

The Cole-Harrington Chronicle

Summer 2011

ISSUE 48

A Message from the Director

Dear Parents,

I hope this summer brings everyone lots of warm, sunny days with many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors with your children!

In this issue of the *Chronicle* I hope to share my thoughts and feelings about the Cole-Harrington culture and encourage staff and families to reflect on this important aspect of our education and childcare programs. Earlier in the new year I happen to visit the two classrooms at the Preschool Enrichment Program during their work time period in the morning. I was struck by the way teachers were interacting with the children and the extent of their engagement with them. There was no question that all the staff truly enjoyed working with the children and had personal relationships with each child. All the staff were going about the planned daily routine which provided a clear structure for the children to go about their business of pursuing their personal interests within the classroom. I observed individual children happily engaged in an activity and pairs and small groups of children comfortably working together and enjoying one another's company. I read notices posted for staff and parents in the hallway keeping everyone informed of the daily activities and upcoming program sponsored events for families.

I then wandered over to the Children's Place and quickly saw their "classroom culture" which was similar to the Preschool Program but different in its own way. All staff were present that day and their consulting speech and language therapist was there as well fulfilling her role to provide weekly language enrichment sessions with funding provided by the Department of Early Education and Care through our Universal Preschool Grant. Every single child was getting attention from an adult and almost all of the classroom interest areas were being used by small groups of children completely engaged in an activity of their choice.

There is no doubt that I would find similar scenes at our other centers, Infant/Toddler Enrichment, Early

Learning Center and School Age Enrichment Program should I happen to drop by at their site unannounced. The same would hold true with family child care providers associated with our family child care system. I am confident that I would see lots of wonderful early childhood activities carried out by these home based educators who have worked hard to create an early childhood culture of nurturance, acceptance and appreciation of the different children in their care.

We know that families have their own values, traditions and ways of interacting and relating to one another. These serve to create a safe, supportive, respectful and stimulating home environment in which all family members can learn, grow and evolve. It is equally important that all members of the Cole-Harrington family consider and reflect upon their values, traditions and ways of interacting and relating to one another, their "cultural responsibilities" as an early childhood program. It is not just what we do for the children and their families but the how and why we do things that truly makes the difference for everyone. Children, parents, and staff contribute equally to the Cole-Harrington culture. Many thanks to everyone for their current, past and future contributions! Each Cole-Harrington center and our associated family child care homes is a product of everyone's efforts and commitment to quality.

Gail H. Brown
Program Director

One isn't necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous or honest.

-Maya Angelou

Go Ask Linda

Dear Linda,

Last week my husband and I had a small party for our son's fourth birthday. He invited some friends from his school and from our neighborhood. We were pleased to see that he included a child of color, (I'll call him, J), on the guest list.

When we gathered around the table for ice-cream and cake, one of the kids, K, declared he was not going to sit next to J because his skin was dirty. I was embarrassed by his statement and taken back.

Everyone including J looked at me waiting to hear how I was going to handle this one. I began by explaining to the kids that J's skin wasn't dirty, his skin color was brown. His skin was brown because his parents had brown skin too. I asked them all to tell me about their own parent's skin color. Then we talked about what happens to dirt when we take a bath. We all agreed that dirt comes off, but skin color stays on. The kids were satisfied with this explanation and K ended up sitting next to J and asked him if he liked the birthday cake. They also became best of friends.

Would you have handled this situation the same? My husband and I are very conscious about raising our son to value and respect people from all cultures.

Sincerely, K.L.

Dear K.L.,

Your explanation was terrific. Rather than ignoring the comment or making light of it, you initiated a discussion. The children discovered with your helpful questioning that J was more like them than different. In the conversation I would have added: People look different and have different cultures because of where they or their ancestors were born. (Chinese from China), (Mexicans from Mexico), (African-Americans from Africa). Do the children know their own culture and heritage? When discussing color - a simple explanation of melanin "a special chemical in the skin" can be shared with children over three, i.e. If you have a lot of melanin, your skin is dark. If you have a

little, your skin is light. Geography is a big factor. Where you live influences how much melanin is produced by your body.

