

# MILFORD FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

## The Infant and Toddler Times

JUDY LOBDELL, EDITOR

January 2021

### Dates to Remember

#### January

18th. Martin Luther King Day celebrated. Center closed.

#### February

12th. - 15th. Winter break. Center closed.

**Our outdoor playgroups continue as long as the weather permits.**

*The Literacy Center housed here at the Fanny Beach Community Center, has been donating age appropriate birthday books for the children enrolled at our center for many years! We are grateful for the generous efforts that this program offers. They even arrive wrapped! Thank you Tami Jackson et al. (see p.6 for more about the work of the Literacy Center).*



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### New Year's Resolution: No More Yelling

By Rebecca Parlakian and Sarah S. MacLaughlin

About 40% of parents told us they wished they could do a better job of not yelling or raising their voice so quickly with their children.

"Even if I yell, my kids don't listen." "The only way my kids listen is if I yell." Either way, it's no fun. If you're looking for a better way to be heard this year, you are not alone. Our national parent survey, *Tuning In*, found that almost 60% of parents said they struggle with figuring out the most effective way to discipline. And about 40% of parents told us they wished they could do a better job of not yelling or raising their voice so quickly with their children. The truth is that many of us yell, even though we know it's not the best way to shape our children's behavior.

#### What to do in the moment when you're about to lose it?

Many of us go from "0 to 60" with our kids way too fast. And as much as we want them to change, the only behavior we can truly control is our *own*. First, make the decision to stop yelling and commit to it. Write it down or post it on your refrigerator; anything that will help you remember your commitment. Then, make a plan to help you follow through, because behavior change is hard and only you know what will help. Maybe it will take some experimenting—for some it's a mindfulness practice, meditation, or yoga. Opening up to friends who know what it's like to raise little ones, or trading childcare so you can get a break, can also really help.

#### When your toddler is losing it and you feel like you might too, try one of these approaches:

- 1. Double-check that your expectations are reasonable.** Our *Tuning In* survey found that parents of young children have an "expectation gap" that leads them to thinking that toddlers have more self-regulation than is actually possible at age 2. Remember that toddlers still need a LOT of help with sharing, calming down, and expressing their feelings appropriately. Trust that they will get there and do your best to model the behavior you want to see.
- 2. Be specific.** Keep instructions specific and clear: "You have two more minutes to play. I will set the timer on my phone." Try, "Put the blocks in the basket" instead of, "time to clean up."
- 3. Tell children what they *can* do, not just what they *can't*.** *You can walk or hop inside* (instead of "no running"). *You can choose what you want to eat on your plate* (instead of "no more snacks").
- 4. Make eye contact and use loving touch.** Kneel down to your child's level. Make eye contact and gently touch their shoulder or arm to get their attention. Then say: *We are leaving the park now. Please hop into your stroller.*
- 5. Offer choices.** When toddlers are upset, choices can sometimes be calming. But be sure to offer choices that still work for you as a parent. If your toddler wants to wear a sundress in January, you might (calmly) say: *You have choices about what to wear. You can choose the long-sleeve dinosaur shirt or the long-sleeve striped shirt.* Or you can look for a compromise: *You can wear a long shirt under your sundress. Which one would you like?*
- 6. Get quiet instead of loud.** Whispering can be attention-getting. You can even add an element of imaginative play: *Let's see if we can put the toys away really quietly so your stuffed animals don't wake up!*
- 7. Do something silly.** Young children *love* silliness. Anything that gets the laughter flowing will be helpful during tough moments—try a silly robot voice or hop like kangaroos while walking to the car. Pretend to put a sock on their nose while getting dressed. Use a fun moment to break the tension.

(continued on page 2)

**8. Don't be afraid to take a time-out (for you!).** Everybody gets pushed to the edge once in a while. It's okay to tell your toddler, "I feel very frustrated right now. I need a break so I can do some good thinking. I'll be back in two minutes." And then go to the bathroom or your bedroom and take a few deep breaths before you return.

**9. Be kind to yourself.** Making changes is hard, so be kind to yourself. There will be times when you mess up. That's okay. Holding yourself accountable in a kind, firm way is great modeling for your child: "Oops, Daddy didn't mean to yell. What I meant to say was, you need to put your cars in the bin now or we won't have time for a story before bath." These moments of reconnection help to build a strong bond between you and your little one, even during the tough times.

