



IHSA Advisor:

Reflections & Connections

May / June 2017

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Updates from IHSA Executive Director, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl

Happy summer! We hope that you have found some time to enjoy summer! It's gone so fast that as I write this July is almost gone. Your Association is hard at work and I want to share a few things we are working on with you in this edition of our IHSAdvisor.

First, we want to get one hundred Illinois parents to the NHA Fall Leadership Institute, "Families Unite for Head Start" training, rally and Hill Visits on September 26th - 27th, 2017 in Washington DC.

We at IHSA have been doing some brainstorming on how we might help and we are willing to handle some

of the logistics for our Illinois Programs. But we need to know the level of interest from each of you. Please email myself if your program is interested in sending a parent or two. We want to know the interest level before we book charter buses, reserve rooms, etc. Let me know if you are interested by emailing me at lfrichtl@ilheadstart.org.



The Association has been hard at work planning exciting professional development opportunities for the upcoming school year. We conducted a training needs assessment back in June and had more responses than ever before. This feedback helps us plan appropriately for the upcoming year. Here is a quick summary of the results. When asked about barriers preventing individuals from attending training the top three reasons were, time; agency budget; and working. The specific training topics identified as most in need are, 1) Staff morale; 2) Challenging Behaviors; and 3) Coaching. Also, we asked if IHSA offered the following training topics, which one would you attend? 47% said Staff Retention; 38.9% said Challenging Behaviors; 30.6% said Data Management. All of these topics will be front and center in our training plan. Look for more details coming in early August.

The Association is also working on an Online On-Demand Orientation series to support orientating new staff about Head Start/Early Head Start. The series will be piloted this fall and launched early next year. The Orientation On Demand Orientation Series will allow programs to orientate new staff members at any point during the year. This virtual, interactive training will be inspirational, empowering, relevant, customized, collaborative, supercharged and fun! Key components of this entertaining, on demand course include:

- build spirit and compassion for our workforce
- be an alternative to the traditional form of professional learning in an effort to enrich practice and support individual success of staff within programs.
- provide the individual learner with a host of innovative modalities to meet the needs of individual adult learners.
- be sophisticated, self-directed modules that will allow staff to truly view the world of Head Start within their learning space and harness the transformational power of hands on learning, including social and multimodal, incorporating text, audio, video, and graphics.
- No more "sit and get" direct instruction but personalized experiences.

In addition, the Association is working on a Peer to Peer Mentoring system. We will be rolling the new mentoring project out this fall. If you have new directors, managers or administrators please let us know.

Updates from Associate Head Start State Collaboration Director, Donna Emmons



Head Start State Collaboration Director

There has not yet been a replacement hired for Anika Todd's position. The Collaboration Director's job has been posted at DHS and there are candidates to be interviewed in August. Stay tuned!!

Early Childhood Block Grant

The Illinois State Budget has finally passed!! ISBE received \$50 million additional funding for its Early Childhood Block Grant in FY 18, which started July 1, 2017. 37% of the grant goes to Chicago. 25% goes to Prevention Initiative. Rest goes to the Preschool Development Grants for the needed Federal match. Look for the RFPs for PI expansion and PFA expansion to come out very soon. PFAE will probably come out first then PI in the next couple of weeks. This is the first time in several years that this funding is open to new entities, as well as current grantees.

**Important-for these two expansions, PI and PFAE, entities who wish to apply for either or both of these grants, will have to fill out an "intent to apply" form on the ISBE website. Cannot use the previous intent to apply that they may have completed. There is no deadline to write the intent. Programs have up until the RFP comes out. ISBE wants to know if a program intends to write because they need to open up an electronic RFP for the program to write its grant. ISBE was not sure when the funding for the FY18 expansion grants would begin. Last year, funding began in October. Funding will end June 30. But programs can extend their end date to Aug 31. All grants, even these new ones, will be re-bid in FY 19.