We also have to think about J. What was going on inside his head through all of this? I would have asked him: "J, How did it make you feel when K said, he didn't want to sit next to you?" J might have said, "I didn't like it," or, "It made me mad," or "It made me sad." J could have said lots of things. What ever he was feeling deserves to be discussed and validated. An important lesson here is that when one person says something about another person, feelings can get hurt. No one likes to get hurt.

According to researchers children become aware of other children's similarities and differences as young as three or four. Another researcher states racial awareness and attitudes develop at age two. So it's very important that we help our children develop positive attitudes about diversity at a very young age.

Being aware of our own prejudices and examining our own attitudes is the first step. Unless we do they may get in the way of giving children accurate information. They deserve to formulate their own thoughts and opinions without biases. We also need to enable children to feel good about themselves. This will help them feel less threatened by people who are different. When discussing diversity with children we need to answer all their questions. If we ignore their desire to learn about others we may send a message that differences aren't ok. Talking about differences with children promotes understanding. Discussing the value of diversity teaches young children we all have individual worth. I appreciate your efforts and hope others follow your lead to raise children to respect everyone.

Sincerely,
Linda Feller
Program Coordinator
Preschool Enrichment Center

Editor's Note: Do you have a problem or question about your child? If so, please send it to Linda Feller, Cole-Harrington Children's Center, 605 Neponset, Canton, MA 02021.

Extra! Extra! Read all about it!

Cole-Harrington Chronicle is
looking for writers.
We go to print 2X a year.

If interested call Linda Feller
at 781-828-1519 to share your ideas.

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Toilet Training - A Nightmare or a Dream Come True

By Deborah Ritson, Site Co-coordinator, Early Learning Center

Toilet training is an important part of development for both children and their parents. To make the transition from diapers to underwear go as smoothly as possible, you must have an immense amount of patience and the ability to accept setbacks. For parents, the most important question is when can I start?

The key is not to focus on your child's age, but on the psychological and physiological signs of readiness. Physiological signs include staying dry for longer periods, the ability to walk comfortably, to climb on and off the toilet with relative ease, and the ability to pull down and pull up their own pants. Psychological signs include: disliking the feeling of a wet or soiled diaper, interest in others using the toilet and verbal cues to indicate they need a diaper change. They should also be in a generally cooperative stage of development, not a negative or contrary one. Once you have determined that your child is ready to begin toilet training, introduce books or videos on the subject. You can also have your child help pick out their own "potty chair". Most importantly, take a look at your current family situation. Life changes such as moving to a new home or having a baby may create added stresses and therefore it is probably best to hold off a few months.

Here are some other ideas you can use during the process.

- Dress your child in clothes that they can easily take off by themselves.
- As much as is possible, leave the diaper off during toilet training. This will increase awareness and motivation for success.
- Night time diapers are still appropriate until your child begins to have dry diapers in the morning.
- Don't ask your child if they *need* to use the toilet, as an alternative, tell your child that "It's time to go to the toilet!"
- Set a timer for every 30 minutes to an hour and when the timer goes off - "It's time to go to the toilet."
- Celebrate successes even if nothing happens, smile and say they are learning.
- Accidents will happen. It is EXTREMELY important not to scold your child, but have them help clean themselves up.
- Offer encouragement "Soon you'll be able to get it in the toilet every time!"
- Once you transition to underwear, do not go back (except overnight).

Toilet training in general is truly in the child's hands and control. You can be supportive and encouraging but keep in mind that your child will be trained when they are

ready, NOT necessarily when you are ready. That being said let's review the steps from a child's perspective! They are being asked to give up something they have made, and then to put it in a random and often inopportune place... the toilet. To use the toilet is to interrupt their playing for a disruptive and time-consuming activity. Then they must deal with the shame — and possible fear— of having their prized creation flushed away, forever. Other creations are proudly displayed on the fridge for all to see. This can raise questions like: "Could the rest of me have this same fate"? "If I fall in, will I be swished down too?" After being successful they are then forced to wipe their bottom, and then wash their hands, a task most children find extremely tedious. If they had a slight accident in their underwear because of bad timing, then they must either hope the grownups don't notice or face the music. If this mistake is noticed, that is admitting failure even if it is only minimal. The child only wants to please the adult and questions whether they will still be loved if they cannot accomplish this bothersome task. Life was simpler with diapers! Be sure to appreciate the vastness of this process and give your child praise, praise, and more praise, even throughout the setbacks and accidents. Before you know it, the toilet training nightmare will come to an end and all you and your child's dreams of wearing underwear and staying dry will come true!

