

The Cole-Harrington Chronicle

Winter 2011

ISSUE 47

A Message from the Director

Dear Parents,

I hope your holiday season was enjoyable and you are ready for the winter season here in New England. I recently had a conversation with a staff member about the strength of character we New Englanders seem to have as a result of our experiences with long winters, shorter days and many hours spent indoors. It led to a discussion about how our strong character may contribute positively to our ability to cope with the day to day stressors we feel as parents. Trying to meet our various responsibilities to our children, spouses, extended family members and of course our colleagues and supervisors at work can indeed be trying and difficult.

Although our primary focus here at Cole-Harrington is to provide a quality educational experience for your child, we also recognize our role in providing you with support, parenting information and access to community resources. In this issue of the *Chronicle* I would like to share with you some of the family based services we have to offer.

During enrollment we provide you with a resource guide listing various support services should you need help in times of financial and or family stress. This resource guide includes information about child health services, evaluation services, health insurance information, parenting support programs, state agencies for children and families, fuel assistance programs, emergency housing, food assistance, adult education opportunities and more. We also have a resource guide for families residing in Canton and surrounding towns with listings of local and regional educational and recreational family activities. This winter we plan to create similar guides for families living in other communities served by our family child care system and network.

Over the years we have also developed an array of family activities at our different centers as well as our family child care system including parents' night, parent/child workshops, children's performances, program graduation events, fund raising activities, participation in local food pantry drives and spring picnics. You are welcome to par-

ticipate in these activities as much as your schedule allows. Our goal for family activities is to bring home and school together.

During the holiday season we work with local organizations to fulfill requests for donations of toys and clothing for our children in need. Our social workers also take the lead to get additional children's clothing through the non-profit organization Cradles to Crayons as an ongoing effort throughout the year.

Our program social workers provide monthly parent support, education and social casework management to our at-risk families. As of 2011 we will have one of our social workers be available to you if you need some parenting support or help in obtaining social services in times of family stress. She can be accessed through your program coordinator.

Early last summer we offered evening parent workshops. The topics were determined by a parent survey sent out to all families. We will also be offering this at our Plymouth location in the near future. Feel free to attend any topic that is of interest to you.

All of these additional family based services certainly help support parents and strengthen one's parenting "characteristics." However, we still believe that one of the most important features of our child centered, family focused programs must be the positive, supportive, and responsive relationships we have with you and your child!

Gail H. Brown
Program Director

*"It takes a village to raise a child."
-- African Proverb*

Go Ask Linda

Dear Linda,

Every night when I come to pick up my 3 year old Sarah from school, she never wants to leave. In fact, sometimes when she sees me she runs the other way. I've tried everything from having surprises in my car to coax her to leave, to just picking her up and walking out the door. This always results in a struggle, upsetting daughter and daddy too. What should I do?

Signed, 'Harry'

Dear Harry,

Don't worry- often parents are faced with this very same problem! Right now I'm sure you're feeling a variety of emotions. You're excited about seeing your daughter after being separated from her all day, but then feel rejected when her greeting is not a positive one.

I assure you that Sarah is happy to see you but your presence also signals to her that her play is about to end! This may be why she runs the other way.

Although I'm sure you had good intentions, I never suggest to parents to use coaxing as a means to get children to comply. Children will quickly learn to do things for material objects rather than to do things because they are right. I also know that Sarah's reaction to you following through on leaving was a natural one. Your child is not always going to like the decision you make for her and often times will let you know it. The important thing is to let her know you understand how she is feeling, but in this particular situation she has no choice. When daddy comes, it's time to go home.

To make this transition easier, I suggest that you discuss your departure routine with Sarah. Let Sarah know that you are aware that you are interrupting her playtime. Give her five minutes to complete her projects with gentle reminders of how much time she has left. When five minutes are up, have her gather her coat and projects. You may have to help her do this at first. When her coat is on, you are ready to go. You can give Sarah the choice of walking to the car holding your hand or walking beside you. The first few times you may even have to pick her up and take her. Soon Sarah will have a handle on the routine and departure from school will be easier for all.

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.