For the full re-competition for FY 2019, there will be three RFPs: 1) Preschool for All, 2) Preschool for All Expansion, and 3) Prevention Initiative. The anticipated release date for these RFPs is fall/winter 2017 (have heard late November). Information will continue to be posted on the [Early Childhood RFP webpage](#).

DCFS Encryption List

We are very close to having this up and running again. We are working on a secure transfer but we are so close! Look for this data soon. I have asked that both children in foster care and intact families be included. I hope to get this information to programs monthly.

Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD)

The Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) funding ended this June, 2017. Several positions at the GOECD were funded through this grant. Kathy Stohr, Deputy Director at GOECD reports that staff transitions for June 30 had been planned for quite some time. Leaving the GOECD were Kathy Stohr, Joanna Su, Kate Ritter and Gail Nelson. Bryan Stokes had already left. Kathy Stohr also reported that Dr. Cynthia Tate, Executive Director at GOECD, has secured "bridge" funding from IDHS, DCFS and unexpended RTT-ELC funds for FY 2018.

[READ MORE FROM DONNA HERE](#)

Statement on FY 2018 Funding Bill approved by the House Appropriations Committee

July 21, 2017

WASHINGTON, DC - Yesterday, the House Appropriations Committee approved a FY 2018 funding bill for the Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies accounts. Head Start and Early Head Start were given \$9,275,000,000 in the bill, which represents an increase of \$22 million for workforce investments through a cost of living adjustment. The following statement should be attributed to Yasmina Vinci, executive director of the National Head Start Association:

"Subcommittee Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro, along with the full House Appropriations Committee, are to be commended for continuing to recognize the remarkable work and lasting value of Head Start, a family-focused initiative touching nearly every community of our country. In the face of declining budgets and tough choices, Head Start received a welcome \$22 million increase that will help programs retain top-notch educators. While additional funding is needed to thoroughly address the challenges facing Head Start's workforce and quality improvement, we are grateful to the Subcommittee's leadership for today affirming their commitment to supporting additional resources. Head Start programs are innovating, improving learning, and offering more, higher-quality services, and in the days ahead, we look forward to addressing with Congress the very real challenges that are ahead of us."

Breaking the cycle of poverty with education

By Rarione Maniece
Jul 21, 2017

In 2015, 15 percent of kids in Virginia were living in poverty. Local organizations are working to help improve the quality of life for such kids in Central Virginia. Experts say education is essential to moving the needle and to helping families move out of poverty.

Harriett Kaplan, executive director and Head Start director for the Monticello Area Community Action Agency, says the organization is focused on education as a means for getting people out of poverty. MACAA offers programs like Head Start to give kids a head start in life. "When they get to kindergarten they are ready. They are not behind the other children," Kaplan said.

Statistics show that kids in Head Start have promising futures. They are more likely to stay in high school and less likely to be incarcerated.

"Imagine you walk into a classroom and you're 30 minutes late. It can be really confusing," Kaplan said. "Well imagine you walk into a kindergarten and you're not 30 minutes late, you're three years late. That's what some kids are experiencing."

The first three years of a kid's life are critical.

Barbara Hutchinson, vice president of community impact for the United Way, says it's important to invest in children and their families while the child's brain is still developing. "I believe a child needs to start out on the right foot," Hutchinson said. Child care scholarships for parents are just one of the ways United Way helps kids from low-income families. "The more that's done to leverage resources in the community to work with families the greater chance the child has to become ready for school and be successful in school and successful in life," Hutchinson added.

[READ ENTIRE ARTICLE HERE](#)

No More False Choices: Increasing Early Childhood Teachers' Education, Compensation and Diversity

Albert Wat
Senior Policy Director
Alliance for Early Success
July 18, 2017

Recently, the District of Columbia established new regulations that require all lead teachers in licensed child care programs to have an Associate's degree by 2020. Increasingly, policymakers, parents, and early childhood teachers themselves accept the notion that early care and education (ECE) professionals should be well-educated and have rigorous preparation. In the last 10 years, policies in Head Start and many state pre-k programs have required these teachers to attain bachelor's degrees with specialization in early childhood education. In 2015, "Transforming the Workforce," a report from the National Academies recommended that all lead teachers of children from birth through age 8 attain at least a bachelor's degree with specialized early childhood competencies, and that all levels of government should invest in pathways to help existing and new teachers reach that goal. (Full disclosure: I was part of the committee that produced the report.)

