

FALL 2007
Volume 2 Issue 1

Aroostook Council for Healthy Families

Newsletter

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PARENTING TIPS

“Helping Your Child Be Successful at School”

from: PCAA



Your school age children often spend more time with their teachers than they do with you. It is important that you, your children, and their teachers have a good working relationship. A good relationship will help your child do better in school as well as reduce stress in your life. **Here are some ideas for building a relationship of trust with your children’s teachers:**

1. Be aware of difficulties. If you learn of a problem, investigate as soon as possible. Listen to both sides. (Many parents believe that the teacher is always right, and many

parents believe the child is always right.) Keep an open mind.

2. Talk to your child about daily events at school.

3. Make sure your child has a quiet place to work. After dinner, the kitchen table can be a good place to study.

4. Establish a routine at home. Set up regular times to do home work, play and go to bed.

If your child brings home a disappointing report card:

1. Sit down with your child

and look over the report card.

2. Praise your child. Find at least one good thing on the report card:

attendance, no tardies.

3. Be calm. Let your child tell you about his or her poor grades.

4. Ask how you can help your child do better.

5. Ask what your child can do to make better grades.

6. Make a plan with your child’s teacher and your child to do better.

IDEAS FOR FUN FAMILY ACTIVITIES



Kiersten age 7

Heading out into nature is a great way to soak up this colorful season and enjoy the outdoors before cold weather sets in. A walk in the woods, fields or even a park, gives kids an opportunity to witness the changing landscape up close. It's also a great way to come together after a busy school and work week. You don't need special equipment for an afternoon jaunt--just some jackets, water and snacks. Kids may also enjoy bringing along autumn journals and crayons for recording observations and making leaf rubbings, and small paper bags for storing treasures found along the path. Once home, kids can use these finds as craft materials. They can string acorns and seed pods for seed necklaces or use gathered leaves to print colorful autumn place mats or to stuff a scarecrow. Play name that leaf. Go out into the neighborhood or local park and have players collect five unusual leaves. Back home, try to identify the trees they came from using guidebooks or rake them into a huge pile and jump in!



OUR SMART BABY EVENTS



**SMART BABY
EVENT IN
HOULTON.**

Over the past two years we have seen how successful our playgroups have been in getting parents and children together to allow for opportunities for both the parents to connect and socialization for the children. In October 2006 we piloted our first Smart Baby event at our Central site in PI. The idea around the event was to provide play stations, created by our staff, that parents and children could

visit that would demonstrate ideas on how children learn through play. Not only did we have great attendance but we also discovered that this was a great way to get fathers involved. We then began repeating this event throughout the county at each of our three sites during the month of April. Each event proved to be equally successful, having a total of 53 children participate, several moms, 15 fathers

and even some extended family like aunts, uncles and grandparents. We have received very positive feedback from the participants. We would like to continue these events throughout the county for the next year. Many thanks to the Houlton Rec. Dept, P.I. Rec. Dept, and Chippy Center in Fort Kent for providing us with space to hold these events

"Healthy Families America is one of the many programs that are starting up all over the country to try and make up for this real gap in what parents need and what they're getting. By offering support early, they can make this a much more exciting and passionate interchange between the parent and the baby." -
T. Berry Brazelton, M.D., Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School

RESOURCE CENTERS

Our resource centers provide take away information on various topics regarding children, specifically from birth to 5 years. This includes information on prenatal topics, fathers, child nutrition, parenting, local resources available to the community, developmental information and much more. Please feel free to stop by our centers or give us a call to see if we have the

information you are looking for. We are also available to open the office or mail you these free materials. These centers are located at:

- 37 Bangor Street Houlton**
- 169 Academy Street Presque Isle**

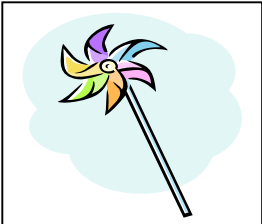
Please contact Cortney Rector to request materials:
cortneyr@verizon.net



Wal Mart has awarded our Healthy Families Program a \$1000.00 grant to provide support to the families we serve.

