

Early Connections

A Newsletter for the Addison Early Childhood Community
Winter 2011 - 2012

VERMONT BIRTH TO THREE PROJECT: Relationships, the heart of quality infant toddler care


A group of funders with a long-standing commitment to Vermont's children are looking at a new project focusing on the early years – birth to three. Science tells us early childhood is a time when the brain is literally building itself from the ground up and we must invest in the very early years. When children have enriching experiences and responsive relationships, they get off to a good start, establishing a strong foundation for future development and success in school.

But not all children have such opportunity, whether due to violence, poverty or other chronic challenges that scientists call “toxic stress.” If we want our children to have that opportunity, we must increase access to high quality caregivers for the very young.

The Birth to Three Project will work toward this goal by focusing on home-based childcare providers. A high percentage of Vermont's infants and toddlers are with home-based providers. Those providers are critical to the well being of our youngest children and an important resource to reach parents. The Project builds on existing relationships and trust between providers and families and providers and their peers.

In Addison County, we are fortunate to have Starting Points Network Coordinator Gerri Barrows as our Birth to Three Mentor. Gerri will work with providers one on one to achieve their goals. Goals could be writing an IPDP, working towards participation in STARS or increasing the number of stars, supporting the achievement of a CDA credential or national accreditation. Gerri is also available to visit programs to model techniques and/or offer assistance in improving one's program environment.

“The Birth to Three Mentoring Project meets providers where they presently are professionally. I am offering mentoring to achieve any credential to meet goals providers have set or want to set.” says Gerri. **If you are interested in working with Gerri, you can contact her at:** kidsfirstdhcc@yahoo.com or 453-3707.



**WISHING YOU A PEACEFUL AND NURTURING
HOLIDAY FULL OF LOVING PRESENCE.
THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO
FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES!
YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

Addison County Child Care Services

81 Water St., Middlebury, Vt. 05753

Phone: 802-388-4304

Fax: 802-388-3063

Protective Services/Family Support:

Doumina Noonan

Email: FS-PS@mjcvt.org**Resource Specialist:** Amethyst PeasleeEmail: resource@mjcvt.org**Subsidy Specialist:** Jane ReillyEmail: subsidy@mjcvt.org**Referral Specialist:** Ginny SinclairEmail: referral@mjcvt.org**Food Program:** Susie Pidgeon388-2853 or cacfp@mjcvt.org**Schoolage Programs:** Anne Gleason388-2853 - schoolage@mjcvt.org**RESOURCES FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS:**

Need your Fire Extinguisher checked? Drop it off at **Auto Paints Plus** on Mondays, pick it up on Tuesday afternoon. Cost \$10—20 depending on what needs to be done. **388-9019**

D & M Fire & Safety Equipment will come to your program to inspect and tag your Fire Extinguishers for \$35.00 per visit. **434-5005**

Helpful Websites:

- ◆ <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/> (social/emotional dev.)
- ◆ <http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/> (literacy)
- ◆ **Northern Lights:** <http://northernlights.vsc.edu/>
- ◆ **The Child & Family WebGuide:** www.cfw.tufts.edu
- ◆ <http://www.safekids.org>
- ◆ www.Bornlearning.org
- ◆ www.familyeducation.com
- ◆ www.zerotothree.org
- ◆ www.commercialfreechildhood.org/
- ◆ **www.VermontFamily Network.org** is a statewide network of support and information for families who have a child with special needs or disabilities, and the professionals who work with them.
- ◆ **www.redleafinstitute.org:** information & resources for Family Child Care, including taxes and deductions