Some in the field have raised the concern that requiring early childhood teachers to get four-year degrees would push out teachers of color and threaten the racial and linguistic diversity of the workforce. Critics believe that such policies privilege those who have the resources to gain access to and complete higher education while shutting out otherwise talented educators, especially teachers of color. Still others see the calls for "professionalizing" the workforce as devaluing the experience, competencies, and relationships with families and communities that less-educated educators sometimes have. These critics also worry that this trend is part and parcel of the history of displacement in communities of color that results in the name of "progress" - from public schools to housing.

[READ ENTIRE ARTICLE HERE](#)

A Vital Connection Between Head Start and School

Ronnie Herndon
7/18/2017

Working together for better results

I have been working in our community with Head Start since 1975. I have never been as excited as I am today about the path ahead to make progress for our students because of a new partnership Albina Head Start formed with Boise-Eliot/Humboldt School this past school year.

People have been talking about building connections between Head Starts and our local schools for as long as I can remember, yet there has been little action.

Thankfully, All Hands Raised brought us together to ensure our students and their families' transition more smoothly over the summer to kindergarten this fall.

Boise-Eliot/Humboldt is a cornerstone of our North/Northeast Portland community, and Boise-Eliot/Humboldt's three kindergarten teachers have each taught in the school for more than 20 years. Yet, no relationships existed between our teachers and theirs. This despite Albina being the largest preschool provider to Boise-Eliot/Humboldt in the neighborhood; nearly one-third of all Boise-Eliot/Humboldt kindergarteners come from our program.

[READ ENTIRE ARTICLE HERE](#)

SIUE researchers talk robotic interaction at Early Childhood Innovation Summit

Alton Telegraph
JUNE 30, 2017

EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville researchers demonstrated how robots may shape the future of early learning during the 2017 Early Childhood Innovation Summit held June 26-28 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Stephen Hupp, PhD, professor of psychology in the SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior, presented during the conference alongside student Ehren Wolfe, who is pursuing a master's in computer science. The two are working on a collaborative research effort, led by Jerry Weinberg, PhD, associate provost for research and dean of the SIUE Graduate School, that focuses on teaching children about social-emotional skills within educational curriculum.

"This was only the second Early Childhood Innovation Summit hosted by the National Head Start Association, and we were proud to be involved," said Hupp.

"Attending this conference offered a great opportunity to share with educators our ideas for future learning with robots," added Wolfe. "Our work is an innovative idea that expands on the existing social-emotional learning curriculum."

[READ ENTIRE ARTICLE HERE](#)

Higher child-to-staff ratios threaten the quality of child care

Brenda Miranda
JUN 15, 2017

President Trump's most recent plan for the country's child care policy was introduced during his presidential campaign, and includes recommendations for increasing child-to-staff ratios in care settings. A key report cited in the president's plan claims that regulations regarding child care ratios fail to improve the quality of care, and the president's plan states that increasing classroom sizes would allow child care centers to reallocate unspent funds on labor to other priorities, including reducing costs for families.

As an early care and education (ECE) researcher, I have followed the discussion regarding ratios and group size. While it is true that there is some mixed research about the link between low child-to-staff ratios and children's well-being, the literature demonstrating the critical importance of small group size and low ratios in the early years far outweighs the studies with mixed results. It's important to consider this larger body of evidence before proceeding with a plan that could have serious implications for young children. Furthermore, the research examining ratios has been conducted in ECE settings that comply with state and local ratio regulations. Therefore, we don't have research informing how relaxing regulations would affect child care quality or children's development.