FATHERHOOD GRANT

The National Fatherhood Initiative awarded ACHF a Fatherhood Grant worth \$3000 of brochures, CD's, posters and other materials aimed at supporting fathers in Aroostook County. Recognizing the important role dad's take in the lives of their children, we are so thankful to have resources to support them. These materials can be found at our Resource Centers or by contacting Cortney Rector at cortneyr@verizon.net



PINWHEELS FOR SALE

Pinwheels are currently on sale for \$1.00 at Noyes in Caribou, Country Creations and the Briar Patch in Island Falls. All proceeds benefit the Healthy Families Program.

PEDIATRIC CONFERENCE



Northern Maine Medical Center is offering a "Managing Acute Pediatric Conditions" workshop on November 9, 2007 from 7:30-4:00 in Fort Kent at the UMFK Nadeau Teleconference Center. The target audience for this

conference is Physicians, Physician Assistants, Nurses, Family Nurse Practitioners, EMT's, Paramedics, Nursing Students and others involved in the care of pediatric patients.

To register please contact Shana Morin at 834-3195. **Topics Include:**

Toxicology, Insulin Pumps, Traumatic Brain Injury, Mandated Reporting, Status Epilepticus.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Develop interests that feed your soul. While we see value in signing our children up for lessons and enriching classes, many parents forget to put themselves on the list of people needing to learn and grow. Having a hobby or other creative outlet can help you relieve stress, lift your spirits, and help you maintain your identity as a person and not just a parent. This can help you keep your children's lives in perspective and deal with some of the worry and anxiety that comes from being a parent. Take care of your body. Taking care of your body can have lasting physical and emotional benefits. Eating a

healthy diet, for example, can stabilize your blood sugar levels and help keep mood swings at bay. It can also keep your body healthier so you're sick less often, feel better about yourself, and live longer. Maintaining a regular exercise regime can provide the same benefits, plus give you a release of endorphins and other positive emotions, help you release tension, and lower levels of stress hormones like cortisol. Maintain a support network. Parents today may experience less social support than in previous times. The reality that now families live further

from each other, parents work more, and we have less time and energy to spend together, along with a host of other factors, leaves families with fewer resources and less emotional support to give and share.

SOURCE:
About.com/stress management

PRESCHOOL ACTIVITY-"Jump &Count"

Brain Research Says: Practice in jumping is required to perfect the skill. It provides a movement experience that is fun and purposeful., which motivates children to repeat it. Two footed jumping required the coordination of muscle groups in the upper and lower body for a smooth jump. Jumping a number of times without stopping develops the perceptual motor abilities of rhythm and timing. Jumping and counting simultaneously involves several brain areas, leading to integrated processing and more complex thought.

ACTIVITY:

You will need six hoops or yarn circles, 12-18 inches in diameter, six pieces of construction paper or cardboard, each with a specified number of dots drawn on it with the corresponding number written beneath, masking tape.

- 1.Lay hoops on the floor. Place a card of dots and numbers next to each hoop
2. Stand in the circle marked with the one dot card. Jump once inside the circle. Move to the next circle and jump the designated number of times.

- After you have modeled the activity have your child try it.
4. Support your child if he has difficulty either counting, jumping, or doing both simultaneously.
 5. Remember the main goal of this activity is to encourage your child to jump and move his body.

CARIBOU CARES ABOUT KIDS

On August 10, the Healthy Families Aroostook program participated in Caribou's annual events with employees from our Presque Isle office walking the parade route from DHHS parking lot, down Bennett Drive, High St. Main St., Sweden St. to end on Washburn St.

Tina Barnard and Kathy Rafford handed out about 200 items, including hackey sacks, key chains and magnets, with our logo, name and phone number to help promote our program and services. It was a good crowd with people, collecting treasures along the side of the streets.



BOOK FAIR

In June, our Houlton staff Debbie Beers and Heidi Pratt attended a Book Fair in collaboration with Houlton Higher Ed. Center. We gave away Playdoh to all children attending and showed off our Healthy Families Program.



