



**TODDLER TOPICS *PLUS*.... A Parent Newsletter for
Toddlers, Preschoolers and beyond!
2007 Issue Three**

TODDLER TOPICS *PLUS*... a learn-at-home parent newsletter created by Penn State Cooperative Extension welcomes you. This newsletter is designed to assist parents, grandparents, caregivers and all adults who care about and for children in all their interactions with children. We will continue to make these issues available on-line as well as in hard copy format.

We hope you will find helpful tips and techniques to improve your family's time together while providing you with information that will enrich your children's learning process. **Contact the Penn State Cooperative Extension office in your county for information on other educational programs of interest to you and your family.**

Ellen Meanix Helfrick, Editor

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Berenstain Bears & Money

Angela Spratt, IUP Child Development Intern, Indiana County

Do you have a child who just *has* to have everything that they see advertised, or who cannot make it through the candy aisle of the grocery store peacefully? It's never too early or too late to let your children know that "money doesn't grow on trees".

Remember, parents set the 'tone' in the family about money. Ask yourself: Is money always a point of heated discussion?



Is my family openly discussing money situations? Do I involve the whole family in helping to solve money and spending decisions?

One of the biggest responsibilities we have as parents is to help our children learn about money in a healthy way. Money cannot buy love, nor should it be used to control another person. Check with your local library for a listing of books on the topic of money and children. There are many books that introduce coins and money, from the process of minting and printing up to counting and spending money. Jan and Stan Berenstain have four books that you can read with your children to help them learn about money.

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Berenstain Bears & Money (Continued)

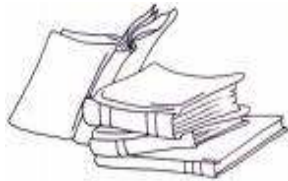
After you read each book, discuss the ideas presented in the books with your children. Then, when a money ‘situation’ occurs involving your child, you can recall the stories and use them to help make the best decision for your family.

The Berenstain Bears Trouble with Money teaches children about earning, spending, and the difference between wants and needs.

The Berenstain Bears Get the Gimmies provides ways to deal with tantrums in stores and teaches children to be grateful for what they already have.

The Berenstain Bears Lend a Helping Hand places less focus on self, teaching children the value of volunteering and sharing.

The Berenstain Bears Dollars and Sense teaches children how to keep track of their money and make wise decisions with their allowances.



Sensory Play

Rendy L. Knepper, Better Kid Care Coordinator, Dauphin County

Fill a large plastic container with rice. Bury plastic alphabet letters in the rice. Your child will love to swish his hands around to seek a letter. Have them try to identify the letter just by feeling it. Then pull the letter out and see if they guessed correctly. After your child has mastered this game, add items that represent different letters and see if they can unbury only items that start with a specific letter. Cover the container and keep it dry and your ABC rice bin will last a long time.
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Healthy Bites

Laurie Welch, Extension Educator
Clinton County

What is a portion? Serving sizes at restaurants are often 2-3 times what is recommended, so it is not surprising that the concept of a “serving size” is distorted. Trying to figure out the serving sizes for children are even trickier. Here is a simple guide:



GRAINS (6 servings a day)

Ages 1-2: 1/2 slice of bread, 1/4 cup cooked pasta, rice or hot cereal; 1/3 cup of dry cereal

Ages 2-4: 2/3 slice of bread, 1/3 cup cooked pasta, rice or hot cereal; 1/2 cup of dry cereal

Ages 4-6: 1 slice of bread, 1/2 cup of cooked pasta, rice or hot cereal; 3/4 cup of dry cereal

PROTEIN (2 servings a day)

Ages 1-2: 1 oz. Cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1/2 egg; 1/4 cup of cooked beans or tofu

Ages 2-4: 2 oz. Cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1 egg; 1/3 cup of cooked beans or tofu

Ages 4-6: 2.5 oz. Cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1 egg, 1/2 cup of cooked beans or tofu

*1 ounce = the size of 4 dice

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Healthy Bites (Continued)

DAIRY (2 servings a day)

