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Child Abuse Prevention Month

"Perhaps we cannot prevent this world from being a world in which children are tortured
But we can reduce the number of tortured children
If you don't help who else will?"

-St. Augustine

This month Parent Link is celebrating Child Abuse Prevention Month with helpful tips and informative articles on how to prevent child abuse. Celebrated across the nation since 1983, April is widely known as Child Abuse Prevention Month. The blue ribbon has been recognized as the symbol since 1989 when a grandmother used it to show tribute to her grandson who died as a result of abuse.

According to Childhelp, a leading national non-profit organization dedicated to helping victims of child abuse and neglect, almost five children die every day as a result of child abuse; three out of four are under the age of 4.

References:

<http://www.childhelp.org/>



If you suspect a child is being abused, neglected, and/or exploited, call the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-962-2873.

Loving Your Baby Safely

By Pam Blake, BSW and Bethany Sands, MEd

Everyone loves that precious new baby and wants only the best for his/her child, but today's stress of work, finances and even traffic have made us into a society of often out-of-control people. Below is a letter from an infant to his/her mom (but could be any caregiver) talking about loving one's baby safely:

"Good morning mom! I love you and the way you hold me, look at me, and make me feel special. I am not sure if you are having a bad day or you have a lot going on when I am hungry, fussy, need to be changed, have gas or just need to be loved, held and touched. I'm really small and the only way I can tell you what I want is to cry...(sometimes really loud).

If you cannot attend to me safely:

- Call a friend
- Count to 10 or 20
- Maybe hug a pillow
- Please wait until you can

I want you to hug me and kiss me as much as you can, but it has to be gently because:



- My neck muscles are still weak
- My head is still relatively large and heavy compared to my body
- My brain tissue and blood vessels are still quite fragile

(Oh yes, and you know how you love to lift me in the air and make me laugh? Please don't because I can get really hurt; let's find another game).

I think I remember a time (maybe at a Lamaze class) when I overheard that if you ever see me showing the following signs and symptoms to please get me help as I may be suffering from Shaken Baby Syndrome:

- My head is turned to one side or I'm unable to lift or turn my head
- There is bruising or other damage to my rib cage, spine/spinal cord, or I have a swollen head
- I have dilated pupils or blood pooling in my eyes
- I am unconscious, semiconscious, or showing signs of lethargy
- I have difficulty breathing or I'm pale or a blue color
- I have seizures, spasms or I vomit

If I am injured, I will be very sad because long-term I may experience the following:

- Speech/language disorders
- Behavioral problems
- Seizures
- Hearing loss/blindness
- Paralysis/CP
- Mental retardation
- Death

I love you mommy, please love me safely."

Understanding Your Baby's Crying

By Christine R. Hughes, Ph.D., Research & Evaluation Analyst

Your baby's crying can be one of the most frustrating experiences of parenthood, often because we adults don't always understand exactly why. Sometimes this frustration continues to build within parents, which can increase the chances of parents unintentionally injuring their baby in an attempt to make him/her calm down and stop crying. Shaken baby syndrome is an unfortunate example; shaking a baby (which parents may do to try to stop them from crying) can cause severe brain damage and even death.

In order to prevent this, professionals who have researched infant crying have found some common patterns, and want to share this information with parents to help you understand your baby's crying better. They call early infancy "the PURPLE period of crying"-it doesn't mean that the infants turn purple when they cry-it's actually just an acronym representing the features of crying from about 2 weeks to 3-4 months of age. Although individual babies may differ in the amounts that they cry, Dr. Ronald & Marilynn Barr's team of researchers has seen that these features of crying occur in all young babies.

The Letters in **PURPLE** Stand for

P	U	R	P	L	E
PEAK OF CRYING	UNEXPECTED	RESISTS SOOTHING	PAIN-LIKE FACE	LONG LASTING	EVENING
Your baby may cry more each week. The most at 2 months, then less at 3-5 months	Crying can come and go and you don't know why	Your baby may not stop crying no matter what you try	A crying baby may look like they are in pain, even when they are not	Crying can last as much as 5 hours a day, or more	Your baby may cry more in the late afternoon and evening

While your baby's crying can make you feel frustrated and discouraged, the Barrs developed this concept of "PURPLE crying" to help parents understand that crying is normal and that it won't continue that way forever.

