



UNITY NEWSLETTER

Mercer County Head Start / Early Head Start

A Community Action Partnership of Mercer County Program; affiliated with the Farrell Area School District

Summer 2009

Volume 4 Issue 4

Serving the Children and Families of Mercer County ages Birth to 5

Dear Parents,

It's very hard to believe that program year 2008-2009 is ending. Since this will be the last Unity Newsletter until September, the articles within will be dedicated to promoting Summer Safety.

On behalf of the Mercer County Head Start/Early Head Start Program, we would like to thank all parents and family members for contributing their time and efforts to make this year a great success. Have a safe and happy summer!

MCHS/EHS Staff

Protect Yourself...Wear a Helmet!

What do bicycling, baseball, in-line skating and skateboarding all have in common? Helmets! The trick is that different sports require a different type of helmet to help protect against head injuries common to that particular sport. All helmets are not created equal; buyers should look inside the helmet for information on standards the helmet complies with.

Fit is the key. A loose helmet cannot protect the head as well as one that is properly fit. Buy a brand and size that fits well prior to adjustments, and then use the adjustable straps and/or sizing pad to ensure a snug fit. Select a helmet that fits you or your child now, not a helmet to "grow into."

Helmets do save lives. According to the Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute, a bicycle helmet reduces the risk of serious head and brain injury by 85%.

Sun and Heat Exposure

During late spring and summer many people like to spend time outside in the sun for fun or work. But overexposure to the sun can damage the skin, cause heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash. Put your health first by:

- * Wear a wide-brimmed hat to keep your head and face cool and provide added protection from damaging sun exposure.
- * Take frequent breaks in the shade or in a cool environment during the hottest times of the day. Carry a source of water with you. Take drinks frequently-every 15 minutes.
- * Wear sunscreen that has an SPF of at least 15. Make sure children are protected.



"Top 10 Checklist for Playground Safety"

- * Surfaces around playground equipment should be filled with at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel.
- * Most stationary equipment should have at least a 6-foot use zone in all directions.
- * Any openings that can trap children (in guardrails or between ladder rungs) should be less than 3.5 inches apart or more than 9 inches.
- * Guardrails should surround all elevated platforms and should be at least 29 inches high for preschool-age children and 38 inches high for school-age children.
- * Look for exposed concrete footings, tree roots or rocks that could trip children.
- * Check for sharp edges and dangerous hardware, like open "S" hooks or protruding bolts.
- * Make sure your child plays on age-appropriate equipment.
- * Playgrounds should be maintained regularly; Report any problems.
- * Remove hoods or drawstrings that can get caught on equipment.
- * Supervise children at all times while they play.



Cost-Free Things To Do With Your Family This Summer

- * Go on a nature hike
- * Observe the stars and planets
- * Sing with the family
- * Watch a parade
- * Go swimming
- * Play outdoor games
- * Go bike riding
- * Watch birds
- * Weed the Yard
- * Clean out your closets
- * Wash the Car
- * Walk on the Beach
- * Camp in the Backyard
- * Play catch
- * Catch fireflies
- * Attend a free concert
- * Play in mud puddles
- * Go to a Little League game
- * Have a Scavenger hunt
- * Tell stories
- * Make & fly paper airplanes

“Comparing Children”

Comparing a child to another child in the family or other playmates is a common temptation of parents. “Why can’t you be like your brother?” Parents don’t want to make a child feel like he isn’t good enough, or that something is wrong with him/her. It’s especially important for parents not to compare a child to other classmates in school. “I wish you could read like Andrew.”

Children learn and mature at different rates. There will always be children that are “better” at something. It’s normal for parents to want their children to have the qualities they don’t and to do things they couldn’t as a child. However, when parents try to change a child, a child feels his parents don’t love him/her as they are, so how can his friends? Children build a strong self-concept, and are more likely to succeed in life, when they know their parents love them as they are. Height, body build, and many parts of a child’s personality are inherited, and can’t be changed. Parents must learn to appreciate the child they have.



Pool Safety

The American Academy of Pediatrics offered the following tips for Summer pool safety:

- ◆ Never leave children alone in or near the pool, even for a moment.
- ◆ Install a fence at least 4 feet high around a pool.
- ◆ Children are not ready for swim lessons until after their fourth birthday. Swim programs for children under 4 should not be seen as a way to decrease the risk of drowning.

Alternatives To Hitting Your Child

With Summer right around the corner, everyday pressures can build up to the point where you feel like lashing out at your child-STOP and try any of these simple alternatives:

- Take a deep breath and another, then remember you are the adult.
- Press your lips together and count to 10, better yet, count to 20.
- Put yourself in time out and think about why you are angry. Is it your child, or is your child simply a convenient target .
- Hug or pound a pillow or phone a friend.
- If someone can watch the children, go outside and take a walk.

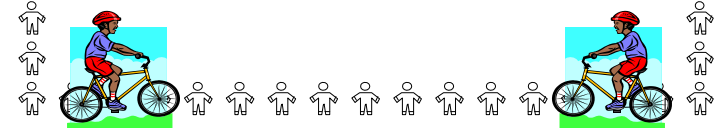
Bug Safety

- Do not use scented soaps, perfumes or hair sprays on your children.
- Avoid areas where insects live and congregate, (pools of water, uncovered food and flowers in bloom).
- To remove a visible stinger from the skin, gently scrape it off horizontally with a credit card or fingernail.
- Repellents appropriate for use on children should contain **NO MORE than 10% DEET** because the chemical, which is absorbed through the skin can cause harm.



