

# MILFORD FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

## The Infant and Toddler Times

JUDY LOBDELL, EDITOR

October 2019

### Dates to Remember October

9th. Yom Kippur.  
Center closed.

10th. Parent panel  
Meeting 10:45 AM

24th. Parent seminar.  
Toilet learning. 10:45

31st. Halloween



### November

2nd. Preschool  
Showcase

5th. Election Day  
Center closed

27th. - 29th.  
Thanksgiving break

### December

7th. Holiday Concert

**The Milford Family  
Resource Center  
@Mathewson School  
466 West River Street  
Milford, CT 06461  
(203)783-3626  
mfrc@milforded.org**

**Milford Family Resource  
Center Staff::  
Program Manager:  
Peggy Kelly  
Parent Educators:  
Kathy Aspinwall  
Judy Lobdell  
Anne Mundy**

### Helping Young Children Develop Empathy

Empathy can be defined as: *the ability to understand and share the feelings of another and act in a caring way* The development of this ability in young children is a process requiring complex social emotional skills such as self awareness, self-regulation, and perspective taking.. Self awareness can be defined as: *conscious knowledge beginning when kids start being able to recognize and name their emotions, strengths and challenges, and likes and dislikes.* Self-regulation is a skill that: *allows kids to manage their emotions, behavior and body movement when they're faced with a situation that is tough to handle. And it allows them to do that while still staying focused and paying attention.* (understood.org) Perspective taking is: *the ability to look beyond your own point of view, so that you can consider how someone else may think or feel about something.* (sociallyskilledkids.com) This ongoing development begins in infancy as a baby becomes aware of her surroundings and learns to respond to cues provided by her loving caregivers. During toddlerhood as a child gains more skills, he is expanding his environment learning to interact with his peers. These interactions often involve a shared interest in the same toy, which, in turn, can offer an opportunity to use his budding negotiation skills that are still a work in progress. As a child approaches the preschool years, she is able to begin to use her higher thinking and growing social skills, but, again, this is a work in progress, as well.

With these thoughts in mind, imagine 3 year old, Sam, observing another child, Jake, crying because his mother is dropping him off at school. Sam would have to use these social emotional skills to relate the situation to his likes and dislikes (self awareness), he would also have to manage his own emotions (self-regulation) and also consider why this might make Jake feel upset (perspective taking). Sam then has the option to lend comfort to Jake by offering him (for example) his favorite truck to play with. This is a lot of thinking for a three year old! And this is why these skills do not happen overnight. However, there are ways to encourage the development of empathy. The following are some suggestions from a variety of sources:

#### \*Stage by Stage: 0 to 2

- By soothing an infant, you'll help him learn to comfort himself and, eventually, to comfort others.
- Toddlers are sensitive to the feelings of their friends and will often mimic their emotions, a necessary precursor to empathy.

Empathy needs to be repeatedly modeled and encouraged in toddlers before it becomes a part of their behavior.

#### Stage by Stage: 3 to 4

- Threes can make the connection between emotions and desires, and they can respond to a friend's distress with simple soothing gestures.

- Sometimes preschoolers can only relate to the feelings of others if they share the same feelings and perspective on a situation.
- Fours are capable of seeing a situation from another person's perspective. Yet they need to know that not all reactions to feelings are OK.

\*Carla Poole; Susan A. Miller, Ed.D.

Another strategy is to read stories about feelings. This allows kids to manage their emotions, behavior and body movement when they're faced with a situation that's tough to handle. And it allows them to do that while still staying focused and paying attention. Here are some suggestions from the Zero to Three website:

- *I Am Happy: A Touch and Feel Book of Feelings*
- *My Many Colored Days* by Dr. Seuss
- *How Are You Peeling* by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers
- *Feelings* by Alike
- *The Feelings Book* by Todd Parr
- *Baby Happy Baby Sad* by Leslie Patricelli
- *Baby Faces* by DK Publishing

#### \*Further Suggestions

**Be a role model.** When you have strong, respectful relationships and interact with others in a kind and caring way, your child learns from your example.

**Use "I" messages.** This type of communication models the importance of self-awareness: I don't like it when you hit me. It hurts.

**Validate your child's difficult emotions.** Sometimes when our child is sad, angry, or disappointed, we rush to try and fix it right away, to make the feelings go away because we want to protect him from any pain. However, these feelings are part of life and ones that children need to learn to cope with. In fact, labeling and validating difficult feelings actually helps children learn to handle them: You are really mad that I turned off the TV. I understand. You love watching your animal show. It's okay to feel mad. When you are done being mad you can choose to help me make a yummy lunch or play in the kitchen while mommy makes our sandwiches. This type of approach also helps children learn to empathize with others who are experiencing difficult feelings.