Family Traditions

By Heather Couture, FCC Early Childhood Specialist

Did you shop for your Christmas tree the day after Thanksgiving, share latkes with your family on the first night of Chanukah before lighting the Menorah or use special candles for Kwanzaa? Do you have special dishes that only come out during the holidays or listen to a certain CD during the holiday season? You might not even realize it, but you are creating traditions for your family and after all; isn't that what the holidays are all about, family and traditions?

Holiday traditions are a way of providing your child with a sense of security and predictability. Children need to believe that whatever is happening in the world around them some things will remain the same and will happen every year without fail. The simple act of making and decorating sugar cookies each year is comforting (and yummy). The traditions you have within your family give children something to depend on each year and are important for developing continuity, an important concept to learn as your child grows into a secure adolescent.

To be meaningful, traditions don't need to be expensive or take up a lot of time. They only have to be consistent. When you hear your child say, "We always leave carrots for Santa's reindeer", you've created a tradition! Growing up, I lived with my Italian grandmother and naturally, food was an important part of our Christmas. Each Christmas Eve she would start in the afternoon and bake and fry fish for dinner. I don't even like fish, but I can remember the first year she said it would be too much for her to do. I was sad that the house didn't have the same aroma like years past. Luckily, my mom has taken on this family tradition. If cooking or baking isn't your thing, tell stories. Telling and re-telling family stories is a great way to include older generations and will give your child a sense of family. Let your child decorate! If you aren't crazy about your 5 year old's design style, let them decorate their bedroom with the special things they have picked out. Music can also play a large role during the holiday season. Many towns have special concerts. Each year I look forward to our high school performing their annual show. Your child will think your voice is the most beautiful thing they have ever heard.

When you are in the middle of the holiday hustle and bustle it's easy for traditions to take a back seat and be forgotten, but it's important to make an effort to continue these special moments. Someday your children will look back on these moments fondly and recreate them for their own children.

I have learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you've done, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

--Maya Angelou

Ready, Set, Read

Introducing Books to Infants and Toddlers

By Karen Heavey, Program Coordinator, Infant, Toddler & Early Learning Center

The first three years of life are so important. It is when the brain is growing and making connections. Infants are born ready to learn. Experts say that infants as young as two months old benefit from being read to. Others say it is important to start reading to your infant while they are still in the womb or a few weeks old. Either way, reading is a great way to stimulate language development, as well as, bond with your new baby. It is also a wonderful time to begin to nurture a love for reading that will last a lifetime.

Establishing a daily routine of reading to your infant is a great way to introduce books into your child's life. These include rituals such as reading before nap and bedtime, spending quiet time throughout the day reading together, or reading after mealtime. At first, reading to an infant or even a young toddler may be a trying task. The attention span of an infant or toddler is often only a few minutes long. Start by setting your goal of reading for a few minutes or a few pages. Instead of reading the book, point to a few pictures and talk about them. You can slowly build up your reading time as your child's interest increases. When your child grows older, begin to ask questions about the story or ask your child to point to pictures in the book.

Books should be available for your child throughout the day. Keep a few books in a basket on the floor or on a low shelf with the covers facing out. Remember to throw a few books in the diaper bag for trips to the doctor's office or on a family outing. Infants and toddlers love repetition and will listen to the same book over and over. It is quality over quantity when it comes to purchasing books for this age group.

How to Choose Books for Infants:

Infants learn by using all their senses. Cloth and plastic books are best for infants since most of the time the book will be in the baby's mouth. Pick cloth and plastic books with bright colors, but not too stimulating. Infants also like black, white, and red color combinations. Some plastic and cloth books have squeaky noises on each page. Though this is interesting to the baby, make sure that the book is safe by checking for any holes or rips.

The Cole-Harrington Chronicle Winter 2011 • Issue 47

The Cole-Harrington Chronicle is published twice a year by the Cole-Harrington Children's Center, 605 Neponset Street, Canton, MA 02021. Correspondence should be addressed to the Chief Editor, Linda Feller, or phone 781- 828-1519.