National organizations like Head Start, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children recognize the importance of low ratios in ECE settings, and all of them have set age-based standards limiting the number of young children that can be cared for by a given adult. These organizations have concluded that adequate child-to-staff ratios are essential to protecting young children's health and safety, therefore, even if relaxed regulations increased the affordability of care, it may come at the cost of young children's safety and development. Research shows that smaller child-to-staff ratios have been associated with fewer situations that threaten children's safety. Moreover,

when early childhood caregivers are responsible for more children than they can manage, it increases their stress and can result in the loss of the caregiver's self-control. Indeed, the presence of a second caregiver has been associated with a lower likelihood of child abuse in the child care settings.[1]

[READ ENTIRE ARTICLE HERE](#)

A powerful pairing: Pre-K boosts future incomes and reduces risk of jail, especially when schools spend more

Matt Barnum
JUNE 12, 2017

It's an issue that has long puzzled policymakers: Why do some early childhood programs produce big benefits for students, but others don't? The answer may be linked to what happens after kids leave the programs altogether and move through school.

That's the conclusion of a working paper released Monday. Economists Kirabo Jackson of Northwestern and Rucker Johnson of Berkeley find that students benefit from both well-funded schools and access to early childhood education - and that Head Start had greater long-run benefits for students whose K-12 schools were better resourced.

In other words, the whole of those two policies in tandem is greater than the sum of their parts.

"The findings suggest that early investments in the skills of disadvantaged children that are followed by sustained educational investments over time can effectively break the cycle of poverty," the researchers write.

[READ ENTIRE ARTICLE HERE](#)

Project Work as a Context for Social Development

By Lilian Katz
June 2017

One of the most important goals of early education is the development and strengthening of social competence. One of the benefits of project work is that it provides many opportunities to develop and apply important social skills. During projects, small groups of children take responsibility for particular aspects of the project, and many incidents arise for coordinating and cooperating the progress of the work.

These incidents frequently and inevitably provoke disagreements about how the work could proceed. During these many occasions, their teacher can suggest alternative ways to resolve disagreements and help the children develop a plan for how subgroups can take responsibility for the project's various subtopics.

For example, a class of 4- and 5-year-olds in a small town undertook an investigation of the various businesses on their nearby main street. A few parents offered to help their teacher with the project. One small group decided to study the barbershop, another studied the butcher shop, and others studied the pharmacy, the grocery store, and the small bookstore.

[READ ENTIRE ARTICLE HERE](#)

We Need To Find A Way To Pay Child Care Workers More Than

Poverty Wages

Yesterday, one of the sweet teachers at my son's pre-K asked me if I knew anyone in the neighborhood who might like a part-time job next school year. It would be a three-hour a day stint at the pre-K, serving lunch to the kids and winding them down for their nap. "It would be great for a stay-at-home parent who wants to get involved in the community and get some extra cash along the way," she said. And I agreed. But then I asked her what the pay was, and my jaw dropped right to floor. "It's \$10 an hour," she said, and I could tell she hesitated a little before telling me. \$10 an hour?! In our neighborhood, a suburban town right outside New York City, it costs \$10 to pay for a couple hours of parking. It costs more than that to take the kids out for pizza. Making a yearly, daily commitment to care for a room full of rowdy 4-year-olds at \$10 an hour sounded pretty much akin to volunteering (not that there's anything wrong with that).

Of course, the teacher who shared the information with me meant well, and it certainly isn't her fault that these are the kinds of wages early child care workers make in our area and in our country. In a town like mine, with an astronomical cost of living, \$10 an hour is pretty much peanuts. Perhaps, in other towns, it might amount to something more as far as cost of living, but chances are that folks would make even less in those areas.

[READ ENTIRE ARTICLE HERE](#)

Fueling Early STEAM Skills with Head Start

LEARNING TOOLS

Research is showing the brain is particularly receptive to learning math and logic between the ages of one and four, sparking new programs to bring these skills to children.

Head Start, which serves over one million vulnerable children each year, has embraced projects to promote STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) in early education. For example, the National Head Start Association (NHSA) has developed a partnership with Lakeshore Learning Materials ("Recycle Your Way to STEAM") to provide easy and fun activities that introduce young children to STEAM.