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- ◆ **CHILDREN'S INTEGRATED SERVICES (CIS):** If you have concerns about your child or a child in your care, birth—3 years old, or if you have concerns about the social emotional development of a child birth—5 years old, please contact the **CIS Team at 388-3171.**
- ◆ **YOUR EARLY EDUCATION OFFICE:** If you are concerned that your preschool age child or a child you care for has a developmental delay, contact your local **Early Education** office. They can answer questions and provide support/resources and guidance for talking with parents:
 - * **Addison Central/ Middlebury: 382-1760**
 - * **Addison Northeast: Bristol: Carol Birdsall/Cindy Kuhns: 453-3674**
 - * **Addison Northwest: Vergennes: Deb Angier: 877-2867**
- ◆ **VERMONT'S CHILD PROTECTION LINE:** Call 1-800-649-5285 — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to report suspected child abuse or neglect .
- ◆ **CHILD CARE CONSUMER LINE:** To report concerns about a child care provider, call 1-800-540-7942 or go to www.brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us; click on 'Contact' in the upper right corner.
- ◆ **PARENTS' STRESS LINE:** 1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373) - for more information see p. 11
- ◆ **DIAL 2-1-1** for free and confidential information and referrals for help with food, housing, employment, health care, counseling and more. 211 is a service of the United Way.
- ◆ **HOSPICE VOLUNTEER SERVICES:** For help in supporting children and families with the loss or terminal illness of a loved one, please call Hospice Volunteers at 388-4111.
- ◆ For a copy of **ADDISON COUNTY COMMUNITY RESOURCES** contact Addison County Child Care Services at: 388-4304
- ◆ **WIC/Health Dept.—388-4644**
- ◆ **WOMENSAFE HOTLINE:** 388-4205 or 1-800-388-4205; business office 388-9180; TTY: 388-4305

STARTING POINTS NETWORK NEWS

Bristol/Middlebury/Vergennes Network: 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month:

January 9th and February 13th: Working on network goals, to include: keeping up on Union movement, doing some taking care of me incentives and appreciation, training on navigating the food program computer system more effectively, and working on computer skills.

NEW! 4th Monday: Curriculum Development Support for Home Child Care Providers

Provider Leaders: *Michelle Sherwin 623-6476 and Gerri Barrows 453-3707*

Meetings take place from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Gerri's

NEW! There will be Orwell Group Meetings; watch for more information.

Addison County Directors Network:

T. Dec. 13th at 3 pm at the Parent/Child Center - discussion regarding allocation of Starting Points funds; setting agenda for January meeting

W. Jan. 11th at 6:30 pm at the Parent/Child Center - discussion with Union Organizers Tiffany Silliman and Kristin Warner regarding Vermont Early Educators United—open to all providers.

Coordinators: *Jenne Morton, College St. Children's Center 388-2401*

SuWhite, Quarry Hill School 388-7297

Brandon: Last Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM @ the Brandon Fire Department

Provider Leaders: *Tracy Bruce 247 - 5427 Call for details.*

All Child Care Providers (Home and Center) are invited to Starting Points Network meetings. Network meetings offer time to share the challenges and joys of providing early care and education with others who truly understand. Each group is free to pursue its own definition of support. Newcomers are always welcome! Sponsored by a Starting Points grant from Child Care Services Division in Waterbury.

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS—CONGRATULATIONS!



For their achievements in the STARS Step Ahead Recognition System:

ACSU Early Education Program—5 Stars

Starksboro Coop Preschool—4 Stars

Jeanne Bergeron— Family Child Care Provider, Brandon—2 Stars

For their Achievements in the Northern Lights Career Ladder:

,Melinda Pearson—teacher, College St. Children's Center—Level IV-A certificate

Tiffany Wilbur—teacher, College St. Children's Center—Level IV-A certificate



Kaplan Early Learning Company now offers discounts for Vermont programs participating in Vermont's STARS Step Ahead Recognition System . Receive discounts on purchases and shipping; contact Paige Gorman at 1-800-334-2014 x5023 or pgorman@kaplanco.com to set up a custom MY KAPLAN ACCOUNT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Classes are open to both early care and education providers and parents, and take place at Mary Johnson Children's Center in Middlebury, unless indicated otherwise. Please pre-register by contacting Amethyst at: 388-4304 or resource@mjcvt.org

NURTURING EARLY LITERACY

CCV Spring Semester 3 credit hybrid class

The foundations of early literacy are embedded in children's earliest experiences in their world, via social and emotional engagement and language. In this course we will develop a common understanding of the theory and practice of emergent literacy, from birth through age 5. How do sensory exploration, music, movement, and the visual arts provide the means for children to communicate and make meaning of the world around them? How can we as teachers use the interests and strengths of children to develop individualized, meaningful literacy opportunities? Using the *Cycle of Inquiry*, we will practice developing curriculum to enhance children's language development, and their ability to understand and express their thoughts and feelings through a variety of forms such as paint, clay, music, movement and social interaction. We will discuss ways to embed and infuse literacy in a child-centered, play-based environment.

