



March 2010



Parents Corner

Sensory Integration Workshops for Parents

The DART Program will offer three Sensory Integration Workshops for parents during the month of March. (March 4th/Central -AIU Waterfront, March 9/North - Northway Elementary School, and March 11/South - Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.) Workshops are offered in the evening from 6:30 -8:00. If you haven't received a flyer about the workshops, contact your teacher or therapist, or call Sue Vandervort at 412-394-5961.

2010 Bureau of Autism Services Family Mini-Grants

The Bureau of Autism Services of the PA Dept. of Welfare has announced the availability of mini-grants of up to \$500 each to support individuals with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families that include an individual with ASD. Priority will be given to individuals who did not receive this grant in previous years. Total funding is limited and is on a first come, first served basis. Not everyone who applies will be funded. Grant funds may be used for respite/child care, summer camp, recreational or community programs, conferences/workshops and safety modifications. The application is available at www.autisminpa.org or by calling 1-866-539-7689. Applications must be completed and postmarked by April 16, 2010 and will only be accepted by U.S. mail.

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

Integration Children



It is once again time to begin the registration process for the DART Integration component in the DART Early Intervention Classrooms. We welcome those children who will be returning to our program for the following year.

For those parents interested in enrolling an additional child into the Integration program, or who know of someone who would like to enroll for next year, please call for a Screening Appointment. **Calls for Screening Appointments will be taken: Monday, March 8th through Friday, March 12th, 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. ONLY by calling (412) 394-5942.**

Before acceptance into the program, each child will be screened, free of charge, to determine the child's developmental skills and speech skills. Your child must pass both areas of the screening to be eligible for the integration program. If we discover that your child may have a potential delay, your child will be referred for a more in-depth evaluation at a later date. We will provide in-depth assessment aimed at identifying your child's individual needs, and recommend free appropriate early intervention services.

Please Join Us for AIU/DART Open House Family Night!

To celebrate Week of the Young Child AIU/DART will be hosting an open house family night.

April 15, 2010 from 6-7:30pm

AIU Central Office
475 E. Waterfront Dr.
Homestead, PA 15120



There will be activities for children, resources for parents and refreshments for all! The Book Mobile will be here and a visit from a special guest!

Early Learning Standards 101 and The Importance of Play

This month's focus is Physical-Health. This standard deals with development and strengthening of gross and fine motor muscles.

Teachers can help encourage physical-health development by giving access to active indoor and outdoor play, as well as helping children develop eye-hand coordination and the strength and control to use writing tools. Teachers also can model healthy and safe lifestyles for children throughout the school day.



Some goals within this area include:

- Developing balance, strength and stamina.
- Demonstrating coordination of muscle movements.
- Engaging in physical activity.
- Demonstrating increasing control with writing and drawing tools.
- Demonstrating good hygiene.
- Recognizing and following basic safety rules.

Wondering how to help your child to develop physically? Developing physical skills is very easy to do! Here are just a few suggestions:

- Provide opportunities for your child to have active play - go to the park or play outside with balls. Inside, you can dance and move to music.
- Provide art and writing materials that help to work on manipulative skills - things like finger painting, play dough, painting with brushes and using safety scissors.
- Help support your child as he/she works on fastening clothing - zippers, buttons and snaps.
- Allow your child to help in simple food preparation - spread butter on bread and pouring milk, juice, or water.
- Check out your home environment to make sure that it is healthy and safe.
- Review safety rules with your child before you take walks and play on the playground.

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

Sources: "Parents Corner" created by Sue Vandervort, DART Preschool Service Coordinator. "Early Learning Standards and The Importance of Play" information provided by PDE and DPW. "Focus on Health and Safety" created by Cindy Callaghan, DART Service Coordinator for Physical Health. U.S. Census info provided by The Arc of the United States.

Focus on Health and Safety

Winter Safety Tips for Preschoolers

Hopefully winter will be a distant memory soon. However, March has been known to allow winter storms to inflict one last gasp. Here are some tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics new website, www.healthychildren.org :



- *Sunscreen.* The sun reflects off of ice and snow. A sunscreen with at least an SPF of 15 should be used to cover the exposed areas of the body. In addition, protective eyewear and SPF lip balm should be used.
- *Layer.* Moisture wicking fabrics are the best. Younger children have a more difficult time regulating their body temperature than adults do, so they can develop hypothermia more quickly. Also, children sweat easily when they are warm, so their clothing can easily become wet and cause them to chill.
- *Stay Alert.* Many winter activities can lead to injuries. It is recommended that children always wear helmets while sledding, skiing or skating. Adults should check out the area that small children will be sledding in to make sure that their path is clear of rocks and trees and that it does not empty into a pond or street.

Have fun and stay safe! Spring is just around the corner!

Did You Know?

The US Constitution requires the population to be counted every 10 years. In addition to deciding Congressional districts and Electoral College votes, distribution of federal money is also decided.

The 10 question form will be mailed out starting in March. It's important to take a few minutes to fill out and return the questionnaire. The results of the 2010 Census will help to decide how the more than \$400 billion in federal aid should be divided. This federal aid is one way services for persons with disabilities (including Early Intervention) are funded.



Please make sure that you take the time to complete your 2010 Census forms. We can't move forward until you mail it back! Everyone counts.