Toilet Training Internet Resources:

- *Toilet Training Guidelines for Parents*: AAP parent's guide to toilet training, with information on recognizing when your child is ready for toilet training, and how to teach your child to use the toilet.
- *Toilet Training Readiness Quiz*: Toilet training is an important milestone that almost all children learn. Unfortunately, it can sometimes cause a lot of distress for families, especially if they begin toilet training before their child is ready. Take our quiz to see if your child is ready to start toilet training.
- *Toilet Training Made Easy*: from BabyCenter.com, 'the signs to look for, what to do when they appear, and tips for motivating even the most reluctant toddler' to use the toilet.

References:

Dr. Greene.com

Babycenter.com

Toilet Training by Vincent Ianelli, MD

Toilet training is a major milestone. Get the facts on timing, technique and handling the inevitable accidents. By Mayo Clinic staff

Your child's view on toilet training. By: Suzanne Dixon, M.D., M.P.H.

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Breathing

Written by Hannah Sullivan
Friend of the Cole-Harrington FCC System

"...In the unlikely event of a decrease of cabin pressure, your mask will drop down in front of you. Please ensure to secure your own mask before assisting others around you."

How many of us have ever stopped to think about what this scripted flight introduction message really means? We leaf through the in-flight magazine, look out the window, or try to find a comfortable position in which to sleep away the flight, but within this repetitive monologue lies a critical concept: take care of yourself before taking care of others. In fact, take care of yourself *in order to* take care of others. What good are you if you can't breathe?

As mothers, we rarely, if ever, put our own needs before those of others. In some cases, we run ourselves into the ground giving, anticipating, fixing, planning, accommodating, and assisting. We want our children to be happy, healthy, safe, and well-fed. We want our husbands to be happy, healthy, satisfied. We want our bosses and co-workers to be pleased, we want our friends to be appreciated, we want our houses to be clean and tidy, we want our meals to be home-cooked and satisfying to all, and we want our parents to be impressed. Add to this the external societal pressure to achieve all this while looking young, adolescent, fit, and well-rested, and you have a recipe for complete and total failure.

If one of our friends fretted about her cluttered living room or blotchy skin, we would rush to assure her that the cleanliness of her house or the smooth gloss of her skin was hardly the reason for our friendship. We would remind her that she was kind, funny, sensitive, and fun to be with. Why do we berate ourselves for our own perceived imperfections? Why can we be so forgiving of others when we can't settle for anything less than sheer perfection in ourselves? And who, aside from ourselves, are we really trying to convince of this "perfection"? Finally, at what cost do we pursue this impossible goal?

The possible explanations are complicated. Some of us worry that settling for anything less than near perfection will lead to a slippery slope of laziness, ultimately resulting in sloth and chaos. We may have unreasonable memories of how our own mother ran the household, remembering hot, delicious, and

prompt dinners and perfectly coiffed hair from a child's perspective, overlooking a harried and exhausted mother bravely struggling to maintain order. We may fixate on the glamorous images in magazines of actresses and models cheerfully balancing families, size 26 waists, and successful careers, ignoring the presence of nannies, airbrushing, and years of hard work and insecurity.

In any case, we are so busy securing the oxygen masks of everyone around us that we find ourselves gasping for air, barely able to keep ourselves alive. What if we made a commitment to ourselves, one every bit as dedicated as those we make to our bosses and families every day? What if we learned to rest when we were tired, reschedule unreasonable deadlines, and ask for help at home? What if we kept standing appointments with our manicurist, ordered pizza and served it on paper plates, and called a babysitter even when we didn't have any plans? Or if we stopped comparing ourselves to supermodels or even the friend with the perfect marriage, and started embracing the myriad ways in which we are already blessed?