References:

The Period of PURPLE Crying: A New Way to Understand Your Baby's Crying

<http://www.purplecrying.info/>

Handling Toddler Temper Tantrums

By: Yesenia Reyes, Early Learning Coalition Staff

There comes a time in every toddler's life when the most important thing to him or her is to get the bag of cookies to which you have already repeatedly said you will not hand over. And that's when it starts; the whining, screaming, and stomping of the feet. What is a parent to do in such a situation? Below are some helpful tips and insight from the Child Welfare Information Gateway on how to deal with temper tantrums. And don't worry! Many children grow out of tantrums by age 4.

Toddlers:

- Love to say "No!" "Mine!" and "Do it myself!"
- Test rules over and over to see how parents will react

What You Can Do--The Preventing Stage:

- Offer a variety of fun activities, scheduled play times, and opportunities to explore the world
- A regular sleeping and eating schedule
- Direct your child's attention to something else
Ex: "Hey! Look at the big plane in the sky!"
- Anticipate when your child will be disappointed
Ex: "We are going to buy groceries for dinner. We won't be buying cookies but you can help me pick out some fruit for later."
- Give praise when he or she shows self-control and expresses feelings with words

How to handle the moment:

- Remain calm. You are a role model for your child
- Take your child to a quiet place where he or she can calm down safely. Speak softly or play soft music
- Some children throw tantrums to seek attention. Try ignoring the tantrum but pay attention to your child after he or she calms down



But most importantly: When your child is having a floor-thumping tantrum the most important thing you can do is remain calm and wait it out. Do not let your child's behavior also cause you to lose control.

Reference:

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/guide2011/tantrums.pdf>

This information was provided by a tip sheet created with input from experts in national organizations that work to protect children and strengthen families. For more information click on the link above or call 800-394-3366.

Stop Child Abuse Florida License Plate

By Christine R. Hughes, Ph.D., Research & Evaluation Analyst

For those of us who want to help children in need and show our support for child abuse prevention services, the state of Florida offers a specialty license plate just for this cause! The license plate shown below costs \$25 per year (in addition to regular registration fees), and a portion of the proceeds support two non-profit organizations that are making a difference in the lives of abused children every day. Children's Home Society of Florida delivers a variety of services designed to protect children at risk of abuse, neglect or abandonment, to strengthen and stabilize families, to help young people break the cycle of abuse and neglect, and to find safe, loving homes for children. The Florida Network of Children's Advocacy Centers aims to improve Florida's response to child abuse by supporting the development, growth, and continuation of Children's Advocacy Centers across the state.



If you wish to learn more about this license plate, please visit the Florida Department of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles website:

http://www.flhsmv.gov/dmv/specialtytags/miscellaneous/stop_child_abuse.html

References:

FLHSMV http://www.flhsmv.gov/dmv/specialtytags/miscellaneous/stop_child_abuse.html

Children's Home Society <http://www.chsfl.org/Home>

Florida Network of Children's Advocacy Centers <http://www.fncac.org/>

Ask Dr. Hughes

Do you have questions for our resident expert in child development? Ask Dr. Hughes!

Each month in Parent Link, Research and Evaluation Analyst Christine Hughes, Ph.D., will answer your questions about child development. Topics can cover language, social skills, play, behavior, motor skills, and thinking and learning from ages birth to 5-years-old. Dr. Hughes earned her B.A. in psychology from Boston College, and her M.S. and Ph.D. in applied developmental psychology from the University of Miami where she currently teaches part-time. Her research has focused on the development of at-risk infants and children in early intervention. Please email your questions to info@elcmdm.org with "Ask Dr. Hughes" in the subject line. Also, include the location of your residence in Miami-Dade and/or Monroe County (e.g., Coconut Grove, Kendall, Key West).

