



All Children Considered

VOL. I • 2007/08

A NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO CARE FOR CHILDREN

HOT TOPICS IN CHILD CARE

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CAREGIVER'S RESOURCE CORNER 8

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College of Agriculture & Natural Resources

In Collaboration with



Connecticut
Departments of
Social Services
and Public Health

Fantastic, Fun, and Free Activities

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Finding free or low cost field trip activities for your children is essential for keeping tight budgets under control. Here are tried and true examples to spark similar ideas for your own programs.

Right Around the Corner: How about popping in to visit a fire station or trying a walk to the grocery store on for size? At our local market, we were given a personalized tour that included tasting mangoes, meeting the live lobsters, decorating cupcakes in the bakery, and using the cash register to scan the milk and carrot sticks we purchased. We've also taken four and five-year olds on "behind the scenes" tours of the post office, a pet store, the Department of Public Works, a nursery, and an ice skating rink, where we hopped on the stationary Zamboni machine and posed for photos.

Special hint: Be sure to call and make an appointment for your visit, then take photos and enclose copies with your follow-up thank you note.

Save it for a rainy day: When the weather outside is frightful for the fifth day in a row, it's time to round up the kids, bundle up, and find a change of scene. How about free story hours for toddlers and preschoolers held at Borders, Barnes & Noble, and many other independent bookstores.

Are you studying dinosaurs or craving great art? Visit the websites at Dinosaur Park in Rocky Hill (www.dinosaurstatepark.org), the Bruce Museum in Greenwich (www.brucemuseum.org), or other local museums to find their free admission days. Also, did you know that there's a free tour of a soda and water bottling factory in New Britain, (860.224.0830 or www.averysoda.com).

(Continued on next page)

From the editor...

Welcome to another year of *All Children Considered*. The theme for this issue is **HOT TOPICS IN CHILD CARE**. Our writers focused on protecting the children in your care, stretching your program dollars, and keeping you up to date with some child care initiatives.

In order to more completely serve our diverse audience, the first article, "Fantastic, Fun, and Free Activities"

has been translated into Spanish (see page 2). Other useful free and low-cost opportunities for children can be found throughout the newsletter.

Lastly, articles from the Departments of Public Health and Social Services will provide critical safety and health information.

Harry Mangle, Editor



Special hint: Call first or check your destination's website for updated hours and admission policies.

A Connecticut state of mind: Public libraries offer everything from playgroups to story times to family concerts. Many libraries also have free passes or free hours for younger children at museums and historic attractions just for the asking. At most Family Resource Centers (FRCs) there are weekly on-site playgroups that include art activities, stories, songs, and snacks for children ages birth through four, accompanied by parents or caregivers.

There's no charge to attend, but as with most FRC programs, their services are restricted to families from the town in which the center is located.

Special hint: For an FRC directory, type "Family Resource Centers" in the search window of the CT State Department of Education website (www.sde.ct.gov) or call 860.713.6543. To locate Connecticut's public libraries, go to www.publiclibraries.com

For even more ideas, pick up free monthly publications like County Kids, Connecticut Parents, and Parent

Planner in libraries, toy stores, and doctors' offices. Visit www.greaterhartfordkids.com and the Fieldtrip Factory (www.fieldtripfactory.com) for more free, super, and inexpensive activities.

Don't underestimate what might be waiting right around the block. After our visit to the West Hartford Department of Public Works, where we saw how street signs were made and where police cars were repaired, one of our preschoolers announced, "It was more fun than a trip to Disney World." Best of all, it was totally free!



Actividades Fantásticas, Divertidas y Gratis

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Traducido al Español por:
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Encontrar gratis o a bajo costo actividades y paseos para sus niños es esencial para no salirse del presupuesto. A continuación hay ejemplos que podría usar en su propio programa.

