

# PROGRAM OPTIONS

Community Action Early Head Start and Head Start promotes school readiness for children and families in and out of the classroom through a holistic approach to early childhood education, health, nutrition, and social and emotional wellness. Our services, provided at no financial cost to families, are offered through four program options within Lancaster and Saunders Counties:

- 1.) **Early Head Start Home-based:** Works with expecting families and families of infants and toddlers ages birth to three in the home. Call Jamie Yenglin at 402-875-9385 for more information or to apply.
- 2.) **Early Head Start and Head Start at Educare of Lincoln:** Works with children ages birth to five in a state-of-the-art facility adjacent to Belmont Elementary School. Wraparound care is available for families in need of full-day services. Call Ciara Alvarez at 402-458-3171 for more information or to apply.
- 3.) **Head Start at Wahoo Public Schools:** Works with children ages three to five in classroom-based learning environments at Ashland-Greenwood Elementary School and Wahoo Elementary School. Call Jean Tesinsky at 402-443-4250 ext. 1007 for more information or to apply.
- 4.) **Head Start at Lincoln Public Schools:** Works with children ages three to five in classroom-based learning environments at Arnold, Belmont, Brownell, Calvert, Campbell, Clinton, Elliott, Everett, Hartley, Holmes, Huntington, McPhee, Norwood Park, Prescott, Roper, Saratoga, and West Lincoln Elementary Schools. Call Toni Jafferis at 402-436-1941 for more information or to apply.



# THANK YOU!!

It would not be possible for our program to do what it does without the financial support of our community partners. We would like to thank the following organizations for the support of our work:

- ~ The Buffett Early Childhood Fund
- ~ Community Health Endowment of Lincoln
- ~ United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County
- ~ United Way Women in Philanthropy
- ~ Target
- ~Imperial Foundation

We would also like to thank our friend Ken for committing his time to illustrate our Super Baby and Super Kid graphics. Thanks for bringing our idea to life!

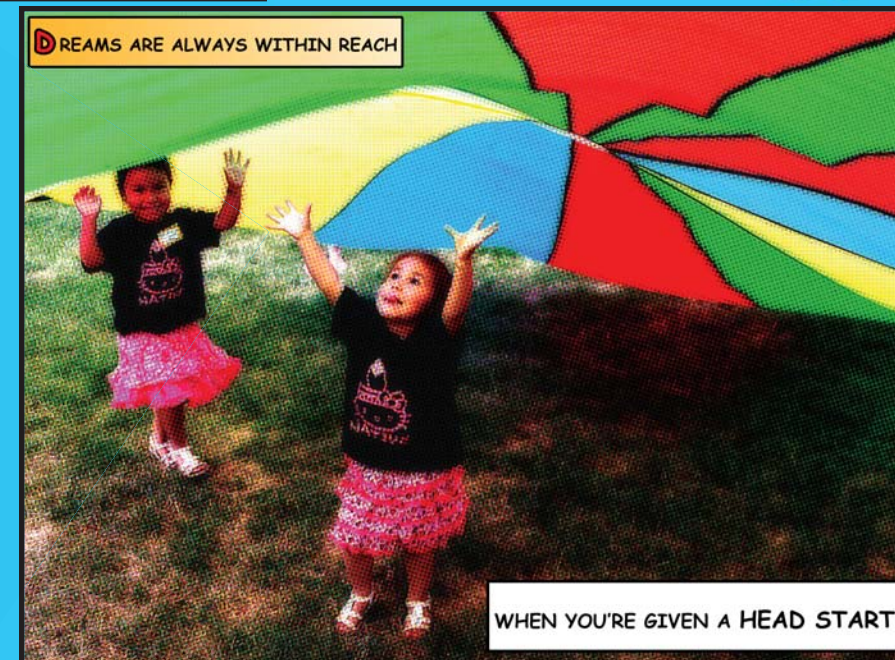


Adventures in

# HEAD START



**VOLUME 1  
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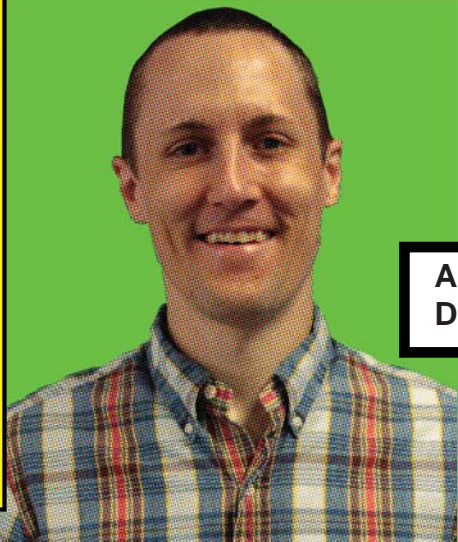
We all have our own ideas of what makes a hero. We often talk of people going above and beyond to take care of some problem, or to save someone or something from sure disaster. We read about these remarkable folks on the covers of magazines as we check out at the grocery store. We recall the heroes in our personal lives, people who have helped shape positively our perspective on the world, and who have instilled in us courage, confidence, and a whole host of other tools that we need to be successful. The older we grow, the more we realize how much of an impact these personal heroes have had on us, even in the smallest of ways.

