Northern Tier Community Action Corp.
Head Start Program

March/April 2026

Dave Greene
Executive Director

From the Director . . .

Reading with your preschooler is one of the most meaningful things you can do together. It doesn't have to be long or perfect — just a few minutes a day can make a big difference. Snuggling up with a book, hearing a familiar voice, and sharing a story helps children feel safe, loved, and excited to learn.

Building Strong Brains
During the preschool years, children's brains are growing rapidly. Reading helps build the connections needed for thinking, remembering, and problem-solving. Hearing stories supports early literacy skills like recognizing letters, sounds, and patterns — all through joyful moments together.

Growing Language Skills
Books introduce children to new words, ideas, and ways of expressing themselves. When you read aloud, talk about the pictures, or ask questions, your child learns how language works. These conversations help build vocabulary, listening skills, and confidence in communication.

Supporting Emotional Development
Stories help children understand feelings — their own and others'. Books can open conversations about kindness, friendship, fear, and big emotions. Reading together also strengthens your bond and helps your child associate learning with comfort and connection.

Getting Ready for School
Children who are read to regularly often find it easier to focus, follow stories, and understand directions. These skills support success in preschool and later in kindergarten and beyond.

Creating Calm Routines
Reading together can be a peaceful part of your daily routine, especially at bedtime. These moments help children slow down, feel secure, and enjoy a predictable, comforting activity.

Making It Simple
You don't need special books or a lot of time. Read the same favorite story again and again, talk about what you see, or even make up stories together. What matters most is spending time together and sharing language in a loving way.
Every story you share helps your child grow — not just as a learner, but as a confident, curious little person.

Contributed by: Debra Sidelinger, Head Start Director

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Attendance

We know mornings with young children can be unpredictable. Some days go smoothly, and other days it can feel like everything happens at once. Illness, tired mornings, big feelings, and busy schedules are all part of family life — and we understand that. Even so, when children are able to attend preschool regularly, it makes a meaningful difference in their growth and development. Each day builds on the one before it, helping children feel confident, connected, and ready to learn.

Growing Minds
The early years are a special time for learning. Young children's brai preschool helps support that growth through play, exploration, and da children attend consistently, they have more chances to prac-tice new understanding grow.

Getting Ready for School
Preschool gently prepares children for future schooling. Through regular attendance, children learn how to follow routines, listen to others, try new things, and work together. These experiences help children feel ready and excited for kindergarten and beyond.

Building Friendships and Feelings
Being with the same teachers and classmates each day helps children feel safe and secure. Regular attendance supports strong relationships, emotional regulation, and a sense of belonging. Children learn how to share, express feelings, and build friendships in a caring environment.

Learning to Communicate
Talking, listening, singing, reading, and storytelling happen all day in preschool. Daily exposure to language-rich experiences helps children build vocabulary and confidence in expressing themselves.

Comfort in Routine
Young children thrive on routine. Coming to preschool each day helps create a predictable rhythm that supports independence, responsibility, and flexibility — skills that serve children well as they grow.

Supporting the Whole Child
Preschool supports more than learning. Children benefit from healthy meals, physical activity, and caring adults who watch for developmental milestones. When children attend regularly, educators can better support their growth and notice early when a child may need extra help.

Contributed by: Debra Sidelinger, Head Start Director

Thank you for participating in our Head Start program. We're honored to be part of your child's early learning journey. We value the trust you've placed in us and are committed to supporting your child and family every step of the way!

Head Start
Where Bright Futures Begin

Social Media

Follow us on Facebook to stay connected with program news and happenings! Like "Northern Tier Community Action Corporation Head Start"

Applications for 2026-27 School Year!!

Northern Tier Community Action Head Start is currently accepting applications for the 2026-2027 school year. Spread the good news of how wonderful your experience has been at Head Start with others! Please let all your family and friends of 3-4 year olds know that we are taking applications for next year. Centers fill up fast!

Applications can be found at your local Head Start center or by calling the main office at 888 809-3704 Ext. 224.

If your child is currently enrolled and is not kindergarten age, you will not have to complete another application. Head Start applications are good for 2 years.

Parent Support!

Thank you for spending your time helping us to support children in succeeding during their preschool years and beyond! Children benefit from having adults participate in Head Start as each volunteer brings a unique personality, heritage and life experience to share in the classroom. Memorable educational experiences for children occur when the family, early childhood educators, and community all work together! We would like to offer sincere thanks for all the time you have donated to Head Start so far this year ! You are truly appreciated!