Securing our own mask means seeing that our own needs are met first, and not apologizing for it. It means nourishing ourselves, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It means forgiving ourselves for our imperfections, and maybe even embracing them as part of our unique nature. And it means having the strength to assist those around us – our husbands, our children, our colleagues, and our families – because we have finally allowed ourselves to breathe.

Where did we ever get the crazy idea that in order to make children do better, first we have to make them feel worse? Think of the last time you felt humiliated or treated unfairly. Did you feel like cooperating or doing better?

-Jane Nelson

Exploring the Great Outdoors Summer Activities for Infants, Toddlers and Their Families

By Karen Heavey, Program Coordinator, Infant Toddler Enrichment Center

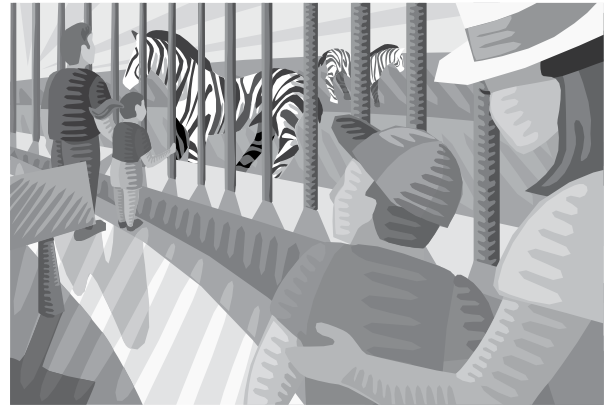
Summer is here! Pat yourself on the back for making it through the winter, especially with a cooped up infant or toddler. Now that the weather is warm, the days are longer, and getting out into the community does not involve a snowsuit, hat, and boots, it's time to go out and explore with your child.

Infants and toddlers are very curious about their surroundings, in fact as soon as an infant starts to crawl or a toddler learns to run there is no stopping them! The question is: where do you go? Below is a list of suggested activities to do with your young child. So find your baseball hat and sunscreen and enjoy the great outdoors!

Take a walk or a hike Whether it involves a stroll around your neighborhood, a walk on a forest preserve trail, or walking around the mall on a rainy day, young children love to explore. On a walk around the neighborhood you can talk about all the animals you see dogs, cats, squirrels, and birds. An adventurous hike conversation can include talking about the trees, brook or stream, or the rocks you find. Blue Hills Reservation in Milton is a wonderful place to explore. Don't forget to check out the Blue Hills Trailside Museum while you are there. Hale Reservation in Westwood or Wilson Mountain in Dedham are great toddler friendly hiking trails. On a rainy day many malls have indoor play space. A mall is a great place to let your child release some energy by walking and "window shopping." Try the Totplex in Canton where there are a variety of age appropriate equipment perfect for toddlers!

Park It Playgrounds are a great place for young children to explore. Many neighborhood parks have fenced in "tot lots" so your mobile toddler can safely run and climb such as the one at Pequiteside Farm. Norwood has several tot lots for young children including the Bond Street and Wilson Street playgrounds. Francis William Bird Park in Walpole is an adventure in itself! This park includes 89 acres of land with over 5 miles of walking paths and footbridges. The park also includes two ponds and two playgrounds for children.

Old McDonald had a Farm (or a Zoo) There are several wonderful farms and zoos in the surrounding communities. Check out The Big Apple in Wrentham for seasonal berry picking in May or June. Ward's Berry Farm in Sharon is open year round with a farm stand where you can pick your own pumpkin in the fall



and strawberries in June. Most farms in the area have websites listing their seasonal events for the whole family. In June the Franklin Park Zoo in Boston has opened a tiger exhibit. The Southwick Zoo in Mendon has free admissions for mothers on Mother's Day and fathers on Father's Day. The Roger Williams Zoo in Providence, RI has lots of fun child activities to do. Check out their website to download the activities before your visit at www.rogerwilliamsparkzoo.org.

