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## UPCOMING EVENTS

9th Annual  
*Caring for Babies Forum*  
Saturday March 20, 2010

Join us for workshops and  
information about community  
resources.

*Registration materials will be mailed  
in February.*

*Please call 617-547-1063 x 203 for  
more information.*

## Family Routines and Rituals

Routines are familiar patterns and habits on which families rely to manage their daily lives. As parents often look for ways to save time and be organized, routines become a much needed helping hand. By setting daily schedules, creating family message centers, and arranging storage for personal belongings, families can stay in control of their activities and troubleshoot potential problems. Rituals are traditions that families inherit or create from their personal beliefs. Often parents will blend customs from their own childhoods with new traditions. These will provide memories for children to take into adulthood. Although many rituals are created to celebrate holidays, others may celebrate family togetherness, seasons, or community events.

Rituals and routines provide children with a sense of identity, stability and consistency that is a cornerstone to growing up.

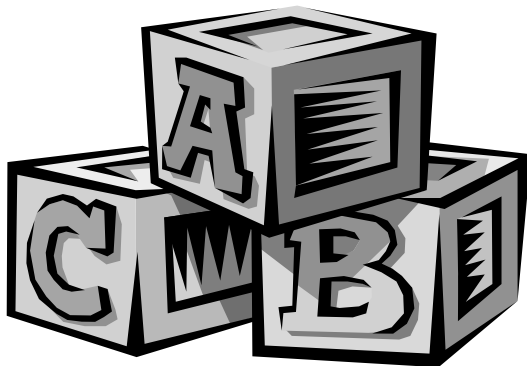
### Daily Routines

The repetition of daily routines gives your child the security of knowing what is expected and helps to build a sense of responsibility. The ability to organize yourself and your belongings is a critical skill that is best learned at an early age. It is up to you as the parent to plan how your family can be efficient. Take a minute to think about organizing your family's daily schedule to create set times for activities such as meals, brushing teeth, leaving for school, homework and bedtime. Post your schedule where everyone can see it and use pictures with captions for young children. A working calendar can also provide daily reminders. As your child gets older you can teach him to make lists for himself.

Start with a few routines that may help eliminate some stressful parts of the day. You can add new routines as you need them.

### Personal Belongings

Keeping track of all of your family's personal belongings can be a daily chore. Simplify wherever possible and set small, achievable goals for you and your family.



Put a basket by the door for all the hats and mittens, keep writing materials in a specific drawer, have shelves or brightly colored containers just for children's toys and books. Your family will quickly learn that everything has its place.

## Holiday Celebrations

Take a few minutes to think back to previous holidays and remember the parts that were the most enjoyable and those that caused the most stress. Anticipate the rough spots for your family and prepare for them. Good advance planning can minimize problems. Keep a little notebook handy to keep track of lists you don't want to forget. If you can get something done ahead of time, it can save you the last minute rush later. At holiday times it can be difficult to keep to your daily patterns. Try to stick to year-round routines that work for your family especially around eating and sleeping schedules. Speak with friends and relatives to let them know what works best for you.

## Helpful Tips For Daily Routines

- Share household responsibilities with your child whenever possible.
- Do as much as possible the night before. You can make lunches, organize backpacks, and lay out clothes.
- Set regular times for certain activities including meals, homework, cleanup, and bedtime.

## The School Connection

Part of being organized with your daily routines includes having good communication with your child's school or child care provider. Stay informed of assignments and special activities and be sure to read notices and bulletin boards.

## Rituals

A good starting point is to think through the rituals of your own childhood. If you are a two-parent family, discuss your beliefs and compare them with those of your partner. You will probably be enhancing some rituals, displacing others, and creating entirely new traditions for your family. These may continue to change over the years as you create new, thoughtful rituals that bring your family together.

