

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025

IN THIS ISSUE

Pg. 1

- Link to DDI Vantage Nutritionist Blog
- Reminder
- Donor Shoutout

Pg. 2

- Family Story

Pg. 3

- Celebrating 60 Years of Head Start

Pg. 4

- My Head Start Success Story

Pg. 5

- Head Start 60th Anniversary Art Show at DDI Vantage

Pg. 6

- National Book Month

Pg. 7

- Happy Halloween - Local Family Fun



**FOLLOW US
ON SOCIAL
MEDIA TO
LEARN
ABOUT US**



How much should my 2 year
old be eating?
(Click the link below.)

Reminder!

Attention Early Intervention Families If you have a parent fee, please remember to pay it each month.

Your bill will come by the method you selected. Either in an email from no_reply@utah.gov or as a letter.

We love serving you and your family!

Family Story

"Our Daughter was showing no interest in walking or standing at 18 months old and our pediatrician suggested we start working with DDI Vantage. I was excited to get her some help and see what we could do for her."

"Our team came and determined Willa mostly needed physical therapy and began giving us tools and exercises we could make games to help her. We also received a walker to help her get strong and found a clinic to have some braces made for her ankles. Once she had some basic skills we were able to enroll her in Musikgarten and Swim Kids which built her strength and confidence in herself. Every session ended with us learning new skills and tricks to implement. Now she is walking and running!"

"We have made tremendous improvements with Willa's physical skills and couldn't be happier. I truly believe without DDI Vantage we would still be struggling. It was nice to have someone who could look at the problem and come up with options to try. I always feel like our provider cares about Willa and our family!"

-Katie Stock-
An Early Intervention Mom





HAPPY
birthday
Head Start

The premise of Head Start is simple:
every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the
ability to reach their full potential.

National Impact:

Early Head Start serves over 214,000 infants, toddlers, and pregnant women across the country, providing essential services that support child development and family well-being.

Children enrolled in Early Head Start demonstrate significantly improved social-emotional, language, and cognitive development, preparing them for success in school and life.

Families benefit from a comprehensive, two-generation approach, receiving support that enhances stability, parenting skills, and access to critical resources.

Long-Term Benefits:

Research shows that participation in Early Head Start increases the likelihood of high school graduation and continued education, supporting lifelong success.

Investments in early childhood education yield substantial economic returns, with every dollar invested in programs like Early Head Start generating an estimated \$1.85 in long-term benefits.

My Head Start Success Story

I grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah, in a family marked by generational trauma and unhealed wounds. My parents had me in 1998, excited for a daughter, but my arrival was not rooted in unconditional love, it became, in many ways, a tool of control. My dad held power over my mom, who had fled an emotionally abusive family that had immigrated from El Salvador. With little money, no family support, and no resources to escape, she was trapped. While my dad provided me with love, attention, and stability, my mom endured emotional, physical, and financial abuse. She tried to leave multiple times but ultimately made the courageous and heartbreaking choice to pursue freedom without me calling me her “big sacrifice.” At just five years old, my mother left.

The trauma of losing her manifested in selective mutism, a symptom of severe anxiety. I had the ability to speak but chose silence, only communicating with those I felt safe with. My father, a truck driver, struggled to find consistent child care for me, as many programs could not accommodate my unique needs. I bounced between relatives until my dad enrolled me in Head Start, a safe, stable, and nurturing environment filled with children who faced challenges like mine.

Early childhood education is often debated, some argue a child is better off at home with a parent. But for low-income families with parents who must work to survive, quality care is not a luxury, it's essential. Without programs like Head Start, children often end up in underfunded daycares, treated as dollar signs rather than individuals with potential. Head Start changed my trajectory. It gave me access to a curriculum designed to meet my

developmental needs academically, socially, and emotionally, offering a lifeline to thrive rather than merely survive.

