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Summer Fun and Safety!



Summer calls for picnics at the park, afternoons at the beach, and any other outdoor events you and your family enjoys doing. In this issue of Parent Link, we want to make sure you are covered in summer safety tips and more; from sun protection to bug bites to any outdoor event you and your family will have. Don't have any events in mind? Check out our Local Events sections for free community events this month!

Summer Reading? Tips on Selecting Books for Young Children

By: Bethany Sands, Director of Inclusion

Reading is important and fun to do any time of the year, and, summers usually offer nice, sunny afternoons for you to enjoy a great book with your child outdoors. Selecting an age appropriate book to read may be challenging. Below are tips to guide you in selecting books that will engage your child's development.

Infants 0-6 months

- Simple books with large pictures and bright colors
- Cardboard or "chunky" books are durable and a lot easier to handle
- Fold out books to prop in the crib
- Cloth and vinyl books with pictures of people and familiar objects that can be washed

Infants 6-12 months

- Board books with pictures of babies
- Cardboard or "chunky" books with bright colors. They will be chewed on; and that's okay!





-Books with photos of familiar objects, like balls, balloons and house objects

-Books that are sturdy, washable or plastic/vinyl

-Small plastic photo album of friends and family. This can be made using sandwich-size baggies and taping the bottom edges together to make a book. Leave the zip side open and you can change the pictures!

Young Toddlers 12-24 months

-Sturdy books that they can carry

-Books with photos of children doing familiar things like sleeping, playing or eating

-Books with more pictures per page

-Bedtime books like "Good Night Moon" by Margaret Wise Brow

-Books with simple rhythms or predictable ending

-Book with animals

Toddlers 2-3 years

-Books that tell simple stories that children can remember and retell (after several readings)

-Rhyming books

-Bedtime books

-Books about colors, counting, ABC's, shapes and sizes

-Animal books and transportation books (cars, trucks, trains, buses, etc.)

-Books about saying hello and good-bye



Hint: You do not have to read the words to tell the story. Talk about the pictures, describe what's happening and name colors and shapes. Let your child help by turning the pages.

Have fun reading with your child!!

For more information, please visit www.zerotothree.org/BrainWonders.
*Next month this column will provide more hints on ways to share books with young children.

Water and Sun Safety for Kids

By: Jeremy Meshil, Intern

With summer now upon us, there are many summer safety tips you should be aware of. Since this is South Florida, the focus of these tips will be on sun exposure and water safety.

Sun Precautions

-The best way to avoid sunburn for a baby less than 6 months old is to avoid exposure or dress the baby in lightweight long sleeved shirt and pants as well as have a brimmed hat on the baby to protect his/her face and neck.

-For all other children the best way to prevent exposure to hurtful sun rays is to cover up. Stay in the shade whenever possible and try to avoid sun exposure during peak intensity levels between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

-If a child is going outside, even if it's cloudy, use a sunscreen with SPF 15 or greater that protects children from UVA and UVB rays.

-Reapply sunscreen every two hours or after a child has been swimming or sweating.

-Use caution near water and sand since they both reflect UV rays and can cause sunburns faster.



Outdoor Sports and Activities

There are some things you should be aware of if a child is exercising in the heat.

-Before prolonged physical activity children should be well hydrated and should not feel thirsty.

-Kids should drink water or sports drinks every 20 minutes while exercising. After an hour of exercise, children need to drink a carbohydrate-electrolyte beverage to replace electrolytes and replenish energy.

-The clothing a child wears should be light-colored and lightweight. Sweat-saturated shirts should be replaced with dry clothing.

-Practices and games in the heat should be shortened and should have more hydration breaks.

Water Safety

There are some tips to follow when spending time near a pool.

-Never leave a child alone near a pool.

-Install a fence that is at least 4 feet tall if you have a pool in your backyard. Keep rescue equipment and a portable telephone near the pool.

-Avoid inflatables such as "floaties" They are not a substitute for life vests.

-The decision to enroll a 1 to 4 year old in swimming lessons should be made by the parent based on the child's developmental readiness.

-Whenever infants or toddlers are in or around water an adult, who knows how to swim, should be within arm's length.

Open-water Swimming

Open-water swimming should be monitored carefully, since these areas can be more dangerous than pools

-Never swim alone!