*From zerotothree.org*

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE: MORATORIUM ON NEW STUDENT ACCEPTANCE**

**As of September 1, 2020, Milford Public Schools and the School Readiness Program have placed a moratorium on accepting new students to the waitlist. The program waitlists are full for the next three years through the 2023-2024 school year. MPS and the School Readiness Program will inform the Milford community when the moratorium is lifted and the manner through which a family may apply to the program. For other information on the program, please contact Milford School Readiness/Ready to Learn at (203) 783-3627.**

## **Talking to Children About Tragedies & Other News Events**

*After any disaster or crisis, families struggle with what they should say to children and what's best not to share with them.*

**The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) encourages parents, teachers, child care providers, and others who work closely with children to filter information about the event and present it in a way that their child can understand, adjust to, and cope with.**

**Where to Start – All Ages** No matter what age or developmental stage the child is, parents can start by asking a child what they've already heard. Most children will have heard something, no matter how old they are. After you ask them what they've heard, ask what questions they have.

Older children, teens, and young adults might ask more questions and may request and benefit more from additional information. But no matter what age the child is, it's best to keep the dialogue straightforward and direct.

### **Avoiding Graphic Details & Exposure to Media**

In general, it is best to share basic information with children, not graphic details, or unnecessary details about tragic circumstances. Children and adults alike want to be able to understand enough so they know what's going on. Graphic information and images should be avoided.

**Talking to Very Young Children** Keep young children away from repetitive graphic images and sounds that may appear on television, radio, social media, computers, etc. [However,] the reality is that even children as young as 4 years old will hear about major crisis events. It's best that they hear about it from a parent or caregiver, as opposed to another child or in the media.

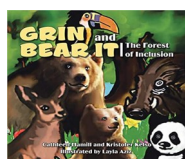
Even the youngest child needs accurate information, but you don't want to be too vague. Simply saying, "*Something happened in a faraway town and some people got hurt,*" doesn't tell the child enough about what happened. The child may not understand why this is so different from people getting hurt every day and why so much is being said about it. The underlying message for a parent to convey is, "*It's okay if these things bother you. We are here to support each other.*"

Please visit <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Talking-To-Children-About-Tragedies-and-Other-News-Events.aspx> for further information.

ReRead Books & More is a used book & specialty shop located at the historic Watch Factory Shoppes, centrally located in the town of Cheshire CT and easily accessible from Route 10. Stop by and visit us. We carry thousands of books for all age groups from a variety of genres.

The unique focus of this endeavor is that it is devoted to creating independent businesses that over time can be self-sustaining and provide transitional and occupational training as well as income to young adults with Intellectual or Development Delay (IDD). To learn more about The Connecticut Community Empowerment Foundation, go to: [CT-CEF.org](http://CT-CEF.org)

[https://www.wfsb.com/video-cheshire-bookstore-helping-those-with-special-needs-gain-job-experience/video\\_5760450b-8147-5bd7-9b26-8b3446e9ae7e.html?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=email&utm\\_campaign=user-share](https://www.wfsb.com/video-cheshire-bookstore-helping-those-with-special-needs-gain-job-experience/video_5760450b-8147-5bd7-9b26-8b3446e9ae7e.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share)



Accepting differences spans a wide range of areas. With that thought in mind, local teachers wrote a book addressing this important concept of acceptance for young children and their parents and classmates. *Grin and Bear It: The Forest of Inclusion*, by Cathleen Hamill, Kristofer Kelso, Layla Aziz (Illustrator) addresses this need, in a beautiful and entertaining way.

*'For those who dream of a more inclusive world, which begins with the unblemished minds of children who accept one another unconditionally'*



## Activities for Toddlers

As winter sets in, here is a sampling of 101 activities for toddlers, from Dr. Amanda Gummer, a research psychologist specializing in child development:

1. Make colored rice.
2. Play doctor.
3. Make maracas to shake as you dance.
4. Play "stepping stones" with pillows.
5. Finger-paint.
7. Make a smiley face with cut-up vegetables.
8. Cook dinner together.
9. Play store.
10. Make slime.
11. Draw with chalk on the sidewalk.
12. Make a painted-rock paperweight.
13. Trace with flour.
14. Sort laundry.
15. Play toy musical instruments.
16. Play parachute games with a bed sheet
17. Roll down a hill.
19. Collect rocks.
20. Blow bubbles for toddlers to catch.
21. Make a pretend car wash.
22. Paint with water.
23. Let them lead a grocery shopping trip for that night's dinner.
24. Prepare pretend meals.
25. Go on a nature walk.
26. Zoom visit grandparents and other relatives.
27. Play "I Spy."

