

SCHOOL READINESS NEWSLETTER

Introducing The New Look of Our School Readiness Goals!

The City of Phoenix Head Start Birth to Five Program recognizes the vital role that children, families, and communities play in school readiness.

We are focused on creating more awareness around our school readiness goals and taking every opportunity to spotlight, celebrate, and honor the multitude of ways that school readiness is celebrated across our program.

Our school readiness goals remain the same. However, we have rephrased the description of each goal to provide more details about what children can do in each learning domain. See our revised descriptions below!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

School Readiness Goals	1
Featured Contributor's Message.....	2
PD Corner	3
Professional Development.....	4
Specialist Spotlight.....	5
Early Head Start Highlights.....	6
Head Start Highlights.....	7-8

CITY OF PHOENIX HEAD START BIRTH TO FIVE SCHOOL READINESS GOALS

DOMAIN: APPROACHES TO LEARNING
School Readiness Goal: Children will show interest, engage in tasks, and persist when challenged to problem solve.

DOMAIN: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
School Readiness Goal: Children will learn how to manage their feelings through safe and trusting relationships with the adults in their world.

DOMAIN: LANGUAGE AND LITERACY
School Readiness Goal: Children will learn to use and understand words, engage in conversation, appreciate books and print, and notice individual and rhyming sounds.

DOMAIN: COGNITION
School Readiness Goal: Children will use math and scientific thinking to count, match numbers, recall objects and events to make connections.

DOMAIN: PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
School Readiness Goal: Children will use small and large muscles to explore their environment and interact with people and objects.

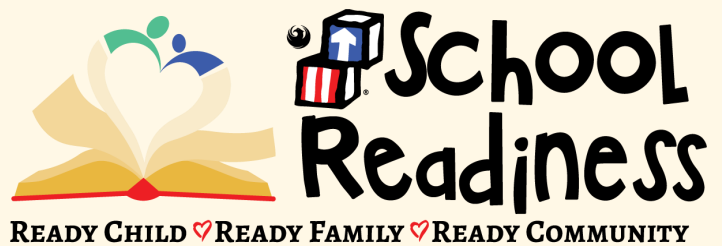
Parent, Family and Community Engagement
Family Engagement Goal: Parents and families observe, guide, promote and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their community.



FEATURED CONTRIBUTOR



Nicol Russell, Ed.D.



Dear folks,

You are the guiding stars in the educational journey of our children, lighting the way towards a future filled with possibilities. Your role extends beyond the classroom, and your impact on both children and families is immeasurable. As we strive to prepare children for school, both now and in the future, you play a critical role in setting them up for lifelong success.

Right now, your dedication and care provide children with a safe and nurturing environment where they can learn and grow. You are giving them not only foundational academic knowledge but also essential life skills. At your best you are caregivers, role models, and sources of encouragement. Don't let the work steal your joy.

Your impact doesn't stop there. You also support families in their crucial role as the first educators of their children. By fostering open lines of communication, you invite families into a community focused on fully supporting their children. You empower them with the tools and knowledge to continue their child's learning journey at home, ensuring collaboration between school and family. Don't let frustration hurt your partnerships.

Looking to the future, you are shaping the leaders, innovators, and change-makers of tomorrow. Your commitment to fostering a love for learning isn't just about being ready for kindergarten. You encourage curiosity, critical thinking, and a wonder about life that brings delight. You nurture not just their academic abilities but also their resilience, adaptability, and empathy. Don't let the challenges harden your heart.

Finally, in the ever-changing landscape of early care and education, I hope you see yourself as a steady constant, a beacon of hope, and a source of inspiration for every child in your care, now and in the future. Your dedication to supporting children and families is a gift that keeps on giving. It both prepares their minds for the future and cares for their hearts right now. Don't let the responsibilities slow your efforts.

Thank you for your tireless work.

Keep inspiring, keep nurturing, and keep shaping the world, one child at a time.

Have you ever wondered how the materials, interactions, and explorations provided for young children come together to create rich, quality STEM environments?

The EDvantage Academy course, *Creating STEM Environments*, in partnership with Region 9 Head Start Association, may be just the course to help elevate STEM practices within your classroom (course #31638) .



After this course, the learner will be able to:

- Explain how the teacher's role and stance can influence STEM learning.
- Identify the characteristics of strong STEM-based environments.
- Identify the types of materials that support STEM learning and environments.



Happy Learning!



Want to learn more about school readiness, and spread the word in your community? Become a school readiness ambassador!

Contact
Janell Stringfellow at Janell.stringfellow@phoenix.gov or
Stefanie Goodman at Stefanie.goodman@phoenix.gov

In November, the Arizona Head Start Association hosted a showing of the documentary film *Black Boys* at the Carpenters Union Local 1912.

The more than eighty participants engaged in a panel discussion with members of the community and one of the directors of the film. The purpose of the documentary is to illuminate the spectrum of black male humanity in America.



LaMesha Byrd and Aliesha Myles, teachers at Booker T. Washington, attended the showing and shared the impact the film had on them.

"I believe that the film opened up a much needed and sometimes hard discussion to have. The film sheds light on issues that young black men face not only in society but in school as well. It breaks down how the education system is truly at the core of the problem when it comes to how young black men are viewed through the world."

~LaMesha Byrd

"Love is representation, listening, empathy, dream making, and honesty." This profound statement resonated deeply in our post-screening discussion of the "Black Boy" film. It illuminated the significance of embracing black boys as individuals with their own stories, dreams, and experiences in the context of education and equity.

