

# CONNECTIONS

Volume IX, Issue III.....A Publication of the Hull Public Schools..... October 2008

## What Scares Children: An Age by Age Guide

Most parents have had the experience of their children suddenly being afraid of something; whether it's the vacuum cleaner, strangers, bugs or any other seen or unknown thing that they can imagine. While it can be hard to reassure children, know that it is a common problem in all children's development.

Fears are a normal part of every child's experience and often reflect an increased awareness of the world around them. Fears don't necessarily end with childhood. Most of us know at least one perfectly rational adult who has some unexplained fear.

**Birth to 12 months:** Children's earliest fears are based on sensitivity to their environment. Children who are afraid of loud noises or vacuums need soft voices, soothing touches and gradual introductions to new experiences. Separation anxiety arises during times that infants realize that their parents are distinct from themselves and can leave.

**1-3 years:** As babies grow into toddlers, they still fear being separated from you as they become more independent and are able to move away from you. Support your child's level of

sensitivity with strangers and new situations by not pushing them to join immediately and asking people to respect their wishes around touch. Children often become afraid of the water, taking baths, the dark and other events in their daily life. Explaining activities in advance, listening to their fears and allowing



gradual exposure all help to ease a child's fear. Giving them the words to describe what they are feeling can also help. Children at this age are often just learning "feeling words" so giving them the correct words can help them feel in control.

**3-5 years:** Starting around the age of three, children's fears reflect their developing imaginations. Preschoolers have difficulty distinguishing fantasy from reality, the witches in fairy tales and the monsters in movies can appear menacingly real. Reading a book that covers this topic or allowing the child to act out their fears such as playing with a doctor kit can help relieve them of their fears. For children who are more sensitive, you may need to prescreen a movie even if it is a known children's company.

**Halloween Fears:** Since the dark is a common fear, head out early and carry a flashlight. This also helps you to avoid the scary costumes of the older children.



**Happy Halloween**  
**Be sure to check inside for all our fun October Events**

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*Published by Maggie Ollerhead & Joan F. MacDonald*

# Hull Early Childhood Advisory Council

## Community Partnerships for Children

### Increase Preschooler's Attention Span

Children (like nearly everyone else) find it easier to pay attention to activities that interest them. Choose something your child enjoys. Then look for ways to keep her focused on it for longer and longer periods of time.

Staying focused on an activity will be an important skill for school success. So will the ability to turn an area of interest into a project. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- ◆ Extend your story time. Instead of a short picture book, try reading a longer story or a beginning readers' chapter book over a period of nights. Each night, remind your child of where you are in the story. Then explain that you are going to read on to find out what happened to the characters. One great series of books to try is the Henry and Mudge series by Cynthia Rylant.
- ◆ Work together on a jigsaw puzzle. Try one with about 25 pieces. Move on to more complicated puzzles once your child masters these. Remember, there is no need to finish putting one together in one sitting! Attention span also involves coming back to a project after you have put it aside.
- ◆ Try a multi-step art project such as making a clay animal. Help your preschooler shape an animal out of clay. Allow the clay to dry and harden. On another day, let your child paint the animal. To go a step further, let the paint dry. Then help your child apply fur or eyes using glue and yarn or bits of paper.

Adopted from *The Parent Institute*, 10/08

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

By Maggie Ollerhead - [mollerhead@town.hull.ma.us](mailto:mollerhead@town.hull.ma.us)

There is still a limited amount of scholarship money available to families of preschool children living in Hull. To qualify for a scholarship parents/guardians must: Be a resident of Hull. Have a preschool age child. Work either full or part-time and be income eligible based on family size.

Family Size	Yearly Income
2	\$30,378
3	\$37,526
4	\$44,674
5	\$51,822
6	\$58,970

Income Eligibility is determined by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts sliding fee scale. Family income should fall at or below state level.

*Children may receive a subsidy for full or part-day scholarships at several community programs. If you believe your income falls within these guidelines, kindly contact Maggie Ollerhead at 925-4400 x1120*

### Getting to School On Time

Parents can start some initiate routines to ensure your child is at school on time. Waking up and getting out of the house early can be a difficult adjustment for many children, especially if your child is used to sleeping in. There is no magic wand to turn your sleepyhead into an early bird. But routines can help your child make it to school on time every day.