For more ideas you can visit this website:

<https://www.care.com/c/stories/4073/101-fun-things-to-do-with-toddlers/>



# 25 SIMPLE ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR TODDLERS

HUG YOUR SIBLING  ASK A FRIEND TO PICK A GAME TO PLAY  
BLOW BUBBLES FOR YOUNGER KIDS  PICK TOYS WITHOUT BEING ASKED  
SAY SOMETHING NICE TO A FRIEND  DRAW A PICTURE FOR A TEACHER  
MAKE PAPER HEARTS AND LEAVE THEM IN LIBRARY BOOKS  SAY THANKS  
PICK 3 TOYS TO DONATE TO KINDERGARTEN  MAKE A FRIEND SMILE  
HIDE TREASURE ON THE PLAYGROUND  MAKE A NEW FRIEND  
PICK 3 BOOKS TO DONATE TO LIBRARY  SET A TABLE FOR DINNER  
BRING FLOWERS TO GRANDMA  SAY HALLO TO EVERYONE YOU SEE  
INVITE A FRIEND ON A PLAY DATE  SHARE A TOY WITH A FRIEND  
CALL GRANDPARENTS AND ASK ABOUT THEIR DAY  SING A SONG  
PICK 3 PIECES OF CLOTH TO DONATE TO CHARITY  GIVE HIGH FIVE  
SHARE A CANDY WITH A FRIEND  PLAY WITH SOMEONE NEW  
 SMILE! AND PEOPLE WILL SMILE BACK! 

## Ages and Stages Questionnaire Explained

ASQ-3 is a set of simple questionnaires trusted for more than 20 years to check child development. There are 21 ASQ-3 questionnaires for use with children from 1 month to 5½ years old (one questionnaire for each age range). Here are the five important areas of development that each questionnaire looks at:

1. **Communication:** Your child's language skills, both what your child understands and what he or she can say.
  2. **Gross Motor:** How your child uses their arms and legs and other large muscles for sitting, crawling, walking, running, and other activities.
  3. **Fine Motor:** Your child's hand and finger movement and coordination.
  4. **Problem Solving:** How your child plays with toys and solves problems.
  5. **Personal-Social:** Your child's self-help skills and interactions with others.
- The "Overall" section asks you open-ended questions about your child's development and lets you weigh in with any concerns you may have.

**Tell me more about ASQ:SE-2.** ASQ:SE-2 is a set of questionnaires with a deep, exclusive focus on social-emotional development. There are 9 ASQ:SE-2 questionnaires for use with children from 1 month to 6 years old. Here are the seven important areas of development that each questionnaire looks at:

1. **Autonomy:** Your child's ability or willingness to self-initiate or respond without guidance (moving to independence).
  2. **Compliance:** Your child's ability or willingness to conform to the direction of others and follow rules.
  3. **Adaptive functioning:** Your child's success or ability to cope with bodily needs (sleeping, eating, toileting, safety).
  4. **Self-regulation:** Your child's ability or willingness to calm or settle down or adjust to physiological or environmental conditions or stimulation.
  5. **Affect:** Your child's ability or willingness to demonstrate their own feelings and empathy for others.
  6. **Interaction:** Your child's ability or willingness to respond to or initiate social responses with parents, other adults, and peers.
  7. **Social-communication:** Your child's ability or willingness to interact with others by responding to or initiating verbal or nonverbal signals to indicate interests, needs, or feelings.
- The "Overall" section asks open-ended questions about your child's social-emotional development and lets you weigh in with any concerns.

### **How long does an ASQ questionnaire take?**

You'll only need 10–15 minutes to fill out an ASQ-3 or ASQ:SE-2 questionnaire. It's that quick and easy!

*If you are interested in completing an ASQ, we have them available here at our center and would be happy to provide one for you and your child/children.*



The Foran Child Learning Center is a high quality, developmentally appropriate program for 3 and 4 year old children. The center is open from **7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and follows the Milford Public Schools calendar. This unique lab setting provides a learning environment for high school classes as well. Please contact Rachel Pangu for more information at [rpangu@milforded.org](mailto:rpangu@milforded.org)

The center currently has openings and is under the direction of a full-time teacher and two professional teacher's aides. The fee for attendance will be \$40.00/day payable as a monthly tuition. The center will be open for 35 weeks (140 days) at a cost of **\$5600** year.

# What's Happening at The Fanny Beach Community Center

## Milford Family Resource Center

As you likely know, the Milford Family Resource Center continues to operate our programs at the Fanny Beach Community Center in Woodmont where we hold outdoor playgroups, weather permitting and provide developmental information, Ages and Stages Questionnaires, and other timely information.

We feel very fortunate to have this space and to be able to continue providing services to our parents and caregivers and their children. And we also feel very fortunate to share this facility with organizations that provide other needed community services in a variety of ways.

The following are highlights of their programs and services.

## Literacy Volunteers of Southern Connecticut

Literacy Volunteers of Southern Connecticut (LVsCT) has had to adjust and adapt to a new way of teaching and learning just like the rest of the world! We are tutoring online, classrooms have new plexi glass barriers; hand sanitizers and cleaning supplies are in each classroom to keep our tutoring and small classes as safe as possible.