As parents, we put so much pressure on ourselves to be the perfect hero for our kids. We look to these small humans for validation that we have great ideas, that we are cool, that we can protect them from all hurt, or most importantly, that we can make the best pancakes in the universe. Sometimes our heroism is validated—often in the form of a hug, an unexpected “I love you”, or a conversation we overhear during which our kids mention to someone else how awesome we are. Sometimes we even overhear how awesome our pancakes are, even when they are initially met with a scowl because the batter was shaped into the form of a mouse with chocolate chip eyes instead of a bunny with banana slice ears.

Yet, even in those moments when we feel like the perfect parent, it is often our seemingly imperfect parenting that may be in the true makings of a hero. I know of few more emotionally crushing blows than watching crocodile tears run down my daughter’s face when she realizes that her behavior has led to the loss of some privilege at the hands of her dad. In each moment like this, we have to decide on a dime whether or not to give in and give the fun back—That would be so much easier, right?—or to hold our ground and calmly show our little ones that actions come with consequences, and that they are capable of doing what is right the next time around.

Even after four and a half years of fatherhood, I still get caught in those moments considering whether to give in or stay the course, but more and more, I am realizing that my daughter’s tears and anger stop soon enough, and that she grows more resilient each time she hits a rough spot. To her, losing dessert or an extra bedtime story can feel like the end of the world; to me, holding firm and not giving back that dessert or story despite her protesting that we should “compromise,” feels much the same.

For all of its joys, parenting comes with its share of burdens, so please remember to cut yourself some slack. Being a hero doesn’t mean always feeling like one, and what feels like less-than-perfect parenting may be just the ticket toward raising some pretty heroic kids.



Aaron Bowen,  
Director of Head Start & Early Head Start

## School Readiness: What Learning Really Looks Like in the First Years of Life

Holly Delgado,  
Education Administrator

The term “school readiness” is used frequently in conversations about young children, but what does it really mean? Generally speaking, school readiness refers to skills or behaviors a young child needs to develop by the age of five in order to succeed in formal schooling. While academic skills, such as letter recognition and counting are an important part of school success, other facets of child development, such as overall health and well-being, social-emotional development, and a child’s approach to learning are equally as important.

Research shows us that children are born ready to learn. At the youngest of ages, learning occurs in the context of everyday routines; feeding, bathing, diapering, dressing, holding, and talking to an infant are a parent’s first opportunity to be a teacher. When a parent responds to an infant’s cry, the child is learning not only that he or she can communicate needs, but that he or she can trust the parent to fulfill those needs. As a child grows, that trust becomes the motivator for future exploration of the world around them.

Young children learn best when provided opportunities for play, exploration, and meaningful interactions with objects and people. Expensive toys and technological gadgets are not needed to boost cognitive development; young children often learn the most from ordinary objects. Here are just some ways you can take ordinary household items and turn them into invaluable learning tools:

- Use plastic bowls to as nesting blocks to teach your child sorting, classification, and other mathematical skills. Put a lid on the bowls to turn them into musical instruments, such as drums.
- Turn an empty cardboard box into a secret fort through which concepts of *in and out* and *on and off* can be taught. Or, transform the box into a racecar to teach your child concepts of *fast and slow* and *stop and go*.
- Use a blanket to play “peek-a-boo” to help your child develop concepts of object permanence. Blankets also provide a warm place to snuggle in while reading a book, singing songs, or just talking about the day. Each of these experiences are important components of literacy development.

All of these open-ended learning experiences provide opportunities to build language, problem solve, and use scientific inquiry skills. They also build confidence, persistence, curiosity, and cooperation, each a key predictor in a child’s future success. As a parent or caregiver, every interaction you have with your child is an opportunity to maximize their learning potential and help shape their future. Invest the time to make sure those interactions encourage success and instill a life-long love of learning, because only when you are ready to fully support and engage in your child’s learning, will your child truly be ready for school.

## ADVENTURES OF THE SUPER BABIES & SUPER KIDS