Play time

This joint effort to introduce young children to 21st century skills was highlighted at the White House Summit celebrating innovation in STEM work. "Recycle Your Way to STEAM" combines imaginative play with problem-solving and critical thinking to introduce STEAM concepts to Head Start children across the country. The initiative includes guides for engaging, hands-on activities that invite children to build anything they can imagine - using cardboard, plastic bottles and other recyclable materials.

[READ ENTIRE ARTICLE HERE](#)

Gateways to Opportunity Credential / How your 2017 training can count toward a Credential

What are Gateways to Opportunity Credentials?

Gateways to Opportunity Credentials are symbols of professional achievement that can be earned by completing an approved program of coursework at an *entitled college or university, or by completing a portfolio that documents education, training, and experience. Gateways Credentials are in state statute and administrative rule. This allows other state agencies to recognize and potentially embed Gateways Credentials within program requirements. Gateways Credentials are an important part of personal professional development for Illinois practitioners. Credentials

currently available include:

- ECE Credential
- Infant Toddler Credential
- Illinois Director Credential
- Family Specialist Credential
- School-Age & Youth Development Credential
- Family Child Care Credential
- Technical Assistance Credential

**Institutions that have aligned their coursework with Gateways Credential component requirements.*

How can your training help practitioners earn Gateways to Opportunity Credentials?

Choosing to have your training meet Gateways to Opportunity Credential requirements may assist practitioners who attend your training in earning a Gateways Credential. Trainings that can be used toward a Gateways Credential must be 7.5 contact hours in length or longer, cover (at least) one Gateways content area, and include an assessment component. Please note that trainings must provide 7.5 contact hours within one content area in order for the training to count toward a Gateways Credential. For descriptions of the Gateways Credential Content Areas, please refer to the following pages.

[READ ENTIRE ARTICLE HERE](#)

IHSA Upcoming Training Opportunities



2017-2018 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN COMING SOON!

Current Job Openings



NEW POSITIONS

[Bloomington, IL / Heartland Head Start / Professional Development Coordinator](#)

[Bloomington, IL / Heartland Head Start / PFCE Manager](#)

[Region V / STG International / Grantee Specialist](#)

[LaPorte County, Indiana / Child Care Constorium, Inc of HS LaPorte County / Head Start Director](#)

OPEN POSITIONS FROM PREVIOUS MONTHS

[Rock Island, IL / Rock Island Milan School District / Head Start Instructional Coach - Part Time](#)

[Rock Island, IL / Rock Island Milan School District / Preschool Assistant Teacher - Head Start Program](#)

[Bloomington, IL / Heartland Head Start / Head Start Teacher II](#)

[Chicago, IL / YMCA Metropolitan, Early Head Start Director](#)

[Chicago, IL YMCA Metropolitan, Family Advocate Specialist & Family Advocate Supervisor](#)

[Chicago, IL, YMCA Metropolitan, Early Head Start Education Manager](#)

[Chicago, IL YMCA Metropolitan, Disabilities and Mental Health Specialist & Teacher Coach](#)

[Chicago, IL, YMCA Metropolitan, Early Head Start Operations & Quality Assurance Supervisor](#)

[Chicago, IL, YMCA Metropolitan, Fiscal Specialist & Professional Development Specialist](#)

[Chicago, IL, YMCA Metropolitan, Early Head Start Data and Compliance/ERSEA Specialist](#)

[Chicago, IL, The Ounce, Technical Assistance and Training Specialist EHS](#)

[Hickory Hills, Pillars, CFDC Site Manager](#)

[Hickory Hills, Pillars, Teacher III](#)

[Bellwood, IL, Presence Health, Teacher Child Care](#)

[Schaumburg, Palatine, and Carpentersville, IL - Lead Teacher](#)

[Carpentersville, Illinois, Childrens Home & Aid - Teacher](#)

[Schaumburg and Palatine, IL, Childrens Home & Aid - Early Head Start Teacher](#)

2017 Vanessa Rich Leadership Experience Recipients



Spotlighting Innovative Bright Practices!