En su propio vecindario: ¿Qué le parece visitar la estación de bomberos o caminar a la tienda de comestibles como actividad alternativa? En nuestro mercado local nos dieron una gira personal que incluyó probar mangos, conocer las langostas vivas, decorar pastelitos en la panadería, y usar la caja registradora para registrar la leche y las zanahorias que compramos. También hemos llevado "Detrás del Escenario" a los niños de cuatro y cinco años en excursiones al correo postal, a la tienda de mascotas, al departamento de trabajos públicos, al hogar de ancianos, y a la pista de patinaje en hielo donde nos subimos a la estacionada maquina Zamboni y posamos para fotos.

Consejos especiales: Asegúrese de llamar

y pedir hora para su visita, luego tome fotos y adjunte copias con una nota dando las gracias.

Guárdelo para un día de lluvia: Cuando el clima ha estado malo cinco días seguidos, es tiempo de reunir a los niños, abrigoarlos y cambiar de escena. Qué tal la hora de cuentos para niños pequeños y preescolares, que imparten gratis en las librerías Borders, Barnes & Nobles, y muchas otras librerías independientes.

¿Está estudiando dinosaurios o interesado en obras maestras? Visite las páginas cibernéticas del parque de Dinosaurio en Rocky Hill (www.dinosaurstatepark.org/) y el Museo Bruce en Greenwich (www.bruce-museum.org/) para encontrar los días de admisión gratis. En New Britain puede encontrar una gira gratis en la fábrica embotelladora de soda y agua. (860.224.0830 o www.averysoda.com).

Consejos especiales: Llame primero o verifique la página cibernética para verificar horario y pólizas de admisión.

Un Connecticut desarrollando la mente: Las bibliotecas públicas ofrecen todo desde grupos de juegos a hora de cuentos y conciertos para familias. Muchas Bibliotecas también tienen pases gratis disponibles a museos y atracciones históricas. En casi todos los Centros de Recursos para la Familia (sigla en inglés FRCs) tienen grupos de juegos semanales que incluyen actividades

manuales, cuentos, cantos y meriendas para niños desde el nacimiento hasta los cuatro años acompañados por sus padres o guardianes. No hay costo por participar pero, al igual que muchos programas en los FRCs, sus servicios son limitados a familias que residen en el área donde el centro está localizado.

Consejos especiales: Para el directorio de FRCs escriba "Family Resource Centers" en la ventanilla de búsqueda de la página cibernética del Departamento de Educación del Estado de CT (www.sde.ct.gov) o llame al 860-713-6543. Para localizar las bibliotecas de Connecticut vaya a www.publiclibraries.com

Para más ideas, recoja gratis las publicaciones mensuales de "County Kids", "Connecticut Parents" and "Parent Planner" en las bibliotecas, tiendas de juguetes y oficinas de doctores. Visite www.greaterhartfordkids.com y "the Fieldtrip Factory" (www.fieldtripfactory.com) para más actividades gratis, geniales y económicas.

No subestime lo que puede estar esperando a la vuelta de la esquina. Después de nuestra visita al Departamento de Trabajos Públicos de West Hartford, donde vimos cómo hacen los letreros de las calles y dónde reparaban los autos de la policía, uno de nuestros niños preescolares anunció "esto es más divertido que un viaje a Disney World." ¡Lo mejor de todo es que fue totalmente gratis!



More Free Resources

Program and activity ideas for after-school care

- The “School-Age Note of the Day” is a free daily e-mail delivered Monday through Friday filled with helpful tips on a variety of subjects including resources, art and craft activities, research, recipes, games and sport ideas, grant information, and other helpful “notes.” This is a service of School-Age Notes, Inc. that provides high quality resources for afterschool care settings. Obtain these daily emails at <http://www.schoolagenotes.com/WritersGuidelines.asp>

HUSKY Eligibility Manual

- This free reference tool provides enrollment information for the CT HUSKY health insurance program that serves children and low-income families. The manual was developed through the “Covering Connecticut’s

Kids and Families Project” and was updated a few months ago to reflect recent legislative changes. It can be downloaded after you complete a brief registration form at the CT Voices for Children Web site: <http://www.ctkidslink.org/toolkit/toolkit.cgi>. If you have the manual and your chapter and appendix pages are dated prior to September 2007, you should download and print updated pages.

