

"THE FISHERMEN FAMILY CONNECTION" NEWSLETTER



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UPCOMING EVENTS

**See Flyers for More Details*



Daylight Savings Time
Sunday March 8th @ 2:00 am
Don't forget to SPRING ahead.
Clocks move forward 1 hour.



Sneaker Ball
Friday, March 13th @ 5:30 pm
Calling all Fathers/Father figures. Join us for a night of dancing dedicated to you and your little one.



Policy Council
Wednesday, March 18th @ 5:30 pm
Join us via ZOOM for our Monthly Policy Council Meeting. Anyone can attend to hear what is happening here at The Order of the Fishermen Ministry Head Start.



Community Baby Shower
Thursday, April 16 @ 10:00 a.m.
Join us as we celebrate expecting families, and connect them to a loving village of love, baby items and community resources.



REMINDERS

Dear Families,
March is Reading Month, and we're excited to celebrate the joy of books with you!

Reading to your infant or toddler, even for just a few minutes a day helps build language skills, strengthens brain development, and creates special bonding time. Your baby loves hearing your voice, and your toddler loves turning pages, pointing to pictures, and hearing favorite stories again and again.

Try adding books to your daily routine, before naps, at bedtime, or anytime you can cuddle up together. Keep it fun, use silly voices, and let your child explore the story in their own way!

Thank you for helping us grow lifelong readers. Happy Reading Month!

Warmly,
Tameka Dwyer
Executive Director



Parent Family Community Engagement



Operation Warm is excited to give back to our TOFM families!

We received winter coats for little ones in sizes 2T–4T, and shoes with socks in sizes 9T–10T AND 10 kids' sizes!

If your family would benefit from a warm coat and comfy shoes this season, we want to help!



Limited quantities available — sign up today!



Your voice matters — and we need it at the table!

Our program is still seeking parent representatives to serve on our Policy Council. Policy Council plays a vital role in guiding our Early Head Start program. Members review important program decisions, share ideas, help approve policies, and ensure our program continues to meet the needs of children and families.

This is a wonderful opportunity to:

- Build leadership skills
- Learn more about how Head Start works
- Share your voice and ideas
- Connect with other families
- Make a direct impact on program decisions

Meetings are held monthly, and support is provided to help you participate successfully.

If you are interested, or would like to learn more, please contact your Ms. Jones at 313-236-2845.

We need **YOU** to help shape the future of our program!

Spring Into HEALTHY HABITS



March Is National Nutrition Month

Healthy eating builds strong bodies and brains!

Try these at home:

- Offer fruits and vegetables daily
- Limit juice to 4 oz (for children over 1)
- Encourage water between meals
- Let your child help with simple food prep

Challenge:

Can your child eat 3 different colors in one day?



As the weather warms up, pollen levels rise.
Watch for:

- Sneezing
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Itchy, watery eyes

Reminder: Allergies do NOT cause fever. If your child has a fever (100.4°F+), please keep them home.



Wash hands and faces after outdoor play and change clothes once inside.



Daylight Savings Time & Sleep

Time changes can affect little ones.

- Keep bedtime routines consistent
- Move bedtime 10–15 minutes earlier for a few days

- Toddlers need 11–14 hours of sleep daily



Education CORNER



March is Reading Month, and at Early Head Start, we are celebrating the joy of books, language, and storytelling! Even our youngest learners are building early literacy skills every single day.

You might be surprised to know that reading doesn't start when children learn their ABCs – it starts at birth! ❤️

When you talk, sing, point to pictures, and read with your child, you are building:

- 🧠 Brain development
- 🗣️ Language and vocabulary
- ❤️ Bonding and emotional security
- 📖 School readiness skills

Why Reading Early Matters:

During the first three years of life, your child's brain is growing faster than at any other time. Hearing words, rhythms, and stories helps create strong brain connections that support:

- ✓ Communication skills
- ✓ Attention and listening
- ✓ Early problem-solving
- ✓ Social-emotional development



How to Read with Infants & Toddlers

You don't have to read every word on the page. Try these simple strategies:

For Infants:

- Use board books with bright pictures.
- Point to pictures and name what you see.
- Use different voices and facial expressions.
- Let your baby touch and explore the book.

For Toddlers

- Ask simple questions: "Where is the dog?"
- Let them turn the pages.
- Connect the story to their life ("We saw a truck like that!").
- Read the same book again and again – repetition builds learning!



