



NPHS News



September 2026

Northern Panhandle Head Start, Inc.

Volume 31, Issue 1

Serving Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall and Wetzel Counties In West Virginia



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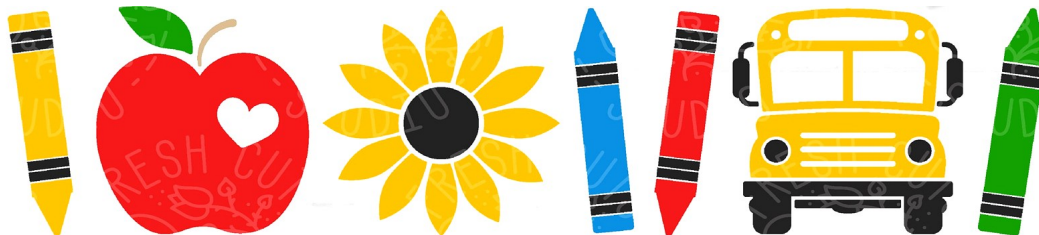
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Stephanie Skadra,
Executive Director
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Start, Inc.

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Brooke, Ohio, Marshall
and Wetzel Counties In
West Virginia

**Check us out on
Facebook at
Northern Panhandle
Head Start Inc.**



NPHS Welcomes New Executive Director

Hello, NPHS Families,

My name is Stephanie Skadra, and I am proud to serve as the Executive Director of Northern Panhandle Head Start. I was born and raised in Wheeling and still call Wheeling home today. I am also the proud mom of two adult children. As both a parent and an educator, I know how important it is for families to have people in their corner as their children learn and grow.

I have spent nearly 20 years working in early childhood education, school leadership, enrollment, and family support. I am excited to bring that experience, along with my love for our local community, to NPHS.

Although I have only been with NPHS for a short time, I have already been so impressed by our amazing and dedicated staff. Throughout our organization, I have seen people who truly care about the children and families they serve. Their knowledge, hard work, and commitment are what make NPHS such a special organization. I feel very fortunate to be leading a team that believes so strongly in the work we do.

One of the things I love most about Head Start is that we do so much more than teach children. We help children learn, grow, and get ready for the next step in their educational journey. We also work alongside families, helping them find support, resources, and opportunities to reach their goals.

One of my biggest goals as Executive Director is to make sure more people know who NPHS is and understand the important work we do. NPHS serves children and families across Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall, and Wetzel counties, and I want us to be a strong and visible part of each of those communities. By building relationships with schools, businesses, community leaders, and other organizations, we can share the NPHS story and create even more opportunities for our children and families.

Most of all, I want you to know that you are an important part of NPHS, and your voice matters. We are here to work with you, support you, and celebrate your child's growth along the way.

I am excited about what is ahead for NPHS and thankful that your family is part of ours. I am proud to be part of this organization, proud of the people who make our work possible, and excited to see where we go together.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Skadra

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Policy Council

2026-2027

Chairperson
Vice Chairperson
Secretary
Treasurer
Parliamentarian

Our first Policy Council Meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2026.

Speak with your Family Resource Advocate or Parent Educator for more information on how you can get involved.

Head Start and Early Head Start Federal Funding Information for the 2026-2027 Program Year

Head Start/
Early Head Start
\$7,759,569.00
Head Start T&TA
\$47,683.00
Early Head Start T&TA
\$41,241.00

CCP
\$1,544,711.00
CCP T&TA \$29,664.00

We are required to match each grant listed with a non-federal share match. We are grateful for the generous support of our community collaborations and parental involvement.

Special Thank You

- ♦ **NPHS Board of Directors**
- ♦ **NPHS Parent Volunteers**

Welcome Back, Families!

The beginning of a new school year is a wonderful time to build positive expectations that can support children throughout the entire year. At Northern Panhandle Head Start, our families have helped shape these expectations. In the past, our parents voted and determined that the best expectations for our children are the **Three R's**:

- ♥ **Be Responsible**
- ♥ **Be Respectful**
- ♥ **Be a Role Model**

Expectations are different from rules. Expectations stay the same no matter where we are, while the rules or specific behaviors may change depending on the environment.

