

## In this Issue

- Exercising with Your Child
- CCRC's New Mission Statement
- Provider Appreciation Day
- Helping Children Deal with Uncertain Times

## REMEMBER...

Summer is just around the corner. Call the *Parent INFOLine* at CCRC to get help finding summer camps for your child.

**617-547-1063 x504**

## Let's Get Physical: Exercising with Your Children

Spring is here, which means its time to get outside and get active with your kids. Physical activity is an important part of children's growth and development. Researchers say that toddlers need 30 minutes of structured physical activities everyday, and then an additional 60 minutes of free playtime. Being active at a young age can help children stay fit for life!

Children who are active develop stronger muscles and bones, and are less likely to develop health problems such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and other conditions later in life. Being active can also help children maintain a stable mood and sleep better.

Being active though is not just for children! Exercise helps adults maintain a healthy weight, and it can also help you stay in a better mood, sleep better, and combat some chronic diseases, such as heart disease. The Centers for Disease Control says adults should participate in moderate physical activity (like walking) for 30 minutes at least five days a week.

As a parent, you can set a good example for your children by exercising regularly, and you can make it a family time activity as well. Exercise with your children! You will all feel better, stay fitter, and spend quality time together.

### Outdoor Activities

When the weather is good, go outside with your child. In addition to being active and outdoors in the fresh air, your neighborhood or local park will give your child a chance to see and learn about different things in the environment.

### Infants

**The Stroller-Walk:** One of the easiest ways to exercise with your child outside is to take him for a walk in the stroller. Your infant won't get as much activity from this as you will, but it is worth it so he can take in the outdoor sights, smells and sounds. The faster and longer you walk, the better it is for you. Another great way to walk with your baby is to use a baby carrier or sling.

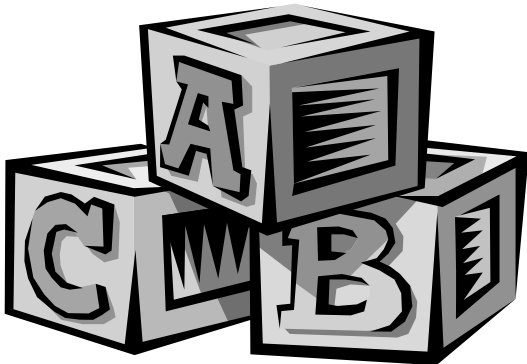
**Sandbox Diggers:** If your baby can sit up on his own, take him to a playground that has a sandbox where you can both dig and play around in the sand. Taking some toys such as a truck with an open back and a shovel can make sand play even more fun.

### Toddlers

**Catch:** Rolling or kicking a large ball is a good way to be active for both of you! Toddlers love to run after big balls or play with it rolling back and forth to you.

**Gardening:** Dig in the dirt with your toddler, either in your own yard or a community garden (call your city or county government to learn if this is available). If this option isn't available, see if your local school has an area that needs some gardening. Your toddler will learn about plants, and the cycle of growth. You can plant flowers, but the digging, carrying plants and all the equipment that go with it are really what works out your arms, legs and more.

Continued on page 2



# **INTERNATIONAL PROVIDER APPRECIATION DAY May 8, 2009**

Provider Appreciation Day is a special day to recognize child care providers, teachers and other educators of young children everywhere. Started in 1996 by a group of volunteers in New Jersey, Provider Appreciation Day is appropriately celebrated each year on the Friday before Mother's Day. The founding organizers saw the need to recognize the tireless efforts of providers who care for children of working parents.

Today's child care professionals are the world's unsung heroes. This profession is one of the most underpaid occupations in the country; yet research shows that early childhood is the most critical developmental period in a child's life. It takes a special person to work in this field and the contribution these individuals make to the quality of children's and families' lives too frequently goes unnoticed. Below are some ideas for how parents can recognize their child's provider.

## **Ideas for Parents**

- Get together with other parents to create a surprise
- Send flowers, cards or a handwritten note of appreciation
- Bring breakfast or lunch for your provider and for the kids
- Work with your child to create a special remembrance
- Buy something for your provider's play area
- Give your provider a paid day off, or a raise, or a bonus
- Key in on your provider's hobby and buy an appropriate gift

**Do not let this day go by without a special thank you to this person who is so important to you and your child!**



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## **Exercising with Your Children Continued**

### **Preschoolers**

**Ball:** Balls are great ways to exercise large muscles and get the heart pumping. Try playing soccer with your preschooler. Set up goal areas in whatever outdoor space you can find by using old milk cartons or use cardboard boxes. Kick the ball from one end of your area to the other. Basketball is also another fun sport to play with your child. If you have a hoop, shoot the ball to the hoop. Have your preschooler try. Help her get the ball into the hoop and just have a good time.

**Jumping Rope:** Jumping rope is a great way to help your preschooler exercise and develop coordination. Learn some jump rope rhymes and share them with your child. Not only is jumping rope an excellent way for adults to exercise - it burns more calories than any other activity in this newsletter!

### **Indoor Exercise**

You don't have to go outdoors or have a lot of space to help your child get some exercise indoors. A little creativity always helps. You probably won't burn as many calories in indoor activities, but just moving is a start.

### **Infants**

**Kicking and Moving:** Put your baby on the floor on her back, and hold a soft object (like a stuffed animal) that she can kick. Use facial expressions and noises to tell her to kick the animal. Act excited when she does. Give your baby a rattle or other noisemaker that he can shake. Babies love it when they can make things happen.