That early foundation shaped the person I am today. I earned a Bachelor's in Social Work and have dedicated my career to children who, like me, are often misunderstood, overlooked, or marginalized. I focus on children with disabilities, behavioral challenges, and mental health needs that are frequently excluded or labeled “too difficult” rather than seen as opportunities for growth. Through my work as a behavior specialist and my contributions to Head Start initiatives, accessible training and supporting educators in both English and Spanish, I bring my lived experience into every classroom and program I touch.

Today, as the Director of Early Head Start at DDI Vantage, I am proud to embody a true Head Start success story, someone who went from being a Head Start child to leading programs that give children the same opportunities to thrive that I once received. My journey is a testament to resilience, opportunity, and the transformative power of early childhood education. It is proof that with the right support, guidance, and belief in potential, children can not only survive adversity, they can thrive, lead, and inspire the next generation.

Sadie Rodriguez

Early Head Start Director- DDI Vantage

YOU'RE INVITED TO THE
**HEAD START 60TH
ANNIVERSARY ART SHOW**

Thursday, October 23RD | 3:00 pm- 7:00 pm
670 E 3900 S, Millcreek, UT 84107

**Celebrating 60 Years
of Head Start**

We invite children, families, staff, alumni,
and community members to join us for an
evening of art, connection, and celebration.

Enjoy hands-on activities, delicious food,
and inspiring community art displays as we
honor the legacy of Head Start together.

Art Show Theme

60 Years Shining Bright What Makes
Our Families Shine

HOW TO PARTICPATE

Art submissions are welcome from
children, families, staff, and
community members. To submit your
art please follow the QR code.

For any questions please contact
Jeddah at jcarrell@ddivantage.org



October is National Book Month

Parents hear it all the time: it's important to read to your kids. But why exactly is that? And does it matter how — or when, or what — you read to them?

It makes sense that being read to would help kids learn to read themselves, and it's true that being read to supports that crucial learning process. But the benefits of reading together — for kids and for parents — go far beyond literacy.



Language Development

From birth, babies are hardwired to develop language skills, and consistent exposure to a wide variety of language patterns is what helps them do exactly that. “Just exposure to words is the single most important thing that you can do to help build the language pathways in your child’s brain,” says Laura Phillips, PsyD, a neuropsychologist. “Reading and exposure to words helps kids maximize their language and cognitive capacity.” Even the tactile experience of holding or touching a book supports babies’ cognitive development.

Empathy and Emotional Awareness

Aside from language and literacy, reading is also an important tool for helping children develop empathy. As kids read books about people whose lives are different from their own (and especially stories told from the perspectives of those people), they gain an appreciation for other people’s feelings, as well as other cultures, lifestyles, and perspectives.

Books can also help kids learn how to handle their own feelings in healthy ways. Seeing characters in books experience big emotions like anger or sadness lets kids know that these feelings are normal — and gives them a chance to talk about their own difficult feelings, too.

The Parent-Child Bond

Having time to read with a parent or caregiver isn’t just about the activity of reading. It’s about having consistent, focused time together, without other distractions or demands. Even a few minutes of reading together gives both you and your child a chance to slow down, connect with each other, and share an enjoyable activity.

<https://childmind.org/article/why-is-it-important-to-read-to-your-child/>



PUMPKIN PATCHES

Kuwahara's

12153 S. 700 W, Draper

Mabey Farms

10090 S 1000 W, South Jordan

Cross E Ranch

3500 N 2200 W, SLC

Wheeler Historic Farm

6351 S 900 E, Murray

The Kinlands

11887 S 4000 W, Riverton

Terre Family Pumpkin Patch

164 East St, Grantsville

Cousins Pumpkin Patch

Corner of Cochrane Lane and Church
Road - Erda



FAMILY FUN EVENTS

Lapoint Corn Maze and Pumpkin Patch

LaPoint, UT

Cornbelly's - Lehi and Spanish Fork

Gardner Village Witchfest

West Jordan

Halloween Lift Rides at Sundance Resort

The Halloween Express and The Pumpkin Train at the Heber Valley Railroad

Benson Grist Mill Pumpkin Walk Stansbury Park

Bluebell Corn Maze Water Hollow Ranch Bluebell

