

January 2012
Parent & Child
Activity
Calendar



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 This is the first day of the year. Discuss the meaning of <i>first</i> . For example, breakfast is the <i>first</i> meal of the day.	2 Let your child see you keep your temper when you are angry. Talk about how you feel instead of yelling.	3 Look through a calendar and point out some special days, such as your child's birthday.	4 Take out your child's baby book and look through it with her. Read it and tell her stories about herself.	5 Talk about your child's favorite winter activity; then do it together.	6 Ask your child to tell you the three best things about him.	7 Give your child play dough, a rolling pin and some cookie cutters. Let her cut out "cookies."
8 Look through newspapers, magazines, and catalogs to find pictures of different forms of transportations.	9 Search together for things that are red, blue, green, yellow, etc.	10 Involve your child in a job you have been meaning to do. Organizing toys is a great idea.	11 Cut straws into different lengths. Encourage your child to line them up shortest to longest.	12 Walk together in different ways - slowly, quickly, lightly, heavily, on tip-toes - to different kinds of music.	13 Let your child follow three-step directions, such as "Go inside, take off your shoes and put them in the closet."	14 Ask your child to draw a picture of himself today. Was he feeling happy, sad, confused, angry?
15 Have an indoor picnic. Spread a blanket on the floor and play music. Let your child help choose the menu.	16 Ask your child to stand on one foot. Count how long she can balance. Now have her try the other foot.	17 Have a pretend phone call with your child. Talk about what he did yesterday and what he wants to do tomorrow.	18 Have your child pretend to have a magic carpet that can fly anywhere. Where would she go? What would she see?	19 String a macaroni necklace with your child. Have him count each piece as he strings it.	20 Have your child draw or paint a picture of the place where you live.	21 Draw or scribble to music. Give your child crayons and a large sheet of paper. Put on some favorite music.
22 Tell your child three things that you love about her. Have her tell you three things that she loves about you.	23 Does your library have a list of recommended books for preschoolers? Check out some to read to your child.	24 Cut out shapes from paper (triangle, rectangle, square, circle). Your child can arrange them to form a boat.	25 Go on a color shopping trip. Make a list of colors with your child. Try to find one item of each color in your house.	26 Make a letter tree. Hang new letters from the tree as your child learns them.	27 Ask your child to give you words that rhyme with words you say: <i>clap</i> (tap), <i>walk</i> (talk), <i>cat</i> (pat).	28 Ask your child, "What if your favorite animal lived in your room?"
29 Play a board game as a family this evening.	30 Help your child make a card for a family member. He can draw on the front, and you can write on the inside.	31 Make a pretend post office out of a box. Write a special note to your child and let her find it. Read it together.				

Great Start Collaborative
of Berrien County

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United Way
of Southwest Michigan

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JANUARY
2012



Great Start Collaborative

YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO THE GSC'S NEWS, INFORMATION AND EVENTS.

Great Start Collaborative and Parent Coalition Collects Over 24,000 Diapers

The Great Start Collaborative and Parent Coalition of Berrien County hosted a county-wide diaper drive and surprised their goal by collecting over 24,000 diapers. "We are very grateful for the generosity of our community," said Melissa Church, Parent Liaison, Berrien County Great Start Parent Coalition. "The diaper drive was more successful than we could have ever hoped for and because of that we were able to help even more families in Berrien County."



Local businesses, including all Berrien County Walgreens and Edgewater Banks, Brew Ha Ha, and University Medical Center locations were diaper drop off locations. Benton Harbor, Eau Claire, Galien, and St. Joseph libraries, Benton Harbor-St. Joseph YMCA Preschool, Berrien RESA Administration Center, Blossomland Learning Center, Bridgman Elementary and Middle School, Countryside Academy, EP Clarke Elementary, Lakeshore High School, New Buffalo High School, Northside Child Development Center, St. Joseph High School and many area churches that included Berrien Unitarian Universality Church, Church of the Mediator, 1st Assembly of God, Pilgrim Rest



Baptist Church, Stevensville United Methodist Church, St. Paul's United Church of Christ and St. Peter's United Church of Christ held diaper drives at their locations. Financial donations were also given by area residents.

Diapers were distributed to Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Safe Shelter, Emergency Shelter, the Link Crisis Intervention Center, and home visiting programs that included Berrien RESA Parents as Teachers, Early Head Start, Nurse Family Partnership, and Maternal-Infant Health Program.

"The diaper drive donations have allowed our staff to provide diapers to clients who are facing a temporary budget shortfall," said Cheryl Bury, Nurse Family Partnership Program Supervisor, Berrien County Health Department. "This is a small way to help reduce stress for the young mothers we are serving and help provide a necessary baby item. The diaper drive has allowed us to provide diapers to new moms as we teach about diaper rash and normal newborn care. Without the support from the diaper drive, the Nurse Family Partnership Program would not have diapers to provide for our mothers."