. . . From Head Start Staff

A Rainbow of Real Foods: The Choosy Rainbow Salad

There is a popular candy with the slogan "Taste the rainbow." Let's try to get kids excited about the rainbow of REAL foods. Just for a moment, think about how food looks and presents itself. Many popular snack foods are really bland or neutral colored. Potato chips, crackers, pretzels are not really eye-catching or colorful. Now think about strolling through the produce section at the market. Wow! Color everywhere. There is a healthy, nourishing rainbow in the produce section of your grocery store. Let's "taste the real rainbow."

Remember ROY G BIV? That guy who helped you recall the colors in the light spectrum. Let's think of his name when we try to prepare the Choosy Rainbow Salad.

Red- little tomatoes or cherries or strawberries
Orange- orange peppers, carrot sticks, or an orange (little ones are popular now)
Yellow- yellow peppers, apples, tomatoes, or corn
Green- lettuce, broccoli, snap peas, green beans or any other greens are great
Blue- how about blueberries?
Indigo and Purple- grapes, blackberries, purple cabbage

Make it a game in the store and if there is something you haven't tried before, show your family what Choosy would do: Try it!

Now put it all together. Remember that just a little is all you need for each salad or make a bigger one for the family to share--that could save you time. You can cut the pieces up and everyone makes their own. Food art is fun, creative, and can include the whole family. Use a small amount of whatever dressing you like or try it dressing-free. It's your choice.
Encourage children to create their yummy, colorful snacks using the cut up veggie rainbow pieces you provide. Children are more likely to eat food they prepare. Not interested in a rainbow salad? How about just adding a little of the rainbow to each meal? Fruit for breakfast. Fruit and veggie for lunch, and fruit and veggie or salad and veggie for dinner. That gets you to 5 in a day!

And remember, when you use some fruit or veggies to have colorful snacks, instead of bland junk food snacks, you are well on your way to giving yourself and your kids the vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fiber they were meant to have as fuel. Real kids, real food!

Taken from choosykids.com
Bonnie Halquist, Health & Nutrition Manager

Adding Goodness to Every Meal

The Child and Adult Care Food Program stirs up goodness every day by providing healthy, nutritious meals and snacks to over 4.5 million children and adults. Here are six different ways that you can stir goodness into your own menus.

Add a Burst of Color on the Plate

Adding more color helps provide a balance of vitamins and minerals.

- Rotate produce by season for variety and cost savings.
- Aim to have at least two different colors on each plate.
- Serve each color at least once per week.

Choose More Whole Grains

Simple swaps for whole grains boost fiber and provide long-lasting energy.

- Serve two whole grain-rich grains per day for more fiber.
- Opt for whole grain-rich bread instead of white bread.
- Pair favorite fruits with oatmeal in the morning.

Power Up with Protein Variety

Protein supports growth and helps keep bellies fuller for longer.

- Offer lean meats and limit processed options.
- Add yogurt and cheese for calcium-rich meat alternates.
- Try out some plant-based options like tofu or lentils.

Keep Flavor Simple and Healthy

Limiting sugar and sodium does not have to mean that you are limiting flavor.

- Use herbs and spices like cinnamon, garlic or basil.
- Try citrus juice or vinegar to brighten flavors.
- Roast or bake foods for different textures and taste.

Make Mealtime Fun & Inviting

Presentation matters, especially for young eaters trying out new foods.

- Practice family style dining if you're able.
- Use fun names like "Super Spinach" or "Mighty Milk."
- Let kids create patterns on plates, like faces or animals.

Involve Kids in the Process

Kids are more likely to try a new food if they've helped choose or prepare it.

- Let kids help pour and mix ingredients.
- Encourage feedback when introducing a new food.
- Have children set the table before mealtimes.

NATIONAL CACFP ASSOCIATION

cacfpweek.org | NOV 25
CACFP is an indicator of quality care.
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Stirring Up Goodness
CACFP WEEK 2026

PBIS

"BEE"ING RESPONIBLE

Beezee and Choosy will be visiting the classroom over the week of March 23rd. This visit will focus on "Bee"ing Responsible. To celebrate National Nutrition Month Choosy will help us learn about being responsible with our eating choices. This includes learning about healthy foods and the importance of exercise. If you would like to attend please reach out to your staff to let them know.

Visit Schedule for the week of March 23rd
Monday-St. Marys, PKC, Ridgway and Johnsonburg
Tuesday-Emporium, EPKC
Wednesday-Kane and Bradford
Thursday-Coudersport, Port and Eldred