“Spotlighting Innovative Bright Practices”

IHSA would like to recognize programs for their innovative practices and creativity!



We want to recognize your program!

- Are you doing something that makes your program run better?
- Have you found a way to save money for your program?
- Have you tried something new that is successful and would be useful to other programs?

Criteria for recognition: The innovative practice must be creative, makes your program run better and/or saves money; fits within the Head Start mission.

- All programs that submit innovative practices to IHSA will be entered into drawing for ECE educational supplies gift cards.

If your Program’s Innovative Practice is chosen; recognition will include:

- Certificate from IHSA
- Featured on the IHSA website
- Exposure on IHSA facebook
- *Recognized at the IHSA conference
- Included in the IHSA conference program booklet.

To be featured at the conference/in booklet; Deadline for submission is 01/16/18.



For more information
Go to [ilheadstart.org/
Spotlighting Innovative
Bright Practices](http://ilheadstart.org/Spotlighting-Innovative-Bright-Practices).
Have questions?
Call 217-241-3511

CONGRATULATIONS to the new 2017 Head Start UCLA Fellows from Illinois!



Back row

Children Home and Aid: Jan Stepto-Millett and Dawnielle Angel Jeffrey (New Fellow)

Riverbend Head Start and Family Services - Cathy Blevens (New Fellow) and Gene Howell

Catholic Charities Diocese of Joliet Head Start - Kathy Fudge- White and Ericka Williams (New Fellow)

Front row

Educare West DuPage - Eugenie Lee Matula, Monique Lopez (New Fellow) and Marcela Sweeney (New Fellow)

Sign Up Now! Parent Leaders In Action Network

LEADERSHIP
in ACTION

IHSA is starting a new project for parent leaders in your program. It's called "IHSA Parent Leaders In Action Network". This does not replace our Parent Ambassador program but builds on our nationally recognized work with parents. Our Parent Ambassadors will support and provide direct leadership for the Parent Leaders In Action

Network. We are looking for all Illinois Parents who are a member of their Policy Council or Parent Committee! Don't Miss This Opportunity to Connect with Parents from Across the State Take Action and Learn What You Can Do to Make a Difference Learn how government works and build a relationship with your Member of Congress.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)

[SIGN UP](#)

ONLINE Food Handler & Food Safety Manager Certification Training

Check This Out!

Illinois Head Start Association is now offering YOU.....**ONLINE** Illinois Approved **FOOD HANDLER TRAINING** and **FOOD SAFETY MANAGER CERTIFICATION TRAINING** at *SPECIAL PRICING* only for Illinois Head Start members!

[**CHECK THIS OUT!!!**](#)

Food Safety Manager Certification Training

This Enhanced e-Learning course has been accepted for Professional Food Managers Certification training by most of the nation's regulatory agencies.

[Learn more here](#)

Food Handler Training

The State of Illinois requires an ANSI-accredited food handler card. The TAP Series Food Handler card is from an ANSI-accredited program, carries the ANSI logo, and is accepted by the Illinois Department of Public Health.

[Learn more here](#)

IHSA Staff Alumni Project

IHSA Staff Alumni Project - check us out on [FaceBook!](#)

Illinois Head Start Staff Alumni project mission: To encourage and support former Head Start staff who still love the program to reconnect, become informed, and receive opportunities to make a difference in local programs and the state association. You are Head Start.

Were you on staff in a Head Start program? Did you love it? Was it one of the most exciting times in your life? Did it seem like a calling rather than just a job?

IMAGINE if you could:

- Reconnect with colleagues from Head Start throughout Illinois;
- Build a social network; plan some activities including attendance at the Friend's component annual meeting at an affordable price;
- Get updated and informed on Head Start in Illinois and across the nation;
- Lend your voice to advocate for this wonderful program
- Get ideas and opportunities to volunteer or donate if you choose....
- Have fun
- Be a model for other Head Start programs across the country.

