



# Building Blocks II

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

## Reduce Sugary Snacks

Limiting the amount of sugar your family eats is good for the teeth and overall health. February is National

Children's Dental Health Month. Below are some dentist-recommended tips to eliminate unnecessary sugar throughout the day: Limit the amount of juice your children drink, skip soda entirely, and offer water and milk first.

Children ages one to six should drink no more than 4-6 ounces of juice

which is about the equivalent of one juice box. Choose snacks without added sugar; even foods like raisins can be troublesome because they adhere to teeth and stay there for a long time. Kids love crackers; however, many are cookies with salt that break down into sugar and get stuck in the tops of teeth. Set an example for your children. Eat well; brush twice a day for two minutes each time; floss at least once a day. source: [mouthhealthy.org](http://mouthhealthy.org)

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## Your Child's First Dental Visit

appointment with a dentist when she gets her first tooth. To get your child ready for the visit, talk to her about what is going to happen and be positive. Have her practice opening her mouth for when the dentist counts and checks her teeth. Read books and/or watch videos about first appointments to the dentist. Ask for necessary patient forms ahead of the visit so you can fill them out at home. Make a list of questions to ask. Schedule the appointment for when your child will be well rested and cooperative. Give your child a light meal and brush her teeth before the appointment so she won't be hungry.

source: [mouthhealthy.org](http://mouthhealthy.org)



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## A Safe Place

A "safe place" can help children learn the important life skill of calming themselves down. It is an alternative to a time out; a place where children who are feeling neglected, alone, anxious, or angry can go to return themselves to a more peaceful state.

Sit with your child in his designated safe place, holding him and a transitional object such as a teddy bear. Tell him that he can come to the safe place when he is angry or upset in order to calm down. Teach him to hug his bear and take two long breaths. Repeat with your child until he can go to his safe place to calm down all by himself. A bean bag is a wonderful safe place because it hugs you as you sit in it!

source: I Love You Rituals

## Teaching Self Control

Children do not develop self control until they are 3.5 to 4 years old. This can be very confusing for parents, especially when their very verbal two year old is able to repeat the rules and still reaches for that cookie! To help nurture your toddler's impulse control, try playing games.

Color one side of a paper plate green and the other side red. Your child sits on the green side. Put them in several places runs



source: zerotothree.org

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## Family Fun with Socks!

Socks can be used to create ideas for family playtime. As families play together, children learn skills like cooperation, taking turns, and problem solving.

**Sock Hop:** Turn on some music, take off your shoes, and dance together in your socks!

**Sock Skating:** Find a smooth surface (NOT wood floors) and skate away!

**Jump Rope:** Make a jump rope by tying several socks together.

**Sock Touch:** Fill several socks with everyday items: toothbrush, pencil, coin, comb, button, etc. Name the item by feeling it from the outside. Younger children can feel inside.  
source: truceteachers.org

green. Play freeze dance with music. When the music is on your



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# Infant Activities

**Shower with Love:** Shower your baby with hugs and kisses. Studies show that your baby's trust and confidence grow with your displays of love. This turns into success at school later in life.

**Meeting Strangers:** Hold your baby in your arms when someone he does not recognize approaches. Greet the person and talk to your baby about his new acquaintance. This will help your child feel more secure and comfortable when meeting new people.

**What's in a Name?** As you sing songs, recite rhymes, or read stories together, try incorporating your baby's name as often as possible. Hearing her name will catch her interest and attention.



source: Totline: A Year of Fun

# Toddler Activities

**Sharing Love:** Talk with your toddler about how nice it is to show family and friends that you love them. Together, think of ways that you show love every day. Use words such as "hugs," "kisses," and "smiles."

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**Sticker Fun:** Give your child several stickers and ask him to place a sticker on a different part of your body (hand, elbow, nose, etc.) Repeat as many times as you wish. You could also call out a body part and have your child place a sticker on his own body.

This can be very confusing for parents, especially when their very young child is repeating the rules and stickers for his cookie!

**Laundry Sorting:** Place several socks and shirts in a laundry basket. Have your child sort through the clothes and arrange them in two piles. Add pants, etc. to make more challenging.

To help nurture your toddler's impulse control, try playing games. Color one side of a paper plate green and the other side red. Your child inside. Put them in several places. Run toward you until you put up the red sign. She runs again when the sign is green. Play it. Then dance with music. When the music is on, your child dances. When you stop it, she has to freeze. Read books about children who get angry or have tantrums, and

# Preschool/School-Age Activities

**Alphabet Menu:** As you prepare a meal, discuss what will be served and ask your child to create a menu. Fold a piece of paper in half. Have your child write the word or sound on one side of the paper and draw a picture of the food on the other side. Do this for each food. Have your child present the menu to the family. Keep it fun!

**Dice Stray with Play-Doh:** Take out the dice together and use the Play-Doh to make a number of times (blinking your eyes, etc.) Use two dice with older children.



**Carpool Karaoke:** Singing in the car can be a great shared language and music experience. You don't have to sing well. Just have fun doing it! Made-up, silly songs are often children's favorites.

Create a playlist of family-friendly tunes for a sing-along or use your favorite streaming service.



**PACE Child Care Works**  
Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Program

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

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## Early Childhood Programming Near You!

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Contact Jocelyn Carvalho at [jcarvalho@pacccw.org](mailto:jcarvalho@pacccw.org) for more info.

**Play & Learn Together: New Bedford, Wednesdays 10AM-11:30AM at PACE Family Center (March 6, 13, 20, 27 and April 3, 10) Call 508-979-1927 to register.**

**Play & Learn Together: Dartmouth, Thursdays 10AM-11:30AM at Southworth Library (March 7, 14, 21, 28 and April 4, 11) Call 508-979-1927 to register.**

**Play & Learn Together: Lakeville, Wednesdays 10:30AM-11:30AM at Lakeville Public Library (February 6, 13, 20, 27 and March 6, 13) Call 508-999-9930 x129 to register.**

**Yoga for Families: Rehoboth-Friday, February 15 at 10:15AM at the Blanding Public Library. Call 508-999-9930 x 102 to register.**

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