



a newsletter for
growing minds

Sept 2009

Children's News

Help Support Programs for all Young Children!

In the next several weeks state legislators will be forced to make many tough budget decisions. Unfortunately, many of the programs that support young children and their families are at risk of being eliminated. Programs most at risk of having funding cut or eliminated include: Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, Great Start Readiness Program (provides free preschool for at-risk 4 year olds), Great Parents, Great Start, Nurse-Family Partnerships, and the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (provides state support for local collaboratives like Success by 6).

You can help!

Contact your state senators and representatives to let them know how important support of early childhood programs is to our community.

To make your voice heard, visit:

[Michigan's Children](#)

click on "Get Involved"

or

[Early Childhood Investment Corporation](#)

click on Policy Center

Learning at the Library

Dear Melissa,

Welcome to the September edition of the Washtenaw Success by 6 Newsletter. We aim to bring you helpful information about child development and family life, including topics like health and safety and this issue's feature, "Back to School", an article designed to help you connect with and stay in touch with your child's teacher. In this edition you will also find lots of opportunities to get connected to community events and services that will help you to be the best parent you can be! Enjoy!

Melissa

Washtenaw Success by 6

Back to School: How to Build a Good Relationship with Your Child's Teacher

You can stay up all night baking birthday cupcakes for your child's class and help him with his presentations, but nothing is as important as building a good working relationship with his teacher. "It's the best gift you can give your child," says Trudy Carpenter, director of special services for Ledyard public schools in Connecticut.

Your child will thrive in school if you can create a "circle of support" that includes the three of you (your child, his teacher, and you), says Carpenter. The more freely information flows back and forth between home and school, the better your child will feel about learning.

The circle of support needs to be especially strong when your child first begins school, but it will remain important throughout his school years. Here are some ways to build and sustain good communication with your child's teacher:

Get to know the teacher right away. It's best to talk to the teacher before a problem surfaces. Although some teachers might want to wait until the first school-scheduled conference to meet, try to arrange at least a quick conversation at the beginning of the year. Make it casual; briefly introduce yourself and your child to the teacher and mention any special concerns. Let your child see you speak with his teacher, or tell him that you did. Children feel safe when the important adults in their lives work together.

Keep in regular touch. Use your first meeting to create a plan for staying in regular contact throughout the year. Perhaps you can pass notes back and forth in a spiral notebook or blank

Public libraries throughout the state work to encourage a love of reading and learning even in the youngest of children by offering a variety of fun events and programs for all ages! Contact your local library for details:

[Ann Arbor](#) 327-4200
[Chelsea](#) 475-8732
[Dexter](#) 426-4477
[Manchester](#) 428-8025
[Milan](#) 439-1240
[Saline](#) 429-5450
[Ypsilanti](#) 482-4110
[Northfield](#) 449-0066

Learning for All Ages

Check out some of the new fall classes offered by your local community education program:

[Ann Arbor](#)
[Chelsea](#)
[Dexter](#)
[Manchester](#)
[Saline](#)
[Ypsilanti](#)

Quick Links

Need help finding child care or preschool for your child?

[Visit Child Care Network](#)

Concerned about your child's growth and development?

[Visit Early On Michigan](#)

Flu Shots

Flu season will be here before we know it! With all of the talk about seasonal flu vaccines and the H1N1 Virus (Swine Flu), you may be confused about which vaccine you should get.

Click [here](#) for information from the [Washtenaw County Health Department](#) regarding the flu vaccines.

Click [here](#) for information from the [University of Michigan Health System](#).

Coming up Next Month:

The Packard Health Clinic will open a second location, in the St. Joseph Mercy Health System's Maple

journal each week; a brief comment or two will suffice. If you choose a system such as this, involve your child. Let him pick his favorite notebook, and give him the responsibility of carrying it between you and his teacher. If you'd rather chat than write, ask his teacher when you might call or meet with her briefly, either before or after school.

Say thank you. Pass along compliments as well as suggestions and criticism. Everyone appreciates a kind word. If your child comes home bubbling over with how much fun school was that day, let the teacher know. Thank her when she shows special sensitivity toward your child or pays him extra attention.

Stay involved with the class. Even if you work full time, you can still help. A small gesture goes a long way to show you care. You could collect art supplies for a class project and drop them off at school. You could also call parents about upcoming events. Your child's teacher will appreciate your help and make note of your willingness to be involved.