Ages 1-2: 1 cup of milk, 1/2 cup of yogurt, 3/4 oz of cheese

Ages 2-4: 1 cup of milk, 2/3 cup of yogurt, 1 oz of cheese

Ages 4-6: 1 cup of milk, 1 cup of yogurt, 2 oz. of cheese

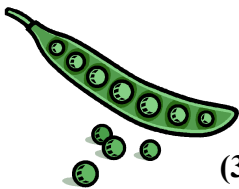
FRUIT (2 servings a day)

Ages 1-2: 1/4 cup of fruit, 1/3 cup of fruit juice

Ages 2-4: 1/3 cup of fruit, 1/2 cup of fruit juice

Ages 4-6: 1/2 cup of fruit, 3/4 cup of fruit juice

* 1/2 cup = the size of a bar of soap



**VEGETABLES
(3 servings a day)**

Ages 1-2: 1/4 cup of vegetables

Ages 2-4: 1/3 cup of vegetables

Ages 4-6: 1/2 cup of vegetables

*1/4 cup=the size of 2 ice cubes

Adapted from: "Parenting Magazine, April 2001. Page 208. Written by: Bridget Swinney, R.D.

Play

Rendy L. Knepper, Better Kid Care Coordinator, Dauphin County

Before I was a Mom, play was simply a word in my vocabulary used in association with young children. As a Mother of two, I'm fascinated by watching the immense impact play has had in their development.

I read books and magazines and subscribed to parenting websites to prepare me for parenthood. I collected information on schedules, sleeping, feedings, developmental milestones, encouraging speech, and ways to encourage play with your infant. Motherhood has reinforced my research. **Play is essential for a child's brain growth and development.** During play, development and learning takes place. It is through play that children grow and learn. Encourage play, be a part of it, create an environment in your home where children can play and explore. Children retain information when they are having fun.

Building blocks play involves problem solving, logical thinking, creativity, and physics plus large and small muscle

development. When I watch my daughter stack make see her the different size items to towers, I feel as if I can the wheels turning in head as she reasons and remembers big ones on bottom.

The asks next time your child you to play, think of the long term benefits and join in the fun - the dishes and laundry will wait!



Raising Resilient Kids

Denise H. Continenza, Family Living Educator, Lehigh County

A wise person once said that parenting is not about raising children; it is about developing responsible adults. Given all the negative influences and our rapidly changing world, this can seem like a very daunting task. But there is hope! **There are positive experiences that have been proven by research to be essential to raising successful young people.** The more of these experiences that are present in a child's life and environment, the greater the chance they have to grow in healthy, positive ways and avoid risky behaviors such as drug use, violence, and unsafe sex.

Resilience will protect young people from harm and bad influences while keeping them on the right path. The Search Institute based in Minnesota has done extensive research on what makes kids resilient. **They have identified forty building blocks known as Developmental Assets that help young people grow up to be caring, responsible, and productive citizens.** These are found in the family, the school, the community, and the child him/herself. The forty attributes are divided into two categories: internal and external. **Internal assets are those things that are fostered from within the child.** Commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity are internal assets. **External assets are those which are found in and sustained by the child's environment.** Support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time are external assets.

Parents, grandparents and caregivers play a role in the latter group of assets. **Help your children be resilient: balance love and limits, provide safe environments and encourage children to learn.**

Surprisingly, the research has shown that the average young person in the United States expresses having experienced only nineteen of the forty assets. Fifty-nine percent have fewer than half of the forty assets. What this means is that we have a lot of work to do -- in our communities, our schools, and in our own families! The Search Institute recently developed two new lists of assets for early childhood as well as for middle childhood. Although the assets are essentially the same, the strategies are geared toward the developmental level of the children. The original asset list targets pre-teens and adolescents.

In our next issue, we will explore what families can do to develop and enhance developmental assets for youth in our homes and in our communities. Meanwhile, to find out more you can visit these sites:

www.search-institute.org
www.americaspromise.org
<http://resiliency.cas.psu.edu>



Book Review

Ellen Meanix Helfrick, Youth Services
York County Library System

Most public Libraries have a Parent/Teacher section. Toddler Topics Plus... 2007



issues feature a book review designed to send you in search of a great resource that will help make learning fun for the

whole family.

