

MILFORD FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

The Infant and Toddler Times

JUDY LOBDELL, EDITOR

February 2021

*Dates to
Remember*

*February
Celebrate*



*14th. Happy
Valentine's
Day*



*15th. Presi-
dents' Day. Center
closed.*



*Weather permitting,
We continue to run
outdoor playgroups
for families at the
Fannie Beach
Community Center.
If you are interested
in attending one,
please email us at
the email below.*

**The Milford Family
Resource Center
@Fannie Beach
Community Center
16 Dixon Street
Milford, CT 06460
(203)783-3626
mfrc@milforded.org**

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Your Age-by-Age Guide to Talking About Race

By Kara Corridan and Wanda Medina

One day you're standing in an elevator and your 3-year-old points to a person of a different race, blurting out, "Mommy, that man has a funny color skin." What do you say? We've highlighted what children understand about race and how to talk to them about it.

Ages 6 months to 1 year

Studies show that babies recognize differences in skin color and hair textures, says Rebecca Bigler, Ph. D., an associate professor of psychology at the University of Texas at Austin, who has studied children's racial attitudes. Even before they can talk to their children, parents can teach through their actions. In addition, do your best to expose your child to a diverse environment. It's important for kids to see their parents interact socially with people of other racial and ethnic groups.

While it's important to talk about physical differences (hair type, skin and eye color, and even height), you should also call attention to the special talents inherent in diversity. Try, "Everybody is special, and so-and-so is special because his family can speak another language," says Harriett Romo, Ph.D., director of the Child and Adolescent Policy Research Institute at the University of Texas at San Antonio. By doing this, you'll teach them to focus less on how someone looks and more on what they offer."

Ages 2 to 3

When children become more vocal, it's normal for them to spontaneously start talking about skin color. So help your child by replying in a calm, positive tone, "Yes, he does have brown skin. It's not the same as yours, but it's a really nice color too." It's also fine to bring up people's physical differences before your child does. A smart time to do this is when you're playing with toys and already pointing out various physical attributes: "This doll has a hat on, that one doesn't; this one has dark skin, that one doesn't."

Ages 4 to 6

It's common for children this age to assign positive traits to people of their own ethnic group and negative traits to people who look different, says Dr. Bigler. As a result, you may hear troubling comments like "That boy has funny-looking eyes" or "Her skin is dirty." The best way to respond is to rebut these statements in a calm, straightforward manner ("Her skin isn't dirty, it's just not like yours. People are all different skin colors"). Talk to them about smashing stereotypes by learning about the important contributions made by people of color. Chapter-book series such as *Who Was?* illustrate the accomplishments of men and women like Jackie Robinson, Malala Yousafzai, and Frida Kahlo. Celebrate your child's own cultural strengths, and encourage them to step it up. "For example, if you see someone struggling with a language barrier, help them out and tell your child, 'See how important it is that we speak two languages and can help [translate],'" Dr. Romo says.

Visit this website for further information: <https://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/teaching-tolerance/talking-about-race-with-kids/>



Sweet Ways to Share Valentine's Day With Children



One mom shared these ideas, "We try and make Valentines a fun day to show our littles how much they are loved! Nothing big and extravagant but they all have a large felt envelope from the Target dollar aisle! They make each other cards, and a card from Mom and Dad go in each one as well. We get them a little something fun like a new hair accessory, or a new pad of paper and crayons and Dad and brother give the girls tulips!"

Want to head outdoors but still want to feel cozy and warm? Go to your local coffee shop and enjoy a few cups of hot chocolate. You'll love the quiet time, and they'll enjoy digging for marshmallows.

Stringing decorations is a quick way to acknowledge the holiday without having to decorate your entire home. Choose a small area and let your little one string hearts at their level for easy participation.

Valentine's popcorn is a quick and inexpensive snack to create together. Be sure to add conversation hearts for additional pops of color.

Every now and then it's okay to grab a snack, blanket, and cuddle next to your little one with a good movie. A Charlie Brown Valentine or Lady and the Tramp are perfect choices!

Enjoy mommy and me time with tea, little sandwiches and sweets. If the weather is nice, enjoy it outside. If not, turn your dining room into a fancy tea party.