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How to Choose Books for Young Toddlers:

Board books are the best choice for toddlers. Paper is too tempting to tear! Board books are also very sturdy and small for holding the book and turning pages. Choose books that involve everyday routines for your child (bathing, eating), that are full of familiar objects (cars, pets, foods), or objects you want to expose your toddler to (shapes, colors). Books that are repetitive or that rhyme are a great way to encourage toddlers to participate in story time. Books that have photos are great too.

Here's Karen's Picks:

Some of my favorite board books include:

Brown Bear, Brown Bear by Eric Carle
Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown
Big Red Barn by Margaret Wise Brown
Goodnight Gorilla by Peggy Rathman
Ten Minutes 'Til Bedtime by Peggy Rathman
But Not the Hippopotamus by Sandra Boynton
Moo, Baa, Lalala by Sandra Boynton
Hats by Debbie Bailey
Toys by Debbie Bailey
Baby Beluga by Raffi
Five Little Ducks by Raffi
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr.

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO PARENTS

STATE DEPARTMENTS

Department of Children and Families
Hotline 1-800-792-5200

Department of Transitional Assistance
Brockton 508-895-7000
Plymouth 508-732-3100
Taunton 508-884-5300

HEALTH INSURANCE

Commonwealth Connector
1-877-623-6765

Mass Health
1-800-841-2900

PARENTING SUPPORT

Fatherhood Program
1-781-326-4226

Parenting Stress Line
1-800-632-8188

FUEL ASSISTANCE

Good Neighbor Energy Fund
508-746-1559

Perspectives' Influence

By: Brenda Lee Boris, Program Coordinator, School Age Enrichment Program

The other day I came across a beautifully written article; *The Turning Tides* by Catherine Chittick, a seventeen year old high school student. What a wise young woman. What the article said to me was that I needed to listen more and see more of the world through children's eyes without passing on my own perspective.

Children will remind us of what is beautiful. Children will teach us to take a moment to appreciate "small wonders." I hope you enjoy the article as much as I did.

The Turning Tides

By Catherine Chittick

Wonderment. Her head tilts and her eyes glisten as she focuses on the world around her. Her small pupils, never darting, linger slowly on that which she sees. Quietly showing the inner workings of her developing mind and its thoughts, her expression reveals this wonder.

I announce to three and a half year old Ella, "Today we can go to the beach!" Quickly and with excitement, she diverts her attention from her dolls and bounces about the room, making sure to gather all of her beach toys. Her pink Crocs move hurriedly down the steps, nearly tripping as she waddles out the door and down the walkway. Her golden-brown tufts of hair blow in the cool, salty air as she talks a mile a minute, eagerly anticipating what the beach will bring.

Looking at my watch, I think of how this simple adventure will pass the time; swimming alone could pass the whole day. However, it is not long before the smell of low tide and the sight of the ocean's rocks baking in the sun spoil these hopes. The thick, cakey muck and lack of the swimmable water offer little opportunity for eager Ella. Afraid she is going to cry, I say with a frustrated sigh, "Oh, Ella, it is low tide. There isn't enough water to swim." She gazes out into the horizon, pensive, and then says simply, "We can just fill up the ocean with our buckets."

I laugh at the silliness of this declaration and imagine Ella, who can hardly carry an empty bucket, going back and forth from the garden hose to the Atlantic. Abandoning the bucket brigade idea, Ella and I begin to walk along the beach, waiting for the tide to turn. As we stagger at toddler's pace, I recall Ella's fascination with rocks and suggest that we collect some. A slow continuous rhythm of "plunks" begins as we accumulate our own collections. I begin to look for hidden sea glass and different shells. I recommend an array of extravagant rocks, rocks that are odd and misshapen, rocks whose crystals glimmer at the right angle, and even heart-shaped rocks. Yet she politely rejects all of them. Her bucket consists of plain gray and blue stones. Flat, small, and smooth, her collection contains typical stones, which she insists are beautiful. While I over-

look the beauty in what is around me, Ella is content on spending hours focusing in amusement and wonderment on her selection. The plain, rather than the extravagant, pleases Ella the most.

