

Early Learning Parents' Pages

April 2019

Child Abuse Prevention Month

The Week of the Young Child

Autism and Milestones



Week of the Young Child

Apr. 8-12, 2019, is [The Week of the Young Child](#).

Each year the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) hosts a weeklong celebration of early learning, young children, their families, caregivers and teachers. Each day has a theme that focuses on an area or place where children learn many skills and concepts through [active play and interactions](#) with friends, family and caregivers.



Plan your own celebrations and try some of the activities with your child. Extend [the fun and learning](#) throughout the month of April by continuing the activities with your child for the whole month. Use your [daily activities](#) to support your child's healthy development and learning.

Use these resources to plan ways to

- Use music activities with your child every Monday.
- Cook or prepare a snack with him each Tuesday of the month.
- Find ways for your family to work together on Wednesdays.
- Find creative ways to use art with your child on Thursdays.
- Celebrate something your child has learned or is learning with support from family members each Friday.



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Child Abuse Prevention Month

During April, you may see silver and blue pinwheels outside businesses or offices and wonder why? April is Child Abuse Prevention Month in Florida and the pinwheels are "Pinwheels for Pre-vention" to remind everyone that child abuse can be prevented by focusing on building strong families throughout Florida.

[All families need a helping hand](#) from time to time. If your family needs assistance or you know a family who could use some help or support, [Child Care Resource and Referral](#) programs are available throughout Florida to assist families in locating quality child care and child care assistance, assistance with housing, food, jobs, education and referrals to other local agencies or nonprofits such as [Help Me Grow](#), and the [United Way](#). If you need resources for your family or know of a family who may need support, please contact one of these agencies that help build [strong families](#) in Florida.

The Florida Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Florida's Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council, Florida's Department of Children and Families and Prevent Child Abuse Florida are working with Florida's Military Family and Community Covenant, as well as other agencies and organizations statewide to build and sustain a network of connections to strengthen families. Known as Operation Strong Families, it will promote protective factors known to increase health and well-being in children and families, including Florida's military families.



Music Mondays

"*Music hath charms to soothe a savage beast*" and children as well. When your baby is upset and crying, the best way to calm her is to play soft music or sing her a song. Singing a happy song when your child is getting an immunization at the health clinic or pediatrician's office is a great way to distract him so he won't be frightened. Introduce your toddler to math concepts such as counting, patterns, and same or different by [listening to music or singing songs](#). Teaching her to clap out the beat of a song or use two spoons or sticks to tap the beat introduces her to patterns since the beat is a pattern of sounds. Count the beats as you clap them out and help your child learn to count. Sing a happy song and a lullaby and talk about the ways the songs are the same or different. As you help your child get dressed or take a bath, change the words to a favorite song or find songs that describe what you are doing such as, "This is the way we wash our toes, wash our toes, wash our toesearly in the morning" instead of "[This is the way we wash our clothes](#)." Doing this increases your child's vocabulary and awakens his creativity as he finds words to substitute in songs.



Tasty Tuesdays



Making a snack or [cooking together](#) helps your child develop and strengthen literacy, math and science concepts. Selecting healthy foods then talking about the food and how to prepare it together supports your child's vocabulary development and teaches her how to count, measure, compare and learn about all types of food. She will learn she can have apple juice as a liquid when she drinks it at breakfast, as a solid when

she eats a piece of apple for snack or freezes the juice and has an apple juice popsicle or puts apple juice ice cubes in her glass of water. These are important science concepts (states of matter) that you can begin teaching her as a toddler or preschooler. She can help you measure ingredients as you bake or count the number of grapes you need for a fruit salad. Cooking together strengthens your relationship with your child and may inspire a picky eater to be more interested in [trying new foods](#).

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Autism and Milestones

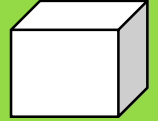
As the parent of a young child, you may have heard of autism at the local health clinic or from your child's health care provider when you have taken her for a well-child checkup. Pediatricians and early childhood professionals urge all parents to be familiar with their child's developmental milestones. Children reach [milestones](#) in how they play, learn, speak, act and move (crawling, walking, etc.). An example of a milestone is a 3-month-old child turning her head to look toward the sound of a person's voice. If you have a 3-month-old who is not yet turning her head toward you when you speak, tell her health care provider you are concerned she has not yet mastered that milestone.