YOUR PARTNERSHIP MATTERS

As we move through March, we are asking for your continued partnership to help your site reach and maintain full compliance. Your involvement truly makes the difference!

✔ Attendance Matters

Bringing your child to school consistently (unless they are sick) supports their development, strengthens school readiness, and helps your site remain in compliance.

🎯 Family Outcomes, Goals & Needs

Be sure to connect with your Family Advocate to complete or update your family goals. These conversations help us better support your family's growth, stability, and long-term success.

👶 Well-Baby Exams

Please make sure your child's well-baby exams are up to date and on file at your site. Keeping health records current ensures we remain fully health compliant and ready to support your child's well-being.

Check out the Compliance Charts posted on your center's Parent Board. These charts:

- Keep you informed about your site's progress
- Show how we are working toward full compliance
- Highlight how your partnership directly contributes to our success

It's a simple but powerful way to stay connected and engaged!



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: CELEBRATING MS. TASHIRA WARD



In just four months, Ms. Ward has done an outstanding job acclimating herself to her sites, building strong relationships with families, and becoming a wonderful addition to our team. Her dedication, warmth, and positive energy have already made a meaningful impact. We are so proud of the work she is doing and grateful to have her serving our families!



TRANSITION PLANNING BEGINS...

March is also an important planning month. We will begin transition planning for families whose children will be leaving the Early Head Start program. If your child will be transitioning, your Family Advocate will connect with you soon to guide you through next steps and ensure a smooth, successful transition.

THE ORDER OF THE FISHERMEN MINISTRY HEAD START

Sneaker Ball

“LITTLE FEET, BIG DREAMS”

CELEBRATING OUR CHILDREN, ONE STEP AT A TIME

Early Head Start children and fathers/father figures are invited to join us for a fun and festive Sneaker Ball created just for our littlest learners

13 MARCH | 2026 | AT 5:30 PM

DURFEE INNOVATION CENTER

2470 DOLLINGWOOD ST.

DETROIT, MI 48234



What to Expect:

- Music & dancing
- Kid-friendly snacks
- Photo opportunities
- Family fun

Dress your best — and wear your favorite sneakers!

Fancy outfits, colorful sneakers, or comfy clothes are all welcome.



**All Parents, Policy Council
Members**

**TOFMHS
Program
Policy Council
Meeting**

**Wednesday
March 18, 2026
@5:30pm**

Join Zoom Meeting

**Meeting ID: 817 9745 5202
Passcode: 652824**

UPCOMING EVENT

Join us for a fun-filled Easter celebration for children with autism and their families.



EASTER

Autism-Friendly Easter Event

Tuesday, March 31 | STARTING 10:30 AM

Egg Hunt Sessions

- 11:30 AM
- 2:00 PM
- 5:00 PM

Structured sessions to support a calm experience.

Family Fun for Autism Families

Join us for a special meet & greet with the Easter Bunny, complete with photo ops and bunny photo available for families to enjoy.

Free Event Highlights:

- Exciting Easter Egg Hunt
- Sensory-Friendly Photos with the Easter Bunny
- Fun Games & Prizes
- Delicious Food & Refreshments



Scan to book your time slot for a photo with the Easter Bunny

Free Event



THRIVE
HEALTH CARE SERVICES



27770 Franklin Rd, Southfield, MI

The Order of the Fishermen Ministry Head Start presents -

“It Takes a Village” Community Baby Shower

for pregnant moms and moms w/infants 0-4 months old



April 16, 2026
10:00am-1:30pm

Join us as we celebrate expecting families, and connect them to a loving village of love, baby items and community resources.

REGISTER HERE >



Durfee Innovation Society
2470 Collingwood Detroit MI 48204
For more info: Jeanette Jones PFCE/Fatherhood 313-236-2845



Because every baby deserves a strong village.





Language and Literacy for Littles and Loved Ones

Literacy starts early. *Did you know you can support your child's future reading and writing before they can even talk?*

Babies come into the world ready to learn. Everything young children learn about communication, language, books, and printed words on their way to formal reading and writing is part of emergent literacy.

Find out what you can do to build a strong literacy foundation for your child in the first three years of life.

Families have literacy superpowers. *Do you know the many ways you already support your child's language and emergent literacy?*

It doesn't take flash cards, tablets, or fancy books. There are many ways you support language and emergent literacy in your everyday interactions with your baby or toddler. Whether you know it or not, you have literacy superpowers. Use the Michigan Language and Literacy for Littles and Loved Ones to discover yours, and build more!