**Patty-Cake:** Your baby might not yet know the words. But, clapping hands and playing patty-cake gives him a chance to get moving.

### **Toddlers**

**Move Like Animals:** Stand next to your toddler, and call out names of zoo and farm animals. Once you have said the name, your toddler (and you!) should move the way the animal does, and make noises like the animal. It will be fun and help your young one use some energy.

**Dancing:** From toddler age to grown-ups, everyone can dance. Play your toddler's favorite music or yours - anything with a good beat - and dance together. Don't be afraid to get into the music - the more you move around, the better!

### **Preschoolers**

**Clean the House:** Make cleaning more than a chore by involving your preschooler. Preschoolers love to help with chores. Though some tasks (using chemicals) may be dangerous for your child, chores such as setting the table, light dusting, picking up toys or sweeping are great opportunities to keep your child active. He'll also get a feeling of responsibility for taking care of the home. Put on some music to make the work more fun.

**Stretching Out:** Work on your flexibility and help your child learn how to exercise healthfully by stretching together. Some moves you can try are:

- Touching your toes
- Arm circles
- Overhead reach (reach your arm over your body and stretch to one side and the other)
- Whatever other stretches you know!

Overall, enjoy yourselves. You don't have to run a marathon to stay in shape - any exercise you can do will be good for you and your child. And, the time you spend together having fun will be great for your relationship.

# Helping Children Deal with Uncertain Times

In one way or another, everyone is affected by the current economic crisis. Just by overhearing adults talking or watching the news, children hear a lot about the economy. Don't underestimate how much your children already know or think they know. Even young children will have heard or seen things that seem scary and that they aren't prepared to understand on their own. It is important to reassure your children and share age-appropriate information with them. And don't forget the positive side to the economic downturn, this is a great time to teach your children valuable lessons about saving, budgeting, and being a supportive family!

From the article "Tough economic times can make a family stronger," by Dr. Susan Newman, here are some of her tips for helping your children understand and cope with the current economic situation:

- **Stay calm:** Your reaction to bad news about the economy is probably how your children will react. Try to stay calm. Avoid angry outbursts, hushed and secretive conversations, and fights about finances, because they will only worry your child.
- **Maintain routines:** Keeping family routines, like family dinners, reading together, and bedtimes, intact will help keep things normal. Make sure your children know it's okay to be happy even though the economic situation is uncertain.
- **Don't blame yourself:** Have conversations about the economy so children can express how they feel. Older kids may assume that economic problems are your fault, so emphasize that the whole country is having problems and that it is not your fault.
- **Be sympathetic:** Children may be upset when financial concerns prevent them from getting what they want. Remind your child that many families are in a similar situation right now.
- **Don't assume the worst:** Don't mention negative things, like a pay cut or job loss, before you know they are definitely happening, because it will worry your child unnecessarily. After something actually happens, if necessary, you can calmly explain it to your child without telling them all the worrisome details.
- **Let children know they're safe:** Make sure your child knows that you will love them and keep them safe no matter what the economy does. Let them know that the current situation isn't going to last forever.



- **Enlist your kids' help:** Clearly explain that your family needs to spend less money. Get your kids to help with little things like remembering to turn out the lights when you leave a room or planting a vegetable garden.
- **Children have good ideas:** Whether it is suggesting that you rent a movie instead of go to the theater or that you all take shorter showers, children often have great ideas about how to save money. Children will be more excited about helping if they get to help decide where to cut back.

The information in this article comes from an article in the January 2009 edition of the "Work & Family Life: Balancing Job and Personal Responsibilities" Newsletter. The article titled "Tough economic times can make a family stronger" is by Susan Newman, Ph.D.

## Child Care Resource Center Unveils New Mission Statement

In November 2008, the Board of Directors of the Child Care Resource Center adopted the following new mission statement for the agency:

*The Child Care Resource Center promotes the healthy development and well-being of young children in Cambridge, Somerville and surrounding communities. Because we believe the best way to help children thrive is by supporting the adults who care for them, we provide access to services and resources for families, offer training and professional development for early childhood educators and caregivers, and build community initiatives that benefit children and their families.*



Over 200 parents and child care providers joined us for the 8th Annual Caring for Babies Forum on March 14, 2009. Participants took classes to learn new information about caring for children age 0-3.

### About the Child Care Resource Center, Inc.

Founded in 1971, CCRC was established with the main objective of providing families with useful information on high quality, reliable child care. CCRC remains steadfast to the commitment of its founders, while its mission and programs have evolved to address the most current needs of greater Boston communities. We believe that the best way to impact children is to support and educate the adults who care for them. Child care resource and referral services, child care tuition assistance, health access services, literacy programming, professional development for child care providers, and support for parents are the cornerstones of CCRC's work.

As the first child care resource and referral (R&R) agency in Massachusetts and one of the first in the United States, CCRC helped set the foundation for the vast network of R&R's nationwide. During its 35 year history, CCRC has sought out service gaps in local communities and modified its programs to address the most current needs of our community's children, families, and early education workforce.

**Do you need health insurance? Do you need help finding a doctor?**

**Call our Health Access Project!**

**617-547-1063 x295**

***Please get in touch with us if you have questions about child care or any of our other programs!***

**Child Care Resource Center, Inc.**

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