



Our Mission: To enrich the lives of families and individuals within our communities by providing opportunities, offering assistance and empowering people to make positive change

Early Head Start

215 S. Barnes
Springfield, MO 65802

Phone: 417-864-3430
Fax: 417-864-3449

E-mail: kshinnbrown@oacac-caa.org



Early Head Start

**Thinking of
Becoming
an Early
Head Start
Child Care
Partner?**



**Ozarks Area
Community Action
Corporation**

215 S. Barnes
Springfield, MO 65802
417-864-3430

BENEFITS OF PARTNERING WITH EARLY HEAD START

- CDA training and certification as well as in-service trainings at no cost.
- Recruitment and enrollments completed by an EHS Family Advocate.
- Support network of EHS staff including an Area Supervisor, Education Specialist, Early Intervention Specialist, Family and Community Partnership Specialist, Nurse, Mental Health Counselors, and others.
- Opportunities to network with other EHS Partners and Centers.
- Funds for program improvement, including a yearly consumables budget and monthly classroom budget if In-Kind* goals are met.

*Examples of In-Kind: Donated materials for use in the classroom, volunteer time from families and community members.



Improving the Quality of Child Care in the Ozarks

Nationally, Early Head Start was launched in 1995 to provide comprehensive child and family development services for low-income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers ages birth to three years. Early Head Start (EHS) programs were established to provide early, continuous, intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services on a year-round basis. The purpose of the program is to enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; to support parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and to help parents move toward self-sufficiency.

Locally, OACAC strives to uphold the EHS vision in many ways:

We ensure the teachers in our classrooms are qualified to provide excellent care by requiring that all EHS teachers (in our centers and partnerships) have, at minimum, an Infant/Toddler CDA credential or its equivalent at the time of hire or within one year.

We strive to build strong relationships with the families we serve through family nights and regular home visits. We respect the parents' role as their child's first and most influential teacher, and we work with them to set developmentally appropriate goals for their children.

Finally, we take special care to ensure that the children in our program are cared for as individuals. We require weekly observations of each child's development along with quarterly developmental assessment reports. The information our teachers gather through observation and assessments is used to plan for each child's care and learning individually.

Our Approach

Instead of using:	We...
High chairs	Hold infants while we feed them until they are ready to sit at an infant-sized table to eat.
Infant swings	Hold babies, enjoy tummy time with them, and allow them to explore the classroom.
Coloring pages/ditto sheets	Encourage children to be creative and explore/enjoy the process of creation.
Product art projects	Provide a large selection of art supplies and interesting items for children to create with.
Theme-based lesson planning	Plan for individual children based on their developmental needs and abilities using the Creative Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers.
Time out	Use positive guidance and redirection.

Instead of:	We...
Decorating for holidays and celebrating holidays and birthdays in our classrooms	Focus on providing an environment where families of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds can always feel comfortable and involved.
Serving cookies, candies, cakes and other sweets at meals or program functions	Encourage healthy eating and dental hygiene by serving nutritious meals and brushing teeth in our classrooms. We even have dentists visit our centers for dental exams whenever possible.
Serving children meals in a cafeteria or restaurant style	Practice developmental meal service where children are encouraged to serve themselves and enjoy meal-time conversations.
Changing a child's classroom or teacher every few months	Focus on continuity of care and primary care giving.

Early Head Start

215 S. Barnes
Springfield, MO 65802

Phone: 417-864-3430
Fax: 417-864-3449

E-mail: kshinnbrown@oacac-caa.org