



Positive Parenting

By The Guidance Center's *Family Resource Center* and



Positive Family Nutrition

Many kids today choose to play video games or watch television rather than go outside to play. Portions in restaurants are huge and fast food is the dinner choice for many busy families. As a parent, you can take small steps to ensure that your child is a healthy eater. Remember that you are their role model – the food choices you make will influence what your children eat. Here are some tips you can use to promote healthy eating for your family.

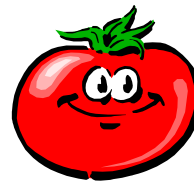
- Eat meals together as a family.
- Say “no” to super-size portions when you eat out.

- Plant a vegetable garden at home.
- Avoid telling your child to “take one more bite” or “clean your plate.”
- Make up a healthy snack list with your child and post it on the refrigerator.
- Drink water as the beverage of choice when thirsty. Limit sweetened drinks such as juice or soda.
- Limit total “electronic time” (video games, computers, and television) to a maximum of two hours daily.
- Cook with your child and involve them in the meal planning.
- Encourage your child to

play outside – play with her whenever possible.

- Teach your child how to read and understand food labels.
- Find an indoor swimming pool that you can use all year long.
- Eat a variety of foods – teach your child about all kinds of food.

When your kids see you making nutritious choices they will be inspired to make the same choices in their lives.



***Information cited from <http://nutritionforkids/emlnews/FK-December03.htm>



The Guidance Center

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Special Points of Interest:

- ☺ Nutritious choices
- ☺ Develop your child's brain
- ☺ Active listening
- ☺ Don't be afraid - finger paint!
- ☺ Parents As Teachers events
- ☺ Playgroups
- ☺ Healthy Downriver Family Expo
- ☺ Thank You!
- ☺ Story Hour

A Healthy Downriver

Don't miss “The Magic of Families”, brought to you by the 2004 Healthy Downriver Family Expo. This is a fun filled day for both parents and children. Governor Jennifer Granholm will be the keynote speaker at the event. “The Music Lady” and “Magic Joe” will also be there! There is also a stress management workshop, along with many other parenting workshops. The Expo is on Saturday, March 13th from 8:00 AM to 1:30 PM at Roosevelt High School in Wyandotte. For more information, call Maria Sutka at (734)246-1008 ext.2257.

Thank You!

The Colina Foundation was established in 1992 to try and give the children of the Downriver area a chance to make their world better. Their mission is simply to “help children.” They certainly have helped a lot of children, and this newsletter is one way they have contributed. Thank you so much to the Colina Foundation for their generous support of this newsletter.



John and Nancy Colina

Parents As Teachers, Playgroup, and Story Hour Events for February

Parents As Teachers Events

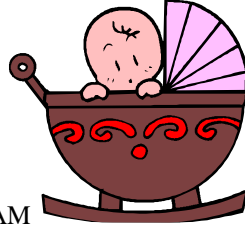
☆ *Infant/Toddler Playgroup* (Ages 0-2 years)
Fridays: 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM - Family Resource Center
February 6, 13, 20, 27

☆ *Preschool Playgroup* (Ages 30 to 60 months)
Wednesdays: 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM - Family Resource Center
February 4, 11, 18, 25

☆ *Twins Playgroup*
Thursdays: 9:30 AM to 11:00 AM
February 5, 12, 19, 26

☆ *PAT Group Meeting*
Tuesday February 24 from 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM

For more information or to register, call Wanda at (734)785-7705 ext. 7126



After Baby Comes Events

☆ *ABC Playgroup*
Wednesdays: 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM - Family Resource Center
February 4, 11, 18, 25

For more information or to register, call Rachel Rosin at (734) 785-7705.

Story Hour

Join us in the Family Resource Center this month for a reading of *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles G. Shaw. This simple book is great for toddlers through kindergarteners. Simple white pictures on blue backgrounds create the different shapes. Children are kept guessing what the changing shape is until the end of the book. This is a fabulous book to encourage imagination. An art project will follow the story. Story Hour is on February 19th at 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM. See you there!

Playgroups

Baby/Toddler Playgroup (for children ages birth to three):
Mondays from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM - Family Resource Center
February 2, 9, 16, 23

Preschool Playgroup (for children ages three to five):
Tuesdays from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM - Family Resource Center
February 3, 10, 17, 24
Thursdays from 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM - Family Resource Center
February 5, 12, 19, 26

Call Andrea at (734) 785-7705 ext. 7159 to register or for more information.

Finger Painting with Toddlers

Some researchers believe that infants and toddlers “think” with their eyes, ears, and hands. This means that children need direct interaction with their environment in order to learn their best. With supervision, toddlers can make the most out of art activities. Finger-painting is a wonderful sensorimotor activity that appeals to most toddlers. Put an old tee-shirt on them and let them go to it! Make sure to cover your kitchen table with newspaper, as well as the floor underneath their chair. This is a great tactile experience because the paint feels slimy and the paper they paint on can either be smooth or rough. It’s also a fast clean up. Let your toddler finger paint in the bathtub. This makes for quick and easy clean up as well. Another option for painting with kids is to put a sheet of wax paper over a tray or cookie sheet. Let your child spoon different colors of tempera paint or finger paint onto the paper. Then cover

the paint with another sheet of wax paper. Your child can press down on the top sheet and watch the colors blend together. Don’t try to direct your child’s interaction with art. Let them create whatever they want, and don’t expect them to name their creations until they get a little older. It’s the process that counts at toddler age, not the product. Use this recipe to make quick and easy finger paints.

