



# Positive Parenting

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

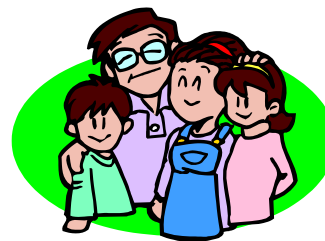


## March Into Parenting Awareness Month

March has been designated Parenting Awareness Month in Michigan. While we celebrate people raising children all year long, March is a time that we especially recognize the effort and heart put into bringing up children. Parents and caregivers are children's first and most influential teachers. The most important parenting skill is giving children love, concern, and respect at all times. This helps them become secure and develop a healthy sense of self. Give your children choices whenever possible, but make sure they are acceptable choices for you as well. For

example, if your child has a meltdown because he has to stop watching television, tell him that his choices are to move on to another activity such as coloring or to go to a safe place to calm down. Make sure your rules are understood by children. Explain that it is for their safety or well-being. Help children express their feelings - little ones especially have difficulty with this. Name the feeling for them. For example, "You seem to be frustrated. What can we do to help you calm down?" Spend as much time as possible with your children. Routines such as story before bedtime or family dinner

together help your child understand that you love them and they are important to you. Tell your child you love him every day, and that you feel lucky to have him. Most of all, set examples by what you say and do. Model the behaviors you would like your child to adopt. Ask for help if you need it. The statewide Parent Help Line is toll free and 24 hours. Call 1-800-942-HELP for assistance. Enjoy your kids!



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### Special Points of Interest:

- ☺ Parenting Awareness Month
- ☺ Playgroups
- ☺ Magic Carpet Ride to Reading
- ☺ Healthy Nutrition
- ☺ School Engagement
- ☺ Let's Talk Language
- ☺ Healthy Downriver Expo
- ☺ How to Pick a Preschool

## Magic Carpet Ride



AmeriCorps brings the Magic Carpet Ride back on March 19th at 1:00 with a special surprise guest. Come join us for storytelling, a raffle, arts and crafts, and pictures with our guest! The event is at Southland Mall in the West Court (by Olga's Kitchen). The closest entrance is by Borders and Ruby Tuesday's. We know how much you have enjoyed this event in the past, so make sure you make it to this very special carpet ride with our super surprise guest!!!



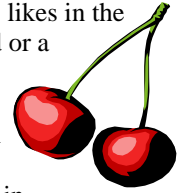
# Healthy Nutrition



Good nutrition is a habit that needs to start early. Giving your child good eating habits now will help them eat well for a lifetime. The most important thing you can do to help your child develop good eating habits is to model them. To do this, you need to eat with your child on a regular basis. Today's families are busy and may not always have an opportunity to share meals, but you should try to eat together as much as you can. Some of the benefits of getting together for meals are making sure your child is eating nutritious foods and allowing you to find out your child's food likes and dislikes. The meals your child eats at home will set the tone for meals she chooses on her own. To encourage more good eating habits, try buying a variety of healthy foods like fruits, veggies, and whole grain breads. Set specific times for meals and snacks.

Limit sugary, high-fat snacks, and avoid adding a lot of salt to foods. Encourage your child to drink lots of water or milk, and avoid caffeine in drinks and foods that you serve your child. Be a good example by trying to avoid these things yourself. If your child is a picky eater, look at parenting magazines or kids' cookbooks to find recipes aimed at children's tastes. Try to find recipes with ingredients that your child likes, and include her in the shopping, cooking and serving. It may keep her interested. Try shredding or chopping veggies and adding them to pancake or muffin mixes. Grated apples are super for holding together ground beef or turkey for burgers!!! Don't show anxiety if your child doesn't eat a meal here or there, and try to relax if she only wants to eat a single food for a week. Don't cater to a picky eater by cooking "special" meals for her. Include

something you know she likes in the meal like a slice of bread or a piece of fruit. If these techniques don't work, there are people who can help, like a registered dietitian who specializes in children's nutritional needs. Give your child advice on how to choose healthy foods in restaurants. Encourage her to include veggies in her meal when ordering out. Make sure that desserts and fast food are eaten in moderation. Try to get your child to look for the healthier selections at these restaurants, such as grilled chicken sandwiches or baked potatoes (without all the butter or sour cream). For more



information, go to [http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition\\_fit/nutrition/habits.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/nutrition/habits.html).



## How To Pick a Preschool



It's important to pick a preschool that both you and your child are comfortable with. But what makes a good preschool? Below are eleven things you should look for when considering preschools.