Please note that questions may be edited, and not every question received will be answered in the newsletter. To protect the privacy of individuals and maintain confidentiality, names will not be printed, but we may refer to individuals by area (for example, "A mother in Miami Beach asked..."). The information provided in this column released by the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe courtesy of Dr. Hughes is not intended to be used as psychological or medical advice, diagnosis, treatment, or as any other professional mental health or medical service. As laws, details and personal situations vary from person to person and state to state, articles and content contained in the newsletter are not and cannot be used as a substitute for legal, parental, health, mental health, or any other advice.

The column is not intended to be a solicitation of business or the furnishing of self-help advice. Readers are strongly urged to consult independent and qualified professionals before making any decisions. The views expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily of the ELC.

ELC and You- Strategies To Enhance ProgramS and Inclusion

Strategies To Enhance ProgramS S.T.E.P.S

The Early Learning Coalition of Miami Dade/Monroe STEPS program provides consultative support to early care centers. The program's goal is to educate staff and families to promote appropriate educational instructions, thus enhancing learning opportunities and outcomes for all children including those with special needs.

These services are offered at no charge to Quality Counts centers:

- Child observations
- Individual screenings/assessments
- Strategies and resources for schools and families
- Referrals to local agencies

Inclusion

Does your child care center need assistance with special needs children? The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe also offers a warm-line to child care centers. FREE services include:

- Trainings/Professional Development
- Consultation and Technical Assistance regarding:
 - Health concerns
 - Disability
 - Special Needs
 - Strategies
 - Curriculum
 - Environmental Adaptations
 - Referrals

To learn more information about STEPS, please call 305-953-5166.

Local Events for the Whole Family!

FACT Festival (Family Against Crime Together)

The FACT Festival encourages children and families to come together with their local law enforcement agencies, community health care organization, and social agencies to provide early intervention and prevention services.

When: Saturday, April 9, 2011

Time: 11 a.m.

Where: North Miami Sr. High School (Athletic Field)

13100 N.E. 8th Ave.

North Miami, FL 33161

Cost: FREE

Contact: Franzia Brea-Burden: 786-218-0498

fbre-burden@northmiamipolice.com

YMCA's Healthy Kids Day

YMCA of Greater Miami invites kids and parents to "Come out and Play" at the YMCA's Healthy Kids Day™.

when: Saturday, April 16, 2011

Time: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

where:

Homestead YMCA Family Center

1034 NE 8 St.

Homestead, FL 33030

305-248-5189

Village of Allapattah YMCA Family Center

2370 N.W. 17 Ave.

Miami, FL 33142

305-635-9622 North Pointe YMCA Family Center

7351 NW 186 St.

Miami, FL 33015

786-433-9622

South Dade YMCA Family Center

9355 S.W. 134th St.

Miami, FL 33176

305-254-0310

Cost: FREE

5th Annual All Kids Included Family Arts Festival

Take flight, dream, soar, and explore with live entertainment and interactive arts experiences for children of all abilities.

When: Saturday, April 23, 2011

Time: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Where: South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center

10950 S.W. 211 St.

Cutler Bay, FL 33189

305-375-4634

culture@miamidade.gov

Cost: FREE

Parent Space

The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe would like you, our parents, to have an area in the *Parent Link* newsletter that you can call your own. This space will provide advice, tips, jokes, stories, and/or even job opportunities that other local parents wish to share.

So don't be shy; send us something you would like to share at info@elcmdm.org. Please note that included submissions may be edited for clarity, etc. We look forward to hearing from you.

About the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring high-quality early care and education for children in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. Through a variety of affordable and innovative early education and voluntary pre-kindergarten programs, the Coalition serves more than 50,000 children ages birth to 12-years-old and their families.

Founded in 2000, the Early Learning Coalition is among 31 similar organizations in the State of Florida established following the enactment of the School Readiness Act, which consolidated Florida's early learning services into one integrated program.