Greetings!!

The holidays are just around the corner! During this time, take a few moments to reflect and be thankful for the blessings you have received. I am honored to serve as your director and grateful to lead this wonderful group that makes up the Head Start-Early Head Start family.

Our year started out with a bang and we haven’t slowed down! We have several contests going on within the centers, please make sure you volunteer so that your child’s class comes up the winner!

We want to provide an engaging and enriching experience for you and your children during this program year! I am excited about the new “adventures” taking place in the classroom and around the agency! As parents, you must take an active role in your child’s education by volunteering, attending parent meetings, completing family take-home activities, and assisting on field trips, just to name a few. Remember, you are your child’s first teacher. The staff and I are ready and willing to partner with you to make your experience at JCCEO pleasant!

We have a lot of activities at JCCEO around Thanksgiving and Christmas. Be sure to look at the Parent Board for announcements about upcoming events.

During the month of February, parent-teacher conferences will be held at your child’s center February 26 – 27, 2019. Children will be dismissed at 1:00 p.m. each day. More information will be forthcoming.

We look forward to working with you and your child this year! I pray you have a blessed Holiday Season!! Thanks for allowing JCCEO to give your child the Head Start they so richly deserve!!

Carmelita Poindexter
Deputy Director
Child Development Svc.
The first months of school have quickly passed and Fall is in the air. Soon we will have a lot of rain and maybe snowflakes! Children and families have been busy meeting new friends, learning routines, and building relationships. Staff continue to create safe places for exploration, discussion, and learning.

Centers held their first parent meetings to bring families together and encourage parent engagement. Staff encouraged parents to seek leadership positions from which center officers and a new Policy Council were elected. The Policy Council is an important aspect of Head Start governance. We are grateful to the parents whose commitment and dedication to the program thus far have been evident through this process.

In October, JCCEO and the Birmingham Urban League, Inc. hosted a career/resource fair. Over thirty vendors from across the city participated and offered job opportunities to our parents and the community. Several of the vendors offered resources to help families in need of wrap-around services. Also, JCCEO and the Junior League of Birmingham hosted a health fair at our St. Joseph’s Center. Parents enjoyed healthy snacks and gifts right from the “Yummy Truck.” Special thanks to the St. Joseph’s Center for hosting the event.

Parent Engagement
One of the most important aspects of Head Start is parents who are engaged in the program. Some of the ways parents should be involved are:

- Attendance at Parent Committee meetings
- Attendance at meetings and/or service on Advisory Committees
- Attend and/or service on Policy Council
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Accompany your child’s class on field trips
- Attend workshops, conferences, and training opportunities
- Attend Family Nights; Complete take home activities
- Participate in Male Involvement Opportunities
- Read to your child every day

Foster Grandparents: Our Foster Grandparents are already making an incredible impact on the children enrolled in our Early Head Start and Head Start programs. They partner with teachers and center staff to ensure that our community’s youngest and most vulnerable children are prepared for success in kindergarten.

GEMS: We have grandparents that are raising grandchildren and they are an important part of JCCEO. In many of these homes, neither of the child’s biological parents is present. In most cases, children taken care of by grandparents move in with them as infants or preschoolers and remain with them for five years or more. These two groups meet on the second Thursday of each month to support each other and learn about new resources available to them.
Parents and children turned out in droves to participate in the JCCEO PrimeTime Family Literacy Program this fall. The six-week program included bi-lingual storytelling designed to encourage both dual language and English-only families to read. Preschoolers received books to begin their home libraries. The project was sponsored by the Alabama Humanities Foundation in partnership with the Five Points West Branch Birmingham Public Library.

Storytellers and JCCEO staffers Antonieta Cristobal and Tonia Price presented certificates at the end of the program to Policy Council representative Maribel Martinez Garcia, parent at Shades Cahaba Center and family.

Parents elected officers to their center Parent Committees and representatives to the Policy Council during parent orientation. Above, new Parent Committee Officers at West Center Street Center. Below, parents at Policy Council Orientation.