Course Objectives:

- **Understand the theory and practice of emergent literacy in children to age 5.**
- **Select and assess children's literature for quality of text, illustration, age-appropriateness, early literacy potential and anti-bias qualities.**
- **Discuss the ways in which play supports the development of symbolic thinking and provides the foundation for children's emergent literacy.**
- **Discuss the roles of the teacher, the environment and documentation in supporting children's emergent literacy.**
- **Observe and record children's play to inform the development of literacy-based curriculum based on children's interests.**
- **Discuss and implement the ways in which various materials, i.e., the "*100 Languages of Children*", support children's emergent literacy.**
- **Use multiple forms of documentation to analyze children's explorations and theories.**
- **Implement a variety of approaches to teaching literacy through the development of projection plans/lesson plans that correlate to *Vermont's Early Learning Standards*.**

This class is offered as a hybrid. Weekly online participation is expected with an additional **3 face to face sessions in Middlebury on Saturday Jan. 21, March 17 and May 5th from 9am - 2pm**. If you are interested in taking this class, you should apply for funding through VSAC and/or CDD as soon as possible. For providers in Addison County, additional funding may be available through the Addison County Early Childhood Council.

Susan Torncello, UVM

Amethyst Peaslee, Resource Specialist

**Please register through CCV at 802-388-3032 or online at www.ccv.edu
??'s about the class? Contact Amethyst at 388-4304 or resource@mjcvt.org**

**MOVING AND LEARNING:
SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPING BRAIN**
THURSDAYS JANUARY 5, 12, 19 6:30—8:30

Recent brain research reveals more and more benefits of physical activity and shows why it is essential for brain development; moderate to vigorous physical activity creates a cascade of beneficial hormones and neurotransmitters, some of which act like Miracle Gro for the brain while others create focus and calming. This applies to brains of any age.

This series provides strategies and resources for infusing intentional physical movement throughout the day to help ease transitions, promote body awareness and develop healthy lifelong habits. We will look at the assessment of common actions such as throwing, catching and kicking as well as discuss the impact of physical activity on stress and anxiety. Music and movement in particular are essential for optimal brain development in young children and help provide a foundation for literacy and math as well as healthy physical and social emotional development. **Participants will receive music cd's and other resources to help them quickly put their learning into action.** Wear comfortable clothing and be prepared to move and learn!

Amethyst Peaslee, Resource Specialist CDA # 1,2,3

**THE 3 R'S OF INFANT/TODDLER CARE:
RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIVE, REFLECTIVE**
Saturday January 7th 8:30 AM—3:30 PM
Lunch Provided Snowdate: Feb. 4th

What is attunement? How do we provide responsive care that meets the needs of individual children? This 6 hour session will consider the various factors that influence responsive care, including an understanding of child development, sensitivity to the family and culture of each child, self-reflection, and observation and careful reading of children's cues.

Sharon Adams, Early Head Start Advanced Specialized Care CDA # 3, 8

**UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO THE
SEXUAL BEHAVIOR OF CHILDREN (URSBC)**
Saturday January 21 8:30—11:30 AM Snowdate: Jan. 28th

URSBC is designed to help adults understand children's sexual behavior. It describes the continuum of behaviors ranging from normal to yellow, red, and black flag behaviors. Ways of responding to prevent habituation and to teach children healthy boundaries and empathy for others are addressed. Since URSBC encompasses adolescent behavior, as well as that of young children, it is flexible and relevant for educators, professionals, and parents/care givers of children who are at risk of sexual behavior problems.

