



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.



How To Handle Picky Eaters

If your child is a picky eater, the first step is to discover why: she wants to be independent, the food is too bitter, you are feeding her too much, dinnertime is too rigid, the food is boring.

From there you may consider some of these tips.

- ◆ Eat dinner as a family.
- ◆ Don't expect your child to sit for more than ten to fifteen minutes.
- ◆ Don't wait until too late to serve dinner or the kids will be tired, cranky, and much more reluctant to try something new.

- ◆ Keep in mind that a serving for young children is a tablespoon per year of age.

- ◆ Make meals interesting by serving it in three courses.

- ◆ Start kids off with the food they're least likely to eat and save their favorite for last.

- ◆ Make sure there is at least one thing on her plate that you know



Present food in visually interesting ways.

your child will eat, but encourage her to taste the other food too.

- ◆ Make food visually interesting.

- ◆ Give food catchy names: carrots can be called "X-ray vision carrots"; cauliflower can be called "snowpuffs."

◆ Give her some control. Try make-your-own-burrito night with bowls of fillings.

- ◆ Look at cookbooks and magazines with your child and plan meals together.

Source: www.parenting.com

Volume 6 Issue 5

November 2017

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National Family Literacy Month

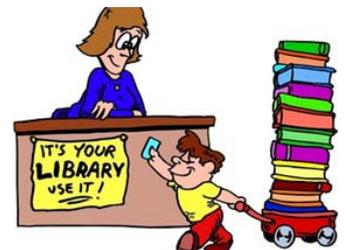
National Family Literacy Month, organized by the National Center for Families Learning, takes place every November and celebrates the work that literacy programs do to empower families.

Family literacy is at work when two generations or more -- parents, children, and/or extended family members - are actively engaged in learning together.

Many libraries have special displays and programs that

invite children to explore the wonderful world of books.

Did you know that there is an online catalog and circulation system, that includes animated storybooks for younger readers, for



72 libraries and branches throughout 40 communities in Southeastern Massachusetts? Go to <https://www.sailsinc.org/about-us/> to learn more about SAILS and the TumbleBook Library.

Turn off the Screen and Turn on the Playdough!

Playdough offers endless opportunities for family playtime. It is a simple item that can provide hours of fun and play. As families play together, children learn new skills such as cooperation, turn-taking, problem-solving, eye-hand and small muscle coordination, and much more.

Watch your child as he plays. This can help you figure out what he is working on and can help you know what to say and do. You can add to the play by talking about what is happening: "I see that you are making a

snake." "This playdough feels smooth." Ask simple questions, such as: "How can we make our playdough balls bigger? How can we make them smaller?"

Add props from around the home to support your child's learning: plastic animals and people, cookie cutters, buttons, beads, popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, children's scissors,

garlic press, plastic knives, plastic cups, small rolling pins.



Using "loose parts" can enhance play.

Source: www.truceteachers.org

Big Jobs For Little Helpers

Young children love to help out, but many times we don't let them because we think it's easier—and faster—to do everyday jobs ourselves. Your child might take 15 minutes to finish a job you can do in one minute. But in 15 minutes your child can learn a lot!

Here are some jobs your child can help you with: washing and peeling vegetables, tearing lettuce to make

salad, raking leaves, and weeding, watering plants indoors and outdoors, sorting and folding laundry, cleaning a pet cage or aquarium, rinsing dishes, dusting, or taking out the trash.

Remember to keep your child safe. Show your child how to safely use equipment like a rake or a vegetable peeler.

Keep it enjoyable and your child will want to do Big Jobs all the time. Talk while you work together and remember to show your appreciation for the work done.

Source: www.families.naeyc.org

Cooking With Your Child

When choosing a recipe to prepare with your child, look for one that offers lots of opportunities for chopping, measuring, sifting, mixing, pouring, and mashing. Avoid recipes where most of the preparation is done on



Provide your child with safe, child-sized utensils for chopping, stirring, and mixing.

the stovetop. Involve your child from beginning to end. The day before a cooking activity let him help you develop a shopping list. On cooking day, let him help set up by setting out unbreakable bowls, pans, and utensils. Pro-

vide your child with safe, child-sized utensils for chopping, stirring, and mixing. Your child's involvement needn't end when the recipe goes in the oven. Let him help set and clear the table, wash and dry dishes and tabletops, sweep floors, and put things away. Have a fun and educational cooking experience.