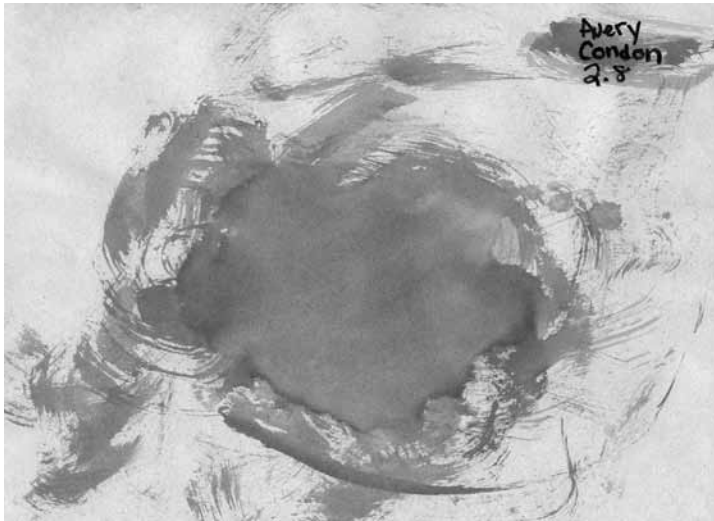
Jump Right In There are several places to take your toddler for swim lessons. The Bolivar Swimming Pool is open for Canton residents and offers swim lessons for toddlers. Call the Canton Recreation Department for hours and fees. A day at the beach is also enjoyable. There are several local ponds and beaches to try out including Hinkley Pond in Medfield, Ames Pond in Stoughton, and Hale Reservation in Westwood.

I hope you find this list helpful. If you have a special activity or excursion that you like to do with your infant or toddler, tell us about it and we will include it in our next edition of the chronicle.

Children are likely to live up to what you believe of them.

- Lady Bird Johnson

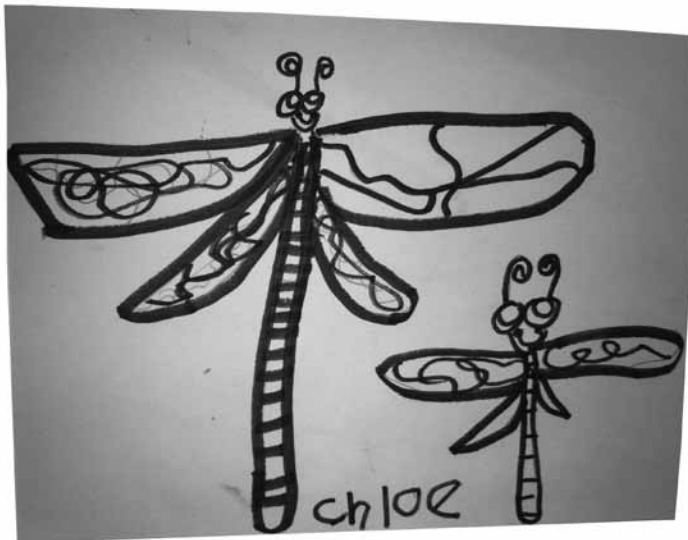
Cole-Harrington Summer 2011 Children's Pages



"Watercolors"
Avery Condon, age 2.8
Artwork brought to you by the
Infant Toddler Enrichment Center



"This is Miss Pauline"
Ahyanna, age 4
Artwork brought to you by Family
Child Care Systems



Chloe, age 6
Artwork brought to you by
School Age Enrichment Program



Zachary, age 6
Artwork brought to you by
School Age Enrichment Program



"Me and Brianna playing at the playground"
Anna P., age 4
Artwork brought to you by Children's Place

If You Could Vacation Anywhere

brought to you by the Preschool Enrichment Center

I asked some of the children the following questions:
If you could vacation anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Here are their responses:

Ashton, 3 years: "To the Doctors."

Elle, 4 years: "Swimming."

Patrick L., 5 years: "I'd go to the Carnival."

Casey, 3 years: "I'd go to the Sports Place."

