

MILFORD FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

The Infant and Toddler Times

JUDY LOBDELL, EDITOR

February 2020

Dates to
Remember

February

14th.  Happy Valentine's Day

14th.-17th. Winter
Break. Center closed

Children's Dental
Health Seminar. 
TBA


February is National
Children's Dental
Health Month

March

2nd. Read
Across America 

5th. Professional
Development.
School closed

8th. DST. Time to
spring forward. 

12th. Early Literacy.
Suzanne Thomas,
Milford Children's
Librarian
10:30 at the 
MFRC

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Love In Bloom: Emerging Feelings In Young Children

What better time of year than now to turn our thoughts toward the emerging feelings of love in young children.

How do babies and toddlers perceive love? Dr. Ayla Humphrey, a psychologist with Bedford Village Family Practice in New York, in an interview with Tracey A. Barger, states that children have feelings of love, but they are not necessarily defined in adult terms.

We know that babies develop their self image by mirroring caregivers actions and behaviors and by getting feedback from these significant people in their environment, but according to Dr. Humphrey, "There's no clear point at which the child is suddenly a loving human being. It's a long process that involves not just parents, but the whole social world." Dr. Humphrey goes on to point out that it is important for the child to receive the "necessary feeding" at each level, so he can move on to the next level.

During the toddler years and into the preschool years, as well, children begin to expand their social circle. Dr. Humphrey states that this is when children begin to deal with the concept of sharing possessions, as well as imaginations and ideas. The school years are marked by the development of "best friends" and love of their peers, even though their primary attachment is still to the family unit. It is not until adolescence, as hormonal changes occur, that the child starts to move away from the family. At this point they are approaching more adult-like feelings of 'romantic' love.

How can parents nurture their children's growing feelings of love and make sure they are getting their proper 'feeding'? One good suggestion Dr. Humphrey had is something we here at the Milford Family Resource Center wholly endorse: *talk to your children about how they feel about their friends and family.* This is important to remember because young children don't always have the words to express their feelings.

While babies respond more to tone and body language, as children grow, they can benefit from having behavior modeled for them and discussing their feelings. You can help your toddler sort through feelings by reading cues: "You look upset about not being able to go to Billy's house today. What other fun activity can we do?" This shows your child you can connect with his feelings, and it also involves him in finding a solution. You can also help your young child understand how others feel by explaining behavior in simple terms: "Suzie got very upset when you took her doll away. What do you think would make her feel better?" Don't forget the power of praise as well: "That was very nice of you to share your new puzzle with Katie. You are a good friend!"

Discussing feelings and providing information about the things your young children see, hear, do, and think about, not only helps them build vocabulary and language skills, but it also helps them to clarify their feelings and build that 'emotional intelligence', so important to successful living. By providing opportunities for young children to analyze their thoughts and feelings, it is helping them to develop empathy, caring, and understanding - all prerequisites to building loving relationships.



Recipe for Creating a Successful Preschool Environment

As an early childhood educator and director of a full day preschool program I have learned some strategies that really make a difference in the lives of young children. First you must understand how they develop and what is appropriate for their age.

Very young children begin with parallel play. They will play alongside another, but very little conversation or socializing happens. As they get older, they start playing in cooperation with other children and that is when you will see conflicts happen. Sharing is a difficult concept for young children and in our program, we try to have them talk it out. For example; Bobby took a toy from Suzy and she begins to get upset. Ask Suzy, "Did you like when Bobby took your toy?" The answer is always "no". Then give them the words, "Tell Bobby, I don't like when you take my toy." Also ask Bobby if he would like to use the toy. When he says yes, give him the words: "Ask Suzy," "When you are done can I have a turn?" The children feel empowered and begin to use these words without a teacher to tell them.

Another important aspect to any early childhood program is the connection to home. Children will learn better and have a sense of pride in their classroom when parents are actively involved. Some of the gatherings we plan include family reading nights. Families are invited to read a book or just come to listen to some stories. Chairs are arranged so the children sit with their parent while they read. Sometimes former students who have learned to read come and read for us, it's quite a treat! In addition to reading nights we have picnics in the spring, beach days in the summer and even a Grand Event when we invite Grandparents to visit the classroom and play. All these social events promote a culture of a caring and inviting classroom.

Most importantly, early childhood programs should allow for free play of at least 30-45 minutes. Children learn through play. The best programs are play based and child directed. This means the child decides on what center or area to play in and the materials provided should be set out intentionally by the teacher for the children to gain skills. For instance, Playdoh can be a great way to build muscles needed to begin writing. The block center can help children learn hand-eye coordination and problem solving. The dramatic play center can help children learn cooperation and negotiating. They are developing skills and learning while playing.

*"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning.
But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood."
Fred Rogers*

Michelle Zawadski
Owner, Director, Milford Preschool, LLC.

Celebrate Read Across America Observed Monday March 2, 2020

"Grab your hat and read with the cat". The National Education Association (NEA) "calls for all children to be reading in the company of a caring adult". You can visit their website at www.nea.org/readacross/ for more information.



*You're never too old, too wacky, too wild,
To pick up a book and read with a child.
You're never too busy, too cool, or too hot,
To pick up a book and share what you've got.*



www.nea.org/readacross



*In schools and communities,
Let's gather around,
Let's pick up a book,
Let's pass it around.*

*There are kids all around you,
Kids who will need
Someone to hug,
Someone to read.*

*Come join us March 2nd
Your own special way
And make this America's
Read to Kids Day.*



The Milford Bank Foundation gathered recipients of grants from the Foundation on January 14 in the bank conference room. The Foundation granted over \$16,000 to Milford and Stratford groups, non profits and agencies—representatives of whom are pictured. The Milford Family Resource Center, Kids Count of Milford and the Milford Salvation Army Service Unit were among the recipients. Thank you to the Foundation members and a special THANK YOU to Jorge Santiago

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION NEWS

The online registration process will, once again, be the sole way to register a child for Kindergarten (for the Fall 2020). **The online registration link will open on Monday, February 10th.** All of the instructions on how to complete this process will be there, along with an online appointment calendar for parents and their Kindergarten-bound children to visit the school and bring original documents for authentication.

Our advice at this point is to go onto the **Student Registration** section of the district website (www.milforded.org) **on Feb 10th.** and begin the process as early as possible. Many thanks

