

Early Learning Parents' Pages

October 2018



- Play: What the doctor orders
- Kindness counts
- Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month
- National Book Month

Play... Just What the Doctor Ordered

When you take your child to her next well-child visit, don't be surprised if her pediatrician writes an unusual prescription: Take two doses of **Play** daily. At least one hour of moderately active physical play and at least one hour of simple, creative play.



"New guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends all pediatricians do the same. The organization says playing with parents and peers is a critical part of a child's healthy development, fundamental for learning life skills and reducing stress." AAP urges pediatricians to prescribe daily play for children from birth to age 2 at every well-child visit and explain to parents that play continues to be important until children reach their teens.

In an August 2018 news article and video, **Why Pediatricians Are Prescribing Play Time for Kids**, CBS News reported on AAP and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) research that cites the reduction in the amount of time children play and the importance of play in supporting children's brain structure and function, language and cognitive development, and motor and sensory development. Reports across the country show a reduction in the amount of play children are allowed in schools, **preschools and child care centers.**

The AAP and CDC examined research on the relationship between play and brain development. There has been a reduction of at least 25 percent in the amount of time young children spend in play. **Due to a focus on academic skills, reports show that 30 percent of kindergarten children have no outside play during the school day.**

"Play is not frivolous. It enhances brain structure and function and promotes executive function," states Dr. Michael Yogman. "Play is really brain-building," he told CBS News. "Executive function skills, learning to persist at a task, to solve problems, to be flexible about how they are learning things. It's how we learn, not what we learn".

Continued p. 4.



In This Issue

Play... Just What the Doctor Ordered

Kindness Counts

Hispanic Heritage Month

National Book Month

November dates

OFFICE OF
Early Learning
LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.

Early Learning Parents' Pages

Kindness Counts

October is [National Bullying Prevention Month](#), [Domestic Violence Prevention Month](#) and October 10 is [World Mental Health Day](#). As a parent, it is important to know about the effects domestic violence and bullying have on children. Considering the violence in movies and television shows as well as that reported on the news and in newspapers, even children who have safe homes and loving, caring parents often see and hear about violence as their parents discuss the news or watch TV news or movies or read the newspaper. What does your child need in order to grow up healthy, happy and resilient in our changing world?

Developing positive [social and emotional skills](#) enables your child to play and work well with other children and adults. Kindness, empathy, gratitude and effective communication are social, emotional and cognitive skills that you and your child's child care or preschool teacher can use to help prevent bullying and promote healthy attitudes and relationships.

Kindness is an important concept you can focus on to teach your child. He will develop [kindness](#) by watching you as you show kindness in your interactions with him, other family members and people you see in the community. Noting his efforts at being kind will encourage more kindness, "You were so kind to offer part of your snack to your friend." You can assign him small chores to do around the house and praise him when he does them. "Thank you for picking up your toys and putting them away. That was very kind of you." Showing kindness to others leads to showing empathy for them. Relating kind acts to helping friends, pets and family helps him learn to show empathy. Praising him helps him connect his actions to being kind

...showing kindness *teaches* kindness

or showing empathy: "It was kind of you to help your friend pick up his toys" or "Remembering to feed your new puppy each morning is being kind. It makes you feel good when you show kindness!"

Effective communication will help your child prevent bullying and violence as he gets older. As an infant or toddler, he is learning to communicate with you and others by making sounds, looking in your direction or looking at your face, reaching toward you or crying. Reacting to his sounds and movements reinforces his attempts at communicating with you. If you pick him up and comfort him when he cries, he learns that you will comfort him when he needs you. By responding to his sounds, you show him that he can make sounds and, eventually, words to tell you what he needs, wants or how he feels. When he is happy or sad, [tell him what emotion he is expressing](#), "You are smiling and laughing so you must be happy!" or "You are crying so hard, are you mad or just tired?"

Effective communication will help your child prevent bullying and violence as he gets older.

When he learns to talk, explain that emotions are the way he feels and shows others what he is feeling. Teach him to recognize his own [emotions and how to express](#) them. When he can use his words to get what he needs and wants, he won't have to cry or take things away from others. You and other adults in his life need to model the correct words and how to interact with others. When you ask him to give you his coat, so you can hang it up, say, "Please hand me your coat" and "Thank you for giving me your coat." When you are with your child and see someone being rude or unkind, tell him what is happening and how that person could have responded in a kind way. As he gets older, explain more complex emotions such as embarrassment, disappointment and surprise. Explain there are appropriate and inappropriate ways to show that you are angry and show him.

