



# Building Blocks II

A newsletter for Acushnet, Berkley, Dartmouth, Dighton, Fairhaven, Freetown, Lakeville, New Bedford, Rehoboth, Seekonk, and Swansea families with children birth-age 8.



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## The Truth About Toilet Training

Toilet learning is a natural process that takes time; you don't need to train your child to use one. Rather than push or manipulate your child by giving him treats such as candy or a special reward, trust that he will learn it when he is ready.

Invite your child to actively participate in bathing, diaper changes, and other self-care routines from the time he is born. Invite active participation by communicating each detail respectfully: "I'm going to lift your bottom now so that I

can wipe you. Can you help me lift?" Be careful not to transmit negative messages about body parts or feces and urine ("stinky, dirty", etc.).



Model toilet use, and make a potty available. Some children like a small potty that allows their feet to reach the floor, while others prefer a seat that fits into the

regular toilet.

Never force or even coax children to use the potty. This can delay the learning process, and lead to constipation or other problems. When children seem to be signaling an urge to eliminate, ask matter-of-factly if they would like to use the potty. Calmly accept no for an answer. Offer the choice of diapers or underwear when you sense children might be ready for toilet learning, always fully accepting their choice to stay in diapers.

Source: [www.janetlansbury.com](http://www.janetlansbury.com)

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## Signs of Spring Scavenger Hunt

Searching for signs of spring is a fun and educational learning activity to do with your kids. You can make a big scavenger hunt on one occasion, or search for the signs every time you go out for a walk.

Here are some things to look for:

- Warmer temperatures
- Melted snow
- Longer days
- Flowers sprouting
- Grass growing on lawns
- Birds singing & migrating
- Bugs being active
- People out walking/playing

Source: [www.rhythmsofplay.com](http://www.rhythmsofplay.com)



## Health is in Your Hands

It is estimated that hands transmit 80% of infections. Good hand washing is frequently called the "do-it-yourself vaccine" because this simple act can help protect you and your family from infection and disease. The key to removing the most germs is in the mechanical action of hand washing, not in the products used. The friction created by rubbing your hands together breaks up and removes biofilms on the skin and nails that house pathogenic bacteria.

Teach your children to rub their hands together for at least 20 seconds, or sing "Happy Birthday" twice while washing. Don't forget to rub the tops of your hands and fingers too!

Consider using a nailbrush to clean under your children's fingernails, where a lot of dirt and pathogens get trapped.

Source: [livinglibations.com](http://livinglibations.com)



Don't forget to rub the tops of your hands and fingers too!

## Teaching Your Child to Use a Knife

Studies show there is tremendous upside to teaching young children to use knives. It has an impact on social health and self-esteem while reducing aggressive behavior and the likeliness of engaging in risky behavior as adolescents.

Start with a plastic knife and simple activities such as spreading butter on bread, cutting playdough or other soft items like pancakes. Talk about

the parts of the knife, the proper way to hold it, how to keep fingers clear of the blade, and how to gently saw back and forth. Talk about safety rules - knives are only for cutting food, keep food on cutting surface, put knife down when not in use, always handle knives



when calm.

Once plastic knives are mastered, introduce butter knives, and eventually real knives. Gradually introduce food with more texture, and be prepared to stop the activity when your child becomes careless or silly.

Source: [www.blog.brighthorizons.com](http://www.blog.brighthorizons.com)

## Let Your Child Make Choices



Making choices helps kids become independent.

Children need to learn how to make choices. Making choices helps them feel grown up and feel good about themselves. As children learn to do things for themselves, they will want to make some of their own decisions. Parents should encourage this.

- Give your child chances to make choices. Ask questions such as: "Do you want to wear the red shirt or the yellow one? Do you want juice or milk? Do you want to take the ball or doll to Grandma's house?"

- At first, give simple choices. Open-ended choices

can confuse your child. Ask, "Do you want a banana or cheese?" not "What do you want to eat?"

- Let your child make a choice only when you mean it. Don't ask, "Do you want to go to the grocery store with Daddy?" if your child has to go.