That night, I tuck Ella in and promise that her parents will be there when she wakes up. Unaware of what she has taught me in our two-hour excursion, she whispers, "Catherine, I love you." I now realize the value of her innocent simplicity. Ella's constructive response to the low tide reveals my own narrow-minded perspective. Offering a solution as opposed to a complaint, Ella's reaction spells out for me the distance between us, the bitter price of growing up. Viewing things from a limited perspective, adults are busy worrying about trivial problems, waiting for wowing moments, while children notice the smaller wonders.

If you wait for the tide to turn, you miss the beauty of the rocks under your feet.

"No" Is Not Such A Bad Word

By Holly Boca, LICSW and Traci Quigg, LICSW

Parenting is not easy! Whether you are a single parent or a working parent, raising children can be challenging to say the least, especially when you add in all the complexities in life. Finding the energy at the end of the day can be difficult when you have to say "no" and set consistent limits with your child. However, children need structure and boundaries within the home environment in order to flourish and to become independent individuals.

You may find it harder to say, "no" than "yes" to a child who is demanding your permission. You may assume that a passive or easygoing approach to child rearing will make youngsters relaxed, happy and independent. However, children read things such as flexibility and willingness to negotiate as inconsistency, and it can make them nervous. Parents who do not have a solid position on an issue make it difficult for the child to figure out the expectations. A child with too much power over their decisions may not feel safe without the structure and limit setting from their parent.

Consistency is so important. When you do say "no", you must follow through with the limit you have set despite the temper tantrum that may occur. Once you are inconsistent, you have reinforced the negative behavior. The child will continue to respond in the same manner when you attempt to set the next limit. They may feel that if they cry and scream long enough, Mom/Dad will give them what they want.

So where do you start? If you feel strongly about what your child watches on TV, start setting limits and boundaries as to what they watch. Explain to your child why it is not appropriate for them to watch specific shows. Also, give them specific times that they can watch television. This will limit the amount they are watching during a day. Make reinforcing television limits easier to control by moving the television to an area in the home that is visible such as a family room.

You have a say in everything your children do. Don't be afraid to say "no" and set consistent limits. Limit setting gives children a sense that they are being kept safe and cared for by their loved ones. Don't use the word "no" unless you mean it. Discipline works when you mean it wholeheartedly. When you're consistent, your child will sense that it is important for them to respect your decision. So go ahead and say "no", but be ready to back it up with your thoughts and reasons. Sometimes just the fact that you love your child and want what's best for them is a good enough reason!

If you would like more information on this topic, there is an excellent book, *How to Set Limits*, by Dr. Elizabeth Vinton, a pediatrician at Children's Hospital in Boston. According to Dr. Vinton, parents who are struggling, fearing a loss of affection, must learn how to set the limits their child really wants and needs. The following is a quote from her book; "Don't back down, children want affection, but not a pushover! Children will push and push and make everyone miserable, including themselves, looking for boundaries".

Oh, That Picky Eater

By Karen Heavey, Program Coordinator, Infant Toddler Enrichment & Early Learning Centers
Debbie Ritson, Co-Site Coordinator, Early Learning Center

"Dinner is a struggle. He won't try anything new." All she eats is chicken nuggets and macaroni and cheese." "He used to love fruit." Parents often come to us looking for suggestions for their toddler who they have proclaimed the 'picky eater'. A picky eater is a child who often will refuse food or only want the same foods. This then causes parents to worry that their child is not getting a balanced diet. According to research presented on *About.com*, toddlers often only need 1300 calories a day. Milk can provide 300 of those calories alone. When you add up the snacks and 2-3 small meals they have had, you can reach this caloric goal quite quickly. It is a common mistake to overestimate portion size. Often toddlers are eating exactly what they need. Portion sizes according to *About.com* are:

- ¼ to ½ slice of bread
- ¼ cup dry cereal
- 1-2 tablespoons of cooked vegetables
- ½ piece of fresh fruit
- 1/3 cup of yogurt
- ½ egg
- 1 oz of meat

There are several causes for picky eaters. These include; sensitivity to the taste or smell of foods and how they feel in your child's mouth, your child's temperament-some children are not 'risk takers' and do not like to try new things, some children are always on the go and do not

want to sit and eat, and some children have medical issues that may make it difficult for them to swallow certain foods.

