

# Early Learning Parents' Pages

## May 2018



- A day to appreciate child care providers
- Make Mother's Day happy
- Moms build babies' brains
- Soothing a crying baby

## Show your child care provider your appreciation

**B**eing the working parent of a young child can cause stress.

Finding the right child care provider to care for your child while you work can help relieve some of that stress. When you feel confident your child is safe and happy while you are at work, you are happier and it may be easier to leave your child each day to go to work.



Other than you and your family, your child care provider is the most important adult in your child's life. If you are a working parent, your child may spend more waking hours with the child care provider on your work days than he spends with you. Your child care provider is a partner in raising your child.

May 11, 2018, is National Child Care Provider Appreciation Day. If you have your child in a

center or have an in-home provider or a live-in nanny, think of ways to show your child care provider appreciation for the role he or she plays in your child's life. A note from you and your child to show your appreciation would be welcome. Or take a picture of your child and child care provider together and attach it to a note of appreciation.



[Child Care Aware suggests](#) ways to show appreciation to your child care provider, such as a thank-you card or certificate of appreciation. If you think your child care provider is a wonderful caregiver, nominate him or her for recognition as a [Provider of the Month](#).

Throughout the year, take a few minutes each week just to say, "Thanks for all you do for my child." It will make your child care provider feel appreciated all year long.



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## Make Mother's Day Happy!

Mothers have a special relationship with their children. The bond between a mother and her child is an important factor in the child's healthy social and emotional development. That is one of the reasons we celebrate Mother's Day as a national holiday on the second Sunday in May every year.

Recognizing moms and grandmothers on Mother's Day is an important tradition in many families. Most moms prefer spending time with their families to celebrate, but moms of infants and toddlers may appreciate a little time for themselves on that day. Families can offer to babysit or get a babysitter and take mom out for a meal. Taking care of the baby so mom can take a nice nap, get a manicure or just take a long walk alone may be a good way to show her appreciation.

Making a Mother's Day card for mom is a special treat for children and most moms cherish the cards their children create for them. Make a memory jar or memory box by having each family member write or dictate for someone else to write about their favorite things they do with mom or what they love about her. Put these in a jar or box and decorate with pictures of the children or drawings the children made.



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## Nurturing Moms Build Brain Size

In his article, [A Mother's Love Changes a Child's Brain](#), Joseph Castro writes about research showing a relationship between a mother's ability to nurture, care for and show her child love and the child's brain development. Studies have shown a mother's early nurturing has a positive impact on child development. Now, MRI scans confirm that a child's hippocampus—the part of the brain important for learning, memory and responding to stress—is larger in children whose mothers provided a loving, nurturing environment than those from families where mothers were not as nurturing. Research shows a link between a larger hippocampus and better memory.

Nurturing mothers console and encourage their children when there are problems to solve or they are scared or hurt. As a result, the children become better at solving problems and more resilient when they fail at something. When babies are trying to crawl, nurturing mothers encourage them by smiling



**Absent a nurturing parent, other family members, caregivers, teachers or family friends may take on the role of nurturing a child. However, a child will not develop to his full potential without a nurturing relationship in his life.**



and coaxing them to crawl toward them. This helps babies to keep trying to crawl even when they fall. Later on, this seems to help children keep trying when they are tackling new tasks or learning new skills. Knowing parents are there to support and encourage them make children more willing to try new things and approach unfamiliar tasks with more confidence in their abilities. Research has found that children from nurturing homes typically do better in school and are more emotionally developed than their peers from homes where mothers were not as nurturing.

Nurturing begins at birth when parents respond to an infant's cries and sounds he makes. Soothing a crying child helps the child build trust and attachment to the parents. As the child grows and develops, the nurturing and love parents show the child supports him as he learns new things and begins to become more independent. As a result, the child becomes a nurturing individual and nurturing parent as well. In the absence of a nurturing parent, other family members, caregivers, teachers or family friends may take on the role of nurturing a child. However, a child will not develop to his full potential without a nurturing relationship in his life.

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## Fun things to do in May

Remember to look at the special days coming up in June. You can clip them out and put them on your refrigerator as a reminder to do something with your little ones. If you didn't clip out the days to remember in May, here are some of the more interesting dates:

◆ May 1 is Mother Goose Day and Poem on Your Pillow Day. Why not put your favorite nursery rhyme on your pillow? Or put your head on your pillow and read Mother Goose?



◆ You can wear two different colored shoes on May 2 – Two Different-Colored Shoes Day.

◆ May 4 is Firefighters' Day. Drive by a fire station and look for a fireman.

◆ Don't wear any socks on No Socks Day, May 8.

◆ May 10 is Windmill Day. Is there a windmill nearby?

◆ May 11 is Provider Appreciation Day. See the story on page 1 and be sure to thank your child care provider.

◆ May 12 is Train Day.

◆ May 13 is not only Mother's Day; it's also Frog-Jumping Day. Ask your 3-year-old to jump like a frog!