Developmental milestones act as checkpoints in a child's development and are based on what the average child is able to do at a specific age. Parents who recognize the developmental milestones for different ages can track their children's mastery of the milestones and ask their child's health care provider about any problems they think their child may be experiencing in their development. You can find developmental checklists and a free Milestone Tracker App at The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website to keep up with the milestones your child achieves. Use the [Milestone Tracker app](#) or fill out a [milestone checklist](#) to track your child's development. Share the completed checklist or milestone summary with your child's healthcare provider. Ask your provider about developmental screenings since the checklists are not substitutes for standardized, validated developmental screening tools.

April is Autism Awareness Month so you may hear more about the importance of keeping track of your child's milestones since this is one way to identify signs of autism in young children. Autism Spectrum Disorder can be identified in children by noting challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and non-verbal communication. By age 2 or 3, children with ASD show some signs of autism and many children can be diagnosed as young as 18 months of age. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends screening children for general development using standardized, validated tools at 9, 18 and 24 or 30 months and for autism at 18 and 24 months or whenever a parent or child care provider has a concern. Identifying ASD as early as possible allows a child to receive early intervention, which produces positive outcomes for many children diagnosed with ASD.

To learn more about milestones, see the CDC's [Learn the Signs, Act Early](#).

Work Together Wednesdays



When children or family members work together or build together, they learn together. Building together usually involves problem solving and sharing, important social skills and [executive functioning](#) skills. Depending on the age of your child, you can use blocks or empty boxes to build a house, a fort or castle or large soft blocks to stack and knock down. Completing a puzzle together, drawing a picture or plan of what you want to build, or making a sand castle outside are great ways to work and [play](#) together and encourage your child to think creatively while learning [math](#) and [science](#) skills.



Easter Seals provides parents with free access to the third edition of the [Ages & Stages Questionnaires®](#), one of many general developmental screening tools. Click to learn more and take the questionnaire. Be sure to share the completed questionnaire and results with your child's doctor.

[A Parent's Guide to Autism](#) and [A Grandparent's Guide to Autism](#) are good resources for families.

CDC's FREE Milestone Tracker App

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

Learn more at cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker

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Artsy Thursdays



During the week it may be difficult to find the time to [encourage your child's creativity](#) or let him use paints or crayons to [draw or create art](#). But, you can give him crayons and paint for the bath and he can be an artist in the tub as he takes a bath. He can draw a slippery, slinky snake as it "crawls up the water spout" or you can draw the snake and sing the song "[Itsy, Bitsy, Spider](#)" (substituting *snake* for *spider*) until he is old enough to do it himself. Put a large piece of paper or use the paper from grocery bags on the table and [have him draw](#) or paint as you make dinner. Give him washable markers or crayons and a pad of paper he can draw or write on while riding in the car or bus.



Family Fridays

Tell your child real stories about your family. Use family pictures and make up funny stories using the names of family members as the characters. Have a special family night where you make dinner together or [take a walk, ride bikes](#), or talk about places you would like to visit. Take your family outside to [blow and chase bubbles](#). Play a game, listen to music or dance together. Have a party to celebrate the good things that your family has experienced during the week. As your child grows, you and he will remember these family times and cherish the time you spent together.



May 1 May Day & Mother Goose Day ♦ May 2 Baby Day & Brothers and Sisters Day ♦ May 3 Garden Meditation Day & Space Day ♦ May 4 Bird Day & Star Wars Day ♦ May 5 Cinco de Mayo, Oyster Day & Ramadan ♦ May 6 National Nurses Day ♦ May 7 National Teacher's Day ♦ May 8 School Nurses Day & World Red Cross Day ♦ May 10 Child Care Provider Appreciation Day & Clean Up Your Room Day ♦ May 11 Eat What You Want Day, National Train Day & National Windmill Day ♦ May 12 Mother's Day & Limerick Day ♦ May 13 Frog Jumping Day & Leprechaun Day ♦ May 14 Dance Like a Chicken Day ♦ May 16 Love a Tree Day ♦ May 17 Pack Rat Day ♦ May 18 Armed Forces Day, International Museum Day & Visit Your Relatives Day ♦ May 20 Pick Strawberries Day ♦ May 23 Lucky Penny Day ♦ May 25 International Jazz Day ♦ May 27 Memorial Day & Sun Screen Day ♦ May 28 National Hamburger Day ♦ May 30 Water a Flower Day ♦ May 31 National Macaroon Day

Special Dates



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