Talk about school at home. Ask your child about school every day. Questions such as "How was school?" are too vague. Try to ask specific questions, such as "Is your friend Michael back in school today?" or "Were you able to go for a walk today or was it too rainy?" Children are more likely to answer these questions and you can use this information when talking with the teacher.

Be discreet but take action if problems arise. If you are angry with the teacher, take steps to address your feelings with her as soon as possible. Don't criticize her in front of your child. He's attached to both of you and if feels he's in the middle of your dispute, it could make him anxious.

Respect the chain of command. If you have a serious concern about your child or the class, speak to the teacher first. Arrange a problem-solving or brainstorming meeting in which you and the teacher try to work out issues. If you're still unhappy, let the teacher know that you want to continue the discussion with her supervisor (if the teacher is the director of the preschool, you may have to consider changing schools). By including the teacher in future discussions, you're being respectful of her relationship with your child.

Remember what PARENT stands for:

Partner. Be there for your child and his teacher. Help your child prepare for school at home, and keep abreast of school events.

Advocate. Work for change in the classroom if you're unhappy with the staff or the curriculum.

Resource. Help your child by providing his teacher with information about him. The more she knows about your child's home life, the more she'll be able to help him learn.

Encourager. Support your child and his teacher. Believe in them. Compliment jobs well done.

Health Building at 510 N. Maple Road in Ann Arbor. You can join the celebration of the opening of Pack Health West on Friday, October 23rd from 11:00am-1:00pm & 3:00 to 5:00pm. Children's activities and fun for the whole family!

Negotiator. Be willing to talk. Be open to finding innovative solutions.

Team member. Do your share of the work. Teachers can't fix everything themselves. A child's education takes place at home, too.

Written by Maile Carpenter for BabyCenter. Check out www.BabyCenter.com for more helpful tips and information.

Activities- What's Happening around the County

There are so many fun and family-friendly events happening throughout the fall, it is hard to know where to start!

Here is just a sampling of the **free** events taking place throughout the county during September:

***Saturday, September 12th, *5:00-10:00pm**

[Home Grown Festival](#)

Local food celebration at the Farmers Market in Ann Arbor. Foods made with local ingredients for sale. Free activities include tomato taste-off, kids activities, music, and information booths about local organizations.

***Saturday, September 12th *11:00am**

[Drop In Storytime](#)

Celebrate Grandparents Day at the Dexter District Library with a story and a craft.
8040 Fourth St, Dexter.

***Sunday, September 13th *12:00pm to 8:00pm**

[My Urban Toddler Celebration](#)

Join us as we celebrate 3 amazing years serving families in our area. We will have product give-aways, free class demonstrations, free play and activities for your children. This event is FREE. Birthday party at 4pm! Join us for cupcakes and entertainment.
7025 E Michigan Ave., Saline.

***Sunday, September 13th *1:00-4:00pm**

[Children's Garden Grand Opening](#)

The Gaffield Children's Garden opening at Matthaei Botanical Gardens helps kids reconnect with nature in a playful way. Kids of all ages are invited.
1800 N Dixboro Rd., Ann Arbor

***Saturday, September 26th *10:00am to 4:00pm**

[Apple Day](#)

Grange members invite the community to join in a day of fun with apples. Press cider, help make apple sauce and apple butter, taste a variety of different apples. Fun for the whole family. Participants can bring apples and jugs to press their own cider; a local farmer will be selling apples suitable for cider.
Pittsfield Grange, 3337 Ann Arbor Saline Road

***Saturday, September 26th *11:00am**

[Winnie-the-Pooh Story Time](#)

Bring your own favorite stuffed bear, receive your own coloring booklet and listen to the story of Pooh Loves You. Barnes and Noble, 3235 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor

***Sunday, September 27th *1:00pm**

[Dancing Babies](#)

Creative movement teacher Dianne Dudley leads this active program for families with very young children, ages 0-5. Ann Arbor District Library, Pittsfield Branch
2359 Oak Valley Dr.

Did You Know?

Success by Six is working throughout Washtenaw County to support families, child care providers and others as we all work toward sending our young children off to school ready to succeed!

Want to Learn More?

Visit our website at www.washtenawsuccessby6.org to learn more about the work that Success by Six is doing in Washtenaw County. You can also join our Parent Network, volunteer, or join our Great Start Parent Coalition to help us get the word out about the importance of learning in the first 5 years of a child's life!

