



MERCER COUNTY HEAD START

OCTOBER 2026
NEWSLETTER



HELLO, HEAD START FAMILIES!

Fall is officially here, and our classrooms are bursting with energy, curiosity, and learning! October brings crisp air, colorful leaves, and wonderful opportunities for our children to explore the world around them.

Inside this issue, you will find important updates on our fall activities, tips for healthy eating at home, and key dates for our upcoming family events. We love seeing our students grow every day, and we appreciate everything you do to support their learning at home!

A DEEPER LOOK

We love giving you a closer look at life inside our classrooms. This month, we are thrilled to shine the spotlight on the Starboard Sea Captains and their wonderful teachers: Ms. Aleisha, Ms. Diana, and Ms. Natalie!

FINISH READING ON PG. 2-3



BONDING

"I Love You Rituals" are short, playful games and rhymes that use eye contact, touch, and presence to build deep emotional bonds with your child. Each month, we will share a brand-new ritual you can easily use at home to spark connection and joy.

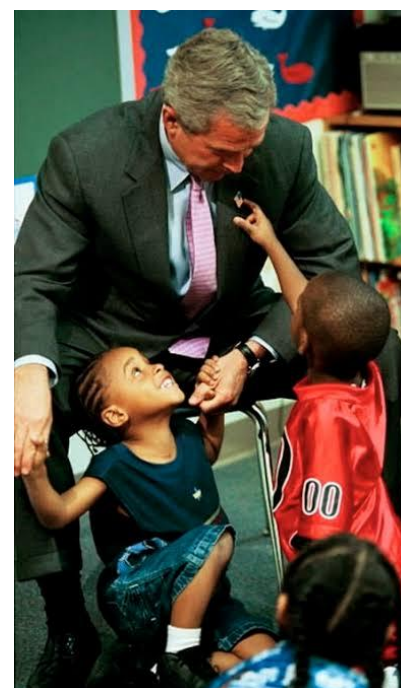
FINISH READING ON PG. 4



SELF-REGULATION

When big feelings take over, a simple breath can reset the brain. Conscious Discipline uses four core breathing techniques to quiet the body's stress response and build lasting self-regulation. Each month, we will share simple, step-by-step instructions so you and your child can learn and practice these calming tools together.

FINISH READING ON PG. 4





WELCOME TO

STARBOARD SEA CAPTAINS!

⚓ Ahoy, families! Welcome to Starboard Sea Captains!

We are so excited to begin a wonderful new school year with our crew of young learners! Our classroom is a **full-day preschool program** made up of a fun mix of **3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds**. Having children of different ages together gives us a wonderful opportunity to learn from one another, build friendships, practice independence, and grow together as a classroom family.

⚓ Setting Sail into a New School Year

The first few days of school are always an exciting time filled with new faces, new routines, and lots of learning! Our main focus has been helping the children feel **safe, comfortable, and confident** in their new classroom.

We have been spending time learning about our **classroom rules and expectations** and practicing what it means to be a kind, respectful, and responsible member of our crew. We are learning how to take care of our classroom, listen to our teachers and friends, use kind words, keep our hands and feet to ourselves, and make safe choices throughout our day.

We know that learning classroom expectations takes time and practice, so we are giving our little captains plenty of opportunities to practice these skills each day. We celebrate their successes and encourage them when something feels new or challenging.



🌀 Exploring Our Classroom Centers

Another big part of our first few days has been getting to know all of the **different learning centers** in our classroom. The children have been exploring each area, learning how the materials work, and discovering all the different ways they can learn and play.