Promote the Building Blocks of Reading

Learning to read doesn't just happen one day. It's the result of many steps you take with your preschooler.

To build a strong foundation for reading, experts recommend that families:

- Familiarize kids with written words. By reading with your child, you show that reading involves looking at printed words (not just pictures).
- Emphasize letters. Point them out in books, on signs and elsewhere. Mention their sounds. ("S says ssss.") Sing the "ABCs" together, too.
- Have fun with words. The word *Sunday* has two syllables (Sun-day). Clap as you say them. Also practice rhyming. Ask, "Do these words rhyme? Why or why not?"
- Practice identifying *phonemes*. These are sounds that make up words. Name words that start the same way, such as *cat* and *car*. Then change a sound, such as from *cat* to *pat*.

Source: "Get Your Preschooler Ready to Read," Scholastic.com, www.scholastic.com/resources/article/get-your-preschooler-ready-to-read.

Preschool Fair

The members of the Saint Joseph MOMS Club are hosting their annual Preschool Fair on Monday, February 6, 2012. The event will take place at First Congregational Church (2001 Niles Avenue, Saint Joseph) from 9-11 in the morning and childcare will be available. The Preschool Fair acts as a one-stop shop for parents, providing in-depth access to the wonderful selection of Saint Joseph and Stevensville preschool options. Public, Parochial, Independent, and nursery school options will be all represented, as well as information regarding parent resources programs provided by the Great Start Collaborative.



The Preschool Fair is open to the general public. It is free for schools to participate and there is no cost for parents to attend. The event is held in a convention format - each school is given a station to interact with prospective families and provide information about their respective intuitions. Each attendee receives a Preschool Fair Program that includes descriptions of all participating schools and a list of the generous sponsors. Questions can be directed to Carolyn Zmrhal at carolynzmrhalsjmc@gmail.com.

Dates to Remember

JANUARY 19, 2011 | Strategic Planning Committee Meeting; 11:30 am; Berrien RESA

JANUARY 19, 2011 | Parenting Education Committee Meeting; 11:30 am; Berrien RESA

JANUARY 24, 2011 | Great Start Parent Coalition Meeting; 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm; Stevensville United Methodist Church



Great Start Collaborative Committees

The Great Start Collaborative Board has broken down into committees. Please feel free to join a committee!

Parenting Education Committee - will be looking at Parenting Education in Berrien County; what there is and what parents are looking for. Next meeting - January 19th at 11:30 am; Berrien RESA

Strategic Planning Committee - will be revising the Great Start Strategic Plan. Next meeting - January 19th at 11:30; Berrien RESA

Communications Committee - will be analyzing local early childhood newsletters and publications to possibly combine into one resource for parents. Next meeting - TBD

Asset #8: Youth as Resources

Assets are 40 key building blocks of development that help youth grow up healthy. The more assets youths have, the more likely they are to succeed. Twenty-eight percent of youth surveyed by Search Institute had the Parent Involvement in Schooling asset in their lives.

Giving Young People Meaningful Roles

Think about a time when you did a project that allowed you to make decisions, have input that others took seriously, and capitalize on your talents and knowledge. How did you feel?

Not only did you probably feel excited and energized but you felt empowered. Even when the project encountered difficult obstacles you were more likely to complete the project when you had an important and meaningful role in it.

That's what this asset is all about: giving young people useful roles. These roles start for children at home. As children grow they have roles in their cultural groups, their schools, their congregations, their clubs, and their community. And children and youth know when those roles are useful and meaningful and when they are not.

Building this asset entails valuing young people's talents, skills, interests, and opinions. It also means setting aside the

old hierarchy that adults know best, youth know some and children are too young to know or contribute anything. When we start seeing children and youth as valuable resources, our young people will start feeling empowered and contribute to our communities, our schools, and our families in meaningful thoughtful ways.

More Help for Parents

Kidstories: Biographies of 20 Young People You'd Like to Know by Jim Delisle, Ph.D. This book profiles 20 kids who are doing things to improve their communities, their schools, and their world. (Published by Free Spirit.)



Important Roles through the Years

Find out what your child's talents, interest, and opinions are, and give her or him important roles in your family, starting on day one.

Infants, particularly, need to be at the center of family life and have their needs met immediately. As they become more mobile, children need to be listened to, given opportunities to explore, develop their interests, and express their thoughts and feelings. Preschool age children can have an active role and vote in family meetings. Throughout elementary and high school families should gradually include children more regularly in family decision making, ask for their ideas about family activities and vacations; and encourage their interests, talents, and opinions.

Tapping an Important Resource

Tips for empowering young people through useful roles:

- Ask your child to teach you something new, such as current slang, a song, or how to surf the Internet.
- Use some of your home projects as learning projects. Build a birdhouse with an interested child. Fix a bike with a mechanically oriented child.
- Ask an artistic youth to draw or paint a portrait of your family or place where you live.
- Ask your child to help plan family outings or reunions.