

# December 2025

## Head Start Herald



From the Desk of Mrs. Tanya Coles, Head Start Director:

December is always exciting because it is a time to create new family memories and begin setting goals for the New Year! Enjoy the moments you have with your child, friends, and loved ones because every moment matters. Your child has made many strides and continues to progress, whether the gains are big or small. The best way to keep in touch with your child's progress is to:

1. Have a presence at the school/ in the classroom.
2. Talk with your child's teacher about what you need to know, how your child is doing, and what you can work on at home.
3. Read information sent home from school.

Parents are always welcome to visit the classroom or volunteer in the program. Parents are invited to attend Parent Connection Meetings. Families can learn various strategies to help handle the challenges of parenting preschoolers, such as building positive parent-child relationships, promoting resilience, addressing meltdowns, and so much more. Be on the lookout for information on upcoming events and activities! If you have any suggestions or ideas for parent training topics, please share them with your Family Services Specialist!

Enjoy your Winter Break, and stay safe as we look forward to the new year!

*Tanya Coles, Head Start Director*

## IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Event</b>
Wednesday	December 3	12:45pm	Health/Mental Health Services Advisory & Education Review Team Meeting @ York Library
Tuesday	December 9	6:00pm	Money Management Presentation by Bayport Credit Union via Zoom
Wednesday	December 17	10:00am	Policy Council at Griffin-Yeates or via Zoom
Friday	December 19	1:30pm	Gingerbread Man Celebration at Each Site
	December 22 - January 2		Winter Break Students Return on January 5, 2026



Please bring your child's backpack to school every day and ensure that you check it every morning and evening. For safety and security, children are only allowed to bring clear backpacks to school provided by Head Start. No toys, food, medication, or other items should be brought to school in your child's backpack.

### \*\*Facebook\*\*

Like us on Facebook and keep up-to-date on all events and school closures.

<https://www.facebook.com/YorkCountyVirginiaHeadStart>

# EDUCATION

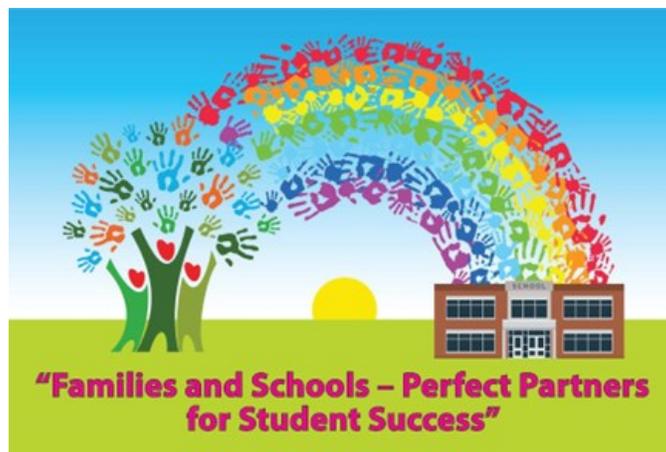
*Head Start Families,*

*As we move into the Winter season, we encourage you to be as involved in your child's early educational journey as possible. Visit the classroom, communicate regularly with the teaching team, attend program events, join the Policy Council, and participate in program department self-assessments.*

*When your child sees you as an active participant in their education, they see their adults at home and their adults at school, as teammates. They know we all work together to provide them with a strong foundation for their future.*

*Being involved also ensures you have a voice in your child's education and learning environments. York County Head Start values input and insight from families as we strive to offer nothing but the best to each child and family we serve.*

Head Start Teaching Staff



**Don't miss out on important information and meetings and exciting events! Check your email frequently for important information from Head Start!**

You will be receiving **emails** and **text messages** from **SchoolMessage@childplus.net**

**You will also receive emails** from various Head Start staff members.

All of their emails will end with **@yorkcounty.gov**.



Dear Head Start Families,

As we continue nurturing your child's growth and development, we want to take a moment to talk about a powerful skill that can help them thrive both emotionally and socially —Gratitude.

Gratitude is more than just saying "thank you." It's about recognizing and appreciating the people, experiences, and things that bring joy and value to our lives. Teaching gratitude early helps build strong, positive habits that can last a lifetime.