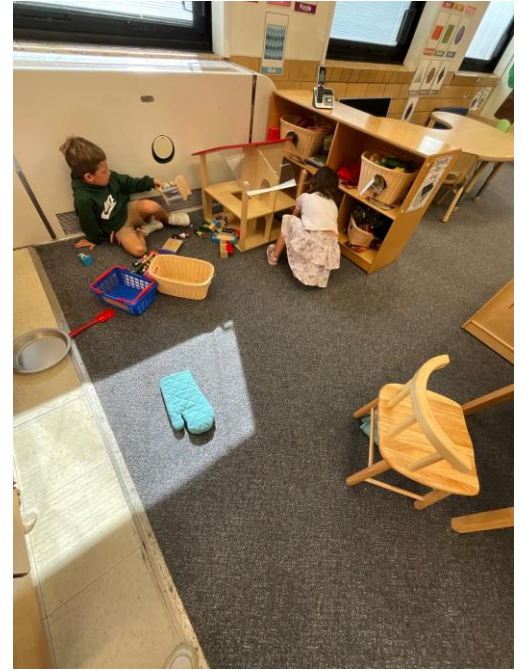
We are teaching the children how to properly use the materials, how to clean up when they are finished, and how to share and work alongside their friends. As the year continues, we will continue introducing new materials and activities within our centers to encourage curiosity and hands-on learning.

♥ Building Our Classroom Family

Most importantly, we are beginning to build a strong sense of **community and belonging** in our classroom. We want every child to know that Starboard Sea Captains is a place where they are loved, valued, encouraged, and supported.

We are learning each other's names, getting to know our friends, practicing how to work together, and discovering all the special things that make each member of our crew unique.

There may be a few moments of uncertainty as everyone adjusts to a new routine, and that is completely normal! We are proud of how our little captains are learning, growing, and settling into their new adventure.



“When parents or guardians and teachers work together well, everyone wins.”

- Julia Thompson



CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE TO USE AT HOME

“I LOVE YOU” RITUALS

Every ritual relies on four simple parts to create a safe, connected moment:

- **Eye contact:** Helps build attention and social awareness.
 - **Touch:** Sends calming chemical signals through the body.
 - **Presence:** Gives the child your full and undivided focus.
 - **Playfulness:** Keeps the interaction joyful and low-stress.
- Every ritual has benefits for children, such as:
- **Better cooperation:** Helps children move out of stubborn or upset moods.
 - **Brain development:** Primes young minds for learning and self-control.
 - **Stronger confidence:** Builds self-esteem and lowers daily power struggles.

Example Ritual: A Wonderful Woman

“A wonderful woman lived in a shoe,” Action: Take the child's hands and gently cross and uncross them back and forth in front of their chest.

“She had so many children,” Action: Keep holding their hands and move their arms gently out to the sides to simulate a large, welcoming embrace.

“She knew exactly what to do.” Action: Take your hands and lightly tap or trace down the sides of the child's face, or gently touch their nose.

“She held them,” Action: Wrap your arms around the child and give them a warm, safe hug.

“She rocked them,” Action: While still hugging them, gently rock your body and the child's body from side to side.

“And tucked them in bed.” Action: Wrap your hands down the child's arms toward their hands, or pull them in close to “tuck” them against you.

“‘I love you, I love you,’ is what she said.” Action: Look directly into the child's eyes, smile, and lightly tap their chest or nose on each “I love you.”

ACTIVE CALMING BREATHING TECHNIQUE

One of the Four Core Techniques:

- **S.T.A.R. (Smile. Take a deep breath. And Relax.):**
 - **How to do it:**
 - Smile.
 - Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose while you fill your belly. Pause briefly
 - And
 - Relax as you slowly blow the air out through your mouth.
 - **Purpose:** Centers the mind and moves the brain from a survival state to an executive state.



OCTOBER IMPORTANT DATES

- Mon., Oct 5 Congressman Jim Jordan Visiting Celina Site -
Time TBA
No Session for Rockford and Coldwater
- Thurs., Oct. 8 2:30PM-3:30PM Parent Committee/Event
(Nutrition) at Ed Complex
- Fri., Oct. 9 Rockford and Coldwater in Session
- Thurs., Oct. 15 12PM Policy Council at Ed Complex
- Mon., Oct. 19 6PM Celina City Schools Board Meeting
- Wed., Oct. 21 5PM-6:30PM Trunk or Read at Ed Complex
- Fri., Oct. 23 Rockford and Coldwater in Session
- Sat., Oct. 24 10AM FUDGE
- Mon., Oct. 26 No Session for Coldwater



CELEBRATE FALL

with Mercer County Head Start

MON OCT 19	Wear orange and black
TUES OCT 20	Wear flannel
WED OCT 21	Favorite Book Character Day
THURS OCT 22	Pumpkin Spice Day Wear any fall colors



