

# WVHSA NEWSLETTER

## Strengthening the Home Team

By Traci Dalton, Head Start State Collaboration Director

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On May 21-22nd the WV Department of Health and Human Resources, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health Home Visitation Program held the first state conference for home visitation programs. The theme of this initial conference was “Strengthening the Home Team” and was attended by approximately 300 participants. These participants represented numerous home visitation models including Maternal Infant Health Outreach Workers (MIHOW), Parents as Teachers (PAT), Right from the Start (RFTS), Healthy Families America, and Early Head Start.

During the two-day conference, home-visitors from around the state had the opportunity to network and learn together on a variety of topics. The conference offered opportunities to learn about home visitor safety, signs and symptoms of substance abuse, depression, literacy, transition, brain development, and numerous other sessions. In addition to the diverse topics offered, there were also exhibitors present to provide information and resources that home visitors can use in their work.

This conference was truly a collaborative event from the beginning. Over the last year, a collaborative planning committee that included representatives from all the home-visitation models worked diligently to provide an experience that met the needs of home visitors across the state. Initial feedback from participants indicates home visitors obtained relevant professional development and had a great time!

Thank you to the WVDHHR, OMCFH Home Visitation Program for this successful conference and to all of the Early Head Start Programs that participated. If you would be interested in participating in next year’s conference planning committee please contact me at [Traci.L.Dalton@wv.gov](mailto:Traci.L.Dalton@wv.gov)

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**Become a Member of the West Virginia Head Start Association**

For more information contact Becky Gooch-Erbacher, Executive Director at (304) 233-4450.

# CASE WV Head Start and Early Head Start Stories and Staff Recognition

By Shannon Atwell, Assistant Director CASE Head Start

## Early Head Start Story

In the Fall of 2012, a young mother of an infant and a toddler came to CASEWV for assistance. She was homeless. Head Start / Early Head Start began working with her and she was placed in Transitional Housing. Her Early Head Start Home Visitor worked with numerous community partners for furniture, clothing, etc. When Mom enrolled in a local GED class, we transitioned the children from Home-Based to Center-Based care. Now, only six months later, Mom has made significant progress: she has her GED, she is in stable housing, she has a job, and she has purchased a car!

## Head Start & Early Head Start Home Base Story

A non-English speaking mother and very limited English speaking father enrolled their two children in Head Start and Early Head Start home-based this past school year (age 4 and infant). The Home Visitor brought in an interpreter to assist her on home visits. We suspected the mother was suffering from post partum depression. Mom seemed depressed, unengaged, and did not want to leave her house. The EHS Home Visitor conducted the Edinborough survey and Mom had a very high score. Mom has been in treatment. The Home Visitor printed all materials in both English and Spanish so that Mom could utilize both sets with her children. Recently, mom and children attended their first Socialization (previously she said that she was afraid to participate). She not only stayed and actively participated the entire time, but she also stayed longer and helped clean up. She asked her Home Visitor when she could go to more socializations! Mom has more confidence and a great relationship with her children. The interpreter has been going along on home visits less and less as mom builds her proficiency in English. The four-year old has excelled as well.

## Special 2012-2013 Recognition of our CASE WV Staff:

:

### Perfect Attendance for year:

1. Marvin Harry, Bus Driver
2. Kristi Weiss, Lead Teacher

### Received ACDS:

1. Sharon Lilly, Assistant Teacher
2. Mary Huffman, Assistant Teacher

### Collegiate Professional Teaching License:

1. Tracy Cruely, Lead Teacher

### Permanent Community Authorization:

1. Shereilla Hearn
2. Christy Croy

### Graduated with Bachelor Degrees:

1. Sabrina Hanshaw, Lead Teacher: RBA, emphasis in Early Childhood Education
2. Mary Taylor, Home Visitor: BS in Criminal Justice & Law Enforcement
3. Tina Taylor, Assistant Teacher: RBA, with concentration in English
4. Elizabeth McKinney, Lead Teacher: RBA, emphasis in Early Childhood Education

## **North Central West Virginia Community Action Head Start and Early Head Start Parents Complete School Readiness Surveys**

By Jennifer Buckland and Kim Martin, NCWVCCA

Since North Central West Virginia Community Action Head Start and Early Head Start covers eight counties in WV, staff wanted to get a true reflection of how HS/EHS parents and stakeholders viewed school readiness. Therefore, School Readiness Surveys were created. These surveys focused on the Five Domains from the HS Child Development and Early Learning Framework. During the initial home visit by the teaching staff, EHS families were provided surveys based upon developmental milestones while HS parents were asked to complete an applicable survey based upon their child's developmental levels. Both EHS/HS surveys were completed by Stakeholders represented from the County Collaborative Partners, Special Education Directors, Birth to Three Representatives, WVDHHR, Librarians, College Professors, etc. were also asked to participate in the survey online.