**Use pretend play.** Talk with older toddlers about feelings and empathy as you play. For example, you might have your child's stuffed hippo say that he does not want to take turns with his friend, the stuffed pony. Then ask your child: How do you think pony feels? What should we tell this silly hippo?

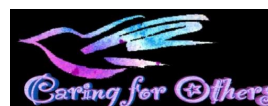
**Think through the use of "I'm sorry."** We often insist that our toddlers say "I'm sorry" as a way for them to take responsibility for their actions. But many toddlers don't fully understand what these words mean. While it may feel "right" for them to say "I'm sorry", it doesn't necessarily help toddlers learn empathy. A more meaningful approach can be to help children focus on the other person's feelings: Chandra, look at Sierra—she's very sad. She's crying. She's rubbing her arm where you pushed her. Let's see if she is okay. This helps children make the connection between the action (shoving) and the reaction (a friend who is sad and crying).

**Describe how others are feeling:** "Angelo is sad because he lost his ball." This helps children become more aware of their feelings and the feelings of others.

Gently guide the children's play to encourage empathy: "David is hungry too! He needs some pretend snack on his plate!" or "Is the dolly sleepy? You are taking very good care of that dolly!"

\*[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

The development of this important skill, as noted above, is a gradual process, but one worthy of nurturing.



## What We Represent at The Milford Family Resource Center

The Milford Family Resource Center is committed to the positive healthy development and well-being of Milford's youngest citizens supporting the belief that  
*Parents Are a Child's First and Most Important Teacher.*

The Milford Family Resource Center was established in 1994 through a collaborative effort of community leaders dedicated to the healthy development of young children and families. The Center is primarily funded by a grant from the State Department of Education. The center is located at the Mathewson Elementary School and provides developmental information for parents with children ages birth to five through the Parents As Teachers program and a variety of other resources as well. Our program operates year round with fee based playgroups on a school semester schedule and a summer program, as well that runs for several weeks. In addition, we offer monthly parent seminars on timely topics and personal visits by appointment, free of charge.

With these thoughts in mind,

At the end of the Summer Days program we asked parents to fill out an evaluation form.

**There were numerous Parent Seminar suggestions that included:**

Toilet Learning, Discipline Strategies, Developmental Milestones (Speech Therapist from B-3) Promoting Social Skills and Sharing, Dealing with Temper Tantrums, Time Management Ideas for Working Parents, Literacy, Area Resources, Nutrition, Social Emotional Health, Screen Time, and Sleep Issues.

Currently, we are seeking members for our Parent Panel that will further enhance the resources that we offer. Research shows us that children thrive when parents are able to actively promote their children's positive growth and development

If you are interested in joining us for this important role and opportunity, you can sign up through the playgroups, email [mfrf@milforded.org](mailto:mfrf@milforded.org), or call us at 203 783-3626 for further information.



can be found at the following website:

**Have a Happy, Safe Halloween!**

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/news-features-and-safety-tips/Pages/Halloween-Safety-Tips.aspx>



**HEALTHY MUSIC FOR A  
CHILD'S HEART, BODY & MIND!**

# The Learning Station<sup>®</sup>

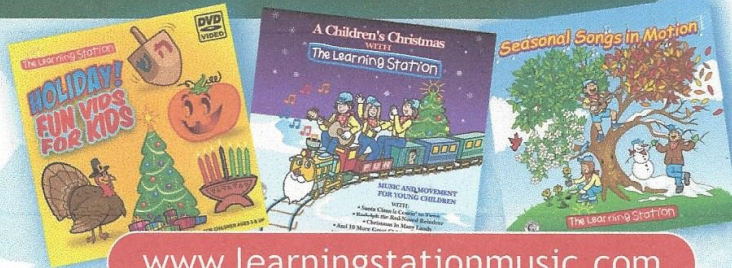
## LIVE In Concert!

# A CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY JOURNEY

The Learning Station is a multi award-winning, children's recording and performing company that has rocked the world of children's music with their internationally acclaimed HIT songs including, **Tony Chestnut, Get Funky and Singin' In the Rain**. They've toured the nation with over 5,000 performances and have been described as, "Magical humans at work!" by Nickelodeon's Joe Piasek.