-A lifeguard needs to be watching children whenever they are in or near the water

-Make sure your child knows not to dive into the water unless they are permitted by an adult who knows the depth of the water

-Never let your child swim in canals or fast moving water

-Ocean swimming should only be allowed when a lifeguard is on duty

Follow these tips to have a safe and enjoyable summer

References:

American Academy of Pediatrics:

<http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/summertips.cfm>

Ouch! Reaction Information and Remedies for Insect Bites and Stings

By Yesenia Reyes, CCEP Coordinator/Communications AA

Along with outdoor summer fun we see an increase in summer bugs. Mosquitoes, bees and wasps, among others, are the most common insects during the summer season. Below are a few tips and information on how to identify an insect bite, how to soothe the irritation and how to react to an allergic reaction.

Identifying Insect Bites

-Usually show up as red, swollen bumps

-Usually itchy, sore and/or painful

Identifying a Severe Reaction

-Swelling of the face or mouth

-Difficulty swallowing, speaking or breathing

-Dizziness or fainting

-The site looks infected (increasing redness, warmth, swelling, pain, or pus occurring several hours or longer after the sting)

*If you see signs any of these signs, seek medical care or call 911

Sting/Bite Remedies



- Keep bites and stings clean by using soap and water
- Apply ice or a cool cloth to relieve pain and reduce swelling of the area
- If the child was stung and the insect's stinger is visible, remove it as quickly as possible by scraping the skin with the edge of a credit card or your fingernail (avoid using tweezers, which could squeeze more venom into the skin)
- To ease itching, apply natural ingredients like witchhazel, lavender or tea tree oil to bites

Prevention

- Avoid skin contact with grass, i.e. walking barefoot, sitting directly on grass
- Apply insect repellent on your family and pets
- Keep away from overgrown areas or areas where insects nest
- Avoid drinking from soda cans outside

***Please consult your pediatrician if you have any questions and/or concerns.**

References:

PBS Parents:

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/special/article-summer-safety.html>

Skincare-news.com: http://www.skincare-news.com/a-5768-Skincare_for_Kids_in_4_Easy_Steps.aspx

KidsHealth.org:

http://kidshealth.org/PageManager.jsp?lic=1&article_set=36497&cat_id=20221



Ask Dr. Hughes- "My two-year-old grandson is a picky eater!" Tips on what to do.

A grandmother in Miami asks: "My two-year-old grandson is a picky eater! He only eats snack foods (like Goldfish crackers), so I'm worried he's not getting the nutrition his growing body needs. What can his parents and I do?"

Dr. Hughes says: The toddler years are when many children begin to develop unique eating habits. This is one of the first experiences in children's lives where they begin to have some control over what they eat-so they often exercise this feeling of independence through their eating behaviors, frustrating many parents along the way.

Many "picky" eating habits are based on some characteristic of the food-taste, color, or texture. Of course, just as adults have individual food preferences, children are developing their own preferences as well. Some resistance of a picky eater may be that the child truly does not like a food (or type of food), and therefore just does not want to eat it! Often, however, the development of difficult eating habits

represents a struggle for independence from the child's parents. Even if your grandson loved carrots as a baby, now he screams and throws them off his plate *not* because he truly doesn't like them, but because his parent is telling him he must eat it.

As a parent, it can be difficult to know which reason is the real one—does your child really dislike the taste of chicken, or is he/she struggling against you as he/she exerts newfound toddler sense of independence? Regardless of the true reason, there are some ways to encourage a picky eater to try new things and eat a wide range of healthy food.



1. Offer your child a wide variety of food! The latest research shows that children who are offered many different foods (and types of food) eat a wider variety of food and have a healthier diet than children who eat few foods. So if your child only eats potatoes, chicken fingers, and apple juice, start introducing many new foods. Even if, at first, your child refuses to try broccoli, offering new foods will increase the chance that he or she will eat and enjoy them!

2. If a child doesn't like certain foods, especially healthy ones that you'd really like them to eat, it often helps to dress it up a bit. Sometimes, just adding ketchup or honey mustard to chicken would intrigue the child enough to try it—and perhaps like it! Another idea is to create shapes that make it seem more fun to eat, like cutting a sandwich into a heart shape, or making a smiley face on the plate out of different types of fruit. Often, an element of entertainment or fun goes a long way with young children.