The HS/EHS families and Community Stakeholders reviewed each of the five domains and specific topics related to them. The Head Start and Early Head Start surveys asked the participants to select the top three priorities for each domain. The results were used as parental input into the curriculum planning process and recommendations for revisions to "draft" School Readiness Goals.

Upon completion of the School Readiness Survey, participants were invited to become a member of the NCWVCAA HS/EHS School Readiness Leadership Team. This team was formed to review the School Readiness Goals and Action Plan, School Readiness Survey results, analyze aggregated data and to strategize changes. The School Readiness Leadership Team consists of HS and EHS parents, College Professors from local universities, Mentor Teachers and Family Resource Coordinator, EHS Teacher, Program Specialists, Children Services Executive Assistant, Children Services Program Manager, Children Services Assistant Director, and Children Services Director.

From the School Readiness Leadership Team a sub-committee was formed to focus on developing a system for aggregating and analyzing data from across the program's service areas. The Committee has attended training on data collection and aggregation. This team is in the process of determining how to track data through the variables of poor attendance, high-risk children, and other learning needs.

This school year may be coming to a close, but staff is now completing Family Satisfaction Surveys to determine if parents feel NCWVCAA HS/EHS has met the School Readiness Goals. The data results from the Family Satisfaction Surveys will be utilized to determine if the family section of School Readiness Goals are being met. This process will continue as the program engages families to meet the needs of children for future success.

## Monroe County BOE Early Head Start's Parent Story

By Lexli Baker, EHS Teacher

Perseverance, dedication, strength, and passion, the first words that come to mind when I think about our Early Head Start program. They are also the first words to pop in my head when I think about a graduating mother that has been with our program from the very beginning.....

Our program started literally from the ground up in 2009/2010 school year. During that time there has been obstacles, celebrations and constant growth for Monroe County EHS. When Director, Jeana Comer-Carr called me with the news that I had been chosen for the teacher/home visitor position with EHS, she explained the visions of Early Head Start and I thought how wonderful this could be. We have had many successes with families since the beginning, but because graduation is approaching our program would like to share a success of a young lady who will walk across that stage next week while her three year old son sits in the crowd cheering her on. It is exactly what our program envisioned from the beginning.

Kristen Little was one of the very first pre-natal mother's to join our program. She was in the 9th grade at the time and overwhelmed with stress. As soon as we met Kristen we knew she was going to persevere and be a wonderful mother. Her strength and dedication to what she wanted in life was a true sign of what was to come. One of the first times I remember seeing her show her true strength was at her prom when she was almost 9 months pregnant and she glowed as she walked in with her head held high. The very next week she sat through West Test with back pain from labor. We put a car seat on the bus that summer for her and we opened the doors to a brand new center that fall. She and that blue eyed baby boy showed up every morning on that school bus. She waited in the cold and sometimes dark for the bus to pick them up. She maintained almost perfect attendance and stayed on the honor roll while her baby boy grew and flourished at the center next door to the school.

Kristen has overcome so many obstacles while attending her high school years, the biggest being the death of her mother during her summer break before her senior year. Through all of the obstacles Kristen has remained focused, dedicated and determined to make it through high school. At one point during her senior year she was working a 40 hour week and keeping up with all of her school work and still doing a wonderful job as a mother. We've watched her take over the roll at her house with her younger sister and older brothers as the mother figure. She completed college prep classes, a huge senior project, the certified nursing program at the vocational center, and many other high school requirements. Her sense of responsibility has been amazing and allowed us to stand beside of her all the way as a support system.

Several weeks ago as I was sitting at the dinner table I received a text from her saying. "I just want to thank ya'll for everything, without your help I wouldn't have made it through high school!" My thoughts were, now that is what our visions were for this program. Without that building on the hill beside of the high school the opportunity for her to be what she is would not have existed. That's when I want to let the world know what this program can do for families.

Next week as she walks across not one, but two stages to receive her diplomas, there will be a lot of joyful tears shed for her from her family and proud Early Head Start "family". That beautiful blue eyed little boy will also be in the crowd cheering her on. Congratulations Kristen Little, this is what Early Head Start is all about!!!!