Sophia W., 4 years: "Disney World."

Brady, 5 years: "Story Land."

Cooper, 4 years: "Canada."

Maggie, 5 years: "New Hampshire to the water park."

Abigail, 3 years: "To Sally's House."

Gabby J., 4 years: "To the Justin Bieber Movie"

Dylan C., 5 years: "To the Super Playground. There's lots of monkey bars and stuff like that."



"Flower"
Luran S., age 3.5
Artwork brought to you by The Early Learning Center

How Much Sleep Does My School-age Child Need

By Brenda Lee Boris, School Age Enrichment Center

Sleep requirements do change according to your child's age. Each child has their own individual sleep pattern that is based on their personality and activity level. More important than the number of hours your child sleeps is how well your child functions the next day. Here are some questions to think about. Is he able to keep up with peers? Is she falling asleep? Can he concentrate? Is she irritable? Does he fall asleep easily at night and sleep soundly through the night?

All children need to develop healthy sleeping patterns. Families can help by providing a pleasant and consistent bedtime routine. For Preschool – 1st grade this may be a bath/shower and a story in the child's bedroom. For children in the 2nd through 5th grade this might include a quiet homework time, a shower followed by brief pleasure reading before turning out the lights.

Engaging in a quiet activity helps to shut down the brain. When a child sits on the computer, plays actively, watches TV or engages in a highly stressful activity, the brain begins to take in and process all this information. It has trouble shutting down the thoughts and images once the head hits the pillow. This makes it difficult to fall asleep which can in turn cause stress for the child. Try to structure late evenings to include a wind down time. Get the stressful homework done early and try not to plan too much that will keep the evening moving at a fast clip. Children need you to help them set this structure into their lives. If these habits can be instilled at an early age, it may help your child be a good sleeper which will help to promote great overall health throughout their life.

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO PARENTS

MENTAL HEALTH AGENCIES

Bay State Community Services
Norwood, MA
781-762-0060

South Bay Mental Health
Brockton, MA
508-580-4691

DENTISTS

Dr. Robert Burr, DDS
Canton, MA
781-828-7788

Children's Dental Health Center
Stoughton, MA
781-342-0030

PEDIATRICIANS

Dr. Theodore Goldman, MD
Canton, MA
781-828-0679

Dedham Medical Associates
Norwood, MA
781-329-1400

Tri-County Pediatrics
Stoughton, MA
781-344-3791

Did You Know?

Did you know teaching your child about math is easy? All you need is a few minutes and a willing child. Here are some of our ideas. Can you think of more?

Look for numbers in these places- recipes, telephone books, books, magazines, T.V. guides, license plates, numbers on the T.V. remote, radio dial, bathroom scale, elevator numbers, numbers on measuring cups, the bottom of plastic containers, clocks, rulers, yard sticks, computer, typewriter.

Count objects- chairs, tables, lamps, stairs, phones, TV's, books, socks, pants, dresses, shirts, windows, sinks, rooms, floors, tiles.

Sort objects-silverware, socks, change, buttons.

Measure objects-with rulers, tape measures, yard sticks, bathroom scales, measure with your own feet.

Maybe Not All Is Lost

By Brenda Lee Boris

Program Co-ordinator, School Age Enrichment Program

Today fifty family and friends of my son gathered for his graduation party from high school. The ages ranged from 4 months to 90 years old. The babies were placed on blankets on the floor with toys and rattles all around them. The toddlers were fast to make it known that they wanted to be outside with the elementary school aged kids. Some parents followed them out. Other parents let them out, hollering out to the older ones; "Here they come, keep an eye on them." The older children gave the 'will do nod' and convinced those parents that they could go back in and enjoy the adult conversation. They would keep an eye on the little ones. The parents ate; chit chatted and made sure the elder aunts, uncles and grandparents had sturdy seating. They also made sure they had blankets if needed as well as dinner and drinks. The elders spent a lot of time cooing and talking to the babies. The cousins and friends, newly high school graduates and college age children played volley ball, bag toss and or sat around the fire and had conversation. As the children came through the house they would stop to talk to the adults. They made sure they made it over to the elders to check in and give hugs. Just when you thought no one was watching, you would hear the adults from inside let out a collective ohhhh as one of the older kids jumped towards one of the preschoolers as they nearly missed falling into the in ground pool. Then as the seemingly close call was over everyone resumed as they were.