- **Child oriented classrooms.** Are there a variety of activities for both small and large motor skills? Is there enough room for the children to move freely?
- **Are the children free to enjoy the activities, or do they have to sit still for long periods of time?** Children learn by doing, so they're always using energy.
- **Individuality.** Does the teacher treat all the kids as individuals? Group learning and story time are great, but not all kids the same age are at the same developmental stage. Everybody has a different learning style, too.
- **Student- teacher ratio.** There should be one staff member for ten students at

age four. The younger your child is, the higher the teacher to child ratio should be.

- **Parent involvement.** Are parents encouraged to stop by and participate? A school that has nothing to hide will encourage parent participation.
- **Safe environment.** Are the tables, chairs, shelves, and yes, even toilets, kid sized? Is there a good security system to keep out unwanted people? Are all the chemicals and pesticides kept well out of the reach of kids?
- **Attitude.** Are the staff and director confident when you ask questions, or are they defensive? Do they have time to talk to you and the children?
- **Role of the teacher.** Is she a dictator or a conductor of constructive activity? Does she enjoy the kids? When a child has a problem, does she understand how the child thinks and feels? Does she have a sense of humor? (Always a plus!)
- **Do the children get along?** If the children are bullying and hitting each other, it's a sign that they have to sit for

too long with too little to do. A lot of times children hit each other and fight when they are not kept constructively busy.

- **Discipline.** Do the teachers use negative body and verbal language to control the children? Ideally, all the children clearly understand rules and etiquette. A short time out is the best type of punishment. If a child has greater discipline problems, teachers and parents need to work together to come up with a solution.
- **Does your child like it?** Although you may not want to take your child to every school you visit, he needs to be part of the decision process once you've narrowed it down to two or three schools. This will make the transition from home to school much easier for him.

Ask plenty of questions - teachers and directors expect them, so be bold! Above all, listen to your child and trust your intuition.

Information cited from: [www.montessorimom.com/pickapreschool.html](http://www.montessorimom.com/pickapreschool.html)

# Save the Date: Healthy Downriver Expo

**When:** Saturday, March 19th 2005

**Where:** Southgate Davidson Middle School

**Time:** 9:00am-2:30pm

What children really want is love, respect, more free time, more contact with extended family and the natural world, and healthier, more peaceful lives. Join other parents and learn ways to provide these things that money can't buy. Kenneth J. Horn, a contributing author, presenter, parent and teacher will begin the day greeting us with a lively, humorous, and informative topic entitled "Different Genders, Different Brains, How Could Learning Be the Same?" There are also workshops presented

by a team of experts including these Parenting Sessions:

- Managing Family Stress
- Keeping Your Family and Home Safe
- Identifying Learning Problems and Getting
- Information for Your Child Zero - Graduation
- Using Literature, Games and Activities to Help Your Child Cope and Learn
- Learn about Health and Nutrition and Participate in a Community Garden

There is a \$5 registration fee that includes breakfast and lunch! Door

Prizes will be awarded, including one family pass to The Henry Ford. Over 60 community information tables with resources will be at the expo as well! Join us there!

## For Information Contact:

Southgate Family Resource Center at (734) 246-7845

Due to limited space, no child care will be provided.



## School Engagement

Asset 22 is school engagement, or engagement in learning for the young child. Parents and other adults can do this by being responsive, attentive and involved in learning new things, sparking children's interest in learning.

- For preschoolers, make sure they have enough rest. Hungry, tired preschoolers will have trouble learning and paying attention.
- Some children are curious and ask questions when adults are around. Other children like to explore on their

own. Create an atmosphere for learning that fits each child's personality.

- Use music, puzzles, books, blocks, dramatic play, and games to add variety and interest to a preschooler's day. Give preschoolers new activities to enjoy. These activities will broaden their interests and keep them engaged in learning through play.
- Play the "Why?" game. With a preschooler, take turns asking and answering: "Why?" questions. If you're stumped, find the answer

together.

- Talk to preschoolers about their feelings. Let them know that feelings aren't right or wrong - they just are. Help them use their problem solving skills to find ways to handle their feelings. For example, if a child is sad, you might say "I feel sad sometimes too. Let's talk about it".

\*Adapted from What Young Children Need to Succeed by Jolene Roehlkepartain and Nancy Leffert, Ph.D.

## Let's Talk Language Tip



### Let's Talk Language Toddler Tip:

Point out recognizable symbols in your environment to your toddler, such as stop signs or men's or women's room signs. As your toddler becomes familiar with these symbols, he/she will begin to recognize them on his/her own and will know that the red sign means "Stop". This is an important pre-reading and recognition skill.



## 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](http://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.

**Please call 734 282-5497 with any questions.**

### **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. For more information, please call the Family Resource Center at (734) 785-7705, ext. 7053.



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