# High-Quality Early Childhood Education Arts Experiences: Paving the Way for Lifelong Learning

By WVDE Office of Early Learning

The 2012-2013 yearlong celebration of Universal Pre-K in WV recently culminated with a celebration of the West Virginia child during the Early Childhood Art Experience Exhibit, which was offered in conjunction with the 2013 Arts Alive! event held April 26, 2013 at the Clay Center for the Arts and Sciences in Charleston, WV. During this event, both 2-D and 3-D art pieces of children who attend WV Universal Pre-K programs throughout the state were displayed alongside artwork from K-12 students in WV.

The importance of arts integration in the early childhood years was also highlighted during the Arts Alive! event by Brea Wiles, Studio Educator for the Marshall University Early Education STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Center. Wiles shared the critical link between arts integration and learning across all domains during the early childhood years during her presentation to the audience. Selected pieces of her presentation, which focused on the relationship between arts integration and high-quality early childhood programming, follow:

On any given day, you will definitely see children who attend high-quality early childhood education programs participating in multiple forms of the arts. We know that during the early childhood years in particular, the arts assists young children to develop fundamental skills necessary for lifelong learning, such as social competence, sensory perception, problem solving, positive dispositions to learning, and awareness of self, not to mention the *huge* impact the arts can have on building children's competencies with cognitive and motor development through integration into domains such as language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, physical health and development, world languages, and other areas inherent to a truly comprehensive approach to early childhood programming.

We know that typically, the younger the child, the more sensory in nature participation in the arts will be. This is why we see visual art that may not look like anything to adults, but might simply have "felt good" for the young child to experiment with the materials used.

Also, consider the huge role dramatic play has on the child discovering the world around them. When children 'play pretend', they mimic roles they have observed, and over time, learn to extend these roles.

And of course, we cannot forget the enjoyment music and movement can provide young children. Listening to, making, exploring, and studying music through developmentally appropriate methods during the early childhood years provides strong foundations for academic as well as social and aesthetic growth.

It is common knowledge to anyone who knows anything about child development that all children *need* the arts. Young children in particular, are most deserving of ongoing, high-quality, developmentally appropriate arts experiences which focus on the process of creating and doing. Programs dedicated to the holistic well-being of young children, such as the MUEE STEM Center, as part of the WV Universal Pre-K Program, are committed to ensuring all children have these opportunities to grow and develop by offering high-quality art experiences daily.

*For additional information about arts integration in WV Universal Pre-K, please contact Rhonda Crowley at [rcrowley@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:rcrowley@access.k12.wv.us) or Monica DellaMea at [mdellamea@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:mdellamea@access.k12.wv.us). For information about the Marshall University Early Education STEM Center, please contact Brea Wiles at [wiles7@marshall.edu](mailto:wiles7@marshall.edu).*

**West Virginia Training and Technical Assistance Team**  
**Celebrate West Virginia Head Start and Early Start Programs**

By Patty Marickovich, ECE Specialist, West Virginia State Manager

To: Our West Virginia Teams:

Many of you are holding year-end celebrations as I write this. I just would like to add that Sally Byard, Pam Waddell, Patti Varner and I are celebrating right along with you! You have done amazing work this year, and we are delighted to recognize your efforts as you make a difference in the lives of children and their families.

As your T/TA providers, we are already planning for next year by thinking strategically of ways to support all of you. We are planning events throughout the state and will share a calendar through the next edition of this newsletter once our timeline is finalized. We appreciate your insight as we plan higher-level data workshops, CLASS trainings and ways to support each of you by coming on-site to meet your individual requests for T/TA services. We especially look forward to continuing the work around mental health services as related to school readiness.

Patti and I look forward to working with your Early Head Start programs this summer. We are fortunate to have such dedicated teams across our state of West Virginia. Region 3 is a strong region among Head Start, and West Virginia programs have demonstrated leadership in many aspects.

On behalf of the West Virginia T/TA group, we thank you for all your hard work and commitment to the communities in which you live, work, play, and provide care.

***MARK YOUR CALENDARS***

The West Virginia Head Start Association's Annual Fall Conference

November 19, 20, and 21, 2013

Embassy Suites Hotel

Charleston, WV

# Why We Don't Have to Fail Our Kids

By Stephen Smith, Executive Director, WV Healthy Kids

We are failing our kids in West Virginia. But we don't have to.

