Welcome to the Region 6 Infant-Toddler Resource Center (ITRC) Newsletter!

October 2014 **Issue 4**

Serving parents and caregivers of infants and toddlers in Ulster, Dutchess, Putnam, Orange, Sullivan, Rockland, and Westchester

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It's starting to get chilly! See page 4 for reasons to make outdoor play for infants and toddlers happen every day!



How can we help you?

- ♦ On-site coaching in regulated center and family-based child care programs serving infants and toddlers on issues such as room arrangement, positive discipline, marketing, child development, and developmentally appropriate practice (DAP)
- ♦ Collaboration with OCFS to build quality in regulated programs
- ♦ Use of the Environment Rating Scales and other valid, research-based tools to assess and improve quality of care
- ♦ Tailored coaching for program's specific challenges
- ♦ Information and on-site support
- ♦ Information for providers and parents by phone or email on issues concerning best practices for infants and toddlers
- ♦ Program start-up assistance

Spotlight on Regulations: "Sheltering-in-place"

As of May 1, 2014, the new family/group family regulations required providers to hold Shelter-in-Place drills twice/year. Sheltering -in-place is done when it is safer to remain in the program rather than evacuating.

An excellent video which explains this (in Section 5) as well as many other new regulations is here:

http://ocfs.ny.gov/mail/childcarenewregsvideo.asp

A drill typically takes less than half hour to conduct, and includes checking to ensure there are 3 days worth of supplies, and moving the children to a designated location within the home or facility. Parents must be informed prior to a drill; and care should be taken to speak with the children before, during, and after a drill, to reassure them that they are safe and cared for, and (appropriate to their ages) why the drill is taking place.

For more information or if you have questions, contact your CCRR, local Infant Toddler Specialist, or your licensor or registrar.

Behavior Management for Infants and Toddlers: TOOLKIT!



-Region 6 ITRC Specialists

People often ask the Infant-toddler specialists, "What do I do about _____?"
(hitting, dumping, ignoring, not helping, grabbing, biting...CHOOSE ONE!)
Here are some easy and proven tools to use:

1. **Think: could this have been prevented? Make sure expectations are realistic!**
   ("Did I expect them to stay in a 20 minute circle time?! Do I have only 2 dolls and expect 8 children to 'share' them?")
2. **Describe child's feelings (even before setting a limit)**
   (You're feeling mad; you still can't hit Joseph.)
3. **Explain how behavior affects others**
   ("*When you bit him that hurt!...When you handed her the crayon that made her SO happy!")*
4. **Use humor**
   ("Well if you won't put on your coat, I will! Watch me get this thing on…!")
5. **Ignore minor misbehavior**
   (Children may grab, not listen, or otherwise display imperfect social skills. Ignoring the small stuff is often the right move!)
6. **Redirection**
   ("All the spots at the sand table are filled. Want to do play-dough?")
7. **Encourage turn-taking (Sharing isn't to be expected.)**
8. **Explain reasons for rules**
   ("It will hurt your friend if you wave the stick at him.")
9. **Give specific praise for the behavior you want to see, when you see it**
   ("I love the way you were so careful of baby Anna on the floor…You two are really co-operating with the blocks!")
10. **Give choices between 2 acceptable choices while maintaining the rules**
    ("You can sit at this table or that one. But you must sit down with your snack.")
11. **Find acceptable alternatives**
    ("You can't jump on the couch but you can jump on this green circle, or outside when we go out later…")

The most important thing to Infant-toddler development is "relationship". Using these tools, from preventing problems in the first place, to finding safe alternatives to the behavior the child is exhibiting, can preserve the positive, nurturing relationship between child and caregiver, while instilling positive social skills!

World Smile Day is October 3, 2014

What We Should Know:

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"Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy." ~Thich Nhat Hanh

Each year, on the first Friday of the month of October, we celebrate World Smile Day. World Smile Day was begun by Harvey Ball, a commercial artist from Worcester, Massachusetts. He also created the yellow Smiley Face in 1963. The World's first World Smile Day was held in the year 1999 and has been held annually ever since.

When we think of a "smile" we think of something that happens as a natural result when we are happy, glad, excited, pleased, or thankful; or, we may think that it's just something we do when "appropriate". But science tells us that there is much more to a smile!

It actually makes us feel good!

Even in the 19th century, Charles Darwin was doing research into the emotional effects of smiling, though no solid conclusions were formed. 90 years later, extensive research by a psychologist named Robert Zajonc showed that rather than just being a consequence of a happy feeling, the physical act of smiling can ***cause*** positive feelings! It doesn't mean that very sad feelings can simply be willed away by a forced smile, or that we should tell children "Smile, be happy!" when they are not. However if one is caught between emotional ends of the spectrum, smiling can tip one over toward happy feelings.



For children, it's crucial for brain development!

The bulk of brain development happens between the ages of zero to five. Thousands of trillions of "synapses" (connections) will be built in the brain as a result of interactions the child has with others in her life. Receiving smiles and other forms of emotional assurance develops the social and emotional parts of the brain, without which we would be lost. One of the most important things caregivers can do for their child's health and well-being is to show that they care. A smile is an indispensable part of that expression!

So on October 3rd, and every day, smile at someone (or everyone!) you know. It's good for you, it's free, and you never know who needs it!

-Region 6 ITRC Specialists

"Let us always meet each other with smile,
for the smile is the beginning of love."

~ Mother Teresa

The Region 6 ITRC

The NY State Infant-Toddler Resource Centers (ITRC) have been working to improve care for infants and toddlers in the lower Hudson Valley since 2003. That is when funds were set aside for an annual contract to establish Infant-Toddler Resource Centers in the seven Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) regions in New York, coordinated through the Early Care and Learning Council. Our goal is to support parents and care providers to provide high quality care, by sharing research-based information, providing on-site coaching, and delivering informative, interactive trainings throughout the region.

The moment I decided to follow instead of lead, I discovered the joys of becoming part of a small child's world.
— Janet Gonzalez-Mena



Excerpt from:

The Importance of Taking Infants and Toddlers Outside
by Brenda Cobb

During the first few years of life, infants and toddlers are trying to make sense of their world. One of the ways they do this is by soaking up every noise, every sound, and every experience that they have. They then take this information and come up with ideas about how the world works. So, not only is being outdoors an enjoyable experience for infants and toddlers, it's critical for cognitive development. During the first three years of life, brain synapses form at a rapid rate. These synapses are formed based on the richness of the child's sensory environment. So, it would make sense that childcare providers would want to provide a stimulating environment for infants and toddlers, both indoors and outdoors.

For complete article:

http://www.claytonearlylearning.org/images/uploads/importance-of-taking-infants-toddlers-outdoors.pdf

How to reach us:

Infant-Toddler Specialists are located in the Westchester, Rockland, and Dutchess-Putnam Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCRRs) and serve all 7 counties of OCFS Region 6.

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