Infant-Toddler language and early literacy activities

- As part of a project sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education, in 2006 the Washington Research Institute designed and produced early language and literacy activities (many in Spanish and Vietnamese as well as English) for children, ages birth to three, in home and child care environments. Each of the activities includes an activity description, and hints for making the activity fun and appropriate for children at different developmental

stages. In addition to the activities, you can download an activity checklist that provides hints and help for parents and caregivers. To view and obtain these free materials, go to the website <http://www.wlearning.com/home.html>, and click on the purple button labeled, “Free Parent Education Handouts.”



Child Care 2-1-1 Mailbag

Question:

As a licensed family child care provider interested in growing my business, can you assist me with interview tips and techniques to use in my program?

Answer:

Choosing a child care program is a very big decision for parents. It is vital to create a format for a successful interview with a family. The interview begins with the first phone call to your program. During the first phone conversation, the parent is usually gathering basic information such as the hours you are open, how many children are currently in your care, what is your experience in the field and your educational background, what a typical day is like, and how much you charge.

During this phone call, ask the parent if they would like to set up a time to meet with you to further discuss and visit your program. If you can, set up two interviews with the family. The first interview should take place during off hours so you can devote your full attention to the family. If they plan to bring their child, make sure

you have some activities available for them. Provide the family with a copy of your lesson plans, a schedule of your day, and a copy of your contract. Discuss with the parents how you develop your lesson plans and how the activities foster learning.

If possible, set up a second interview. It should take place during business hours to allow the parents to see your child care program (and you) in action. Make it at a time when their child will be able to join in activities so that the parents can see the educational aspects of your child care program. They will be able to observe their child engaged in educational activities and interacting with other children.

It is important for a parent to gain trust and confidence in your ability as a child care provider to help them in making a decision on the best program for their child.

2-1-1 Child Care provides specific information regarding child care resources, professional organizations, statistics, training opportunities, and business loans. For more information, go to website www.211childcare.org or call 2-1-1 or 800.505.1000.

CONNECTICUT LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY UPDATES

Early Childhood Education Policies

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A recent Connecticut educational policy initiative is the Ready by 5 & Fine by 9: Connecticut's Early Childhood Investment Framework. This document was created by the Early Childhood Education Cabinet, a legislatively constituted group of Connecticut's governmental and educational leaders. The document is Connecticut's written framework for addressing the needs of its at-risk children and their families. It set out three goals:

- All children will reach developmental milestones (intellectual, physical, and social-emotional growth benchmarks) from birth to age 5;
- All children will begin kindergarten with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed for success in school; and
- All children will have K-3 education experiences that extend children's birth to 5 learning and ensure consistent progress in achieving reading mastery.

The document may be found at <http://www.ecpolicycouncil.org/cabinet.php>. In order to accomplish these goals, Public Act 07-03 authorizes the Early Childhood Education Cabinet to develop and implement:

1. A statewide longitudinal evaluation of the progress of children from preschool through Grade 3,
2. Minimum and higher quality

- standards for all early childhood programs receiving state funds,
3. An accountability plan for early childhood services,
4. Data sharing agreements across state agencies, and
5. A workforce development plan.

Connecticut has received a grant from the National Governor's Association to hold an Early Childhood Policy Summit, planned for January 15, 2008. Governor M. Jodi Rell will host this event which will focus on the birth to 3 age group, the new Infant/Toddler Framework, and the bi-partisan, cross-branch, state-local leadership necessary to advance this work.