Toddlers also change their minds often, so parents will need to offer their children foods on many different occasions prior to deciding that their child actually does not like a particular food. For instance if your child throws his peas on the floor one week and you offer them a week later, he/she may gobble them up!

Consider your child's diet over the course of a week. He or she may not be eating 3 nutritional meals a day, but as long as it balances out over the next week or so then you can consider their diet a healthy one!

Here are some helpful hints that can make meal time more successful;

- Prepare simple meals
- Eat as a family, offer the same foods to everyone at the table
- Present small portions
- Do not insist your child finishes their meal
- Allow your child to make choices (present 2 options and have them choose)
- Dip, dip, dip. Children love to dip foods. Use healthy choices such as cottage cheese, guacamole, yogurt, natural apple sauce, peanut butter (when there is no risk of allergy), or soy butter
- Allow your child to go on a "food strike", but keep offering and eventually they will choose to eat.
- Allow your child to feed themselves
- Try cutting/displaying foods in fun shapes using cookie cutters
- Offer foods filled with nutritional value such as avocados, bananas, cheese, berries, eggs, hummus, whole grains, tofu, yogurt

Be a positive role model and ALWAYS stay calm.

We hope you find these strategies helpful. If you would like additional information on this topic, please do not hesitate to contact your Program Coordinator.

Extra! Extra! Read all about it!

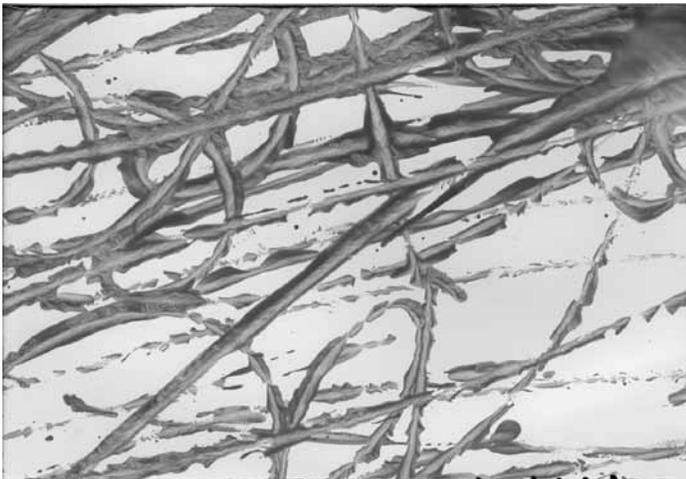
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We go to print 2X a year.

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

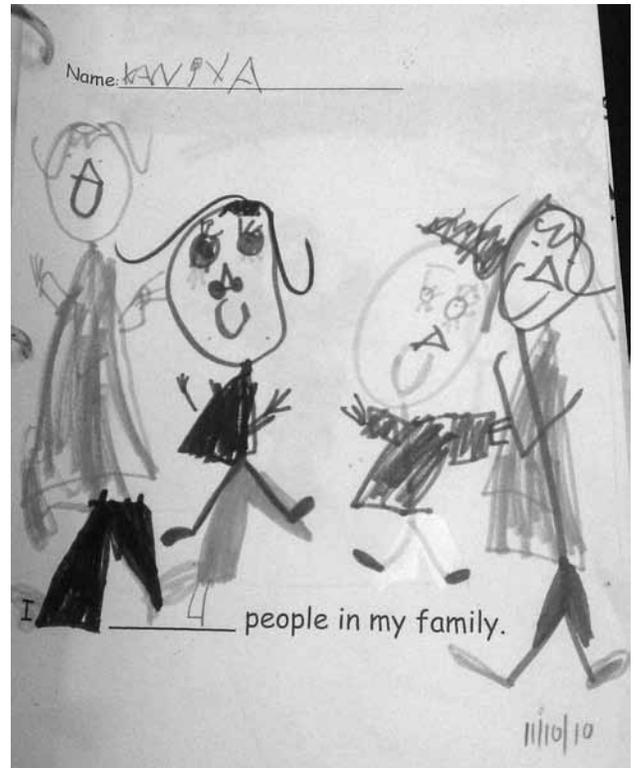
Cole-Harrington
Winter 2011
Children's Pages