Literacy starts early. You can start now!

Use the camera on your phone to scan the QR codes to learn more about each essential practice!

Set the Stage for Love and Learning



Children need to feel safe and loved to learn and reach their full potential in language and literacy. Families can provide safe, caring, and playful environments to help children feel loved and ready to learn by:

- giving children lots of love with cuddles, kisses, and kind words
- creating consistent daily routines for meals, rest, and play
- providing safe physical spaces for children to explore and play with things that interest them most



[Maximize Love, Manage Stress](#)

Back-and-forth Conversations with Babies and Toddlers

Beginning at birth, babies can be part of back-and-forth communication with their loved ones. Families support children's language when they turn babies' coos and toddlers' talk into conversations by:

- looking at their baby when they coo
- copying and adding to children's sounds and words
- translating children's actions and sounds into words
- asking questions
- waiting for answers
- keeping the conversation going



[Talk, Point, and Sing](#)



Literacy in Your Family Life and Culture

You play the most important role in your child's early learning. No matter where you are, play and talk with your child in your home language(s). Use language to share your family culture with your child—by talking, reading, telling stories, or singing. Daily routines are the place to start:

- Meals
- Bed time
- Going from place to place
- Getting dressed
- Shopping
- What else do you do with your child every day?



The tools you need are already in your home and daily life!



[B3 Essentials Handout: Language & literacy in daily routines](#)

Print is All Around!

Print includes letters, words, and other symbols like road signs. Knowing how print works is an important early step to reading and writing. Families can help children understand print by:

- pointing out printed words, symbols, or specific letters
- reading labels on items at home
- talking about the printed words they see or write in everyday tasks and what the print is used for



[B3 Essentials Handout: Print is all around](#)



Fun with Books & Storytelling



Babies and toddlers who share books and listen to stories with their families have stronger language and literacy later in life. You can help build these skills by:

- reading books with babies and toddlers from birth
- looking at and talking about picture books
- telling stories out loud
- using books as prompts to talk, sing songs, and share memories



[Read and Discuss Stories](#)

Sound Play Every Day

Playing with sounds helps children notice the sounds of language. Then they can recognize and make those sounds later, and eventually connect the sounds with letters. You can:

- use “parentese” with babies (slower, rhythmic, sing-song speech; scan QR code for video)
 - repeat sounds children make
 - sing songs and share books with rhythm, rhymes, and similar starting sounds
- point out the first sounds of familiar words



[Parenting Counts: Babies learn sounds and words from you](#)

Baby Language is Body Language

Before babies say their first words, they can “talk” with their face, hands, and body, and you can, too! Promote language as you:

- point and use other gestures as you play, talk, and sing with your baby, and encourage babies and toddlers to use their hands, faces, and bodies to communicate
- use “baby signs” in everyday routines like meals and bedtime (scan QR code for video)
- use pointing and “baby signs” with books, stories, and songs
- translate (put into words) children’s body language, gestures, and signs and respond to their messages



[WKAR Infant Signs Collection](#)

So Much More than Scribbles!

Children start to understand that writing is a way to communicate long before they can write letters or words. Children begin to “write” with marks, scribbles, and pictures. Families can support children’s writing by:

- talking about their own writing (lists, emails, thank you notes)
- celebrating and talking about all the different ways children write!
- putting safe and simple writing tools and materials within children’s reach
- providing toys and activities to build hand and finger strength by building, rolling, squishing, and tearing



[Zero To Three's Learn to Write and Draw](#)

Reading and Writing Within their Reach

Babies and toddlers learn best when they have safe and simple materials for reading and writing within their reach. Get creative with things you already have, such as:

- mail, magazines, or catalogs
- sturdy books from your local library
- cookbooks, recipes, or labels on food packages
- notepads or post-its
- washable markers, crayons, or chalk



Low tech is best! Babies and toddlers learn more from printed books and simple writing tools they can grip in their hands than from electronic ones.



[B3 Essentials Handout: Supporting writing Birth to Age 3](#)

It Takes a Village: When & Where to Go for Help

Do you have questions about your child’s language, play, or interactions? Trust that you know your child better than anyone. If you are worried about your child’s development, reach out to the resources that are here to help. Contact Early On (1800EarlyOn.org) or talk with your child’s doctor. Early intervention can help you provide the best support for your child.



[Download the CDC's Free Developmental Milestones Tracker App](#)



<https://www.1800earlyon.org/>