Karen Holz, Prevent Child Abuse VT CDA #1 & 3 Advanced Specialized Care

BOOKMAKING
Thursday February 2nd 6:30—8:30 PM

Join artist Aurora Davidson in this bookmaking session designed for those who work with schoolage children. Participants will learn several styles of books to make with children. Methods can be adapted for working with younger children. **Aurora Davidson CDA # 2, 3**

PRINCIPLES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

3 Saturdays - Feb. 11th, March 3rd, April 7th 8:30 AM—12:30 PM

Snowdates: Feb. 18, March 10, April 14

This Northern Lights Level II module focuses on the relationship between child development and the learning environment. It includes onsite support and an observation of the participant and is designed so that participants will acquire the knowledge and skills needed to:

- ◆ use child development theory and research to identify the essential components of inclusive early childhood (birth- 5 years) learning environments.
- ◆ create inclusive learning environments that are responsive to the needs, strengths and interests of children.
- ◆ understand and recognize the typical and atypical development of young children.
- ◆ use space, interactions, schedules and materials to construct an environment that encourages play, exploration and learning.
- ◆ describe how children acquire knowledge through play, interactions and documentation
- ◆ use observation and documentation to create and adapt the learning environment.
- ◆ use the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS) as a guide for curriculum planning.

Heather Duhamel Northern Lights Level II CDA # 2, 3, 7, 8

ECO HEALTHY CHILDCARE

Thursday February 16th 6:30—8:30 PM

Eco Healthy Child Care is a national program that partners with child care professionals to eliminate or reduce environmental health hazards found in child care programs. EHCC supports child care providers as they make simple choices that benefit the health and well-being of all children in their care. Participants will gain an overview of the program and information on how to participate and begin taking low and no cost steps to create healthier environments for children in their care.

Amethyst Peaslee CDA # 1 For more information visit: www.cehn.org/chcc

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

Saturday March 10th 8:30—11:30 AM

This **new 3-hour interactive training** is designed to help child care providers overcome difficulties when making reports to the Vermont Department for Children and Families about suspected child sexual abuse, and to help adults recognize boundary violations and pre-offending behaviors before they result in child sexual abuse. Teaching methods used include video, role-playing, brain storming, scenarios to practice responding to children and adults, and discussion. This training includes:

- ◆ examples of common boundary violations, grooming and other pre-offending behaviors;
- ◆ myths and facts about those who sexually abuse children;
- ◆ bystander roles and issues;
- ◆ skills development via role-playing on when and how to confront boundary violations and pre-offending behavior;
- ◆ children's normal sexual behavior and signs of abuse.
- ◆ barriers to reporting suspected child abuse;
- ◆ mandated reporting and ways of coping with community fall- out after reports are made;

Karen Holz Prevent Child Abuse VT CDA #1,5,8 Advanced Specialized Care

USING OBSERVATIONS TO DEVELOP CURRICULUM

Thursdays March 1, 8 and 15 6:30—8:30 PM

In the STARS Program Practices Arena, points can be achieved by providing documentation that shows observations of children are used to help develop program curriculum. Join STARS coordinator and former MJCC Lead Teacher, Johanna Vaczy, for this series on how to develop and extend curriculum based on children's interests and strengths.

Johanna Vaczy CDA # 2,3,5,7

GARDENING WITH CHILDREN

Tuesday March 27th 6:30—8:30

Get ready to garden with Suzanne Young, Addison County's NOFA-VT (National Organic Farmers' Association) Farm to Community Mentor. You will learn practical tips for pre-garden planning, soil preparation, developmentally appropriate expectations for children in the garden as well as ideas for extending your gardening experience with children and meeting early learning standards through gardening activities. **CDA # 1, 2**

PAPERMAKING

Wednesday April 18 6:30—8:30 PM

Artist Aurora Davidson will share a variety of papermaking techniques as well as ideas for using pressed plant materials in collage. Appropriate for those who work with toddlers—schoolagers **CDA # 2**

DANCING WITH THE STARS



Are you interested in participating in the STARS program but not finding the time to work on your application? Do you need some extra support in understanding the process and completing your application? Join Family Child Care Providers Gerri Barrows and Michelle Sherwin along with Resource Specialist, Amethyst Peaslee, for a series of STARS work sessions. STARS coordinator LouAnn Beninati will also lend support and clarification. We will work on one arena per session. Come to all or just the arena with which you need help.

