



Worchester Community Action Council Auburn HEAD START

Happy December! This year is flying by! I hope everyone has a great week off and we will see each other again next year (HA!)

Thank you for handing in homework. It really helps out our program. Also, don't forget to participate in fundraising— it's a great way for us raise money for our children to go on field trips!

THANK YOU

WCAC's annual coat drive was once again a huge success! We were able to provide a new winter coat to all of the children enrolled in our Head Start and Early Head Start programs, as well as for our Healthy Families program and children of young parents enrolled in the agency's Job & Education Center. National Grid and Commerce Bank once again led the way with their generosity, with the two combining to provide more than half of the donated coats! Additional coat donations were gratefully accepted from PENTA Communications, Southbridge Savings Bank, AllCom Credit Union, the City of Worcester employees, Family Services of Central Massachusetts, Knights of Columbus of Auburn, Webster Five Cent Savings and countless individual donations. Additionally, the Creative Hands group of the Worcester Senior Center donated more than 200 hand-made hats and mittens. Generous financial contributions to support the purchase of new winter coats were received from Worcester Rotary Club, Bay State Savings Bank, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care and Dr. Satya Mitra. Thank you to all those who helped to keep our children warm this winter! View a photo album of the 2015 Coat Drive on WCAC's Facebook page.

December 2015



Having trouble keeping up with home heating expenses? WCAC's Fuel Assistance Program is designed to provide relief to those households that are most vulnerable to high home heating costs. Massachusetts' Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is intended to help defray the cost of heat during the winter months, November 1 – April 30 of each year.

Visit www.WCAC.net/fuel-assistance for information about how to apply.

Number in Household	Income
1	\$33,126
2	\$43,319
3	\$53,511
4	\$63,704
5	\$73,897
6	\$84,089

*add approximately \$1,911 to income for each additional person in household



Toy Safety Awareness



According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 251,700 toy-related injuries in 2010 throughout the United States. 72% were to people less than 15 years of age. Additionally, in 2007 alone, toymakers recalled over 19 million toys worldwide because of safety concerns such as lead paint and small magnets.

When it comes to toys and gifts, the excitement and desire to get your children their favorite toys may cause shoppers to forget about safety factors associated with them. Before you make these purchases, it is critical to remember to consider the safety and age range of the toys.

Prevent Blindness America has declared December as Safe Toys and Gifts Awareness Month. The group encourages everyone to consider if the toys they wish to give suits the age and individual skills and abilities of the individual child who will receive it, *especially for infants and children under age three.*

This holiday season (and beyond), please consider the following guidelines for choosing safe toys for all ages:

- Inspect all toys before purchasing. Avoid those that shoot or include parts that fly off. The toy should have no sharp edges or points and should be sturdy enough to withstand impact without breaking, being crushed, or being pulled apart easily.
- When purchasing *toys for children with special needs* try to: Choose toys that may appeal to different senses such as sound, movement, and texture; consider interactive toys to allow the child to play with others; and think about the size of the toy and the position a child would need to be in to play with it. Consult the “AblePlay” website at <http://www.ableplay.org/> for more information.
- Be diligent about inspecting toys your child has received. Check them for age, skill level, and developmental appropriateness before allowing them to be played with.
 - Look for labels that assure you the toys have passed a safety inspection – “ATSM” means the toy has met the American Society for Testing and Materials standards.
 - Gifts of sports equipment should always be accompanied by protective gear (give a helmet with the skateboard)
 - Keep kids safe from *lead in toys* by: Educating yourself about lead exposure from toys, symptoms of lead poisoning, and what kinds of toys have been recalled; being aware that old toys may be more likely to contain lead in the paint; having your children wash their hands frequently and calling your doctor if you suspect your child has been exposed to lead. Consult the last two websites listed below for more information.
 - Do **NOT** give toys with small parts (including magnets and “button” batteries which can cause serious injury or death if ingested) to young children as they tend to put things in their mouths, increasing the risk of choking. If the piece can fit inside a toilet paper roll, it is not appropriate for kids under age three.
 - Do **NOT** give toys with ropes and cords or heating elements
 - Do **NOT** give crayons and markers unless they are labeled “nontoxic”.

Proper Handwashing Tips

Did you know that December 6th through 12th is National Handwashing Awareness?

Keeping hands clean through improved hand hygiene is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water. If clean, running water is not accessible, as is common in many parts of the world, use soap and available water. If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.

When should you wash your hands?

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats

After touching garbage

How should you wash your hands?

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.

Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

About 1.8 million children under the age of 5 die each year from diarrheal diseases and pneumonia, the top two killers of young children around the world .

Handwashing with soap could protect about 1 out of every 3 young children who get sick with diarrhea and almost 1 out of 5 young children with respiratory infections like pneumonia .

Although people around the world clean their hands with water, very few use soap to wash their hands. Washing hands with soap removes germs much more effectively .

Handwashing education and access to soap in schools can help improve attendance ..

Good handwashing early in life may help improve child development in some setting

Please make sure you call us BEFORE 9AM if your child is going to be absent. It is important for attendance to be 85%, and we need to turn in a lunch count by

9:15

December

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Parent Meeting 4-5:30pm	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 Mobile Dentist	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
				NO SCHOOL		
27	28	29	30	31	Jan 1	
NO SCHOOL						

Worcester Community Action Council

Southbridge Head Start—25 Cole Avenue, Southbridge, MA 01550 (508)765-4738

Auburn Head Start—68 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501 (774)318-0994

Main Office—484 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608 (508) 754-1176

Call (508)765-4738 ext. 300 for Storm Announcements/Closures