



# WESTERN DAIRYLAND HEAD START MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## September 2019

EDUCATING CHILDREN. EMPOWERING FAMILIES.

IN THIS ISSUE

## Healthy children are ready to learn!

Health connects to school readiness long before a child enters school. Healthy development continues to support learning throughout childhood and later life. "Health in the earliest years – actually beginning with the future mother's health before she becomes pregnant – lays the groundwork for a lifetime of well-being".

### School Readiness Begins with Health

**Physical Health:** Children who access ongoing health have better attendance and are more engaged in learning. Consistent attendance helps children prepare for school. Routines such as handwashing and wearing helmets help children stay healthy and avoid injuries.

**Oral Health:** Children with healthy teeth are better able to eat, speak, and focus on learning. Daily

oral health hygiene and ongoing care from oral health professionals help make sure that children have healthy teeth.

**Nutrition:** Good nutrition is essential for children's brain development. Children who have access to nutritious food have energy to learn. Providing healthy snacks and meals helps children's bodies grow, giving them what they need to talk, play, and learn together.

### Physical activity and Motor Development:

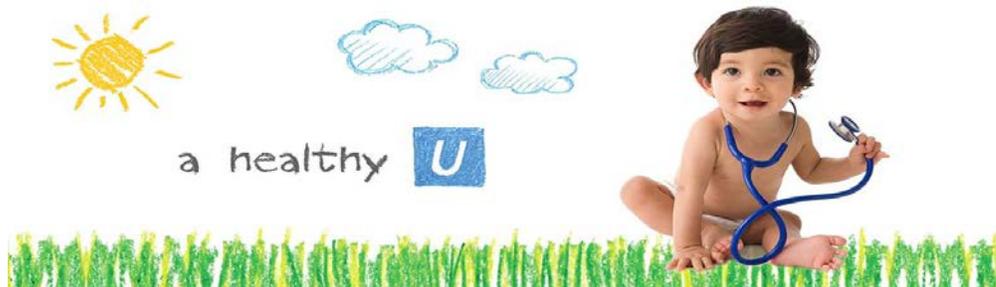
Staying active benefits young children's physical and cognitive development. Activities that get children moving build motor skills that are useful to reading, writing, and math skills.

**Sleep:** When children get enough sleep, they can pay attention,

remember what they learn, and manage their feelings. When programs schedule a nap, rest or quiet activities, children can focus on learning.

**Mental Health:** Beginning at birth, children need positive relationships with the adults who care for them. When children learn to recognize and share their feelings with trusted adults, they feel good about themselves. These relationships help them develop the confidence to learn new skills.

**Each child enrolled in Head Start is required to have a current record on file of a physical exam, dental exam, and immunizations. If you need assistance in completing health requirements, let a Head Start staff person know.**



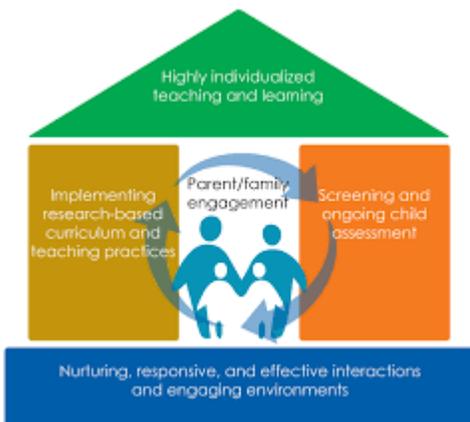
## School Readiness and the Stages of Learning

School Readiness means children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. Physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development are all essential ingredients of school readiness. Children from ages birth to age 5 are continually learning and practicing skills that build on one another to help them achieve school readiness.

Every month in our newsletter we will be introducing the Stages of Learning for one of the School Readiness goals we are working on with your child. This information will provide examples of the goal in action for children ages birth to 5 years of age. You are your child's first and most important teacher and we look forward to partnering with you this year to prepare your child for school success.



### Help your child succeed: Build the Habit of Good Attendance Children need to be at school to succeed!



Encouraging regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways you can prepare your child for success—both in school and in life. Consistent attendance has a direct impact on school readiness.

As your child's first and most important teacher and role model, you set the stage for children to learn good attendance habits. Whether your child is enrolled in a center or in a home based program, attendance at home visits or at school is important to help develop habits that last a lifetime.

Being absent in the first month of school can predict poor attendance patterns throughout the year, providing an early warning sign for parents and educators to intervene and put students back on track.

Being absent just 2 days per month in a center based program or just one home visit in a home based program equals missing an average of 10% of the school year.

Attendance at home visits, socializations, and at school matters, and these habits start early!

# Routines

[fyi.uwex.edu/parentingthepreschooler/](http://fyi.uwex.edu/parentingthepreschooler/)

## Patterns Children Can Count On

- Repeat actions and events every day, such as washing hands before meals or reading before bed, to add consistency to a child's day.
- Give children a sense of security and control by making a daily schedule with pictures so children can see what comes next.
- Encourage children to lead the routine, for example, by picking their own clothes ("Pick which socks you'd like to wear today.") or feeding themselves ("Grab a banana or some grapes to start your breakfast.").
- Post pictures of daily activities on a clock face so children learn what to expect at different times of day.
- Remind children of what is happening next in the routine to help them transition more easily between activities ("After breakfast, it is time to brush your teeth.")
- Establish and stick to a routine. Children will argue less when they know what to expect.



Photograph by Nancy Munoz

## Why Routines?

Routines are important because they give children a sense of security and control over their environment. Children learn what to expect at different times of the day. They feel pride and satisfaction when they can participate in and perform these routines.

# Routines Build Independence

Preschoolers like to be independent but sometimes they need a parent's encouragement. Teaching independence through skills like feeding, hand washing, brushing teeth, and dressing are important steps in development that can be achieved when children are taught how to do each step in each routine.



## Morning Routines

A key to a smooth morning is preparing the night before—make lunches, pack backpacks, and set out clothes. Make sure you allow enough time that your child can go at their own pace.

Some parents find it helpful to create a morning routine chart with pictures and drawings that remind children what tasks need to be completed. Try to remove distractions such as television and favorite books or toys as it can distract them from what needs to get done.

Following a morning routine helps everyone be on time. It also helps children be healthier, better behaved, and perform better in school.

## Bedtime Routines

Preschoolers need 11 to 13 hours of sleep each night to be healthy, behave well, and learn. Establishing a bedtime routine is one way to achieve this. If your child needs to wake up at 7 AM, they need to go to sleep between 6-8 PM.

Be consistent with bedtime routines by starting around the same time each night and going in the same order (e.g. bath, pajamas, brush teeth, read book). Give children gentle reminders before bedtime. Try to encourage calm activities before you start to get them to sleep, such as a bath, books, puzzles, or soothing music. Sometimes the bedtime routine continues after bedtime, such as checking in on a child after a certain amount of time has passed as promised.

## UW-Extension Family Living Programs

"Raising Kids, Eating Right, Spending Smart, Living Well"



For more information, please contact your county UW-Extension office:

<http://counties.uwex.edu/>

[Link To References](#)

Copyright © 2016 by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System doing business as the division of Cooperative Extension of the University of Wisconsin-Extension. All rights reserved.

An EEO/Affirmative Action employer, the University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements.