

MILFORD FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

The Early Childhood Times

JUDE LOBDELL, EDITOR

April 2023

Dates to Remember

April

1st.-7th.



7th. -14th. Spring break. School closed.



22nd. Earth Day



The Milford Family
Resource Center
@Pumpkin Delight
School
24 Art Street
and
Calf Pen Meadow
School
395 Welch's Point Rd.
Milford, CT 0640
(203)783-3626
mfrc@milforded.org

Milford Family Resource
Center Staff:

Program Coordinator:
Terese Maguire
Parent Educators:
Kathy Aspinwall
Jude Lobdell

The National Association of the Education of the Young Child will celebrate the Week of the Young Child on April 1 through April 7.

The goal of this week is to celebrate our young learners, our early childhood educators, and our families.

Each day of the week has a specific theme and we encourage you to celebrate each day with your child.

Music Monday- sing a favorite song with your child, make instruments from recyclable materials or create a song of your own.

Tasty Tuesday- bake or cook together using a favorite family recipe. Make smoothies or a favorite dessert.

Work Together Wednesday- build something together using blocks, legos, or other materials. Go outdoors and create a family garden. Play a favorite sport together.

Artsy Thursday- draw, paint, color, or sketch together. Make animals or other items out of playdough. Use recycled materials to create a sculpture.

Family Friday- host a family game night, ride bike together, read a favorite story, or watch a favorite movie.





A very big thank you to our families here at the Milford Family Resource Center for their donations to the Toasty Toes Sock Drive. Your contributions are much appreciated.

Parent Do-Overs – 7 Confidence Building Responses
From Elevating Child Care by Janet Landsbury

If parenting were film acting, we'd always be brilliant because we'd have plenty of "takes" to perfect our responses (not to mention make-up, hair styling and ridiculously high salaries). But we are playing a part — the role of a lifetime for a lifetime. Luckily, we perform for an adoring, forgiving audience, and our children will usually accept our less thoughtful, less than stellar performances. In fact, even our bloopers can be blessings, because they teach kids the invaluable lesson that mistakes are okay since even superstars like their parents make them.

Here are a few of my "Take 2" suggestions for handling common infant and toddler situations and some of the reasoning behind them:

1. **Crying** *Instead of "Don't cry", "Shhhh", "You're okay", "Okay, that's enough now", "It's alright, nothing happened"...* Non-judgmentally acknowledge the child's response and the incident that caused it. **"Ouch, that hurt you when you bumped into the wall."** Or **"oh, you are very upset that the dog barked."** Or **"You are having a hard time relaxing your body. I hear you."** Then allow the child *all the time he or she needs* to finish crying with your full support. Encouraging children to express their feelings is the key to fostering emotional health. No matter how unreasonable our child's reaction seems, he or she needs it to be accepted. Remember, even adults can't *control emotional reactions*, but young children are not capable of controlling the manner in which they express them, either. Discouraging the feelings or responding impatiently invalidates the child. When you're feeling impatient with a tantruming toddler, stay present, relax and imagine all the future therapy bills you're saving.

2. **Minor accidents** *Instead of running over to the child and scooping him up in a panic ...* **Take a moment to observe his response. If he cries, go close to him as calmly as possible, ask if wants you to pick him up, acknowledge what happened (as explained above) and his feelings about it.** When we respond frantically, we startle our child, which can make him fearful or cause him to become upset when he might have quickly recovered and continued playing. Our little ones are *very* tuned into us and benefit greatly when we can trust their competence. Allowing children to recover autonomously whenever they are able to fosters self-confidence and resiliency, gives them an opportunity to try to understand what happened and learn something from the experience.

3. **Praise** *Instead of "good job", "That's beautiful", "You are so smart!" or a big round of applause...* You might say, **"Thank you for helping me!" "You did it all by yourself!" "You pulled the plastic beads apart. That was hard!" "You struggled and struggled, but you didn't give up." "You must be proud of yourself."** Add specifics so your child knows you've been paying attention (and to aid language development). These responses encourage children to own their accomplishments, protect intrinsic motivation, and are less likely to train kids to depend on others for validation.