### Why Gratitude Matters

Research shows that practicing gratitude has many health and emotional benefits—even for young children! These include:

- Better sleep
- Stronger immune systems
- Improved mood and emotional well-being
- Lower levels of stress and anxiety
- Stronger relationships with peers and family

Gratitude helps preschoolers feel more connected and less frustrated. It supports their ability to manage big emotions and fosters kindness toward others.

### Tips for Teaching Gratitude at Home

You are your child's first and most important teacher! Here are a few simple ways you can help your preschooler build gratitude into their daily life:

1. Model It: Use thankful words often. For example, say things like "I'm so thankful for our yummy dinner" or "I feel grateful when we spend time together."
2. Create a Gratitude Ritual: Start a bedtime routine where your child shares one thing they're thankful for that day. It could be a toy, a friend, a meal, or a fun moment.
3. Read Books About Gratitude: Children's books like *\*Bear Says Thanks\** by Karma Wilson or *\*Thanks a Lot\** by Raffi help introduce gratitude in fun and age-appropriate ways.
4. Encourage Thank You Notes or Art: Let your child draw pictures or create cards for family members, teachers, or friends to express appreciation.
5. Celebrate Acts of Kindness: Recognize when your child shares or helps others, and talk about how good it feels to be kind and appreciated.

### Family Services Is Here for You

As always, our Family Services team is here to support you with resources, parenting tools, and encouragement. If you'd like ideas for activities or books that teach gratitude, or if you want to talk about ways to support your child's social-emotional development, please don't hesitate to reach out.

We are grateful for YOU—our wonderful Head Start families. Together, we are raising kind, caring, and confident children.




# Handy Handouts®

#456

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

## Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease A Painful, Very Contagious Virus — Symptoms and Treatment

by Becky L. Spivey, M.Ed.

Hand, foot, and mouth (HFMD) disease is a very contagious viral illness named coxsackievirus a16 and/or enterovirus 71. In fact, you might hear your child's doctor refer to it as the coxsackievirus. The symptoms of HFMD disease are hard to miss: painful, blister-like sores in and around the mouth, on the palms of the hands and bottoms of the feet, on the buttocks and legs, and in the throat. The illness is most common in infants and children and seems to cycle around our schools, daycare centers, and other places children gather, but adults are susceptible as well. The virus usually doesn't last more than a week or so and appears mostly in summer and fall.

The most common complication of HFMD disease is dehydration. The sores in the mouth and throat make swallowing painful and difficult. If dehydration is severe, intravenous (IV) fluids may be necessary.

This very contagious virus spreads through saliva, nasal mucus, and infected stools (i.e., changing a diaper or when a young child gets stool on his hands and then touches objects that other children put in their mouth). Often the disease breaks out within the local community or neighborhood or wherever children are playing together. The virus gets in the saliva from the sores and passes between different children. You can also catch the virus from someone coughing in close proximity to you.

**The first symptoms** of HFMD disease appear a few days before the breakout of lesions. You might notice that the child has



- Fever.



- Pain or irritability; infants, toddlers, and older children just don't seem like they feel well (just not acting like themselves).



- Been drinking less fluids. Drinking or eating is painful if the child is developing blisters in the mouth.

- Loss of energy and appetite.

**Then you will see...**



- Red, blister-like lesions on the tongue, gums, and inside the cheeks (some can be painful).



- Red rashes (without itching) and blisters on the palms, soles of the feet, and sometimes the buttocks and legs.





# Handy Handouts<sup>®</sup>

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students  
(cont.)

Since HFM is viral, there is no quick cure, but the symptoms are very manageable. **Always consult your physician for advice on treating HFM.**

### Treatment usually includes:



1. Keeping children hydrated with lots of water and cool fluids to help with sore throat. Cold foods such as flavored ice pops and ice cream may also help.



2. Treating high fevers with fever-reducing medications (under the instruction of a physician). For pain and fever, give your child acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen (such as Advil). Do not give your child aspirin. Aspirin has an association to Reye syndrome, a very serious illness.