Each generation is supposed to have it better than the one that came before... That's not true for my one year-old son's generation. His generation faces historically high rates of divorce, addiction, and incarceration among their parents. In 2011, we were the only state where the teen pregnancy rate was rising. And in just the last seven years, the rate of kids being raised by a grandparent has increased by 25 percent. At the root of it all is poverty, which continues to rise among children and families. This spring, the WV Healthy Kids and Families Coalition and the WV Center on Budget and Policy released a report on child poverty and launched a statewide organizing campaign called "Our Children, Our Future." Since February, the campaign has brought together more than 160 partner organizations, legislators, unions, chambers of commerce, religious institutions and other leaders to fight and win major victories on Medicaid Expansion, saving Child Care benefits, stopping family violence prevention cuts, the Feed to Achieve Act, and other issues – as well as the creation of the Senate Select Committee on Children and Poverty.

The following is a summary of 6 key findings in our report (which can be found in full at [wvpolicy.org](http://wvpolicy.org)) and an invitation to join our effort:

**1. Living at or near poverty is the norm for kids in West Virginia.** 1 in 4 kids live below the poverty line and 52 percent live below the "self-sufficiency standard," the income level where a family has enough to get by without outside assistance (56 percent receive free or reduced lunches). This problem is not about trying to rescue a few kids and families who live at the margins; it's about fixing an entire system where working parents can no longer afford to support their kids.

**2. Poverty is crueler than it used to be.** Not only are child poverty rates the highest in two generations, the experience of poverty is also tougher because families are now contending with historically high rates of addiction, incarceration, divorce, kids being raised by adults other than their parents, and historically low rates of social capital – church, union, and social club participation.

**3. Poverty is not inevitable.** Just ask our seniors. West Virginia slashed its population of poor seniors from 39 percent to 10 percent in the last generation. Now we must make the same commitment for our kids.

**4. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.** For every \$1 we spend on quality early childhood education and care, we get back at least \$7 in savings from future crime, unemployment, and poor health.

**5. The solutions are simple, but hard.** There are only 3 ways society can fix child poverty. One, increase the income and benefits that go to working families. Two, reduce the basic costs of life – food, clothing, rent, health care, etc. Three, invest in human development – so the next generation fairs better. The challenge we have is to generate the political and social will to do those things. Just as seniors organized locally and nationally, so must we all organize to make our most vulnerable kids a priority in our communities, in our private sector, and in our government. It will not happen overnight.

**6. Parents are part of the solution, not the problem.** We just completed a campaign of community meetings about child poverty (with business groups, faith leaders, social workers, kids, prison administrators, and so on). Parents now have lower wages, higher costs (especially health care and child care), fewer adults in the home, more unstable jobs, and fewer supporting institutions than they did 40 years ago – but they were by far the most resourceful groups we spoke to. No one matched their creativity or their commitment to their kids. History teaches us the same thing: the times when child poverty has been the lowest were the times when poor and working parents were the most organized and engaged.

*That is why this report is part of a community-based campaign to engage parents and kids, business and labor leaders, ministers, social workers, and educators. We need more people like you. Will you join us? To read the full report, visit [www.wvpolicy.org](http://www.wvpolicy.org). To lend a hand, contact Stephen Smith at [ssmith@wvhealthykids.org](mailto:ssmith@wvhealthykids.org).*

***Your West Virginia Head Start Association  
2012-13 Board of Directors***

**President:** Susan Stafford

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Parents: Bobbi Daniel, Joe Mauller, Pat Priddy

Friends: Edith Redd, Tim Salmons, Terri Wontrobski

***UP & COMING***

**2013 WVHS Association Meeting Dates**

3/20 & 3/21/13     Charleston, WV

6/12 & 6/13/13     Charleston, WV

**2012-13 WVHSA Board of Directors Meeting Dates**

11/28/12             Conference call

12/13/12             Conference call

1/10/13                Conference call

2/14/13                Conference call

4/11/13                Conference call

5/09/13                Conference call

7/11/13                Conference call

8/08/13                Conference call

9/12/13                Conference call

10/10/13              Conference call

11/14/13              TBA

***MISSION  
STATEMENT***

***\*\*\*\*\*"***

***The West Virginia Head Start  
Association's Mission Statement for  
2010-2012***

Speaking with one voice for West Virginia's young children and families by:

- involving parents as decision makers,
- advocating for high quality services,
- strengthening partnerships on the local and state level,
- providing statewide training for early childhood programs, and
- circulating key information to local Head Start programs.