For example, **"Be Responsible"** in the classroom might mean, *"We walk in our classroom."* On the playground, being responsible might mean, *"We look for our friends when we are running."* The expectation of being responsible stays the same, but the specific behavior changes because the environment is different.

The Three R's give children **simple, positive language** to help them understand what is expected of them throughout their day. Rather than focusing only on what children should *not* do, we focus on **teaching, modeling, practicing, connecting, and regulating** so children can learn and use the behaviors we want to see.

You may hear our teachers using language such as:

"You helped your friend pick up the toys. You were being a role model!"

"You waited for your turn. That was respectful!"

"You put your things away when you were finished. That was responsible!"

Bring the Three R's Home!

We encourage you to bring the Three R's home with you! Using the same positive language at home and at school can help your child better understand and practice these important skills.

Remember, **children are still developing their brains and learning how to manage their emotions, actions, and relationships.** They need lots of opportunities to practice and lots of patience and encouragement along the way. When adults stay calm and regulated, we help children learn how to regulate themselves, too.

We are all learning together!

The goal isn't perfect behavior. The goal is to help children develop the **social and emotional skills they need to be successful in school and in life.**

With many opportunities to **teach, practice, encourage, connect, and try again**, our children will continue learning what it means to:

- ★ **Be Responsible**
- ★ **Be Respectful**
- ★ **Be a Role Model**

We are so excited to partner with all of you for another wonderful year of **learning, growing, and building strong relationships together!**

Amber Boring,
Education & Training Manager

Fine Motor Skills, What's that?

Fine motor skills are the movements and coordination of the small muscles of the body, typically thought of as the movements that involve the fingers and the hands. Fine motor skills are important for supporting independence with dressing, feeding, eating and performance in school. Giving your child the opportunity to feed themselves, turn pages in a board book, or try and zip-up their own coat promotes the development of fine motor skills. To help your child develop their fine motor skills try the activities listed below.

Infants

- * Grasping your finger
- * Holding onto a small toy
- * Grasping for objects

Waddlers

- * Using utensils to feed self
- * Turning pages of a book one at a time
- * Picking up leaves when out on a walk

Toddlers

- * Squeezing playdough
- * Making something out of dough, such as pizza or cookies
- * Picking up items with tweezers, clothesline pins, or kitchen tongs



Beth Ott, MSSL
Early Head Start Manager

Starting the Year Strong: Helping Your Child Adjust

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A new school year is exciting, but it can also be a big adjustment for young children! New teachers, new friends, different routines, and separating from family can bring out some **BIG feelings**. You may notice more crying, clinginess, tantrums, tiredness, or changes in behavior at home. This doesn't necessarily mean something is wrong. Your child may simply be adjusting to a lot of new experiences at once.

Tips for Home:

Keep routines predictable.

Consistent morning, bedtime, and mealtime routines help children know what to expect and can make their day feel more manageable.

Talk positively about school.

Help build excitement and confidence by talking about their teacher, friends, classroom, and things they may get to do during the day.

Keep goodbyes short and reassuring.

Try: "I love you. You are safe. Your teachers will take care of you, and I will be back after school." A predictable good-bye routine can help your child learn that you always come back.

Remember:

Behavior is communication. Young children don't always have the words to tell us, "I'm tired," "I miss you," "This is new," or "I need help." Sometimes they show us through their behaviors instead. Give your child (and yourself) time to settle into the new routine. Consistency, connection, and patience go a long way!

Name and accept their feelings.

Instead of trying to immediately stop the feeling, help your child understand it: "You're sad because you want me to stay. It's okay to miss me." Children learn how to manage emotions when adults help them recognize what they are feeling.

Give them time to reconnect after school.

Holding it together during a busy school day takes a lot of energy! Your child may need extra connection, quiet time, movement, or rest when they get home.

Celebrate the little successes.

"You walked into your classroom today!"

"You told your teacher goodbye!"

"You tried something new at school!"

Specific encouragement helps children recognize their own growth and build confidence.

