



## February 2010



### Parents Corner

#### *Feeling a bit stressed with "Cabin Fever"?*

Contact the Family Resources WARMLINE for support, information & referrals for your nonmedical parenting concerns. (All calls are confidential & free)

Hours:

Monday - Friday, 9-9

Saturday & Sunday 1-5

Call (412) 641-4546

*The DART Behavior Series will be offered in April, May & June. Stay tuned for more information!*

### Attention ALL Kindergarten Transition Early Intervention Families



If your child is Kindergarten Age for the 2010-2011 year, you have already received information by mail regarding Kindergarten Transition Meetings. These meetings will be held on different evenings in February. The letter you received has the exact date, location and time of your School District's K-Transition Meeting. If for some reason you have not received a letter and your child is Kindergarten eligible for next year, please ask your child's teacher/therapist for details about your school district's meeting. In order to assist in the smooth transition of your child's kindergarten year, all parents are strongly encouraged to attend these K-Transition meetings. We are looking forward to seeing you there!

### Focus on Health and Safety

I am writing this in January, although I know that you won't read this until February. During the recent holidays I heard a story regarding poisonings of children who are five years of age and younger. The vast majority of these poisonings occur when a child accesses medication that they find in their own home.

Although, child safety caps exist for many medications, they do not exist for all. Some medications are dispensed in sheets and they only need to be pushed through a foil backing. Some childproof lids are not closed properly, so that they can be easily opened by arthritic hands.

Grandparents and other relatives who take a variety of medications, often remove them from their childproof containers and place them into a pill dispenser (marked with the days of the week). These containers are not childproof and they can be mistaken by a preschooler or toddler for a candy dispenser.



One additional area of concern is that purses of visiting relatives can contain medications. If there is a young child in your home, the purses of visiting relatives should be kept out of their reach.

Additionally, any medication which is traveling with your guest must be inaccessible to children. If you are visiting, please ask that the person (or people) whom you are visiting make sure that their medications are not accessible to your children during the visit.

I think that these are important things to remember throughout the year. Although there are more poisonings during the holidays, they can happen at any time.

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**Save the Date! April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010 for the  
DART Open House at the AIU...  
More information to come!**

## Early Learning Standards 101 and The Importance of Play

This month's focus is Personal-Social. This standard deals with strengthening children's social and emotional development as well as nurturing emotional security, positive self concept and respect for others.

Teachers can help encourage personal-social development by modeling respect, using positive guidance techniques that support the development of self-control and interpersonal problem solving, and by encouraging positive approaches to learning.

Some goals within this area include

- Attempting new experiences with confidence and independence.
- Recognizing and labeling feelings.
- Understanding consequences of own behavior.
- Following adult directions.
- Entering into and initiating play with peers.
- Cooperating in small and large group activities.
- Taking turns in games and tasks.
- Choosing materials and activities independently.
- Showing increasing self-reliance in self-care activities. (e.g. toileting, grooming, dressing, eating)



Wondering how to help your child to develop socially? Social development is something parents have to model and provide opportunities for. Here are just a few suggestions.

- Have one on one conversations with your child about his/her day and important happenings in his/her life.
- Be supportive when your child wants to try something new.
- Provide encouragement and praise your child's efforts.
- Give your child advance notice so that he/she can bring play to an end before pulling him/her away from his/her tasks to do what you want.
- Give clear directions with the expectation that your child will comply.
- Provide consistency and predictability in daily routines.
- Provide opportunities for your child to interact with other children. (e.g., play groups, going to the park, etc.)
- Be available to help your child resolve conflicts rather than removing the child or the toy.
- Organize your child's toys and materials so that he/she can access them independently.
- Give support and nurturing when needed, but ask your child to help with dressing, pouring, grooming, etc.

Make sure to check out next month's issue of the DART Board to read about the featured Early Learning Standard.

## Teach Math, Reading with Building Blocks

Children often have blocks with numbers and letters on them. How can you help your child learn from them? There are lots of ways!



To build skills:

- Remember that preschoolers often confuse letters and numbers. With your child, sort the blocks, making separate lines of letters and numbers. Point out letters and numbers in other places, too, such as on signs and in books.
- Build towers by putting numbers and letters in order. Place the "1" and "A" blocks on the bottom. Start with one tower, saying each letter or number out loud. Then build the second tower the same way.
- Try variations when the towers fall down (or your child has fun knocking them down!). Build with all the blocks, and then call out letters or numbers for your child to find. Or make patterns, such as number, letter, letter, number, letter, letter.

## Teach Your Child the Importance of Trying to 'Do the Right Thing'

As toddlers and preschoolers, children behave to earn parents' approval and to avoid a negative consequence. As they get older, they slowly learn good behavior for its own sake--simply because it's the right thing to do.

There are many ways parents can help preschoolers develop good character and the desire to do what's right.



- Give your child unconditional love. Children who are secure in their parents' love almost always behave better than those who are not.
- Be a role model. Your child is watching you all the time. If he overhears you telling lies, he will, too. If you always tell the truth, chances are, he will, too.
- Correct your child for disrespect. "In our family, we use kind words." And here's the "model" concept again--use those same kind words when you talk to your child and other family members.
- Cue your child to think of others. Example: Someone in the family sneezes and the tissue box is on the counter. Say to your child, "Look on the counter. Do you see something there that Katie needs?" Praise your child for following through.

Sources: "Parents Corner" created by Sue Vandervort, DART Preschool Service Coordinator. "Focus on Health and Safety" created by Cindy Callaghan, DART Service Coordinator for Physical Health. "Early Learning Standards and The Importance of Play" information provided by PDE and DPW. "Teach math, reading with building blocks" and "Teach your child the importance of trying to 'do the right thing'" articles reprinted from the February 2010 issue of *Parents make the difference! E. Childhood Edition newsletter.*