If it's hard for you to verbalize your feelings, try leaving morning love notes for your kids on their doors. Saying things like, "You never give up," and "you are brave!" can have a big impact on a child.

Sure it's nice to buy cards for loved ones, but it's even more unique to make them. Teach kids the value of homemade gifts by assisting them with the process.

It's more than likely too cold to play outdoors for an extended time, but that doesn't mean you can't play inside. We love this adorable DIY Valentine's Day ring toss from Little Family Fun.

Walks are a great way to exercise while spending time with your little one. Go for a Valentine's Day walk and locate heart-shaped objects. Whoever finds the most can win a special prize.



Excerpted from <https://www.mother.ly/lifestyle/valentines-day-crafts-2559513854/1-give-fun-inexpensive-gifts>

Diana Spalding

Guiding Children By Asking Questions

By Jack Wright

Asking children questions is a way to guide them toward healthy behaviors by helping them think about what they do and what effect they have on others. Over the course of many years, children who receive lots of gentle reminders—often in the form of questions—develop the ability to think about behaviors before doing them. For families, it can be hard to remain patient and calm as a toddler grabs a toy from a playmate or a 5-year-old throws a snack she doesn't like on the floor. It can be tempting to punish children to quickly put a stop to their behavior, but punishment often teaches children little about better alternative behaviors and it runs the risk of emotional harm.

What just happened here? is an excellent question after a child's behavior has caused a problem (e.g., maybe he has just knocked over a lamp while running in the house). It is important that he not be afraid that he will be punished when you ask the question, as that fear may limit a child's ability to think. The child will not be afraid if the relationship with the caregiver has been gentle throughout the child's experiences and never (or rarely!) impatient with her learning from mistakes. Many people think that a child is getting away with something if we don't punish them, but thinking about the behavior develops the improved behaviors far better than punishment would have.

Asking a question *before* an action is also an excellent way to encourage good behaviors. For example, when getting a child dressed for going outside, asking, *Is it going to be cold outside?* is a more helpful and thought-provoking than simply telling him to put his coat on.

Asking a child about his behavior can stop the behavior *as it is happening* and get him to think about it. The best questions are ones that require more than a yes-or-no answer. Here are some examples.

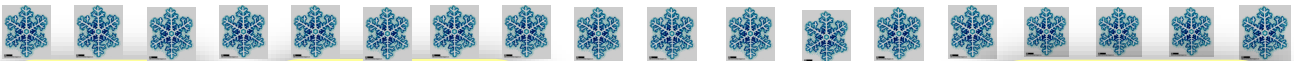
- What problems are there when you run in the house?
- What happens when you grab your sister's doll away from her?
- What do you see on the table that might easily spill?
- Why is it healthy for you to brush your teeth?
- What are the good behavior ideas we came up with for going to the store?



The feelings we express when we question children are very important. Children know when we are upset with them. If we display anger or irritation, they may feel anxiety or fear—and that's when they aren't doing their best thinking. But if we can stay calm and warm as we ask these guiding questions, we'll see that troublesome behaviors end more quickly and become less common.

Asking children open-ended questions starts a conversation—and builds a relationship—and it even helps develop children's brains. Asking them open-ended questions that help them think about how they want to behave, supports reflection, and increases self-control over time.

Dr. Wright retired from four decades of counseling as a licensed psychologist, occasionally teaching as an adjunct instructor at five different colleges. He is now a Child Development Consultant on the Flathead Reservation.



Another day, another snowman!

Check out page 4 for more pictures.

*Take home craft bags
are a big hit!*



More
Fun
In the Snow



FREE DIAPERS AVAILABLE TO MILFORD FAMILIES IN NEED!



BABIES & YOUNG CHILDREN DESERVE TO BE DRY!

- ♦ Applicants must be residents of Milford.
- ♦ The child (or children) receiving diapers must be under 4 years of age (expectant mothers are welcome to apply).
- ♦ Children with Special Needs/ Disabilities welcome to apply.
- ♦ Financial/other eligibility guidelines apply – please contact the Diaper Bank for more information and an appointment/application.

*For more information, please contact the
Diaper Bank - diapers@teaminc.org*

203.878.9153



February, 2021



MILFORD FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER 783-3626
MFRC@MILFORD.ORG

Playgroup News

Milford Family Resource Center

Valentine's Day is a special day! It is a day when we share our positive feelings about special people. This day also provides an opportunity to talk about the importance of sharing, giving, loving, and friendship.