Changing the perception of black people requires altering the images we encounter. This is a vital step toward dismantling damaging stereotypes and fostering inclusivity. The film underscored the urgency of confronting biases and providing positive role models to inspire young black boys to fulfill their potential. "They don't need saviors; they need believers." It's crucial to understand that young black boys don't require rescue, but rather, they need individuals who believe in their potential and capabilities.

In a world where black men's humanity is constantly questioned, it's imperative to acknowledge the pervasive challenges they face and work actively to combat these biases.

In conclusion, our experience with the "Black Boy" film and our ensuing dialogue underscored the urgent need to reshape our perceptions and approach to nurturing black boys in early childhood education. To foster equity, we must set high expectations, embrace diversity, provide positive role models, and, above all, be believers in their potential. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that every black boy has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.

After attending the professional development, I am feeling profoundly inspired. The insightful discussions and revelations from the "Black Boy" film screening have ignited a renewed sense of purpose and commitment within me. I'm now driven to actively contribute to the transformation of our education system, ensuring that every black boy feels valued, empowered, and equipped to achieve their fullest potential.

~Aliesha Myles

What is Inclusion in Early Childhood Education?

Inclusion refers to the full and active participation of young children with disabilities in programs with typically developing children. Inclusion in early childhood programs supports the right of all children, regardless of abilities, to participate actively in natural settings within their communities. Natural settings include, but are not limited to: home, preschool, nursery school, Early Head Start/Head Start, kindergarten, neighborhood/community, school classroom, child care center, place of worship, recreational space, and other settings that young children and families enjoy. (Inclusive Schools Network)

Head Start supports the inclusion of all children. It requires that at least 10 percent of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services and have either an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

An inclusive attitude accepts that all children with and without disabilities should be respected and supported to feel capable and safe and can experience the benefits of living and growing together. By creating an atmosphere in which children can better accept and understand differences among themselves, children begin to realize and accept that some people need to use wheelchairs, some use hearing aids, and some use their arms and legs in different ways.

Research shows that inclusion benefits all children in the following ways:

Children develop friendships and learn how to play and interact with one another.

Children develop a more positive image of themselves and a healthy attitude about the uniqueness of others.

Children are provided with models of people who achieve despite challenges.

All children have opportunities to learn new skills by observing and imitating other children.

Children are encouraged to be resourceful, creative, and cooperative.

Children are more sensitive to the interests and needs of others.

Positive attitudes are developed that impact future relationships.

Head Start defines school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge, & attitudes necessary for success in school and for later in life.





BE A SCHOOL

READINESS

CORRESPONDENT

We love to hear the great things your community is doing to promote school readiness!

Please send your newsletter submission and pictures to one of the following emails:

katie.hunot@phoenix.gov

sherri.anthony@phoenix.gov

elisa.najera@phoenix.gov

At Cactus Kids, Early Head Start teachers in room 8b comfort children by patting their backs at nap time. The toddlers in this classroom are learning to manage their feelings by comforting their baby dolls as modeled by caregivers.



HEAD START HIGHLIGHTS



In Mr. Nick and Mrs. Sarah's classroom at Lowell Elementary, children meet for large group in the morning. The teachers use positive strategies to support social and emotional skills with the children, including consistent routines, advanced language, positive affirmations, and breathing techniques. One child has the job to be the "emotional coach" for their group gathering. These strategies support the school readiness goal of children learning to manage their feelings through safe and trusting relationships with the adults in their world.



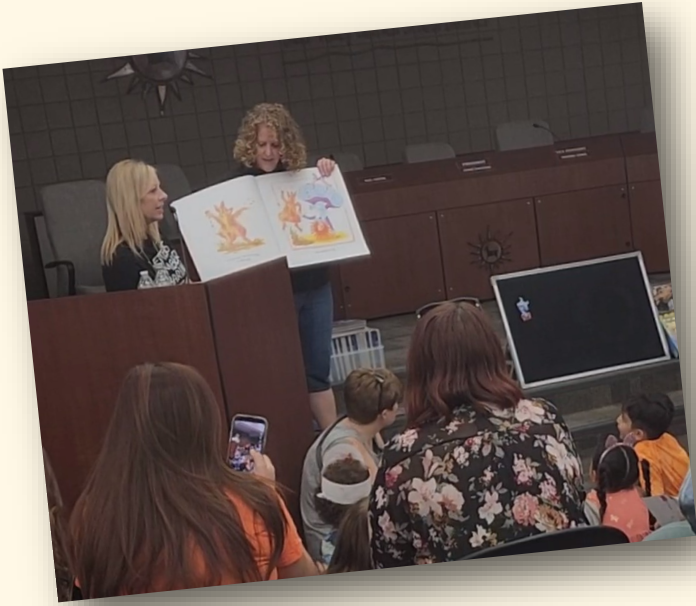
Inspired by a training at Pre-Service, Mrs. Kale introduced the book "Not a Box." After the book was read, Mrs. Kale and the children had a discussion on what they would like to create. The children used old milk cartons and other materials to put together their own creations. Creations included an Airplane, a Kitty Blast Star, and a Dog.

The book "Not a Box" is one of the children's favorite books!

The children worked with their teachers to plan their creations over time until their creations were complete. This approach supports the school readiness goal for Approaches to Learning. Children will show interest, engage in tasks, and persist when challenged to problem solve.



HEAD START HIGHLIGHTS



In October, Deer Valley Head Start hosted a Mommy and Me Night with over 200 families attending to plant flowers, make Fall Stew and S'mores, build scarecrows, and guess the amount in estimation jars. All school readiness goals were incorporated into the event.

Director Janet Zeek led a group reading of the book, *Silly Sally*.