Kudos to Mr. Mailaun Diamond! During the month of September, he provided haircuts for eight children in his nephew Rorrie’s class at Head Start Erwin Center. He also helped two parents become employed full-time at Shoney’s Restaurant.

Spotlight on Eugenia Mack

Ms. Mack is a former Head Start parent who is now employed in the Data Center at JCCEO.

Q: How did you get a job here?
A: I was a Policy Council Representative on the interview team. In a light-hearted moment I asked Ms. Poindexter why my name was not on the list to be interviewed. She said if I was really interested in working for the agency I should apply. I did and I have been here since March 2017.

Q: Where did your child attend Head Start?
A: He started as a 3-year-old at West Center Street. When we moved to Bessemer he transferred to Hard Center. He was a handful. But his teacher, Glynda Reed, really worked with him and challenged his abilities because he is a smart boy.

Q: How is he doing now?
A: He is doing great in kindergarten, an A+ student, and he loves school and learning. He just made the basketball team, so he is excited about that...

Q: What would you say to parents with children who are currently in Head Start?
A: Parents should be involved as much as possible to ensure that it is a good experience. My son’s father and I both participated whenever we could, volunteering in the classroom and male involvement activities such as the kite flying event. It was very rewarding.

Best Wishes...To Our Parents

...At ERWIN CENTER: Kiana Bradley, a former Head Start student and current Head Start parent of Kearyn, has begun a new job as a Claims Representative at Infinity Insurance Co.

Celia Williams, mother of Cornelia and Landon, has a new job at the Amazon Co.

Alexis Hudson, mother of Adyn, has a new job at Wells Fargo Bank.
RoTarious, a student in Ms. Waites and Elston’s class at West Center Street Center, and his family marched through North Titusville in the Walk-to-School event held at Washington School on Oct. 10, sponsored by Alabama SafeKids and United Way.

OCTOBER IS PEDESTRIAN SAFETY MONTH, and JCCEO collaborated with the United Way of Central Alabama in providing fun-filled activities and prizes to encourage families to travel safely when walking or riding on public streets. Children hopped aboard the Walking School Bus and sang along with Cyrus the Centipede’s safety reminders. Parents and children were also encouraged to walk for fun by going to their favorite park and creating artwork about the experience. Thank you to Safe Routes Coordinator Rachael Leonard and all of the United Way volunteers who took time out to visit our centers and read to the children. In November, children will practice bus safety, led by agency bus drivers, and be entertained (Arrington Center) with a Kids-on-the-Block puppet performance from Children’s of Alabama.

JCCEO sponsored a Health Resource Fair at Head Start St. Joseph’s Center this fall. Top left, Head Start Health Assistant DollGenene Turner takes blood pressure of parent, Ms. Gonzalez. Bottom left, members of the Junior League served healthy snacks from the “Yummy Truck.”

Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service visited Festival Center, shown here with Ms. Walker’s class, during Fire Prevention Month.
Ms. Poindexter and Sandra Abston receive award from the Mountain Brook and Vestavia Kiwanis Club who donated a new parent library and outdoor classroom to the West Center Street Center.

Reading Challenge volunteers: The community stepped up to the plate at storytime. (Above left) Funny Maine from 95.7 radio station at Sherman Heights Center. (Right) Librarian from Leeds Public Library at Leeds Center.

United Way Volunteer READERS were a hit in the classrooms. (Right), staff from Royal Cup Coffee Co. at Tarrant Center.

Children at Festival and Leeds Centers practiced recycling to protect the environment this fall. They learned that you can take trash brought from home to create something useful.

PNC Bank and the McWane Center continue to support JCCEO’s science curriculum with traveling experiments presented onsite to our classes, field trips to the museum, and visits to the planetarium. Below, volcanoes erupted in the Dino Museum created by Ms. Burroughs and Smith’s class at Arrington Center.
Am I Talking Too Much or Not Enough

Learning to talk is a process that starts at birth, and by 2 years old, a baby will develop a large vocabulary and can put words together to express their wants, needs, and ideas. Childhood development is a journey and not a race; child development is not a competition. All children develop at their own pace. There are developmental milestones that give a general idea of when certain skills develop. When communicating with your child, remember — babies play with sounds, such as “baba” or “dada.” They communicate without the use of words, such as smiling when hearing a happy voice and crying when hearing an angry voice.