- ◆ **Monday April 2: Arena 2– Staff Qualifications and Professional Development**—Learn how to write your IPDP online on the Bright Futures Information website.
- ◆ **Monday April 9: Arena 3 - Families and Communities Demystified**...brainstorm and receive support and resources for creating and hosting Family Evenings in your program.
- ◆ **Monday April 30: Arena 4 - Program Practices** - review self-assessment tools, including the Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale, learn about the self-assessment process, having a STARS assessment and how to receive support and mentoring throughout the process.
- ◆ **Monday May 7: Arena 5 - Administration** - Learn about an independently authorized operations budget and how to create one.

In addition to these work sessions, you may want to participate in STARS coordinator Johanna Vaczy's series on how to develop curriculum based on observations; see details at top of this page.



M A T C H

The purpose of creating the *MATCH Network* in Vermont is to enhance the competency, professional growth and satisfaction of individual practitioners, and to promote program quality through customized support for effective practices. These changes will positively impact the children and families in their care.

This will be accomplished by a network of professionals who provide quality mentoring, consulting, coaching, technical assistance and information to professionals – and those seeking to be professionals, in the field of early childhood and afterschool services across Vermont.

A *MATCH Professional* is a qualified professional with the knowledge, skills and dispositions¹ to give individualized support to programs and professionals (or those entering the field), in early childhood or afterschool programs. *MATCH Professionals* work to support the process of change through:

- ◆ observation and reflection,
- ◆ assistance in planning and goal setting
- ◆ helping to solve problems
- ◆ providing information and resources and
- ◆ responsive relationship building

¹Knowledge, and skills may be content specific, such as knowledge of regulations, infectious diseases or grant writing; or skills in implementing play-based routines, toddler room arrangement or developing a program evaluation. The MATCH network is multidisciplinary, including professionals with a broad range of knowledge and skills across many disciplines. MATCH professionals share common positive dispositions and competencies that enable them to effectively customize support to individuals and programs using a variety of strategies.

LITTLE VOICES FOR HEALTHY CHOICES

The ability to keep a steady beat is linked to the development of adequate linguistic abilities. It helps children tune into the rhythm or cadence of language. Steady beat is also an organizer for the child’s sensory system. The ability to keep a steady beat should be in place by the age of 2. However, research shows only 10% of today’s kindergarteners can keep a steady beat!

Little Voices for Healthy Choices was a year long initiative focusing on Brain and Motor Development, Music, Movement, Nutrition and Sleep for children from birth through three years of age, their families, caregivers and communities. You can learn more about the importance of music and movement for brain development as well as learn songs which support the development of steady beat, by going to: www.ehsnrc.org/Activities/

ARE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP?

Domestic violence crosses all cultural and socio-economic boundaries. In every community, some of our sisters, coworkers, friends, and neighbors experience the abusive and controlling behaviors of their partners. Children who live in homes where one parent or parent figure is abusive are also affected, even if they never “see” an episode of violence. Children in homes where domestic violence occurs are physically abused or seriously neglected at a rate 1500% higher than the national average in the general population. The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse suggests that domestic violence may be the single major precursor to child abuse and neglect *fatalities* in this country. Also, girls living in homes where their mothers experience abuse are 6.5 times more likely to be sexually assaulted by their fathers/father figures than are girls from non-violent homes. Children also suffer from many emotional, physical and psychosomatic symptoms when living with violence perpetrated on their mothers. Domestic violence touches all of us, and it affects our community. No one should feel alone. Resources and support are available for those who experience domestic violence. Below are a few guiding questions that can help determine if you or someone you care about is experiencing domestic violence.

Do you feel nervous or fearful in your relationship? Are you afraid to say “No” to sex? Are you criticized or humiliated in front of other people? Does your partner check up on you or question you about what you do when not with him/her? Are you made to feel like you are wrong, stupid, crazy, or inadequate? Are you told what to wear, or how to do your hair? Has your partner taken your car keys or controlled your money? Have you been subjected to reckless driving? If you answered yes to any of the questions above, you could be in an abusive relationship, or a relationship that may become abusive. Remember, you don’t deserve to be abused, no matter what.

For confidential support, assistance and information call VT’s statewide domestic violence hotline 1-800-228-7395, or in Addison County and Rochester, call 388-4205/1-800-388-4205. Anonymous calls accepted. Remember, the first call may be the hardest, but everyone deserves to live life free of fear and control.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: HOW CAN WE HELP?