TOUCHPOINTS TRAINING



In April 2006, the Maine Children's Cabinet met with Dr. T. Berry Brazelton and his faculty to discuss opportunities for Maine to develop a statewide system to support the use of the Touchpoints Approach by child and family service providers. Based on years of research from Dr. Brazelton's work at Children's Hospital in Boston, the Brazelton Touchpoints Center (BTC) developed an approach for professionals that emphasizes the building of strong and supportive relationships with families. This evidence based practice of purposeful and meaningful connection with caregivers around their children's development leads to better outcomes for children and families. Caregivers and professionals collaborate, anticipating the changes brought on by developmental growth to support the health and well being of children

and families. A decision was made to begin the integration of the Touchpoints Approach with the statewide home visiting programs. The Touchpoints Approach provides a framework and skills that support common language and consistent service delivery, which are being incorporated into home visiting practices across the state. In November 2006, home visiting program managers participated in a three-day Touchpoints training in Bangor provided by the BTC faculty. Three people were identified from that training to attend a five day training in Boston in January 2007 to become trainers in the Touchpoints Approach. The three trainers worked with BTC faculty to establish an implementation plan for

training and ongoing mentoring for all home visiting staff. Three trainings have been completed with 71 home visiting staff being trained to date. Three additional trainings are planned: one in September in Houlton, one in November in Waldoboro, and one in January '08, location to be determined. The University of Maine Cooperative Extension and the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center are evaluating the project in partnership with the Director of the Early Childhood Initiative, Office of Child and Family Services and the Maine Home Visiting Touchpoints Training Team.

ANNUAL LUNCHEON



Recognizing and celebrating staff was the theme at our Annual Luncheon in Sept. Incredibly dedicated and hardworking staff truly never get the thanks they deserve. On this day staff were individually recognized for some of the wonderful qualities they bring to enhance our agency. Sheryl Peavey, Director of Early Childhood Systems Initiative at DHHS, was our guest speaker. We are so grateful to Sheryl for making the trip to show her support of our staff. Many sincere thanks to her and especially to all members of our outstanding team!

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEW TRAINING

This training will be held January 23 and 24. This is a two-day training where Stephen Andrews will discuss an effective approach in the treatment of challenging clients. He will also provide participants an opportunity to explore creative ways of integrating these approaches into an effective therapeutic intervention-when to use, when not to use motivational interviewing. This training has been made available for Healthy Families Staff. If others are interested in this training, please contact Danielle Langley at 532-7405 or langleyfam@netscape.net.

POSITIVE PARENTING TRAININGS

Our Raising Stronger Families Program offers three different Positive Parenting Classes for the community. These classes are focused on Babies, Toddlers and Preschoolers. Our first class in the 3 part series offers parenting information on responding to baby's crying, redirecting baby's curiosity, and connecting to baby. Our second class discusses toddlers and setting safe limits, easing mealtime struggles, and handling biting. The third positive parenting class teaches how to ease bedtime battles, responding to aggression, dealing with defiance, how to handle the angry child and to learn what to do when siblings fight. Each class has a video and handouts and uses group discussion. If you are interested in a class, please call 1-877-207-2301 or corteyr@verizon.net

UPCOMING EVENTS...

OCTOBER

October 10- Houlton Playgroup at Houlton Rec. Center from 10:30- 12:00 for children birth to 5 yrs. Parental supervision required.

October 10- Fort Kent Story Time at the Library starting at 2:00 for children birth to 5 yrs.

October 16- Houlton Story Time at the Cary Library from 10:30-11:00 for children birth to 5 yrs.

October 25- Presque Isle Playgroup at PI Rec. Center from 9:30- 11:00 for children birth to 5 yrs. Parental supervision required

October 26- Board Meeting from 10-12 @ CARY Medical Center in Caribou

October 29- November 2- Maine Home Visiting Week.

October 30- Water Safety for children 4 months to 5 yrs at the Shiretown Motor Inn in Houlton from 5:30-6:30 pm.



NOVEMBER

November 2- Yoga for Children and their parents at the Chippy Center in Fort Kent from 6-7 pm.

November 9- Northern Maine Medical Center is offering a "Managing Acute Pediatric Conditions" workshop on November 9, 2007 from 7:30-4:00 in Fort Kent at the UMFK Nadeau Teleconference Center.

November 14- Houlton Playgroup at Houlton Rec. Center from 10:30- 12:00 for children birth to 5 yrs. Parental supervision required.

November 14- Fort Kent Story Time at the Library starting at 2:00 for children birth to 5 yrs.