When talking to your child, provide plenty of time for your child to say something. Avoid attempting to help by saying or answering what you think he or she is trying to say. Let’s remember to talk as much as possible; talk while you’re feeding them, changing them, dressing or playing with them. Talk about what’s around them. Make eye contact as you talk. The most effective way to build language skills is to spend time talking with your child and not just to them. Conversation needs to go both ways, expand on what they say, and model their efforts at conversation. Remember — everything has a name and is worth talking about.

JCCEO offers Aftercare services to parents in partnership with Child Care Central. But it’s not just daycare. Aftercare is another opportunity to extend our child development curriculum and help our children get ready for kindergarten. This year we are using the I Care Character Development curriculum created by Judith Mitchell. Thank you, to Education Specialist Carolyn Skanes and Resource Center Assistant Madlyn Bland for introducing the curriculum to mentor teachers and providing them with train-the-trainer techniques to take back to their centers.

Aftercare is offered at JCCEO centers Monday through Friday, 3:30 until 6:00 p.m. Contact Aftercare Manager Earl Williams at 599-6400, or your center manager for additional information.

Mentor Teachers and Ms. Skanes are planning lessons for Aftercare themes:
I Care...About Myself, About Others, About Nature, About Safety.

JCCEO tested 943 children last summer for early identification of health and developmental issues. Children needing additional support are being referred to developmental specialists or health care professionals for further assessment or treatment.
THE MONTH OF OCTOBER IS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH. According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, breast cancer is the most common cancer among women. In fact, as of January 2018, there were and are more than 3.1 million women with a history of breast cancer in the United States, including women currently being treated, as well as women who have completed treatment. Women are urged to regularly get mammograms to lower the risk of dying from breast cancer. The United States Preventative Services Task Force recommends that women who are 50-74 years old should have mammograms every two years. Women under the age of 50 are encouraged to consult their physician about when to start getting a mammogram and how often to get one. Here are some of the most common signs of breast cancer:

- Any change in the size or shape of the breast;
- Pain in any area of the breast;
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk (including blood);
- A new lump in the breast or underarm.

While breast cancer screenings do not prevent breast cancer, early detection may make it easier to treat.

On Friday, October 10, 2018, to show support for those who have survived breast cancer as well as for those who are still in the fight, our agency went Pink. Many of our staff also participated in various Breast Cancer Awareness activities such as the annual Breast Cancer Awareness Walk, Breast Cancer Awareness luncheons, and other events to show support for such a great cause and in an effort to not only increase awareness, but also raise money for a cure. Find out more information about Breast Cancer on [http://www.breastcancer.org](http://www.breastcancer.org)
Money for School

“JCCEO is excited to partner with INNOVATE BIRMINGHAM. This program will be a game-changer for our parents by providing the essentials to establish a technology career with a potential starting salary of $30,000 annually.”

DePriest Waddy

Job Fair: JCCEO’s partnerships with The Women’s Fund of Greater Birmingham and Jeff State Community College brought job seekers and employers together. Over 30 employers were on hand to recruit the 200+ prospects who attended. Attendees participated in a resume-writing seminar before meeting with employers.

Ask US... about the Scholarships for Single Moms Project

Bicentennial Salute

JCCEO is honoring Alabama veterans as a part of its yearlong celebration of our state’s 200th birthday. Thanks to a partnership between Head Start, Wylam Adult Day Health Care, and Positive Maturity’s Shepherd’s Center East, ten armed forces retirees will receive handmade blankets—our way of saying thanks for their sacrifice. (Pictured) Children from St. Joseph’s Center make Air Force blanket with Wylam Center participants.

JCCEO offers the scouting experience to age-eligible Head Start children through a unique partnership with the Girl Scouts of North Central Alabama. Thanks to all of our staff and parent volunteer leaders for making this wonderful opportunity available to our girls. Any parent whose child is participating in the program is welcomed to share in the experience and provide support for our leaders. Look for meeting schedules on your parent bulletin boards, and come join in the fun!