Other groups have been meeting online or outside on our front lawn with lawn chairs. We will continue to adapt so we can continue to bring people together, support our programs and continue to meet the needs in our community.

As a community-minded organization with a deep understanding of literacy's vital role in determining a community's vitality, prosperity, and well-being, LVsCT ensures that its mission of nonprofit literacy continues to grow. The organization continues to forge strong links to the community in developing programs in support of its educational mission for the common good.

"During this very difficult time we continue to adapt and evolve so we can support people in our program," says Executive Director, Tami Jackson. Literacy empowers adults to make a better life and world for themselves and their families. Literacy helps families be healthier, support themselves through work, be better citizens and create a more fair and just society. We help people change their lives by giving them the reading, writing and basic math skills they need to earn money, stay healthy and improve their communities.

Check out the lvscet newsletter for further information at:

[Www.https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1/#inbox/FMfcgxwKkHgGLvkPnWmsNMTPxlGGChS](https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1/#inbox/FMfcgxwKkHgGLvkPnWmsNMTPxlGGChS)

## The Woodmont Library: A Hidden Gem

Milford is full of delightful surprises that even life-long residents are sometimes surprised to discover. One of them is the Woodmont Volunteer Library, at 16 Dixon Street. It's been there since 1980, but is a bit tucked away in a city-owned Community Center in the Borough of Woodmont, so we need to spread the word.

Because it's an all-volunteer library, the hours are a bit more limited than fully-funded municipal libraries. And with the COVID pandemic, hours are shorter than usual. Current hours are: **Monday from 10 am-noon, Wednesday from 2-4 pm and Thursday from 10 am-noon.**

Plus, the Woodmont Library offers curbside service (since the pandemic). You can call in or email the name of the book you'd like, and pull up in front of the building, let the librarians know you're there and they'll bring it out to your car. They can email you the list of new and reserve books (which is updated every month), you choose, or get added to the reserve list if the book is out or has a waiting list. You get a call when the book is ready and there you go!

There's also a bright, cheerful room full of children's books and play areas. Post-pandemic, we will resume our weekly Story Time for preschoolers every Monday from 10-noon. Special kids' events will resume too – like puppet-making, Valentine's Day and Mother's Day card-making and other holiday activities. Children are often proud to get their own library cards – start them out on a lifetime of learning and literary pleasure!

Reading is a great way to spend time alone in the house, which is what we all are doing a lot of these days. And when COVID starts to get under control and life gets a bit more normal, you'll already be hooked on the Woodmont Library. You'll know the volunteer librarians and you can enjoy the expanded hours and a range of in person activities once they resume!

Stop by to sign up for a Woodmont Library card, and start to enjoy the smallest, sweetest little library in the state! Ample, free parking and personal service. What other library has staff who can greet you by name? It's like a visit into the past!

If you have questions, call the Woodmont Library during its hours of operation at 203-874-5675.





January, 2021



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MFRC@MILFORD.ORG

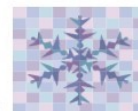
## Playgroup News

# Milford Family Resource Center

Happy New Year! We hope your holidays were healthy, happy and fun.

Recommended Activities:

- Read to Your Child Everyday! Reading to your child shows them the importance of communication and motivates them to become readers. The reassuring sound of your voice as you read or point out pictures helps your child associate reading with closeness, warmth and pleasure.
- Snow Pictures - Have your child make a snow picture on a sheet of dark blue paper by arranging round white stickers or cotton balls dipped in glue on it.
- Finger paint directly on large baking sheets that can be easily rinsed off. If your child wants to save a painting, press a blank sheet of paper over it, lift it off carefully, and set aside to dry.



### CHUBBY SNOWMAN (finger play)

A chubby little snowman,  
had a carrot nose.  
Along came a bunny,  
And what do you  
suppose?  
That hungry little bunny,  
Looking for his lunch,  
Ate that snowman's  
carrot nose,  
Nibble, Nibble, Crunch!!

### January Song

(to the tune of  
"Twinkle, Twinkle  
Little Star")

January has begun!

Now it's time for  
winter fun!

Put some warm socks  
on your toes!

Feel the snowflakes on  
your nose!

Celebrate the  
brand-new year!

Wintertime is finally  
here!

### SONG FOR THE MONTH



### Recommended Readings



Sadie and the Snowman, by: Allen Morgan  
The Mitten, by: Jan Brett  
The Big Snow, by: Mercer Mayer  
White Snow Bright Snow, by: Alvin Tresselt  
The Snowy Day, by: Ezra Jack Keats  
Geraldine's Big Snow, by: Holly Keller  
Max and Maggie in Winter, by: Janet Craig  
Snowballs, by: Lois Ehlert