November 20- Houlton Story Time at the Cary Library from 10:30-11:00 for children birth to 5 yrs.

November 29- Presque Isle Playgroup at PI Rec. Center from 9:30- 11:00 for children birth to 5 yrs. Parental supervision required

November 30- Board Meeting from 10-12 @ CARY Medical Center in Caribou.

DECEMBER



December 12- Houlton Playgroup at Houlton Rec. Center from 10:30- 12:00 for children birth to 5 yrs. Parental supervision required.

December 12- Fort Kent Story Time at the Library starting at 2:00 for children birth to 5 yrs.

December 18- Houlton Story Time at the Cary Library from 10:30-11:00 for children birth to 5 yrs.

December 20- Presque Isle Playgroup at PI Rec. Center from 9:30- 11:00 for children birth to 5 yrs. Parental supervision required

December 28- Board Meeting from 10-12 @ CARY Medical Center in Caribou

JANUARY

January 9- Fort Kent Story Time at the Library starting at 2:00 for children birth to 5 yrs.

January 16- Houlton Playgroup at Houlton Rec. Center from 10:30- 12:00 for children birth to 5 yrs. Parental supervision required.

January 22- Houlton Story Time at the Cary Library from 10:30-11:00 for children birth to 5 yrs.

January 23 and 24- Motivational Interview Training with Stephen Andrew. If anyone is interested in this training please contact Program Director Danielle Langley @ 532-7405 or langleyfam@netscape.com

January 24- Mandated Reporter Training for ACAP staff at the Houlton Career Center.

January 25- Board Meeting from 10-12 @ CARY Medical Center in Caribou

January 31- Presque Isle Playgroup at PI Rec. Center from 9:30- 11:00 for children birth to 5 yrs. Parental supervision required



FEBRUARY

February 13- Houlton Playgroup at Houlton Rec. Center from 10:30- 12:00 for children birth to 5 yrs. Parental supervision required.

February 13- Fort Kent Story Time at the Library starting at 2:00 for children birth to 5 yrs.

February 19- Houlton Story Time at the Cary Library from 10:30-11:00 for children birth to 5 yrs.

February 22- Board Meeting from 10-12 @ CARY Medical Center in Caribou

February 28- Presque Isle Playgroup at PI Rec. Center from 9:30- 11:00 for children birth to 5 yrs. Parental supervision required

MARCH

March 12- Houlton Playgroup at Houlton Rec. Center from 10:30- 12:00 for children birth to 5 yrs. Parental supervision required.

March 12- Fort Kent Story Time at the Library starting at 2:00 for children birth to 5 yrs.

March 18- Houlton Story Time at the Cary Library from 10:30-11:00 for children birth to 5 yrs.

March 21- Mandated Reporter Training for ACAP staff at the Presque Isle ACAP office.

March 25- Tentative Date for Hall of Flags Event. Aroostook Council representatives travel to Augusta to educate Legislators and raise awareness about building stronger families through education and support.

March 27- Presque Isle Playgroup from 9:30-11:00 at the Presque Isle Rec. Center for children birth -5 yrs old. Parental supervision required.

March 28- Board Meeting from 10-12 @ CARY Medical Center in Caribou

CHECK OUT THESE ONLINE RESOURCES!

- www.wlearning.com -New (birth-to-three age range) parent-child activity materials are now available for downloading
- www.SylvanDellPublishing.com-crafts and activities parents and children can do at home.
- www.parenting-resources.com- free parenting resources for caregivers, educators, parents and teachers.

The Aroostook Council for Healthy Families is a community organization committed to strengthening families in Aroostook County by providing and advocating for education and support.

1-877-207-2301

1-877-207-2300

Maine Children's Trust has awarded us a \$3000.00 Grant to support and expand our Family Resource Centers

Healthy Families program funded by DHHS, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, United Way of Aroostook, Maine Community Foundation, Maine Children's Trust, National Fatherhood Initiative, Aroostook County towns and the County of Aroostook and our **Raising Stronger Families** program is funded by DHHS.

We would like to thank the Aroostook County towns who generously give us many donations throughout the year as well as the County of Aroostook. All of you are instrumental in the continuation of our Healthy Families Program.