Source: [Totline: A Year of Fun](#)

Infant Activities

Infant Aerobics: Help your baby "exercise". Stretch out her arms and cross them in front of her in a hugging position. Repeat several times, singing "Out and in, out and in" in a singsong voice. Then push her legs gently so that they're curled up to her chest, and then let them go.

How to Use Baby Toys: Instead of simply handing your baby a toy, use it to engage her attention. Shake a rattle on one side of her head, and see if she can turn her head to find it. Hold her hand and help her to stroke a soft stuffed animal or to squeeze part of a toy to make a crinkling

noise. As she gets a bit older, take two of her small toys and have them "talk" to each other and act something out.

Name It: During diaper changes, take a moment to play "what's this?" Lift up her foot and say, "What's this? It's a foot. And what are these? They are toes." Name belly, belly button, knee, legs, parts of the face, and more.



Use toys to engage baby's attention.

Nesting: Show baby how to nest a 3/4-cup measuring cup into a 1-cup measuring cup. You can also demonstrate how a small plastic bowl fits into a larger one. Can baby do it? Give lots of praise

Source: brighthubeducation.com and [Totline A](#)

[Year of Fun](#)

Toddler Activities

Pot and Pan Play: Gather an assortment of pots and pans for your child to play with. Encourage him to match the pans to their lids. What happens if he puts a little lid on a big pan? A big lid on a little pan? Invite him to wear a potholder when he plays with the pans. Are the pans easy to pick up with the potholders? Have your child clap his hands with and without the potholders. Encourage him to

notice the different sounds.

Nut Roll: Let your toddler drop or roll nuts through a paper towel tube. Your child will delight in placing the nut in one end of the tube and watching it come out the other end. If desired, give your child a bowl to place under her tube. Can she land the nut in her bowl?

Library Visit: Take your child to the

library and pick out books together. Look for colorful books with large, simple pictures.

Source: [Toddler Games](#) and [Totline A Year of Fun](#)

"The best things in life are free."

Preschool/School-Age Activities

What Am I? While driving or waiting in the doctor's office or grocery line, play this guessing game. Say, for example, "I live on a farm. I give milk and say moo. What am I?" Or "I'm red and you can put me on French fries and hot dogs. What am I?" Or "I'm round, I can roll, and I can bounce. What am I?"

Thankful Hands: Ask your child to

think of five things for which he is thankful. Then help your child trace around his hand on construction paper and cut out the shape. Write the things your child has said he is thankful for on the shape, one on each finger. Let your child



Help your child to think of five things for which he is thankful.

decorate the hand so that it looks like a turkey.

Source: [Totline: A Year of Fun](#)



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This publication was compiled by the PACE Child Care Works CFCE Program with funding from the MA Department of Early Education and Care.

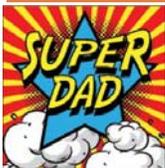
The Best Playdough Recipe

Put **2 cups water** into a cooking pot. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ **cup oil** and **food coloring**. Heat until hot but not boiling. Stir in **2 cups flour**, **1 cup salt**, and **2 tablespoons cream of tartar**. Cook and stir on medium heat until playdough pulls away from the sides of the pot. Allow to cool, then knead for about 10 minutes - kids can help. Add flour if it's too "gooey." Store in a covered container or Ziploc bag. Consider making two batches in different colors.

Source: www.truceteachers.org



Laying the foundation for life long learning.
www.brainbuildinginprogress.org



How to be your
kid's hero
without
the cape

Teaching Your Kids to Be Thankful

We want our kids to appreciate all they've been blessed with, both in words and actions. It is our job to teach them how to do this. Here are 4 ways you can teach your kids to be thankful.

1. Be Thankful Yourself

Make a habit out of being thankful, and share this with your kids. Show appreciation for the big things and everyday "little" blessings you and your family enjoy.

2. Dinnertime Thanksgiving

The dinner table is a great place to talk, teach, and share your thanks. Make a habit of going around the dinner table every night to share all you are thankful for each day.

3. Thank You Post-it Notes

Post-it notes are quick and easy ways to share something or remember something. Give each of your children a set of post-it notes and have them write a note to tell someone "Thank you" for something. Then leave the post-it notes with them until all the notes in that set are gone.

4. Manners

One of the simplest ways to be thank-



Write a simple note to tell someone "Thank you".

ful is to have good manners and be considerate of others. Help your kids by working on their manners. Get them in the habit of saying, "Thank you" when someone does something worthy of thanks.

Source: www.allprodad.com