

Welcome Anoka/Washington County Head Start-Early Head Start Families to the 2020-2021 Program Year

As we plan for a beginning like no other opening we have seen in the past, our focus will still be to ensure that:

- Every child, every day is finding a way to feel **love** and **connected**;
- Every child, every day is being **challenged** by new learning experiences;
- Every child, every day knows they have a **champion** they can turn to.

Spring of 2020 has challenged staff and families to find a new normal for learning. What I have learned the most through this process is how much I appreciate the expertise our staff bring to our Head Start program. I'm sure many of us are wishing for the good old days, a little normalcy; giving a high five, a hug or being able to gather together. These challenging days truly make you appreciate the little things in life.

Normal is such a simple word and it is our goal at ACCAP Head Start to not only find our new normal, but to use this time as a learning experience that will forever impact the learning environment of our Head Start program. Every week staff are piloting new types of learning experiences and much of what we learned during the stay at home order will continue to be used in the future. Our fall re-opening may not be "normal", but our learning will not only continue, it will thrive. We can't wait to move on to the next phase of learning under COVID-19 and we know that all the returning and new children to ACCAP Head Start will be welcomed and we will continue to grow!

Anoka Washington County Head Start is committed to providing families with program options which best meet the individual needs of families. For this reason, we will be providing both in-person and distance learning options. Our reopening plan aligns with current CDC guidelines, Minnesota State Licensing and directives issued by the Office of Head Start and guidance from Minnesota Department of Health Department. We are exercising extreme precautions with top consideration being the safety of children, families, and staff. We took into consideration not only the need to take safety precautions but also the need to be nimble and prepared for whatever changes and challenges come our way. For this reopening plan, we have mindfully considered how to address all the needs of children, families and staff, particularly those needs related to health, safety and social/emotional well-being. Our main objectives to provide a health and safe environment for children, families and staff, provide several program options such as center-based or distance learning, provide training and monitoring that incorporates the maximum safety in order to mitigate risk and to provide ongoing communication with families and staff.

Anoka Washington County Head Start is a great program with caring and supportive staff, which we know is why each of you entrust us with the education of your children. Our staff prides itself on ensuring that our children have as many, if not more, educational and extra-curricular opportunities as children in much larger Head Start programs throughout the State.

If you have any questions, please contact your teacher or Family Service Worker. There is also information posted on the ACCAP website and the Head Start Facebook page.