Bicycle Safety

- ⇒ Do not push your child to ride a 2 wheeled bike until he or she is ready, about 5 or 6.
- ⇒ Stick with coaster brakes until your child is older and more experienced.
- ⇒ Take your child with you when you shop for a bike so that he/she can try the bike out.
- ⇒ Buy a bike that is the right size, not one your child has to “grow into.” Oversized bikes are especially dangerous.





Get Ready For Kindergarten



4 Basic Rules to Help Your Child Get Ready For Kindergarten

1. Encourage Independence: Your child should know his/her name, address, and telephone number, be able to use the bathroom by him/herself, button and zip his/her clothing and be able to share and play with other children.
2. Establish Routines: Practice getting a good night's sleep, waking up and getting dressed in time for school, eating a healthy breakfast together, and be prepared to meet the bus on time. Routines put children at ease. Set a limit to the amount of TV your child watches.
3. Enjoy Reading Together: Reading is a basis for education! Take time to read to your child everyday. When you finish reading a book, talk about what happened. Make regular visits to the library and story times.
4. Explore The World Around You.: Help your child turn everyday activities into learning experiences. Explore the world around you and name different things you see and experience. Example: Count the number of blue cars you pass on the way to the grocery store, compare the size of fruits and vegetables while shopping. Show your child that learning can be fun.

Activities To Help Your Get Ready For Kindergarten



Numbers and Math Readiness:

1. Place varied amounts of buttons, beans, or pennies in the bottom of an empty egg carton. Ask the child to count how many are in each cup. Mix them up, and have the child sort in groups.
2. Use simple recipes with simple measurements to help a child practice counting & measuring.
3. Have the child help set the table by using a table placement pattern.

Position and Direction:

1. Play Simon Says: Include directions of top & bottom, over & under, up & down and back & forth. Give simple directions that involve simple movements. Limit the directions to 2 or 3 steps.

Listening and Sequencing:

1. Take a walk to listen and identify both loud and soft sounds heard. After returning home, try to recall as many as possible and if it was made by an animal or human being.
2. Introduce rhyming sounds through rhymes and stories such as The Cat and the Hat by Dr. Seuss.

Speaking Skills:

1. Encourage your child to take an active part in conversations at home and during mealtimes.
2. Ask your child many questions and give him/her a chance to answer.



We're on the Web!!
www.mchs-ehs.org

Mercer County Head Start / Early Head Start

1901 Memorial Drive
Farrell, PA 16121

Tel: 724-346-4482
Fax: 724-346-4431

Smart Spot

"Popsicles"

Ingredients: 1 package Kool-Aid, 1 Package Jell-o 1 1/4 cups sugar, 3/4 cup hot water, 3/4 cup cold water. Mix all dry ingredients thoroughly in a large zip lock baggie. Measure 6 tablespoons of the dry ingredients into a bowl; add the hot and cold water. Pour into popsicle mold and freeze. If you do not have popsicle molds, use ice trays. Insert a popsicle stick when partially frozen.

Sticks can be found at any department store that has a craft department.

You may reach your Family Advocate by calling:

Waynetta Austin
(724) 342-3734 X 15

Marsha Barr
(724) 342-3734 X 20

Jennifer Gottberg
(724) 342-3734 X 17

Shirley Reagle
(724) 662-0170 X 14

Karla Stanton
(724) 662-2068

Congratulations to: Ashton Link—Mercer

& Lauren Rossman—Sharon Case Avenue 1, Proud winners of the bike drawings for perfect attendance sponsored by Horace Mann

"Summer Fruit Salad"

1 Cantaloupe or honeydew halved and seeded. 1/4 watermelon, seeds removed if desired and 1 pint fresh fruit sorbet. Directions: Use a melon baller to make 1 cup of each type of melon ball. Divide the balls between 4 to 6 clear bowl or parfait glasses. Let sorbet sit out for 10 minutes to soften slightly. Scoop sorbet with melon baler and add several to each bowl just before serving.

Using Fireworks Safely

Summer means picnics, barbecues, parades and fireworks displays, especially around the 4th of July. Summer also means an increase in injuries from backyard grills, bonfires and fireworks. In 2002, an estimated 8,800 people were treated in emergency rooms for firework related injuries to fingers, hands, eyes and legs. Children between the ages of 10 to 14 had the highest injury rate, followed by 5 to 9 year olds and then 15-19 year olds. The most severe injuries were from sparklers, bottle rockets and small firecrackers.

The National Safety Council advises that the best way to safely enjoy fireworks is to watch a display conducted by professionals. However, if fireworks are legal where you live and you decide to set them off on your own, be sure to follow these important safety tips:

- * Never allow young children to handle fireworks.
- * Older children should use fireworks only under close adult supervision.
- * Light fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from onlookers, houses and flammable material.
- * Light one device at a time; maintain a safe distance after lighting.
- * Do not allow any running or horseplay while fireworks are being used.
- * Never ignite devices in a container.
- * Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks; douse and soak them with water and discard them safely.
- * Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire.

"HUMOR AT IT'S BEST"

A man was driving down the road and ran out of gas. Just at that moment, a bee flew in his window. The bee said, "What seems to be the problem?" "I'm out of gas." The bee told the man to wait right there and flew away. Minutes later, the man watched as an entire swarm of bees flew to his car and into his gas tank. After a few minutes, the bees flew out. "Try it now," said one bee. The man turned the ignition key and the car started right up. "WOW!" the man exclaimed. "What did you put in my gas tank"?

The bee answered "BP"

