



To: All Head Start Staff, Policy Council Members, and Collaboration Sites

From: Jenny Childerson

Subject: Weekly Memo Update

Date: Week of 3.18.16

Director's Note

I wanted to take a moment to apologize to you all for not getting a memo out last week. They say “when it rains, it pours,” and last week it sure felt like it was pouring at the 3rd Street office. Let me give you a little glimpse of what we encountered last week: there was a small electrical fire at Fenton, the hot water heater at Grey Summit went out and we had to close the center for a day, there was a power outage that required us to close Hematite for a day, we ran into some licensing troubles at Windsor, we had a kiddo that took a pretty bad tumble at St. Clair, and we had a handful of licensing and fire code violations thrown into the mix. No one is to blame for any of these mishaps, what we experienced was simply a series of unfortunate events that we were forced to deal with on top of our usual day to day demands. I tell you all of this not to discourage you or to ask you to extend a little sympathy to your management team, but to be real with you on what we encounter from time to time. Over the past few months we have championed this vision of strengthening our Head Start program by building systems, putting policies and procedures in place, and embarking in new and innovate endeavors, but despite all of our best efforts sometimes we end up taking two, (or ten) steps back before we move forward. But you know what, that is ok, and I would argue that it is even a good thing. Sometimes we can get so focused on what we want to see happen that we lose sight of where we are at in the moment. Last week caused us all to take a moment to re-center ourselves on what we are doing today. It caused us to step back and think about where we need to focus our efforts to make sure our program as a whole is running smoothly so our children and families can receive the best services we have to offer.

To say last week was chaotic would be a bit of an understatement, but in the midst chaos I saw our teams really coming together and standing strong against trying circumstances; I witnessed the staff at Fenton being proactive and calling in the Fire Department when they suspected that something wasn't right, I witnessed the team at Hematite pulling together to make sure all of the kids were taken care of when we could not continue to teach them for the day, I witnessed the team at St. Clair taking charge and not being afraid to take drastic measures to ensure a child received the best care possible, and I saw the entire 3rd street team sharing responsibilities and supporting other staff above and beyond what is asked of them. You are all truly an important piece of the puzzle, and last week was the perfect example of how it is impossible for any one person, any one center, or any one department to carry out our mission independent of one another. My hat goes off to all of you because last week when many of you had every reason to crumble, you chose to persevere and rise above instead.



Jefferson Franklin Community Action Corporation
P.O. Box 920
Hillsboro, MO 63050
636-789-2686

Special Services Memo

We hope that you all are starting to feel more supported with the mental health and behavioral concerns you have been experiencing with your students. Susan and Megan are working very hard to work with you in your classrooms and to begin seeing children individually. I need to take a moment to clarify our current scope of work within the Special Services Department; for now the Special Services team will provide clinical services strictly to the children in our program. They may determine at points that it is important to involve parents or other family members into the child's treatment, but at this time we cannot offer counseling sessions to parents. Due to the nature of our work it is often very easy to identify when a parent or other care giver is in crisis and in need of support. In the future we hope to be able to offer our clinical services to parents as well, but with almost 500 children in our program and 2 clinicians, unfortunately our staff simply cannot extend themselves beyond serving our children as their primary clients at this time. With that said however, we never want to leave a family in crisis without options. If you are aware that a parent or other family member is in need of mental health support we are instructing that you take your concerns to the child's Family Advocate who will coordinate a referral. Family Advocates, if you are unsure of an appropriate referral source the Special Services team can help you find good resources.

Shout Out!!

This week's shout out goes to MR. SKIP! Over the course of the past few weeks Skip has had more than his fair share of projects. I think you would all agree that electrical fires, broken hot water heaters, and power outages would be enough to keep a man busy for a week, but on top of managing all of these issues he has been fixing playground equipment, making sure doors get installed, hauling supplies out to centers, and making countless trips to our storage facility to store deliveries. You may not know, but he has been managing all of this without his tools because they were stolen from his work truck a couple of weeks ago. Through all of the hustle and bustle we have been experiencing Skip has worked tirelessly with a willing heart and a smile on his face. I know you all appreciate everything that Skip does for us, but please take a moment next time you see him to let him know just how much you care!

Thank you for taking the time to read and review this week's update. Please feel free to contact your immediate supervisor, any management staff, or myself with any questions and/or concerns.

Jenny Childerson