- ◆ Speak up when a friend is abusive to his partner.
- ◆ Work for full equality between women and men in society and in personal relationships.
- ◆ Don’t buy toys which stereotype genders.
- ◆ Don’t allow bullying; teach children to speak out against it.
- ◆ Unplug boys and girls from violent media.
- ◆ Promote good sports etiquette.
- ◆ Hire coaches committed to non-violence.
- ◆ Encourage athletic activities that promote cooperation, fun, physical health and camaraderie.
- ◆ Teach children how to settle conflicts peacefully.
- ◆ Recognize that verbal and emotional cruelty is also violence.
- ◆ Understand that love does not involve control or ownership.
- ◆ Remember: anger is a feeling, violence is an action.
- ◆ Do not express feelings with fists.
- ◆ Teach children effective, respectful, ways to express frustration, sadness and anger.
- ◆ We are all role models. Be nurturing, loving and caring.
- ◆ Do not belittle, humiliate or hit children.
- ◆ Teach children to communicate clearly in relationships, and that “no” really does mean “no”.
- ◆ Never excuse behavior by saying “boys will be boys”.

FREE COMMUNITY DINNERS—ALL ARE WELCOME!

Every **Friday night at 5 PM at the Congregational Church Fellowship Hall.**

FREE COMMUNITY LUNCHESES—ALL ARE WELCOME!

**11:30 am—1 pm Mondays at St. Stephen's
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at the Charter House Dining Hall**

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN Supplemental Food Program (WIC)

Woman and children who meet income and health or nutrition guidelines are eligible for WIC. Fathers and foster parents may apply for children who are in their care. If your family income is below 185 % of the federal poverty income guidelines, or if you are enrolled in Medicaid/Dr Dynosaur or VHA, you are considered Income-eligible for WIC. In addition to providing healthy foods, WIC provides nutrition counseling, breastfeeding support, health education, and connections to other community resources. Call **388-4644**.

THE COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM (CSEFP) is a federal nutrition program administered by the Vermont Foodbank. Every month, approximately 4,000 boxes of food, each worth about \$50, are distributed to income eligible senior citizens and families with young children. More boxes are now available to eligible Vermonters. Call the Foodbank toll free at 1-800-214-4648 for more details, outreach materials, or a free pre-screening. Please spread the word in your community about this important nutrition resource!

DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY—FREE BOOK!

Would you like to have more books in your home that your child loves to look at and hear you read? A local organization, Addison County Readers, Inc., sponsors a program that mails a **free book each month** to the homes of registered children. There is no cost to the family and the books are theirs to keep. The program is called Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and is for children from birth to 5 years of age who live Addison County. If you have more than one preschooler, each child can be registered for the Imagination Library and receive a different, age-appropriate book each month. For more information or to register online go to: **www.addisoncountyreaders.org**

THE PARENTS' STRESS LINE is available in Vermont to parents, professionals, and community members for parenting support, resources and referrals. **What types of issues do people call about?** People call for a variety of different reasons—some are having a particularly difficult day with a child and just need a listening ear, for some it's an ongoing problem and they are wondering where to turn next for more professional assistance. Often, calls have come because of the many stresses of being a single parent or difficulties dealing with a former partner. Sometimes people call because they want to find out where the nearest parent education programs are located. Or they call because they don't want to abuse their children anymore and are looking for help. **Is this a counseling service?** The support team is available to provide a listening ear, resources and referrals, but they are not trained counselors. **The Stress Line is open Monday - Friday from 9AM - 5PM.** The phone number is **1-800-CHILDREN (1-800-244-5373)** you can also e-mail us at: **pcavt@pcavt.org**

WHAT'S HAPPENING

STORY TIMES--check w/ your library for days & times of story hours & special events.