Child Day Care Licensing 2007 Legislative Review


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Three key public acts passed during the 2007 legislative session have a direct impact on the CT Department of Public Health's licensure program. The three public acts are:

Public Act 07-22: An Act Concerning Licensure of Child Day Care Centers

Public Act 07-129: An Act Concerning Child Day Care Services, Youth Camps, and the Emergency Distribution of Potassium Iodide Tablets in Certain Facilities

Public Act 07-252: An Act Concerning Revisions to Statutes Relating to the Departments of Public Health and Social Services and Town Clerks

For a complete 2007 Legislative Session Summary, please refer to the Department of Public Health website at www.ct.gov/dph and click on "Parents and Children" then "Child Day Care," and finally "What's New." 

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Keeping Kids Safe and Healthy

Protect Your Children from Environmental Risks

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Keeping children safe from environmental risks is important to all caregivers. The following information was excerpted from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publication: EPA 100-F-02-004 www.epa.gov/children.

Breathing Unsafe Air

- Don't smoke and don't let others smoke in your home or car.
- Keep your home/center as clean as possible. Dust, mold, certain household pests, and pet dander can trigger asthma attacks and allergies.
- Limit outdoor activity on ozone alert days when air pollution is especially harmful.
- Limit motor vehicle idling.

Lead Poisoning

- Wash children's hands before they eat. Wash bottles, pacifiers, and toys often.
- Run cold water until it becomes as cold as it can get. Use only cold water for drinking, cooking, and making baby formula.

Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals

- Store food and trash in closed containers to keep pests from coming inside.
- Read product labels and follow directions.
- Store pesticides and toxic chemicals where children can't reach them. Never put them in other containers that children can mistake for food or drink.

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning

- Have fuel-burning appliances, furnace flues, and chimneys checked once a year.
- Install a CO alarm that has been certified safe by UL or IAS verification laboratories.

Contaminated fish and polluted water

- Be alert for local fish advisories and beach closings.
- Learn what's in your drinking water. Test your water if you have a private well.
- Properly dispose of toxic household chemicals.

High levels of radon

- Test your home for radon with a home kit.

Too much sun

- Have children wear hats, sunglasses, and protective clothing.
- Use sunscreen with SPF 15+ on children over six months; keep infants out of direct sunlight.
- Limit time in the midday sun. The sun is strongest between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM.

Mercury Poisoning

- Replace mercury thermometers with digital thermometers.

(Continued on page 7)

Free Books for Children

*Cindy Gerstl, Communications Coordinator
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All Children deserve to have good books read to them. All children deserve to have good books they can call their very own, to pull out, and "read" anytime they want. The Read to Grow organization is a free community resource dedicated to improving

literacy in Connecticut by providing books and encouraging adults to read to children beginning at birth.

Read to Grow, Inc. operates Books for Kids, which offers free books to individuals and to those who work with children and families. Individuals, children's publishers, schools, businesses, large and small, religious organizations, and other community groups collect and/or donate new and gently used books to Read to Grow. In turn, the books are redistributed, at no cost, to programs and children through middle school age. More

than 70,000 books were distributed last year.

We encourage caregivers and others that have direct contact with children and families to spread the "need to read" message and to contact us for books. If you are interested in receiving books, visit the Read to Grow website at www.readtogrow.org and download an application. For questions, call Books for Kids coordinator Linda Sylvester at 203.488.6800, or e-mail her at lsylvester@readtogrow.org.



Protect Your Children from Injuries

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Awareness of the following common hazards present in homes and child care environments is a priority of the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC):

Recalled products: Every year about 400 consumer products are recalled because they can cause injury or death. A list of recalled products is available at the CPSC website: www.cpsc.gov, where you are encouraged to click the gold rectangle to sign up for free e-mail notification for recall notices and safety alerts.

Magnets: Small, powerful magnets are increasingly common in children's toys. If two or more magnets are swallowed, they can attract one another through the intestinal walls and cause holes or blockage leading to serious injury or death. Keep toys

with magnets away from children less than six years old, and regularly check toys for loose magnets or magnetic pieces.