3. If you encounter resistance at meal times, think about your child's snacking schedule. Sometimes children are simply not hungry at the times we ask them to sit down for a meal—and we may not realize that it is because we have filled them up by offering snacks like crackers or cereal for the past several hours. Of course, parents have different expectations for their children's eating schedules, so some parents prefer that their children snack throughout the day. This can be a good option as long as the food you're offering is healthy. But if you'd like to encourage your child to eat well at meal times, pay attention to how much your child is eating in between, and then adjust accordingly.

More resources on helping young children eat well can be found online through the USDA

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/index.html> and PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/parenthelpers/healthyfood.html>.

Bon appétit!

Do you have questions about child development between the ages of 0 to 5 years old? Then ask Dr. Hughes! Please email your questions to

info@elcmdm.org with "Ask Dr. Hughes" in the subject line. Also, include the name of the town/city in which you reside in Miami-Dade or Monroe County (e.g. Coconut Grove, Kendall, Key West).

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, 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.

ELC and You - 2011 Legislative Session Outcome on Florida's Early Learning System

President's Message:



Dear Community Partner:

I wanted to share the outcome of the 2011 legislative session with you in terms of its impact to Florida's early learning system; its consequences will be felt by the children and families of each and every community in the state. As it currently stands, statewide we will not be able to serve over 15,000 children currently participating in Florida's School Readiness program. I wanted you to have this information because Miami-Dade and Monroe counties will be hit particularly hard by the budget reductions.

The highlights of the session are as follows:

Subsidized School Readiness Program (SR)

-This program assists working poor families with the cost of child care: children learn while parents earn.

-In the 2009-10 fiscal year, the School Readiness program suffered a reduction of \$38 million. The impact of that reduction was not immediately felt because American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus) dollars were used to fill the budget gap. Since the legislature was not able to fully restore the budget during the 2011 session, we will have \$27 million less statewide. Miami-Dade and Monroe's share of this reduction is over \$5 million.

-There is also a federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (one of the funding sources for the School Readiness program) reduction of \$32 million. Unless the Governor vetoes this particular line item, Miami-Dade and Monroe's share of this reduction is just over \$6 million.

-In total, we will have over \$11 million less for the fiscal year that starts on July 1, 2011.

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)

-This program is in our state constitution and provides free pre-kindergarten for all four-year-olds in Florida.

-There was a 7% reduction in the Base Student Allocation (BSA). This is the reimbursement that early care and education providers, including the public school system and charter schools, receive per student. The new BSA is \$2,383 for the school year and \$2,027 for the summer.

-To make up for the reduction in the BSA for providers (to help keep provider revenues level), the teacher-child ratios (class size) were increased to 1:11 and 2:20, so there will be more 4-year-olds in every classroom.

-Administration and program support (quality assurance, provider certification, eligibility determination) was reduced from 4.5% to 4%. This will most certainly result in longer wait times for parents trying to register their children for the program and scaled back quality improvement efforts.

The public process of implementing these reductions will now begin. Over the next couple of months our Board of Directors will have to make many very difficult decisions that include the disenrollment of children from our early education programs, reducing investments in educational quality improvement programs for children ages 0 - 5, as well as reductions in every other area. These decisions will be made with input from our community and we certainly hope that you will join us for the discussions.

As always, I'm at your service.

Sincerely,
Evelio C. Torres
President & CEO

Local Events for the Whole Family!

Blueprints for Happy, Healthy Children

This free event, presented by The Parent Academy, will have family workshops and presentation, along with giveaways, door prizes and surprises!

When: Saturday, July 16, 2011

Time: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Where: Miami Children's Museum
980 Macarthur Causeway
Miami, FL 33132

Cost: FREE entrance to the museum, however, parking fee will not be covered.

Miami-Dade Public Library System: Pawsitive Reading

"Read to Trina, a licensed therapy dog. Trina loves it when you pet and read to her!"

When: Saturday, July 16, 2011

Time: 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Where: Kendall Branch Library
9101 SW 97 Ave.
Miami, FL 33176

*Schedule may vary, please call 305-279-0520 to confirm.

Cost: FREE

Back to School Splash

"This free event features an outdoor water play area, stage entertainment, a fashion show, face painting, health and education information and much more."

When: Saturday, August 6th and Sunday, August 7, 2011

Time: Noon (12p) - 6 p.m.

Where: The Falls
8888 S.W. 136 St.
Miami, FL 33176

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.