



Spring is in the air! April is from the Latin verb “aperire” which means “to open.” At IHSA we are opening up several new adventures this spring. **The three big adventures involve you!** **First**, on May 15th we are sponsoring a rally at the State Capitol building. This is a great opportunity to meet your state representatives and share the amazing work you are doing for Head Start/Early Head Start children and families. Join us for an exciting day at the State Capitol to share and educate state legislators on the benefits of Head Start and Early Head Start. In our current political environment, it's critical that everyone has a good understanding of the great work being done by our Head Start/Early Head Start programs in Illinois. May 15th was chosen, as this is **Trauma-Informed Awareness Day**. **This big day OPENS up an opportunity for you to make a big difference!** I can't think of a better day to celebrate Head Start/Early Head Start. There is no cost and each participant will receive a t-shirt and lunch. Here is the link to register. [Head Start Rally at the State Capitol](#). Details are as follows:

May 15, 2019
"Strong Bright Futures Begin at Head Start"
10:00 am -- 2:00 pm
We meet at the Illinois State Museum
502 S. Spring St. Springfield, IL 62706

Second big opportunity are the IHSA Orientation Modules and the online learning platform called Bridge. Are you ready to bring your orientation to a new level? These inspirational modules bring life to onboarding new staff and make your job easier ensuring that your newest team members are engaged and excited about their new job. Certificates can be printed to celebrate success and support documentation needs. These pre-designed modules are an excellent strategy for onboarding new staff. Plus, the online learning platform gives you the flexibility to do much, much more. BRIDGE allows our programs to offer online orientation anywhere at any time. It's accessible, easy to use for both the Head Start and Early Head Start program as well as for the user. You have an internal calendaring system, the ability to create surveys and assign tasks to learning groups. You can also have your own platform and add your own training. The easy use of the platform for both the learner and the administrator makes this a great tool and **OPENS up many possibilities for your agency.** Five modules are ready to use. These include:

Module 1: What is Head Start and Early Head Start?

Module 2: Cultivating Passion

Module 3: Professionalism

Module 4: Reaching the Most Vulnerable and At-Risk

Module 5: Parents As Key Partners

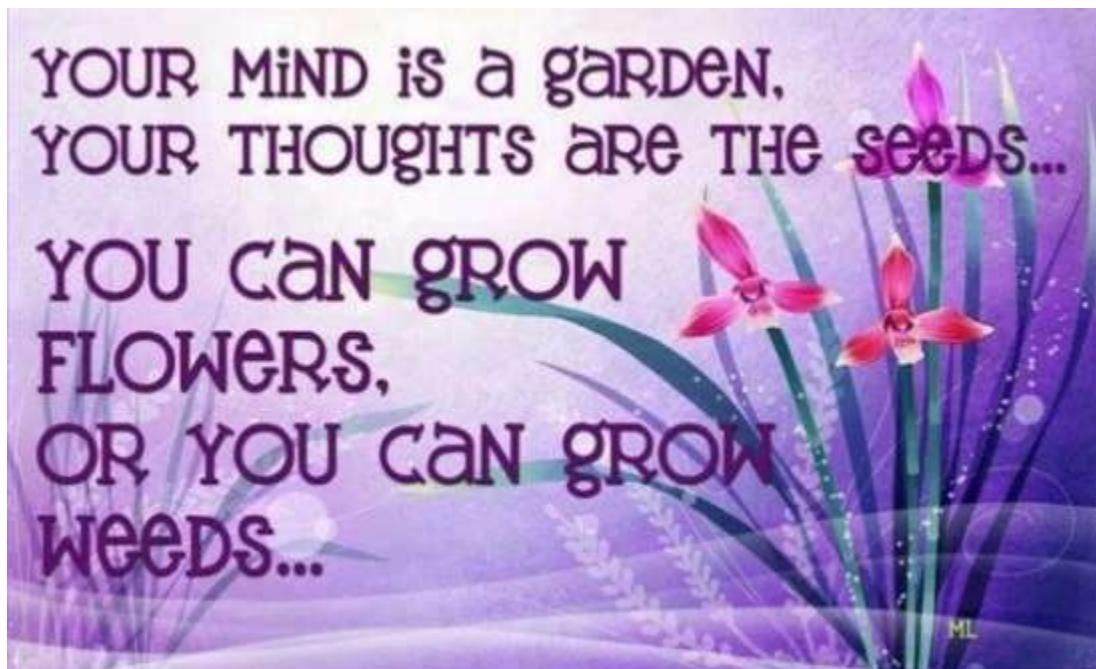
To learn more about these orientation modules, other learning content and the online learning platform please follow this link. (NEED TO ADD LINK)

Third, even bigger, opportunity is the IHSA Parent Ambassador program. We are now accepting applications for 2019-2020. If you are a parent reading this we would like to have you join us for this wonderful opportunity. If you are a staff member reading this please share and encourage parents from your organization to complete the simple application process. Goals of Parent Ambassador Program include

- Teach ambassadors about the legislative process.
- Train ambassadors how to educate, organize, and mobilize parents in their program.
- Give ambassadors the skills to advocate for themselves and their community.
- Help ambassadors serve as a liaison between a local program, IHSA, and the larger early learning community.
- Ensure that parents have a voice in policy making discussions and deliberations.
- Provide IHSA and the Head Start community with a strong grassroots network that can help move positive policy proposals forward.

This **OPENS up a wonderful, leadership opportunity for parents.** To learn more follow this [link](#) then, scroll down to the *Parent Ambassador* section.

In closing, OPEN yourself up to the endless possibilities! Be open to new ideas, open to new adventures and open to taking time for yourself. Remember this:



So, keep GROWING and always remember we appreciate the work you do!

Take care,

Lauri