Source: [Totline: A Year of Fun](http://Totline: A Year of Fun)

## Infant Activities

**Sound of the Day:** Choose a sound that your baby has babbled frequently. Repeat this sound many times during the day, using it in words, songs, or babbling it yourself. For example, "Ba" - sing "Bah Bah Black Sheep," play with a ball, sit in a box, drink from a bottle, etc.

**Follow the Light:** In a dark room, hold your



Help language development by repeating sounds during play.

baby in your arms and shine the flashlight on an object - say things like, "I see your crib" and "Your elephant is on your pillow." Then, shine it on another object. Make it disappear and reappear by turning the flashlight on and off.

**How Big Is Baby:** Hold your baby's hands and cross them across her chest.

Ask, "How big is baby?" While raising her arms gently over her

head, say "Sooooo big." Do this repeatedly. Soon, your baby will raise her hands on her own.

**The Chase:** Get on your hands and knees and crawl toward baby. Exclaim, "I'm going to catch you!" Play a game of chase with baby. Baby will squeal with delight as the two of you crawl after each other.

Sources: [www.brighthorizons.com](http://www.brighthorizons.com) and *Totline A Year of Fun*

## Toddler Activities

**Friends:** Invite a friend over to play. Take pictures of your toddler with the friend. Later, show the pictures to your child and talk about them, emphasizing what friends do: friends play together, take turns playing with toys, laugh with you, give you hugs, like to be with you.

**Matching Game:** Give your toddler three identical objects, such as tea-

spoons. Pick up each spoon, name it, and pretend that you are eating something. Let your child hold each spoon, feeling its shape and texture. Replace one spoon with a fork. Pick up the fork and say its name. Pretend to eat with it. Let your child hold the fork and feel its shape and texture. Ask your child to give you a spoon, then ask for the fork. Praise your toddler when she gives you the right one.

Source: [Games to Play with Toddlers](#)



## Preschool/School Age Activities

**Table Place Cards:** Use small squares of paper, about 3 by 3 inches. Have your child paint or draw on each piece. Then, fold it in half so it stands up. Neatly print each person's name on a card. You or your child can do the printing, or you can write names on another piece of paper and have your



child copy them.

**I Spy With My Little Eye:** Start the game by selecting an object in the room (or car), and give clues so your child can try to guess what

the object is. Say, "I spy with my little eye, something that is...(give a hint of color, shape, use, etc.). Then, have your child ask up to 20 yes or no questions to see if he can figure out what it is. Then, switch and have your child pick an object while you ask the questions.

Source: [www.brighthorizons.com](http://www.brighthorizons.com)



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Laying the foundation for life long learning.  
[www.brainbuildinginprogress.org](http://www.brainbuildinginprogress.org)

# We Are Moving

Effective April 2, 2018  
Please visit our new location at:

134 South 2nd Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740

PACE Child Care Works will be located on the  
1st floor of the building.



How to be your  
kid's hero  
without the cape



## Divorced Dads: Find Ways to be Involved



Here are three general ideas to encourage you:

Some of the most heroic examples of fatherhood are found in single, non-custodial dads. While some men make things worse for everyone by pretty much checking out of their children's lives, more and more men are crushing that trend. Divorced dads are finding ways to engage their children despite the challenges.

1. Use technology - texting, calling, email, Skype, Facetime, whatever you can pull off. Often, technology can make or break relationships, so work hard to use it to open lines of communication.
2. Be creative and adapt to your situation. For example, if your kids move far away with their mother, ask the mother to send their artwork or school assignments in a big envelope. That way you can learn a lot and get some great conversation starters.
3. Collaborate with Mom. This may be hard to hear, but it's really important. According to one expert, the "best predictor of whether a father is going to be involved in his kids' lives is his relationship with the mom." She is often the gate-keeper for your interactions, so find a way to work together. Maybe schedule monthly meetings with her to compare schedules and talk through discipline issues. Put any and all hostilities behind so you can do what's best for your kids.



Source: [www.fathers.com](http://www.fathers.com)