The Values Book – Teaching 16 Basic values to Young Children by Pam Schiller and Tamera Bryant, 1998 Gryphon House (Continued)

Book Review (Continued)

The sixteen basic values that Schiller and Bryant address in this book are:

Commitment, Compassion, Cooperation, Courage, Fairness, Helpfulness, Honesty, Humor, Integrity, Loyalty, Patience, Pride, Respect, Responsibility, Self-Reliance and Tolerance.

Each value has a poem or a song and a simple easy to understand definition. Next, we learn why it is important in a section titled: Things for adults to think about. Each trait also includes these sections: Talking With Children About Values; Things to Do in the Classroom; Working with Families: Ideas for Home; plus a Books to Share with Children list. You may have already read many of the recommended books. Re-reading will supply reinforcement of the values you hope your child will emulate.

Activities in this book are split into those for children of all ages and those for older children. How wonderful for that family with several children that is just discovering this book. I doubt you will find a book that better equips you as a parent to build character in your child. The definitions create a mindset and prepare you to redirect and encourage your child. Here is just a portion of what Schiller and Bryant have to say about Responsibility.



What is Responsibility?

Responsibility involves being trustworthy and dependable, being someone others can count on. Holding responsibility for something or someone means that we are answerable for our actions in that regard.

Things for Adults to Think About

Part of responsibility requires making good choices. Making good choices means taking the time to evaluate your options.

Talking With Children About Responsibility

With young children, recite or sing “Little Boy Blue”. Ask the children what Little Boy Blue was supposed to do. What was his job? Did he behave responsibly?

Things to Do in the Classroom

Keep a helper chart in the room and rotate responsibility for classroom activities.

Working with Families: Ideas for Home

Include pets and plants in your home.

Involve your children in their care.



Books to Share with Children

Can I Keep Him? by Steven Kellogg

Caring for My Home by Jane Moncure

Carl Goes to Day Care by Alexandra Day

Dirty Hands and Wet Feet

Kathleen Ryan, Environmental Education Specialist, Presque Isle State Park

What are your memories of being outdoors when you were a child? Did you spend hours playing in the grass, climbing trees, watching bugs, and chasing frogs, building a tree fort or wading through a creek?



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Dirty Hands and Wet Feet (Continued)



Environmental experiences are essential to your healthy development.

According to Richard Louv, author of Last Child in the Woods, the

health of children is dependant upon ensuring that they have the opportunity to spend time in nature.

Current research suggests that many of the ills our children face today (obesity, hyperactivity, attention deficit, and depression) are exacerbated by a void in our lives. That void is created by our lack of time enjoying the natural world. We once lived directly off the land, nomads following herds before we settled into farming. The rapid changes in our society due to the Industrial Revolution have brought tremendous changes to our lifestyle. These changes, we are now learning, are bad for our health. **We need to stay connected to the natural world and so do our children.**

Research shows that children that spend time outside are less prone to behavioral problems, score higher on cognitive tests and are generally more content. This fast paced world doesn't need yet another organized activity for our children. Playing soccer in the yard connects your child with nature even more than playing on a team. **Nature play: splashing in a puddle, laying on the grass and looking at clouds, picking up a stick and banging it on a tree, studying an ant mound, taking a walk in the woods together, looking at rocks, etc. is missing from the lives of children today** Give your child the chance for free exploration. The pace for free exploration needs to be set by your child. It should be without direction, without lecture, and without too many rules. This type of natural free exploration is an essential

ingredient in a healthy life. It is possible to keep your child safe and yet allow them to explore. Join them and have fun together.

Our command for children to respect nature has destroyed the opportunity to fall in love with nature via free exploration. Concerned parents and park staffers using phrases like: "Stay on the trail.", "Don't chase the squirrel.", and "Leave the sticks on the ground." have sterilized nature despite the intention to help children bond with the natural world. **Children are tactile; they need to touch, to feel, to experience, to learn; they need to feel exuberance to learn to care.** Moments like these foster a love for the environment in our youth while creating the next generation of environmental stewards.

More importantly, they provide the simple pleasure of having dirty hands and wet feet.



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