RECREATION

- **Bristol** for information **453-5885** or visit **www.bristolrec.org**
- **Middlebury** for information **388-8104** or **388-4041**
- **Vergennes** contact **Tara Brooks @877-1159 T&W, 8 am -12 pm** or **recreation@vergennes.org**

PLAYGROUPS---The Addison County Parent/Child Center will be sponsoring **free** play-groups for children birth to 6 and accompanying adult. The Play Group calendar follows the school calendar and snow day closings. For info call 388-3171

Bristol

Tuesdays 9:30-11:00
Baptist Church

Middlebury

Tuesdays 9:30-11:00
Memorial Baptist Church

Vergennes

Wednesdays 9:30-11:00
Congregational Church

MIDDLEBURY—AUTISM SUPPORT GROUP (usually) meets the last Tuesday of the month from 7—8:30 PM at the Ilsley Library Community Room in Middlebury. This low-key support group for parents and caregivers of children on the autism spectrum offers support and sharing of resources. For more information call 989-3081.

AUTISM SUPPORT DAILY is an online parent-led support group open to parents, families and friends of those on the spectrum. New members are always welcome.

www.autismsupportdaily.com

VERGENNES AREA RESCUE SQUAD holds “fitting station” for care seats hours on the first **Thursday of each month from 3:00-6:00 pm** and on the **third Saturday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm**. Call **877-3683** for more information.

The VERMONT FAMILY NETWORK (VFN) is the merged organization of **Parent to Parent of VT** and the **VT Parent Information Center (VPIC)**. Vermont Family Network provides information, support, and advocacy for children and adults with special needs and promotes family-centered policies and practices. **1-800-800-4005** or **www.VermontFamilyNetwork.org**

Great resource for parents and practitioners!! **The VERMONT FAMILY NETWORK (VFN)** provides families of individuals with Autism and the people who support them with family centered, accessible information, appropriate referrals and assistance. We can assist families and individuals with:

- ♦ phone support
- ♦ information and help navigating complex systems of care
- ♦ answering questions, and connecting them with resources

www.vermontfamilynetwork.org/i-need-help-with/developmental-disabilities/autism

CHILDREN'S INTEGRATED SERVICES: If you have concerns about your child or a child in your care, birth—3 years old, or if you have concerns about the social emotional development of a child birth—5 years old, please contact the **CIS Team at 388-3171**.

GIVE THE GIFT OF OPEN-ENDED PLAY

Giving gifts to children usually means buying manufactured toys at a store. Here is an alternative gift idea that you can easily put together. Shoebox gifts are collections of small, familiar items that are organized around a play theme and presented in an appealing way. They show that expensive toys in fancy packages aren't necessarily the best.

- Decorate an empty shoe or appropriate-sized box and lid with gift wrap and stickers.
- Choose a theme, and put a label on the box which includes both a simple word and a picture of the theme.
- Look for most of the items in hardware stores, pharmacies, stationary stores, art/crafts stores and supermarkets.
- Use small containers, sandwich bags, or build dividers made with small pieces of cardboard to make compartments for the various items in the shoebox. Young children like to organize play things by returning everything to its place. Make sure these suggestions are appropriate and safe for children to use independently; some items, such as food coloring, may require adult supervision.

BATH TUB PLAY

- small measuring cups and spoons
- empty plastic bottles with pump and squirt tops
- clear plastic tubing
- terry face cloth
- small baby doll for washing
- plastic and aluminum tops
- small plastic boats, animals and people

RESCUE/FIRST AID

- flashlight
- band aids
- fabric strips/ bandages
- ace bandage
- sling
- eye patch
- gauze
- stethoscope
- surgical mask

PLAYDOUGH

- buy a small can of non-toxic playdough or make your own
- garlic press
- plastic knife
- popsicle sticks
- wooden dowel
- plastic lids
- small tray/plate

SHOE BOX GARDEN

- plastic-lined shoe box
- potting soil
- seed packets
- small watering can
- popsicle sticks
- garden tools
- gardening gloves
- flower fairies

NATURE EXPLORER

- nature guides with pictures of birds, trees, woodland animals
- small sketch book and colored pencils
- binoculars
- plastic magnifying glass
- camera (toy or real)
- vest or small backpack with pockets
- small, re-sealable bags
- bag of bird seed

COLLAGE KIT

- roll of wax/craft/freezer paper
- recycled gift wrap and ribbon
- children's glue and tape
- fallen pinecones, other natural materials
- scrounge materials: old keys, plastic bottle tops, buttons, fabric scraps, etc.
- craft feathers, glitter

BEYOND SHOE BOXES

Recycle large boxes that can be painted and decorated for dramatic play. Create a car, spaceship, animal, creature, house, or cave. Extend the play possibilities by adding blocks, flashlights, tablecloth, carpet squares and pillows.