Easy Egg & Cheese Muffins

Ingredients

- 6 large eggs
- 1 cup Mozzarella Cheese
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper (optional)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350.
2. Crack eggs into large bowl and whisk very well.
3. Add salt, garlic powder, onion powder, & black pepper (if using) and mix well.
4. Add shredded cheese and mix well.
5. Add prepared egg mixture into a nonstick or silicon muffin pan. Filling each cup only half way. Once ready place muffin pan into the oven and bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until top is lightly golden brown and the inside is completely cooked.



Let's Talk About It
PODCAST



SCAN HERE to listen!

Want to hear more about supporting young children and families?

Check out our **Let's Talk About It Podcast**, where we have real conversations about children's behavior, development, social-emotional wellness, parenting, and the everyday challenges that come with raising and supporting young children.

Stay tuned for upcoming episodes and more information on how to listen!

Amanda Ames, M.A.Ed., RBT
Child Development and Disabilities Coordinator

Healthy Start, Happy Learners!

As we begin a new program year, our focus is on making sure every child has the health support they need to learn, grow, and thrive.

- **Immunizations:** Keep records current and follow up on missing vaccines.
- **Vision & Hearing:** Complete screenings and referrals as needed.
- **Dental Health:** Establish a dental home and follow up on dental care.
- **Nutrition:** Identify allergies, special diets, and nutritional concerns.
- **Medications:** Keep medication authorizations and emergency plans up to date.
- **Mental Health:** Support children's social-emotional well-being and connect families with resources.
- **Health Records:** Review health information, medical conditions, allergies, and special health needs.

Every child deserves to be **HEALTHY • SAFE • SUPPORTED • READY TO LEARN!**
Together, we can make this a healthy and successful program year!



Denise Musolino, BSN
Health & Nutrition Coordinator

For Enrollment Opportunities in Head Start or Early Head Start, please contact Cher McKeever, Enrollment/Recruitment Coordinator. 304-233-3290

"USDA Civil Rights Non-Discrimination Statement"

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

fax:
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

email:
program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide a high quality family-focused program uniquely designed to prepare each child for learning and life.

VISION STATEMENT

"Building foundations for life-long growth and development"

Up and Coming

September 2026

September 7— Labor Day: No Class/No Staff
September 23—Policy Council Meeting
September 24—Marshall County Family Activity Night

October 2026

October 1—MELC Family Activity Night
October 8—Ohio County Family Activity Night
October 15—Paden City Family Activity Night
October 21—Policy Council/Advisory Meeting
October 22—Hancock/Brooke Counties Family Activity Night

November 2026

November 2—Election Day: No Class
November 11—Veterans Day: No Class/No Staff
November 18—Policy Council Meeting
November 19—Parent First Aid/CPR Training
November 26-27—Thanksgiving Break: No Class/No Staff

December 2026

December 16—Joint Policy Council/Board Meeting
December 22—Christmas Break for children starts: No Class
December 24-25—Christmas: No Staff
December 31—New Years: No Staff

Welcome All New Employees

Jessie Buchanan
Stephanie Skadra
Carol Harrison
Catherine Holtz
Cassie Utt
Alleigh Miller
Dawn Blake
Miranda McCullough
KaTara West
Annalouise Gonnion
Heather Yaussy
Mariah Shepherd
Morgan Cowgill
Ayla Watson



NPHS is always on the lookout for committed individuals who want to serve the children and families of the Northern Panhandle of West Virginia.

You can view our list of current openings, and the qualifications or requirements of each position, on our website at: <http://www.npheadstart.org/hr-and-employment/available-positions>

Full-time, part-time, and substitute positions available.

We appreciate your interest in a career at Northern Panhandle Head Start, Inc.

To learn about employment opportunities at NPHS, please contact Human Resources at 304-233-3290.

Board of Directors News

The agency is seeking area professionals who are willing to serve on the Board of Directors. Do you want to make a difference in the lives of children and families in our communities? Consider membership with our Board of Directors. This group of dedicated professionals has made a profound impact on our program. They are the driving force, along with the Policy Council, in the decision-making process. Please contact Stephanie Skadra, Executive Director, with any questions regarding membership roles and responsibilities at 304-233-3290 or sskadra@npheadstart.org.