Mix together 2 tablespoons of sugar and 1/3 cup of cornstarch in a small pan. Slowly add 2 cups of cold water. Cook over low heat, stirring until the mixture becomes a smooth, almost clear gel (about 5 minutes). When it’s cool, stir in 1/4 cup of clear dishwashing liquid. Scoop equal amounts of the mixture into containers and stir in food coloring (or, for even more vibrant colors, use food coloring paste).

Let your child mix the food coloring into the paint using their fingers for a

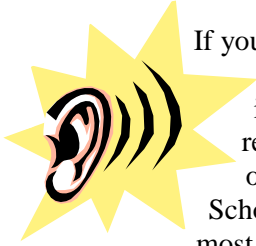
fun experience. You can also finger paint with chocolate pudding. Smearing is a natural activity for children. Your child may be hesitant at first, but once warmed up kids usually enjoy it. Have fun with it and don’t be afraid to experiment!



Information and recipe cited from:
<http://familyfun.go.com/crafts/drawpaint/expert/dony0400aapaint/>

Active Listening for Preschoolers

By Sue Ellen Small, Principal, Waring Elementary School



If you are a parent of a preschooler, the issue of school readiness is already on your mind.

School readiness is most often thought of as visual or motor skills that are typically appropriate for preschoolers who are three or four years old. However, one of the most important skills for youngsters entering school is active listening. The ability to listen and respond is critical to the developmental process and needs to be understood and supported from infancy on. The right kind of auditory environment and sensory stimulation of the auditory center of the brain will have a dramatic influence on the actual organization of auditory brain pathways. Basically, this means that as a child listens, his brain creates more and better ways of perceiving and learning. The better they hear, the better they learn. Not coincidentally the better they listen, the better they read and write. What does this mean? We all need to pay attention to the listening environment that children live and learn in. The following are some hints that will help your infants, toddlers, and preschoolers become good listeners and enrich their social

and language development immeasurably. These tips were taken from Enhancing the Listening Environment for Early Learning Success by Carol Flexer.

- ◆ A quiet room and a good snuggly chair for two is the best way for a child to hear and be heard.
- ◆ Focus on listening, not just seeing. For example, ask your child, "Did you hear that bird?"
- ◆ Maintain a joint focus of attention when reading (meaning the child looks at the book while listening to you read).
- ◆ Always speak with a clear voice and in complete sentences. Use lots of melody and NO baby talk.
- ◆ Read aloud daily beginning in infancy.
- ◆ Sing or read nursery rhymes every day. This helps develop phonics awareness.
- ◆ Name objects throughout the day. Be mindful of a growing vocabulary.
- ◆ Talk about and describe how things sound, look, and feel.
- ◆ Talk about where things are. Use prepositions (in, on, over...).
- ◆ Compare. Talk about similarities,

differences, shapes, colors, and textures.

- ◆ Describe sequences – what came first, before, or after. Sequencing is really important in developing auditory memory.
- ◆ Tell and retell family stories. Keep the narrative simple for younger children and increase complexity as they grow older.

Finally, and most importantly, keep the noise level in the house as low as possible. Monitor television and boom boxes so that children can hear and be heard. Young children are highly sensitive to loud, high pitched tones and over a period of time will experience stress that directly impacts their social and emotional development. The advantages of a quiet, calm and orderly environment continue well beyond preschool years. The best homes and classrooms are places where children can hear and be heard. The payoff for these simple strategies is remarkable. These children will come to school ready to listen and follow directions, ready to read and write, able to talk about their thoughts and ideas and confident in their ability to make friends. It doesn't get any better than that!

Develop Your Child's Brain Through Music



Early experiences stimulate learning. A newborn comes into the world ready to respond to complex sound patterns such as music and voices. Include music in

your child's daily routine, from the womb on. Complex musical patterns, such as classical music, help develop the areas of the brain needed for math

and spatial reasoning. The prime time for developing the brain connections for these areas is between the second and third month of life, though it is always beneficial to include music in your child's life. Come down to the Family Resource Center and check out our series of videos entitled Baby Bach, Baby Mozart, and Baby Beethoven. Help stimulate your baby's brain. Music and higher test scores are connected!

Check out our website of the month:

<http://www.sfskids.org/templates/home.asp?pageid=1>



Mission Statements

Everybody Ready

Our Vision: All children will be physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually prepared to enter kindergarten “Ready to Learn, Ready to Succeed, Ready for Life” through the love, nurture and support of their families, their caregivers and their communities.

Our Mission: Everybody Ready engages the community to support families and caregivers as they meet the needs of children 0-5.

Please check out our website www.everybodyready.com. On it you will find upcoming events for children 0-5, and information telling you all about Everybody Ready. Look for our open quarterly meetings. We always have a keynote speaker talking about issues of young children.

Our next meeting will be April 21st from 9:30 to 11 am, at the Center for Excellence at The Guidance Center, 13111 Allen Road in Southgate. Please call 734 282-5497 to hold your spot!

Family Resource Center

The Guidance Center’s Family Resource Center’s mission is to provide comprehensive, research-based family support services to enhance families’ capacity to support the growth and development of all family members — adults, youth, and children, as well as the community.

Infant Massage

The Family Resource Center is pleased to offer a free infant massage class to parents of babies ages one month to crawling. Learn to nurture your baby with infant massage. The many benefits of infant massage include:

- ♦ Bonding – enhances communication and encourages positive interaction.
- ♦ Relief for baby from discomforts such as teething, colic, congestion, gas, and emotional distress.
- ♦ Relaxation – helps baby sleep deeper and longer.
- ♦ Helps parents feel more competent and confident in their parenting role.

Our qualified instructor will guide you through the infant massage process with demonstrations and handouts for you to keep. Classes are held Wednesday evenings and Thursday mornings. For more information, please call the Family Resource Center at (734) 785-7705, ext. 7053. .



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