Reading children's books that have characters who show kindness, empathy and gratitude is a great way to talk about these character traits with your child. As you read, stop and talk about the [Rainbow Fish](#) who did not play with the other fish or [Big Al](#) who had no friends. Ask what they did to make friends. Being kind and showing empathy and gratitude helped them. Ask your child to think about how he treats his friends and the way the fish made friends. Are they the same or different?

Being able to communicate with others, to control yourself when you are experiencing strong emotions, and recognizing your own emotions is the basis for successful relationships in your family, in school and in the workplace. Since these skills begin developing in babies, you need to start teaching them to your child when you hold and cuddle him as an infant and continue throughout his childhood.

Early Learning Parents' Pages

October is for celebrating Hispanic Heritage and Books

Hispanic Heritage Month

During September and October, we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month to honor Hispanic and Latino people. Teach your child about the cultures and traditions of Spain, Mexico and many more nations in Central America, South America and the Caribbean. During this time, some schools and parks have celebrations in honor of Hispanic heritage. There may be local events in your area, so check with groups or parks nearby to learn about events near you.

HispanicHeritageMonth.gov has information regarding events at some national museums. If you visit some of these, your family may be able to see a folklorico dance, which demonstrates colorful mariachi attire, or try specialty foods from different cultures.



Celebrate *Hispanic Heritage Month* with Folklorico Dancing!

You can celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with your family at home as well. Spend time with your child making arts and crafts or let your child help you make a

meal. Use some tissue paper and wire or pipe cleaners to create lovely [Paper Fiesta Flowers](#) or visit [here](#) or [here](#) to learn about other great ways to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. Many families of Hispanic culture love to decorate their celebration area with fiesta flowers. Spend time with your child making flowers, masks or other arts and crafts to help expand their knowledge. You can even try a new recipe for a snack, a meal or a dessert. [Here](#) are some fun ideas suitable for toddlers, preschoolers and elementary-aged children and [some great books](#) to involve your children easily in Hispanic Heritage month.

13 Picture Books That Celebrate Hispanic Heritage

by Wesley Salazar



October is National Book Month, a Time to Celebrate Books and Reading

“If you want to raise a reader, be a reader. Make the space, and time, for books you read for yourself.”
—THE NEW YORK TIMES

As a parent, you may wonder when is the best time to introduce books into your child's life. The answer is **at birth**. Begin reading to your child as soon as possible after she is born and continue reading to or with her as she grows.

Early Learning Parents' Pages

Doctor's Orders...

Continued from pg.1

Play helps reduce stress, allows children to learn risk-taking in a safe environment, nurtures safe relationships with caregivers and supports language development as well as social and emotional skills.

Parents need to know about the **types of play** AAP recommends: self-motivated and spontaneous play, play without specific rules, play that encourages active engagement with others, and play resulting in "joyful discovery."

Maria Montessori, a well-known physician and designer of the Montessori method of teaching young children, said, "Play is the work of the child." The classroom environments, materials for teaching and learning, and the methods she designed for teaching all focus on play. Her materials and classrooms reflect the importance of play in a child's learning process. Learning through play allows children to be creative, learn to solve problems, be able to self-regulate and work well with others. These are the same skills that are most important for adults to be successful in the workforce.

National Book Month

It is never too early to give your child age-appropriate books to hold and explore. Baby books are sturdy and made specifically for babies and toddlers who will try to hold them, chew on them, step on them and throw them. Having books available for reading to your child daily is important and reading books you enjoy or use for information is important as well. You are a model reader for your child. She will see you reading books and will want to read books just like you.

Have a special place to keep books for your child and yourself. This makes books easy to find and keeps them from getting dirty or torn. Teach your child how to hold the book, turn pages and put the book away.

You can find books for children at thrift shops, garage sales, bookstores, and even in most grocery stores or department stores. Take your child to the local library to get a library card and check out books she chooses. Reading to your child at least 30 minutes a day is the best way to make sure that she will become a reader.

Suggested book titles for children by age: <http://www.readaloud.org/bookselections.html>

Information on the importance of reading to your child from Read Aloud 15 Minutes: <http://www.readaloud.org/>

Parent Resources on literacy to use with their infants, toddlers and preschoolers:

<http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/parentresource1.php>

Special dates in November

November is FAMILY ENGAGEMENT MONTH ♦ Nov. 1, National Family Literacy Day ♦ Nov. 8, Parents as Teachers Day ♦ Nov. 11, Veterans Day ♦ Nov. 13, World Kindness Day ♦ Nov. 17, National Take a Hike Day ♦ Nov. 22, Thanksgiving Day ♦ Nov. 26, National Cake Day



Rodney J. MacKinnon
Executive Director



OFFICE OF
Early Learning
LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.

250 Marriott Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Toll-free 866-357-3239
www.FloridaEarlyLearning.com