3. Avoiding giving children acidic or spicy foods and drinks, such as salsa or orange juice. These foods can make mouth sores more painful.



If you suspect your child has hand, foot, and mouth disease, please contact your physician.

Children are more likely to spread the disease during the first week of the illness (even before the blisters appear), but the virus can stay in the stool for several months and can spread quickly to others. To help prevent the disease from spreading:



• Insist that everyone in your home wash their hands frequently, especially after toileting. It is especially important that adults wash their hands after touching a blister or changing the diaper of an infected child.



• Don't allow infected children to play in close contact with others, share toys, or give kisses.



• Clean toys regularly with antibacterial wipes, and wash linens, blankets, clothes, and pajamas frequently during and after the child's illness.

• Talk to the day care or school staff about when your child can return.

Even though HFM disease is a minor illness causing only a few days of fever, mild signs, and symptoms, a form of the coxsackie virus can involve the brain and cause very serious (though rare) complications:



• **Viral meningitis.** This is an infection and inflammation of the membranes (meninges) and cerebrospinal fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord.

• **Encephalitis.** This severe and potentially life-threatening disease involves brain inflammation caused by a virus. Encephalitis is rare.

For more FREE Handy Handouts<sup>®</sup>, go to [www.handyhandouts.com](http://www.handyhandouts.com)

## Asian Beef and Rice

Servings: 4

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

### Ingredients

- 1 pound lean ground beef (90% lean)
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 2-2/3 cups hot cooked brown rice
- 3 green onions, thinly sliced



### Directions

1. In a large skillet, cook beef and garlic over medium heat 6-8 minutes or until beef is no longer pink, breaking beef into crumbles.
2. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, mix brown sugar, soy sauce, oil and seasonings.
3. Stir sauce into beef; heat through. Serve with rice. Sprinkle with green onions.

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/korean-beef-and-rice/#RecipeCard>

## Asian Beef and Rice

### Ingredient Price Comparison

Ingredients	Walmart	Aldi
80 % Ground Beef (1lb)	\$6.93	\$6.59
Garlic Cloves (3 Cloves)	\$1.84	\$1.75
Brown Sugar (1/4 cup)	\$1.00	\$2.00
Soy Sauce (1/4 cup)	approximately: \$0.20	approximately: \$0.22
Sesame Oil (2 tsp)	approximately: \$0.22	approximately: \$0.22
Ground Ginger (1/4 tsp)	approximately: \$0.26	approximately: \$0.23
Crushed Red Pepper Flakes (1/4 tsp)	approximately: \$ 0.05	approximately: \$0.03
Black Pepper (1/4 tsp)	approximately: \$ 0.06	approximately: \$0.05
Brown Rice (2 2/3 cups)	approximately: \$ 1.00	approximately: \$2.00
Green Onion (3)	approximately: \$ 1.00	approximately: \$ 0.48
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12.56</b>	<b>\$13.57</b>

#### REMINDER

**Please call 890-3888 to discuss your child's health status before coming to school**, if your child or anyone in your household has been diagnosed with or exposed to RSV, COVID-19, or another communicable disease. We want to do all that we can to continue to protect Head Start's children and staff. It is a confidential matter but it is our reality. We cannot protect your child, other children, and our dedicated team if we are not aware. We ask that you please make us aware so that we can problem-solve together. It is the only way that we can limit the spread of viruses that are spreading in our community. Thank you for your cooperation.

# DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			RIF Reader @ 9:00 GYC/Yorktown			In Service
						Classroom Visitor
			Health/Mental Health Services & Education Review Meeting York Library 12:45 - 2:15			Winter/Spring Break
						Closed
						Evening Event
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
			RIF Reader GYC @9 am			
		Money Management				
		Presentation by				
		Bayport Credit Union				
		6:00 pm via Zoom				
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
			Policy Council		Gingerbread Man Celebration	
			10:00am @ Griffin-Yeates or via Zoom		at each site 1:30pm	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
			SCHOOL HOLIDAY	SCHOOL HOLIDAY		
			Christmas Eve	Christmas Day		
			Winter Break			
28	29	30	31			
			SCHOOL HOLIDAY			
			New Years Eve			