Although many rituals are tied to seasonal holidays, some rituals may be created for other reasons. For many parents these rituals fill the need to accomplish a task and create quality family time. Here are some ideas that may work for you:

- Ask family members to bring food that represents their ethnicity to family gatherings.
- Have every person share what it is they are thankful for around the table at mealtime or during a holiday.
- Keep at least some time each week for just immediate family.

## Charitable Giving As A Family Ritual

No matter what the age of your child is, volunteering as a family can be a wonderful ritual for everyone to participate in. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Help serve a meal at a soup kitchen. Call ahead to find out when you might be most needed.
- Invite someone who lives alone (such as a senior citizen) to your house for a meal or a holiday.
- Create a holiday food gift basket for a family in need.

## Setting Up the Family Calendar

A multi-month working calendar placed where everyone in the family will read it, is a wonderful way to organize new routines and schedules. Children gain a sense of control over their own activities and parents can troubleshoot potential problems.

*The Child Care Quarterly* is reprinted in part from *The Daily Parent*. *The Daily Parent* is prepared by NACCRRRA, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, with funding from the Citi Foundation.

## A Trip to Your Local Museum

As winter approaches, many children begin staying inside to get out of the cold. Although staying inside can become dull, there are many fun places and activities that you and your child can enjoy this winter.

A great place that you and your child can go to is a museum. Children are able to witness real world events that they may not be able to see in their lifetimes. The Boston Children's Museum currently has an exhibit called "Our Green Trail". The exhibit uses fun games to teach children the importance of recycling, conserving water, reducing electricity usage, etc. The experiences give children a chance to ask questions about their surrounding environment. Experiences like these can enrich the ways children view the world.

There are many museums in the greater Boston area. Many of these museums have discounts, or free admission. Call in advance to find out when these promotions are occurring. You can also borrow museum passes at your local library. Call your neighborhood branch for more information.

Some museums in the area include:

*Boston Children's Museum*

Boston, MA  
(617) 589-0300

*Museum of Science*

Boston, MA  
(617) 426-6500

*Harvard Museum of Natural History*

Cambridge, MA  
(617) 495-3045

If you have access to the internet, you can go to the following website for information on museum discounts:

<<http://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=22l80k4o8robkbn3v0sva079t4@group.calendar.google.com>>

## CCRC's Health Access Project

Do you need health insurance? Or do you need help finding a doctor? CCRC's Health Access Project can help you answer these questions and many more.

We provide one-on-one counseling to help find programs and services you are eligible for, complete paperwork, answer questions and more.

For more information about the Health Access Project call

**(617) 547-1063 x295** or email

**[healthaccessproject@ccrcinc.org](mailto:healthaccessproject@ccrcinc.org)**

We also have information on our website at [www.ccrinc.org/health.shtml](http://www.ccrinc.org/health.shtml)



# Family Literacy Fun Day

The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Literacy Fun Day was held on Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at Cambridge City Hall. Nearly 500 families attended the event, which included activities ranging from maraca making to face painting. The day culminated with a performance by Bonaparte the Magician. The Cambridge Family Literacy Collaborative, which the Child Care Resource Center is a member of, sponsored the event.

The day was an overwhelming success and feedback from families was very encouraging. Many evaluations included positive comments like, "A great event for Cambridge families, thank you!" and "The free books were great!" Besides the activity tables in City Hall, there was a free pizza lunch across the street at the Cambridge Senior Center for event participants. Thanks to everyone who helped make Family Literacy Fun Day a success!



Families applaud after listening to a story in the mayor's office.



Children choosing a book to take home.

## About the Child Care Resource Center, Inc.

**Our Mission Statement:** *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.*

**Our History:** Founded in 1971, CCRC was established to provide families with useful information about high quality child care. During its over 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. Today 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.

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

## Child Care Resource Center, Inc.

130 Bishop Allen Drive,  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Fax: 617-547-3340

Email: [ccrc@ccrcinc.org](mailto:ccrc@ccrcinc.org)

Website: [www.ccrcinc.org](http://www.ccrcinc.org)