with your home visitor, or tell them how to contact EWU EHS. These are all great ways to tell them how they can get more information and begin enjoying the benefits of being in Early Head Start too!