◆ May 14 is Chicken Dance Day. Teach your little dancers the chicken dance.

◆ Look for strawberries on

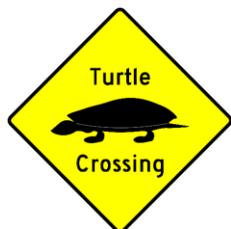
May 20. It's Pick Strawberries Day.

◆ May 23 is Turtle Day. Watch out for turtles!

◆ May 25 is Tap Dance Day.

◆ May 26 is Paper Airplane Day.

◆ May 27 is Sun Screen Day. But living in Florida, **every** day should be sunscreen day!



◆ May 28 is Hamburger Day. Remember to clip out June dates!

## Soothing a crying baby

The sound of a crying baby gets everyone's attention. You may be sitting in a restaurant, waiting in the doctor's office or in line to pay at the grocery store when your baby lets out a blood-curdling scream and cries loud enough to drown out all other sounds. All heads turn toward the sound and seem to look at you. What can you do to soothe your child? You may feel as if everyone is judging you and, in the few seconds it takes you to respond, you are in a state of panic to find out what is wrong with him.

When a baby cries, your brain sends out a warning to make sure you take care of him. But, sometimes this warning makes the thinking part of your brain shut down



so you cannot think logically and remain calm as you assess the situation. Since your [baby senses your emotional state](#), he cries louder and can't calm himself. The stress of onlookers and worry about the cause of your baby's crying brings on additional stress, making your arms and shoulders tense and your facial expression angry or worried. This will add to your baby's fussiness as you hold him and try to calm him down.

In order to calm your baby, [you have to calm yourself](#) first. After, seeing that your baby is not in any danger, try to lay him down in a safe place like a stroller, car seat or baby carrier until you can calm yourself down. Take deep breaths as you count to 10, breathing in through your mouth and out through your nose. When you are calm enough to talk softly or sing to your child, gently



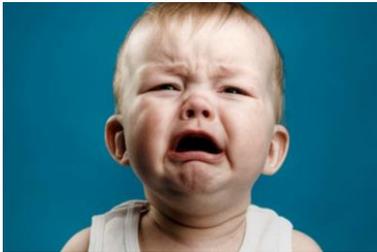
rub his tummy, back, arms or legs as you sing or talk. When you feel that your body is no longer tense and your voice is calm, pick him up and hold him close, gently rocking him and rubbing his back or his head. Sometimes standing up and walking around helps him to settle down. If you think he is

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## ...when baby fusses

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hungry or needs a diaper change, wait until he has quieted some before feeding him or changing his diaper.



When **you feel in control and calm**, your baby will sense your feelings and become calmer. Keep smiling and talking or singing and soon, his mood

will reflect yours. Remember that most of the people looking at you have been in similar situations and are probably feeling sympathetic instead of judgmental.

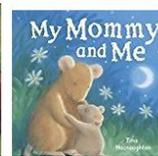
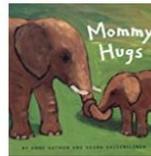


## ...make Mother's Day happy!

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Record a family video of the children singing mom's favorite songs or acting out a story for her. Check out ideas for Mother's Day celebrations and **gifts** on **Pinterest** or Facebook. Mom may enjoy reading the article, **What Mother's Day Cards Don't Say**. It can be printed and placed in a card made by her family or bookmark the article on her computer or electronic device.

At the end of the day, have the children snuggle with mom and read a good book together. *Mommy and Me*, *The Kissing Hand*, *Mommy Hugs* or *Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother, Too?* are great books for young children and their moms to read together.



## Special dates in June

June 1 Doughnut Day & Go Barefoot Day ♦ June 2 Trails Day ♦ June 4 Hug Your Cat Day ♦ June 5 Running Day & Hot Air Balloon Day ♦ June 6 Drive-In Movie Day & Gardening Exercise Day ♦ June 7 Chocolate Ice Cream Day ♦ June 8 Best Friends' Day ♦ June 9 World Doll Day ♦ June 11 Corn on the Cob Day ♦ June 12 Superman Day ♦ June 14 Flag Day ♦ June 15 Nature Photography Day & Flip-Flop Day ♦ June 16 Fudge Day & World Juggling Day ♦ **June 17 Father's Day** & Eat Your Vegetables Day ♦ June 18 Go Fishing Day ♦ June 20 American Eagle Day ♦ June 21 World Music Day & World Giraffe Day ♦ June 22 Take Your Dog to Work Day ♦ June 24 Log Cabin Day ♦ June 25 Catfish Day ♦ June 26 Canoe Day ♦ June 27 Sunglasses Day & Pineapple Day ♦ June 29 Camera Day ♦ June 30 Armed Forces Day

SOME  
Super Heroes  
Don't have  
CAPES...  
They are  
called  
DAD

Rodney J. MacKinnon  
Executive Director



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