Join us for this delightfully festive and multicultural holiday production. Music becomes the universal language as everyone joins together to recognize Christmas, Kwanzaa and Hanukkah. **The spirit of the holiday season comes alive as children's imaginations are sparked** with a delightful combination of classic and original melodies combined with entertaining, interactive skits.

**CONNECTING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THROUGH  
CONTEMPORARY, INTERACTIVE MUSIC!**



[www.learningstationmusic.com](http://www.learningstationmusic.com)



**Date:** December 7<sup>th</sup> 2019

**Time:** Concert 11:00am to Noon

**Location:** Doors open at 10:00am  
Mathewson Elementary

**Admission:** \$5.00 School (under 2 free)

**Contact:** 203 783-3626

**BRING HOME SOME OF THE FUN!**

Award-winning Learning Station  
music will be available to  
purchase at this performance.



## The Milford Junior Women's Club

presents our Annual Event of the Year



Junior Women's Club of Milford, CT

# ~~TRICK~~ Touch A Truck



Junior Women's Club of Milford, CT

*Halloween Themed!*

**Eisenhower Park**  
**780 North Street-Milford**

**October 13th (Rain or Shine)**  
**11am-2pm 'Quiet Hour' 11-12pm**

### **PRE-SALE**

**\$5 each; under 2 yrs old FREE**

### **AT GATE**

**\$7 each; under 2 yrs old FREE**

***Purchase tickets on Facebook @juniorwomensclubofmilford***



**First 200 kids receive a FREE reusable candy tote bag**



## Milford Trick or Trot 5K Run/Walk

The 8th Annual Milford Trick or Trot 5K Run/Walk to benefit the Beth-El Center will take place on Saturday, October 26, 2019 beginning at Lisman Landing (37 Helwig St. in Milford) at 9:00am. Run or walk a 3.2 mile scenic route through Milford.

Kids Fun Run starts at 8:45

Fee is \$27.00 per person for advanced registration/\$35 same day. Price Includes bib, t-shirt and post race breakfast and entertainment.

Register at [www.milfordtrickortrot.com](http://www.milfordtrickortrot.com).

New:

New: pet costume contest.



# Preschool Showcase

Sponsored by

**Kids Count of Milford**

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Kids Count is pleased to announce that the Annual Preschool Showcase will be held on **Saturday, November 2, 2019** from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the

***Mathewson Elementary School  
466 West River Street, Milford***

Preschools from Milford will be there to share information about their programs which will include the school's philosophy, curriculum, registration information and fees. Parents will have the opportunity to meet the staff and ask questions that will be helpful to them as a beginning step in deciding which preschool they will enroll their child.

Kids Count of Milford will provide information on the importance of preschool and how to choose a preschool.

Staff from the Milford Family Resource Center will be on hand to discuss how to prepare your child for preschool.

If you have questions about this event, please feel free to call Peggy Kelly, Executive Director, at 203-783-3627 or email at [pkelly@milforded.org](mailto:pkelly@milforded.org).

**Children are welcome**

15<sup>th</sup> Annual

**THANKS  
FOR  
GIVING**

**FOOD COLLECT-A-THON**

**Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>**

**Wasson Field** (Parson's Complex  
Parking Lot)

Scouts will be at Wasson Field around the clock collecting non-perishable foods as well as frozen turkeys to help distribute to over 250 local families. Non-perishable foods may also be dropped off before November 15<sup>th</sup> at collections boxes in the lobby of City Hall, the Parsons Government Center, Aquinas Consulting, and other locations.

**Want to help out: Email us at  
[fooddrive@aquinasconsulting.com](mailto:fooddrive@aquinasconsulting.com)**



**7th Annual Holiday Benefit Dinner  
Silent Auction & Live Auction**

**TO BENEFIT**

Keeping Milford Warm's  
EMERGENCY FUEL & ELECTRICITY PROGRAM

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2019**

**6:30- 11:00 P.M.**

**GRASSY HILL COUNTRY CLUB**

**441 CLARK LN, ORANGE, CONNECTICUT**

**SILENT AUCTION- LIVE AUCTION- LIVE MUSIC  
DOOR PRIZES- RAFFLES**

**TWO HOUR OPEN BAR FROM 6:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.**

**TICKETS TO THIS EVENT ARE \$65.00 PER PERSON  
SURF AND TURF DINNER TO BE SERVED**

**KINDLY REPLY**

**BY: NOVEMBER 28 ,2019**

**WITH ENCLOSED CARD OR**

**KEEPINGMILFORDWARM@GMAIL.COM**

**203-876-7289**

**SPONSORSHIP AND DONATION OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE**