

# CONNECTIONS

Volume X, Issue I .....A Publication of the Hull Public Schools September 2009

## The Importance of Routines

Whether you are a relaxed, easygoing type of parent who likes to keep things flexible and spontaneous, or love to be super-organized and stick to a pretty tight schedule, some routine is good for all children and families. A good routine caters to the needs of family members and fits well with other priorities. Routines are how families organize themselves to get things done, spend time together and have fun.



Every family has its own unique routines. Routines help family members know who should do what, when, in what order and how often. It makes sense that family life could be chaotic without some routine. But research has shown that there is more to it than that. Routines let your children know what is important to your family. When they are highly meaningful, routines are sometimes referred to as rituals and these play an important role in strengthening shared beliefs and values, and building a sense of belonging and cohesion in families. Maintaining normal daily routines as much as possible can make it easier for children to deal with the stress of events such as the birth of a new child, divorce, or the illness or death of a family member.

### Why are routines are good for children?

\*An organized and predictable home environment helps children feel safe and secure.

\*Routines built around fun, play or time together strengthen relationships between parents and children. Reading a story before bed, for example, can become a special time you spend with your child.

\*Daily routines help set our body clocks - for example, bedtime routines help children's bodies to 'know' when it's time to sleep.

\*Routines are a way of teaching your child ways to stay healthy, like brushing teeth, exercising, or washing hands after using the toilet.

### Why routines are good for parents?

\*When things are busy and hectic, routines can help you feel more organized and more in control, which will make you feel less stressed.

\*A routine will help you complete routine daily tasks efficiently. Routines take effort to maintain, but once established they will let you do things on 'auto pilot' so you can think about other things while you work.

\*As children get better at following a routine by themselves, you can give fewer instructions and nag less because each step of the routine prompts the next step.

A child's temperament plays an important role in how he responds to routine or the lack of it. Some easygoing children can go with the flow, and quickly adapt to a changing environment. Other children are more sensitive, and more easily upset and unsettled by changes to their daily patterns. The same can be said for parents.



Join us on  
**Thursday,  
September 10th**  
for  
**Toe Jam Puppet  
Band**  
at 6:00 p.m.  
on the side lawn  
of the Jacobs  
School

The music concert is geared towards children ages birth to age 6

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Published by Maggie Ollerhead & Joan F. MacDonald

# Hull Early Childhood Advisory Council

## Community Partnerships for Children

### How Parenting Style Can Help Protect Children From Predators

As children grow older they are exposed to more adults without their parents present to supervise. Parents begin to worry how to best help their child learn to protect themselves and not become a victim. Research suggests that parenting style, not scary conversations about strangers (or family friends) will help your child be able to get help if needed.

Use I-messages and natural or logical consequences as punishment. These help children feel safe and loved, keep attachment between parents and children healthy, and encourage positive self-esteem. This results in children being less likely to be victimized and more likely to talk with their parents if they feel something is wrong.

Be an active listener. Listen for children's feelings, connect those feelings to what they are saying, and check to ensure you interpreted the emotions accurately. Helping children identify and express feelings and then showing respect for those feelings makes it more likely that kids will know their feelings are important. This also means a more assertive response when someone attempts to victimize them.

Treat your child's body with respect. Avoid jerking, grabbing or hitting. Be careful with

*Continued on page 3.....*

### From the CPC Coordinator's Desk.....

*By Maggie Ollerhead - mollerhead@town.hull.ma.us*

Usually, at the beginning of the school year I am excited at the opportunity to offer families in need a CPC scholarship. Unfortunately, this year is different. There are no new scholarships to give out. The Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care has frozen all new funding. Fortunately, the families that received scholarships last year will continue to receive assistance. If you feel that your family may qualify for funding in the future, please call or email me to be placed on the centralized waitlist. If you would like further assistance or have questions regarding other types of assistance, please contact our resource and referral agency Community Care for Kids (CCK) at (617) 471-6473.

### Preschool is Exciting and Exhausting



Preschool is an exciting place for little ones, so it's no wonder that they come home tired and cranky! There are lots of toys to play with, new skills to learn, and the stimulation and uncertainty of interacting with peers whose moods, words, and actions are intriguing but somewhat unpredictable.

Then, there's the tension of having to exercise fledgling self-control skills--remembering to sit "criss-cross-applesauce," to follow directions, to refrain from grabbing or poking a neighbor when standing in line, and to ask to use the potty when necessary.

To ease the after-school transition, focus on helping your child refuel. Feed your preschooler as soon as possible after school. Research by Roy Baumeister shows that exercising self-control depletes glucose and makes subsequent self-control more difficult.

"Refueling" means more than food. Think about what kinds of soothing activities help your child refuel. Some preschoolers need quiet time alone to 'decompress,' whereas others need to report in detail everything that happened at school. Many children find it soothing to use a rocking chair or swing or play with water. Reading books or listening to music are other possibilities. Learn your child's unique range of activities and have different ones for each of your children.

*By Ellen Kennedy-Moore for Parenting Press Sept. 2009*

## Hull Family Network

### Note from the HFN Coordinator:

Joan F. MacDonald, [jmacdonald@town.hull.ma.us](mailto:jmacdonald@town.hull.ma.us)

This summer we heard from the Department of EEC that our grant amount was increased slightly during the conference committee thanks to everyone's advocacy. This increase will allow us to be open 4 days a week for 5 group or drop-in times; in addition to being available for both telephone, email or home-visit support for any questions or concerns that your family may have. We will be looking to find a variety of ways to provide occasional parent education workshops, in addition to some family events at free or low cost to families.

By now, you have hopefully opened and read your registration flyer. We are trying a few changes in our scheduling and registration process due to our decrease in staffing/funding. If you missed the lottery day, call or email to see if there are openings or to get added to the waitlist. All families on the waitlist will receive their first choice of group for the second fall session which begins November 2, 2009. Please, feel free to let me know your opinions on how the changes have worked and any thoughts on how we can best serve families in Hull.

### Loving Without Smothering

It's hard to be a parent. Sometimes all the advice from "experts" can make you worry that you're not doing enough. This guilt can make you over-protective and over-directive of your child.

Throughout a child's life, they and you will strive to balance how independent they will be. This balancing act begins at around 8 months when they first learn they can crawl away from you. They enjoy seeing how far they can go, but then quickly become scared thinking "wait, I need her/him." This struggle with independence continues well into adulthood and is the source of many parent-child difficulties.



Give your child a chance to be her own person. When she is a year old, this means giving her a chance to explore her environment: to get stuck crawling under the chair and then to allow her to figure out how to get out. Giving children choices in what they wear, eat and play with allows them to express an opinion in a safe manner when you give age appropriate choices ("Do you want a banana or grapes for snack?").

Don't do things for her that she can do herself. Praise and encourage the effort not always the finished product. Better to let your child learn that she can make some of her throws into the basketball hoop than to pick her up and have her be 100%.

Expect her to take responsibilities for herself, as she is able. This helps her learn to be responsible for her own actions.

*From Growing Together February 2005*

### How to Protect your child, Continued from page 2.....

wrestling or tickling games. Never force a child to hug or kiss someone. Let your child know that no one has the right to touch him in ways that feel uncomfortable (except for health or safety reasons). Arrange for a cue during wrestling/tickling games. Don't tell children to never say "NO" to an adult. There may be a time when it is appropriate to say no to an adult. When a child is telling you no, explain why no isn't an option in this situation and how to say it respectfully if needed, to other adults.



When parents demonstrate respect for children's bodies and emotions, kids are more likely to be cooperative with reasonable adults, and capable of talking about feelings and problem-solving. They feel more confident about themselves and their self-worth. They also feel more confident about a secret that makes them feel bad. If they were to be victimized, they would be more likely to discuss the problem with an adult they trusted.

Experts also suggests that we talk to our kids about other adults that they can confide in. Help them identify people they trust so that if they are ever approached by a relative or family friend and are confused about whether to tell you, they have other resources.

*Adapted from Parenting Press*

# HULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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events and information at  
[www.town.hull.ma.us](http://www.town.hull.ma.us)  
click on the Hull Schools link

This newsletter is a  
collaboration of  
Hull Family Network  
&  
Community Partnerships  
for Children

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Education and Care

## What is the Hull Family Network?

The Hull Family Network supports all parents and caregivers who have children prenatal through age three. Our goal is to help parents create and maintain a healthy family environment as well as to promote family well being through parent education and community support.

Funded by the Mass. Dept. of Early Education and Care through a grant to the Hull Public Schools, the Hull Family Network provides playgroups, parent education workshops, parent support groups, family activities, and information on parenting and community resources. By providing family recreational activities and playgroups, we hope to help parents build connections that will extend beyond the HFN Center and be a support to them. By providing parent education workshops, support groups, and having an extensive parenting lending library, we hope to help parents enhance their child-rearing skills.

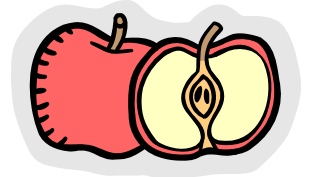
Our programs are free to all residents of the town of Hull who are pregnant or have children through the age of three. Most of our programs are offered at our center which is located at 180 Harborview Rd. We are open Monday-Friday 8:30- 2:30, and Tuesday until 7:30 p.m. and are always happy to meet a new family.

## Apple Smiles Recipe

*Make a fun snack with this  
apple smiles recipe.*

*Ingredients:*

- ◆ Apples
- ◆ Peanut Butter
- ◆ Miniature Marshmallows



*Instructions:*

Cut apples into wedges. Smear peanut butter on one side of 2 wedges. Stick a few marshmallows on the peanut butter on one of the apple wedges and top with the other apple wedge - peanut butter side down. When you look at this it looks like a smile (the red part of the apple are the lips and the marshmallows are the teeth!)