With that I started to think about my son, his friends and the family; how they all at some point in their lives have taken risks. They have eaten candy that would pull out your teeth. They have consumed thousands of bags of chips, and drank soda by the gallons. All of them are attached to their cell phones, have Facebook pages and watch scary movies. They listen to music too loud and text as opposed to talking. Some have long hair. Some have no hair. There are those with piercings and others that are involved in way too many extra curricula activities.

Today they are graduates. Today I watch them as they sit and have intellectual and comical conversations with one another. They are or will be attending great universities. They are not overweight. They have amazing teeth. They can verbally communicate. They shake your hand, say hello and look you in the eyes. They are aware of and respect their elders. They look out for and have one another's back. They all have ideas about the world and want to be successful.

As a parent I know there are fears, worries and concerns about raising children today. I have heard parents of the babies and preschoolers talk about the woes of feeding, children sleeping through the night and managing toilet training. I have heard the concerns of parents of elementary and middle school children worried about the bullying issue. These parents raise questions such as how much is too much extra curricula activity, what are the girls wearing to semi or prom, how late should we allow them to stay out, and should I allow my child to have a cell phone or face book account. No doubt everyone has their own opinion on such matters.

As the evening gets later the group of friends seems to have multiplied. The vigorous conversations and volleyball games continue. The elders are coiling into themselves with exhaustion every once in a while giving a head lift and a smile. The parent's feet are up and are absorbing the advice about childrearing they received throughout the day; some solicited and some not. The elementary and middle school kids are still playing. Some are outdoors running around in the dark playing a game that now requires flash lights. Infants are being fed their last bottle while the toddlers and preschoolers get into their pajamas, toddle out and head to their bags to pull out sippy cups and iPads. As they turn on their iPad's selection of entertainment their eyes become glazed over and they are only able to respond to others with a half glance and a tired smile.

As a mother of a recent high school graduate I would like to share some advice, advice that will be brief and simple. As you look at your family, set reasonable expectations for yourself and your children. Line those expectations with morals and values that you as a family can live with. Revisit those expectations at least yearly, maybe around the birthdays of your children. Listen to everyone's advice but then process the information and do not let their truths become yours. You know your children best. Stay involved and present but know where they start and you end. As they grow you will see that they will develop expectations of you, the world and themselves. From these expectations interests will develop and their world will begin to evolve and separate from yours. Oh, and one more really big thing, there will be lots of mistakes made on every side. It is how you handle the mistakes that will determine how you will grow as a family. Life does come full circle. There are a lot of similarities between the elders and infants and none are worse for the wear. Good Luck!

What is Attachment and Why it is Important for Your Child's Well-Being

By Alaina Bolster, Clinical Social Worker

Attachment is an ongoing relationship between you and your child. It begins in infancy and continues throughout your child's developmental stages.

It starts with your ability to empathize with your baby and pick up their signals about what they need and want. By you providing consistent care, affection and support you are helping your baby reach their full potential. Your baby needs to have a sense of security in all aspects of their lives so that they can grow up to be healthy and productive adults.

As your infant or toddler matures and moves through their normal developmental stages, they can use you or another consistent caregiver as a secure base from which to explore their environment. A securely attached baby or toddler trusts that care will be given to them, their needs will be met consistently, they will be helped to learn self regulation, and they will be encouraged to learn and explore their environment. Because they feel safe and secure, they have the confidence and sense of competence they need to try new things and to learn.

Your baby's attachment in infancy has lifelong consequences. It can effect their ability to engage in positive relationships with others, maintain commitments in school or work, and to raise healthy, happy children of their own. Soooo love your baby their future depends on it.

**** Information from the book *The Attachment Connection: Parenting a Secure & Confident Child Using the Science of Attachment Theory* by *Ruth P., Ph.D. Newton*

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