It's helpful to:

- ◆ Do as much as possible the night before. This includes setting out clothes, backpacks and even breakfast foods that do not need to be refrigerated. If your child takes lunch to school, pack it and place it in the refrigerator. Leave yourself a note if you might forget it's in there.
- ◆ Evaluate bedtimes and wake-up times. Is your child truly rested when he wakes? If not, you may need to set an earlier bedtime. If your child rushes through each morning, despite your best efforts, you may also need to wake him 15 minutes earlier.

Adopted from *The Parent Institute*, October 2008



## Hull Early Childhood Advisory Council

### Hull Family Network

#### Note from the HFN Coordinator:

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

Thank you all for being patient with us as we moved in to our new site. We are getting settled and planning for fun family events.

Please pre-registration for all events so we can adequately plan for both supplies and resources. (There may be an occasional event that is too full or has been cancelled due to lack of pre-registration.) Also, we are always looking for new ideas and options for services, so if you have a skill to share or an idea that you think others may enjoy let us know.

We will be adding a new portion to the newsletter highlighting resources and service providers that may be of interest to your family. We hope that you find the information helpful.

As always, if you are in need of a particular service please call or email me for help in finding it.

### School Readiness

Many parents who have had a child leave the family network and move on to preschool have reported how important the structure and routines learned at the family network have helped their child adapt successfully to preschool. There are many things as parents that you can do with your child at any age that will eventually lead to future school success.

1. Be consistent in your enforcement of rules, but be certain that your rules can be defined, are reasonable and enforceable. Rules in the home help children feel more secure and comfortable when they meet rules in the school and community.
2. Permit your child to be wrong, make mistakes and even fail sometimes. Children learn by doing. Making mistakes is one basis for future independence, self-direction and intelligent decision-making. Help guide them to correct mistakes by taking over options for corrections.
3. Keep your promises. Children develop cause-and-effect relationships when they know that they can anticipate the consequences.
4. Resist the temptation to over-structure children's free time with lessons, sports or other activities. Children need lots of free time to just play and explore.



#### Fall Harvest Festival

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#### Market at the Harbor

Friday, October 17, 2008

2:30-6:30 p.m.

Destination Community Development is planning to have hay rides & cookie decorating for kids sponsored by Weinberg's Bakery. A scary tale told by someone from the library. A pie contest, a pumpkin carving demonstration and contest, pony rides, a giant pumpkin display with photographer Lindsey Buchleitner and more!



#### South Shore Women's

#### Resource Center

Tel: 508-746-2664

24 hour hotline: 508-746-2664 or 888-746-2664

The So. Shore Women's Resource Center, a program of Southeast Regional Network, is a non-profit community-based agency that assists victims of domestic violence in 17 towns in Plymouth County. The free and confidential services are focused both on prevention and intervention and include: 24 hr. toll free hotline, emergency safe home services, individual and group counseling, older women's services, SAFEPLAN court advocacy, advocacy at local police departments, child and adolescent programs as well as training and outreach.

*Adapted from Growing Together August 2008*

# HULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Check our website for additional  
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

Sponsored by grants from the  
Massachusetts Department of Early  
Education and Care

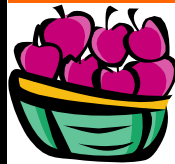
## What is the Hull Family Network?

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 Road. 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.

## Use autumn game to develop your child's language skills



This activity will introduce your preschooler to the season of fall. Plus she'll use her feeling senses and language skills.

First, talk about autumn. Get library books on the seasons. As you read together, discuss colored leaves, falling acorns and other items that indicate fall.

Collect fall-related items: leaves, acorns, pine cones, apples, nuts and even mini pumpkins.

Put these in a box. Cut a hole in the top just large enough for your child's hand.

Let your child put her hand in the box and feel the items. Have her describe what she feels. Let her guess what each item is.

You can play this game with household objects too. Or let your child put items in a box for you.