Furniture tip-overs: Furniture, TVs, and appliances can easily tip over on young children. Remove items that might tempt children to climb and check that furniture, TVs, and appliances are stable. For added security, attach to floor or wall with brackets, screws, or toggles. Freestanding stoves should be installed with anti-tip brackets. Place TVs on sturdy furniture and push it as far back as possible.

Windows and window coverings: Keep furniture that children can climb on away from windows and don't rely only on window screens to keep children from falling out of windows. Whenever possible open windows from the top - not the bottom. Install window guards (which can be opened in an emergency) or window stops on windows on upper floors. Window blind cords that can form a loop can strangle children. Cords on window coverings sold be-

fore 2001 should be repaired. Contact the Window Covering Safety Council (www.windowcoverings.org or 800.506.4636) for free repair kits. Keep cords out of reach of children. When buying new window blinds or shades, consider using cordless blinds or shades. Keep cribs and playpens away from window cords.

Home drowning hazards: Bathtubs, toilets, buckets, and other containers all pose a drowning risk for children, especially those under the age of five years. Drowning can occur in seconds, even in just inches of water. Always keep a young child within arm's reach in the bathtub. If you must leave for any reason, take the child with you. Keep toilet lids closed. Never leave buckets, even containing a small amount of liquid, unattended - toddlers can fall in headfirst. Empty out buckets and store upside down.

For more information on any of these hazards, go to the Consumer Product Safety Commission's website www.cpsc.gov, or call 800.638.2772.



Protect Your Children from Renovation Lead Contamination

Rhonda Pales and Mark Aschenbach
Lead Poisoning Prevention and
Control Program
860.509.7299

Millions of U.S. houses and apartments built before 1978 have paint that contains lead. Unless testing has shown otherwise, it is safe to assume that those built before that time contain lead-based paint. The dust and fumes from this paint carry the following dangerous to human health if they are not properly handled:

- When people ingest or inhale lead dust (even a very small amount), they can become lead poisoned.
- Lead is especially dangerous to unborn children, infants, and young children, as it damages the central nervous system and can cause permanent, life-long behavior and learning disabilities.
- In adults, lead can cause reproductive problems, high blood pressure, memory difficulties, and muscle and joint pain.
- Extreme cases of lead poisoning can even cause convulsions, coma, and death.

Lead-safe work practices must be used in these pre-1978 homes during any painting or renovation project that results in the disturbance of painted surfaces. If such work is being con-

sidered in your home or child care environment, be sure to:

- Locate a properly trained contractor (click the link, <http://www.ct.gov/dph>, then click "Parents and Children," then "Childhood Lead Poisoning," and finally, "Lists of licensed Abatement and Consultant Contractors.")
- Make sure proper precautions are taken by contacting the Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Program at 860.509.7299.
- Be aware of signs and symptoms of lead poisoning in children. Please check this website <http://www.hec.uconn.edu/adults.html>, and then click on "Information Sheet for Parents about lead Poisoning."



New Free Support for Family Child Care Providers

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A new, free service is available statewide to newly-licensed family child care providers that can help them successfully start or improve their child care business. The Family Child Care Support Project, administered by 2-1-1 Child Care, offers child care providers the following wide range of topics in their homes or via phone.

- Business Practices such as contracts, policies, setting and collecting fees, and advertising.
- Communicating with Families including welcoming families into a program, discussing sensitive topics, and resolving conflicts.

- Child growth and development including social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language.
- Developmentally appropriate activities for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children.
- Routines and scheduling of drop-off/pick-up times, nap/rest times, meals and snacks, and diapering and toileting.
- Effective environments including assistance on safety, organizing toys, arranging furniture, and appropriate learning materials.

In order to participate in this service, call 2-1-1. A referral will be made to a local Early Childhood Specialist, who will set up a convenient visit or phone consultation to discuss the provider's areas of interest. Based on this consultation, the Early Childhood Specialist will prepare customized materials for a visit. After the visit, there is continued support via phone calls, e-mail, or additional visits to their program.