\$2 Per Child Campaign!



\$2 Per Child Campaign

Head Start Works in Illinois!

The IL Head Start Association & the National Head Start Association support IL Head Start programs and their work by advocating on the state and national level. We need local agencies to support advocacy efforts through a local level \$2 Per Child Campaign. **\$1 will be sent to NHSA and \$1 will stay in Illinois for the local association's work.**

YOUR ILLINOIS \$\$ @ WORK!

- * Advocacy Visits to State & Federal Legislators
- * Parent Ambassador Support
- * Ensuring Head Start has a voice in state level discussions about issues that affect us.

Local Campaign Ideas for HS Parents, Alumni & Volunteers

Spare Change Drive
Silent Auction
Bake Sale
Raffles of Donated Items
Car Wash
Decorate Your Classroom Door Contest (\$1 per vote)
Pie in the Face (pay per vote to see your favorite manager take a pie)
Chili Cook Off Contest (pay to taste & vote)
Pay to PJ (staff pay to wear pjs to work)

SAVE THE DATE! 2018 IHSA Annual Conference!

SAVE THE DATE!

**2018 ILLINOIS
HEAD START
ASSOCIATION ANNUAL
TRAINING & PARENT
CONFERENCE**

FEBRUARY 20—FEBRUARY 23, 2018



**EMBASSY SUITES RIVERFRONT
HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER
EAST PEORIA**

How Was Your Summer?

by spoonvision / July 2017



Dear teacher,
On the first day of school,

When you ask me how my summer was,
You're assuming that it was good.
You're assuming it was
something remarkable,
Something incredible,
Something shareable,
Something fun.
And maybe it was.
Maybe I went to Six Flags.
And maybe I flew in an airplane.
And maybe I went on vacation to the beach
with my mom and my dad and my sister
(but we left our dog at home,
so my Uncle Dennis came over every day)
Maybe I participated in the summer
reading program at the metro library,
and I read four books above my grade level.
And maybe I got to spend a lot of time with
my mom because she is a teacher like you.
Maybe, just maybe, I had a pass to the pool.
Or maybe I interned at the zoo.
Or maybe I went to STEM camp,
or church camp, or the lake.
Maybe I played summer ball.
Maybe life was good
because I slept late,
I did whatever I wanted,
And I didn't have to come here
and eat that nasty cafeteria food.
Maybe my summer was great.
Or Maybe it wasn't so great.
Maybe I didn't leave my neighborhood at all.
Maybe I've never been on vacation,
Never been out of Oklahoma.
Maybe I couldn't leave my house all day
because I was in charge of my two
little brothers and my baby sister.
Maybe I've never been to the city pool
and I still don't know how to swim.
Maybe I haven't opened a book since May.
Maybe I got a summer job
to support my family.
Maybe I went to bed hungry every night
because there was not enough food.

Maybe we moved twice in one month
and I just found out yesterday
that I would be coming to this school.
Maybe I was physically and emotionally hurt
by someone who is supposed to love me.
Maybe I don't want to be here,
But it sure is better than being at home.
Maybe I left my house every morning walking
and didn't come home until after dark.
Maybe, just that one time, I was at home
by myself
for three whole days and nights.
And even when I wasn't by myself,
maybe I went whole days
without talking
to anyone.
Maybe I don't have any friends,
But at least when I'm at school
I can pretend that I do.
Maybe my summer was ok,
But maybe I have the feeling
that I deserve so much better.
Maybe the first day of school
is the most exciting thing about my summer.
And maybe that's why I am so loud,
And want to talk,
And don't want to sit down,
And want to touch people,
And want to run in the halls,
And don't want to do math.
(at least not the first couple of days)
What I am trying to say is,
You don't know how my summer was.
So just in case it wasn't as great as yours,
Maybe you might find a better question
to ask me on the first day of school.



<http://www.ilheadstart.org>

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Springfield, IL 62704



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