Have a Happy Valentine's Day!

Recommended Activities:



- Read to your child everyday. Reading to children shows them the importance of communication and motivates them to become readers. It also provides a context to discuss issues and learn what is on your child's mind,
- Help your child make a valentine for a grandparent, aunt, uncle or other person. A special note could be dictated by your child and written by you.
- Heart Prints. On a table place white paper and various heart-shaped cookie cutters. Mix pink and red paint and pour into shallow pans. The children can print hearts on white construction paper using the cookie cutters as a tool and then paint them.
- Cut various-size hearts from pink, red and white construction paper. The children can sequence the heart shapes from small to big or vice versa.



A RED HEART

Sung to: Mary had a little Lamb

I have a Red Heart,
a Red Heart,
a Red Heart.
I have a red heart.
That I will give to you.

Skidamarink

Skidamarink a dink a dink,
Skidamarink a doo,
I love you.
Skidamarink a dink a dink,
Skidamarink a doo,
I love you.

I love you in the morning
And in the afternoon,
I love you in the evening
And underneath the moon:
Oh, Skidamarink a dink a dink,
Skidamarink a doo,
I love you!

SONGS FOR THE MONTH



Recommended Readings



Valentines Day, by: Anne Rockwell
Mama Do you Love Me?, by: Barbara Joosse
Papa Do You Love Me? by: Barbara Joosse
Froggy's First Kiss, by: Johnathan London
The Valentine Bears, by: Eve Bunting
Love You Forever, by: Robert Munsch
Silly Tilly's Valentine, by: Lillian Hoban
Arthur's Valentine, by: Marc Brown
Guess How Much I Love You, by: Sam McBratney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: January 29, 2021

Press Contacts: Kathryn Bonetti, Communications Coordinator
Milford Public Schools Central Office, (203) 882-5872
kbonetti@milforded.org



Milford Kindergarten Registration to Open 2/16

Schools to Welcome 'Class of 2034'

MILFORD – The Milford Public School district is delighted to welcome its newest students! **Kindergarten Registration will open on Tuesday, Feb. 16th** for children entering the Milford Public Schools in the fall of 2021. Children who are at least 5 years old on or before December 31, 2021 and are Milford residents are welcome to enroll in kindergarten for the 2021-22 school year. The registration process will be conducted exclusively online this year.

As of Feb. 16th, parents will be able to access the registration link right on the district's website home page (www.milforded.org) to begin the process. We suggest parents read the instructions first before they begin as there are several documents that will be needed for upload to complete their child's registration (see below). It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete the online materials.

Documentation You Will Need to Register Your Child

The following items will be needed for upload as you begin the registration process.

- A certified copy of your child's birth certificate (with raised seal, not a photocopy)
- For Homeowners: mortgage/deed or tax bill for the residence
- For Renters: lease or rental agreement signed by the landlord, including the landlord's contact phone number
- (2) Recent Utility bills in the same name to the same address (landline phone, water, electric, gas, oil or cable tv)
- A copy of the student's latest physical exam (must have occurred within the past 12 months) and immunization record

If you have any additional questions, please contact Cass Philpott in the Assistant Superintendent's office at (203) 783-3422 or via email at cphilpott@milforded.org.

February News at the Milford Public Library!

Library staff have put together some great programs, take and make craft kits, and book discussion groups to keep you busy during the cold month of February! From the comfort of your home meet author Mary Marantz as she discusses her new book: *Dirt: Growing Strong Roots is What Makes the Broken Beautiful*; explore mysterious Easter Island; hone your job search skills with our Job Search Take & Make kits, be entertained by the musical presentation, *The Roots of Black Music in America*, and much more!

If you are dreaming of travel and need to get your passport in order, our Passport Office is now open! It is open Saturdays, 10:00am-12:00noon, by appointment. Please call 203-783-3309 to schedule.

We have closed our temporary Children's Space as staff move items back into the renovated and expanded Children's Department. We can't wait to share it with you!

The opening date will be posted on our website and Facebook page as soon as we know them. During this closure, a small collection of Children's materials will be available in a designated area on our adult floor. We thank you for your patience during this project!