For more information on this project or other topics about child care, simply dial 2-1-1 or check out the website at www.211childcare.org. 2-1-1 Child Care is funded by the Department of Social Services. In addition to providing early care professionals with technical assistance and resources, 2-1-1 Child Care helps families find child care arrangements that best meets their needs by educating parents about quality child care and making accessible to them current lists of licensed and licensed-exempt care options in Connecticut.



Connecticut Tops in the Country for Children's Oral Health

Hartford – This fall, the Connecticut Department of Public Health released findings of the 2006-07 oral health survey of children in Connecticut. While the dental caries (decay) rate is high (34%), Connecticut children were found to have less decay experience than other states.

“That’s where the good news ends,” said Dr. Ardell A. Wilson, Director of the State Office of Oral Health. “We surveyed preschool children age 2- to

5- years old and found that one out of every third child had decay experience (a filling and/or untreated decay),” she stated. “One in five preschool children had untreated decay.”

Dental caries (decay) is an infectious disease. It can lead to pain, tooth loss, abscess, and septicemia. It can spread more rapidly in some children than others. “Transmission of the bacteria that causes decay often occurs in infancy, so the key is prevention from the time teeth erupt into the mouth,” said Dr. Wilson.

Children should see a dental provider by age one. An assessment for risk of decay can be made and a preven-

tive regime started, such as good oral hygiene techniques, good diet, fluoride in drinking water, and fluoride varnish application. As children grow older, dental sealants (plastic coating on the tops of molar (back) teeth) are essential to add to the preventive regime as well as routine dental visits as recommended by their dental provider.

For more information, visit the Department of Public Health, Office of Oral Health website at <http://www.ct.gov/dph>.

Excerpted from September 18, 2007 Press Release



(Environmental Risk ...continued from page 5)

- Never vacuum a mercury spill. Contact your state or local health department for proper cleanup procedures.

This information is available as a Tip Sheet or as a Growth Chart in English and Spanish at no cost. Call 800.490.9198 to order.

(Tip sheet: # EPA 100-F-02-004
Growth chart: # EPA 100F-04-012)



Treasure Chest of Sites for Keeping Kids Healthy and Safe

- <http://www.healthychildcare.org/> This American Academy of Pediatrics website has a wealth of information on areas of interest to caregivers, particularly a "What's New" section featuring information on preventing the flu in 2007-08 (with an excellent handout), as well as a wealth of information on Early Care and Education. A link for "Child Care Providers" on the home page

provides access to a free online newsletter, Health and Safety E-News.

- <http://www.healthykids.us/> provides additional health-related resources of interest to parents and caregivers, written in Spanish and English! It is sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/kids/> is the US Fire Administration site for kids. It has numerous free activities and resources for caregivers to use with children for fire safety and prevention efforts.
- <http://www.cpsc.gov/nsn/ChildCare.pdf> This link is an excellent three-page 8"x10" poster that attractively presents Safety

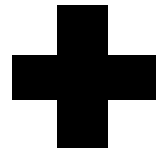
Tips for the home or child care program.

- <http://www.kids.ct.gov/kids/site/default.asp> ConneCTkids is the official State of Connecticut Website for Children and contains an impressive number of events, activities, and resources of interest to children, youth, their parents, and caregivers.
- <http://www.cpsc.gov/nsn/nsn.html> This link will lead you to the Neighborhood Safety Network, which is a doorway to many safety posters for parents and caregivers of newborns.



First Aid and CPR Courses/ Cursos de Primeros Auxilios y RCP

A list of First Aid and CPR Courses approved by the Department of Public Health, including courses in Spanish, is available on the department's website at www.ct.gov/dph. To access this information, click on "PARENTS & CHILDREN", then "CHILD DAY CARE," then "PROVIDER INFO," and finally "APPROVED FIRST AID COURSES" or "APPROVED CPR COURSES FOR CHILD DAY CARE CENTERS."



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