THE BENEFITS OF OPEN-ENDED PLAY are highlighted in molecular biologist, John Medina's new book: **Brain Rules for Baby: How to Raise a Smart and Happy Child from Zero to Five** (Pear Press, 2010). In it he debunks several myths which have sprung up in answer to many of parent's questions such as, *How do I get my kid to get good grades? Does my baby have an active mental life in the womb? What's parenting going to do to my marriage? How do I raise a happy child? How do I make a moral child?* Parents might be surprised to learn there's a neuroscience behind each of these questions. Among the myths:

Myth #1: To boost their brain power, children need French lessons by age 3, a room piled with brain-friendly toys and a library of educational DVDs. The truth? Medina says if your toddler's brain could talk, it would say, "Quit buying me electronic gadgets. I need lots of open-ended play. I don't need flash cards. If you really want to improve my cognitive development, talk to me, say words to me. Interact with me. Understand my behavioral cues." The worst thing possible for your toddler's growing mind, Medina says, is your flat-screen TV.

Every play space should include the following elements:

- * Lots of choices
- * A wardrobe filled with costumes
- * Blocks
- * A place for drawing
- * Picture books
- * A place for painting
- * Tubes and gears
- * Musical instruments
- * "Anything where a child can be safely let loose, joyously free to explore whatever catches her fancy," he explains.

Myth #2: Continually telling your children they are smart will boost their confidence.

The truth? Medina voices the impact of such a myth on a mind: "If you are going to praise me for my intellectual accomplishment, don't tell me I'm smart." "Little Johnny gets an A," Medina explains. "A fixed mindset praise says, 'Oh Johnny, you got an A on the test. I am so proud of you. You are so smart.'" Thus, when he gets a C, Johnny believes this means he's not smart. If you want your child to do well in school, Medina says, use *growth mindset praise*: "Oh Johnny, I'm so proud of you. You must have studied really hard." Parents who praise their kids' efforts, not achievements, raise children who love running into problems. According to Medina, kids raised with growth mindset praise are focused, tenacious and don't take failure personally. **To read the entire article, go to www.mjccvt.org, & click on 'Articles of Interest'.**

HAVE A COMMERCIAL FREE HOLIDAY!

Commercial-Free Holiday Links:

Send Us Your Strategies for Commercial-Free Holidays:

<http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org/holidayguide/#sendtips>

Read CCFC Members' Commercial-Free Holiday Tips:

<http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org/holidayguide/membertips.htm>

Download the TRUCE Toys, Play & Young Children Action Guide:

http://www.truceteachers.org/docs/T_Guide_we.pdf.b_10

Download the TRUCE Infant & Toddler Play, Toys & Media Action Guide:

<http://www.truceteachers.org/docs/infant-toddler-guide-color.pdf>

Download The Center for a New American Dream's "Simplify the Holidays" Guide:

<http://www.newdream.org/holiday/brochure.php>

Addison County Child Care Ser-
vices
81 Water Street
Middlebury, VT 05753



INFANT/CHILD/ADULT CPR AND FIRST AID
Saturdays: January 14 March 24 May 19

CPR ONLY (including recert)	8:30 - 10 am	\$30.00
First Aid ONLY	10:00 - 12:30	\$30.00
CPR and First Aid	8:30 - 12:30	\$50.00

- **Registration forms and payment need to be received a week before the class is scheduled; Please note change in fee and times. Make checks payable to MJCC and send to:
MJCC, 81 Water St. Middlebury, VT 05753 Attn: Amethyst**

NAME: _____ **PHONE #:** _____

DATE OF TRAINING: _____ **PLEASE CHECK TRAINING NEEDED:** _____

Funding for this newsletter is provided by the Child Development Division of the Department of Children and Families, Addison County Child Care Services & the Addison County Early Childhood Council