Artwork brought to you by School Age Enrichment Program

Artwork brought to you by the Infant Toddler Enrichment Center



"Marble Art" by Luna, 13 months



"My Family" by Kaniya, age 5

Artwork brought to you by Children's Place



"Mommy & Me", Anna, age 4

Young Artists brought to you by Family Child Care Systems



"Earth, USA" by Sean, age 4

You Are Never Too Old To...

Brought to you by the **Preschool Enrichment Center**

I asked some of the children and staff the following questions: You are never too old to?

Here are their responses:

Teachers

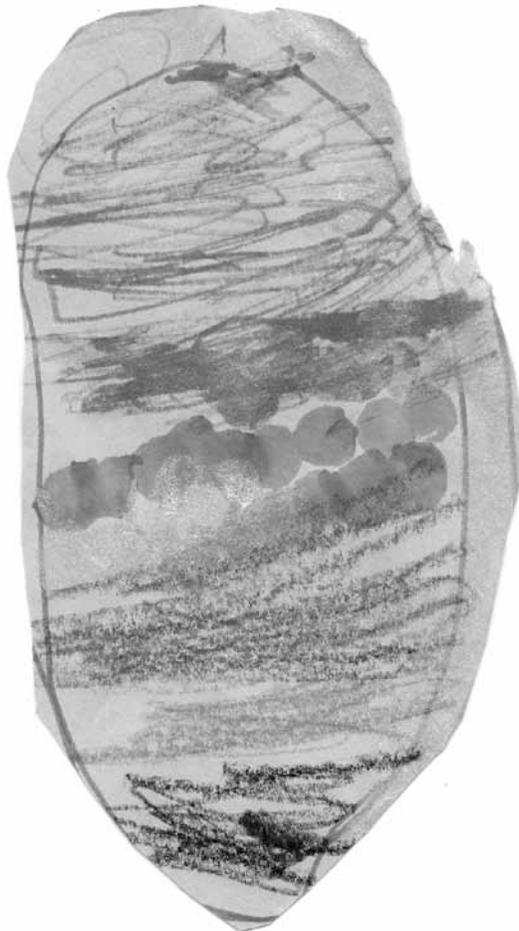
Play
Jump in the leaves
Catch a snowflake on your tongue
Enjoy the moment
Learn a new trick
Use your imagination
Blow out your own birthday candles
Sing and Dance
Give hugs and kisses
Get hugs and kisses
Smile
Have Fun

Children

Brady 4 years: "Go to Kindergarten."
Sophia T. 4 years: "Have a doggy."
Jared 4 years: "Climb. I love to climb."
Camryn M. 4 years: "Draw pictures."
Mekhala 5 years: "Make silly faces."
Maggie 4 years: "Play."
Patrick L. 4 years: "Go to Storyland."

It's so nice to know we have so much to look forward to.

"Mixed Media", Olivia, Age 3
Brought to you by
Early Learning Center



Did You Know? Adventures in Breakfast

The old adage that “breakfast is the most important meal of the day” is true. Research substantiates that it is the one meal children should not go without. A nutritious breakfast from the five food groups can provide children with about one-fourth of their daily nutrient needs. Among children who do not eat breakfast:

one third do not meet their daily protein requirement; and, 75% do not meet their recommended daily allowance (RDA) for calcium.

Not only does breakfast supply your kids with needed nutrients to give them energy and help them grow, but breakfast can even boost their “brain power” to succeed in school. Studies show that kids who eat breakfast concentrate better, work faster, make fewer mistakes, are more creative and even score higher on tests! So make sure your kids get a “smart start” everyday with a nutritious morning meal by offering breakfast.

This information was reprinted from the National Dairy Council.

Enable, Inc.
Cole-Harrington Children's Center
Cole-Harrington Chronicle
605 Neponset Street
Canton, MA 02021

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