4. **Encouragement when a child is struggling** *Instead of "you can do it!"* **"I hear you getting frustrated, but you're almost there." "This is hard work you're doing!" "I'm here and I won't let you fall, but it is safer for you to climb down yourself. Try placing one foot on the bar below.** "You can do it" can be perceived as pressure and make the child think he's disappointed us if he ends up *not* being able to do it. Giving a little verbal instruction helps children learn to get down safely after they have climbed onto something. Children usually *can* do this themselves, but by taking them down, rather than just spotting and providing verbal support, we lead them to believe they can't

5. **Undesirable behavior** *Instead of distracting, coaxing, bribing, shaming, scolding, punishing ...* Handle with care, confidence, respect, brevity (save the lectures for another time). Whenever possible, acknowledge the child's point of view. **"You wanted ____."** Give a brief instruction (and

an option if possible). **“I can’t/won’t let you _____. That’s not safe”** (or **“It’s not time for that now”**, etc.). **“But you can _____.”** Physically block the behavior if necessary. Acknowledge again. **“I know you wanted _____ and I wouldn’t let you. That’s upsetting.”** Infants and toddlers need help managing their immature impulses and understanding our boundaries. They are **not bad kids** who need to be reprimanded, punished or “taught a lesson”. The most vital lesson they must learn is that their parents are always in their corner (rather than sending them off to one), and that we will calmly, consistently and patiently remind them of the family rules and prevent them from harming us or themselves. When we do this, children learn our expectations and internalize them with amazing proficiency.

6. Sharing *Instead of telling babies and young toddlers they must share or take turns...*

Observe closely and calmly reflect (or ‘sportscast’) the situation and allow it to unfold.

“Justin, you are holding the ball and Meredith wants it, too. Now Meredith has the ball.” Or, **“Meredith are you asking Justin for the ball? Justin seems to be saying he wants to keep it for now. Maybe when he’s done.”**

Infants and toddlers commonly socialize by taking and (less often) giving toys. From the child’s perspective it’s as if the toys suddenly come alive and become interesting when another baby is holding them. When we allow children to connect with and learn from each other this way, they may react negatively in the moment, but they are usually quite capable of working it out without our intervention. The big clue to the child’s perspective? After these little play tussles have ended, the desired toy is almost always left behind, no longer of interest to either child.

7. Learning language *Instead of correcting toddlers when they mispronounce words or use them incorrectly (for example, they call green “yellow” or a rabbit “a dog”)...*

Don’t. It takes courage to speak words for the first time. Encourage your child to speak by treating him with the same respect you would a foreigner trying out English. If the child mispronounces a word, we can respond in a manner that provides a gentle correction. In other words, when your child points to the rabbit and says “bobby”, you could reply, **“I see the rabbit, too!”** If the child points to the rabbit and says “dog”, you could say honestly, **“Yes, I see! That looks like a dog.”** When children begin using language, they are only able to say a fraction of the words they know. Chances are they know the difference between a rabbit and a dog but just aren’t able to express that yet. Trusting and supporting your child’s process means allowing him to be “right” as much as possible. And don’t forget to enjoy (and log!) your child’s creative use of language while it lasts.



Milford Public Schools Kindergarten Registration Portal is open This is for students entering Kindergarten in the Fall of 2023.

Please visit <https://www.milforded.org/article/100543> for further details.

And for further information about preparing your child for kindergarten, check out the following link.

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/kindergarten-here-we-come>
<https://www.milforded.org/article/1005432>

Things That Will Help Me Stay Calm

Toddlers

Try to **understand** what my behavior is **communicating**.



Consistency throughout our day. Having a similar order to the day and doing activities in a similar way helps me feel safe.

- reading a book or telling stories at bedtime
- singing a song during diaper time



Connect with me throughout the day: talking, smiling, hugging, singing, holding.

- Listen and respond when I try to tell you something.
 - When we play together, let me take turns with you.
 - Join in my play and follow my lead.
 - Talk about what I am doing or watching.
 - Talk and play with me at my level.
- Bring me up or lower yourself down.



Stay close in new places and with new people. I rely on you to know I am ok.



Help me prepare for new or challenging situations (e.g., talk about what will happen, give me a comfort item).



Teach me about emotions. Name your feelings and my feelings throughout our day.



Play problem-solving games. Pretend to forget an action or item during a part of our day and see if I remember what to do.



Provide me with **choices** throughout my day.



More family resources at ChallengingBehavior.org/Implementation/Family.html



National Center for
Pyramid Model
INNOVATIONS



UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA



Inviting MFRC Playgroup Families to join us this
spring and summer at the

ANSONIA NATURE CENTER

Programs are one hour in length and geared
toward children ages 2-5. Cost is \$6 per child.



Wednesday, April 19th @ 10:30am

Learn to identify frogs, toads and salamanders. Hike to
our vernal pool to explore a unique wetland habitat.



Wednesday, May 17th @ 10:30am

With the advent of warm weather and snake sightings,
we bring an introduction to nature's most
misunderstood animals. Children will have a chance to
meet one of the Nature Center's resident reptiles.



Wednesday, June 28th @ 10:30am

Collecting, Identification, and Animal Release. Involve
your class in a hands-on lesson about the food chains
found in fresh water habitats. The class will visit
Redwing Pond with simple equipment to catch,
observe and release the small residents that live there.

The Nature Center building will be open for families to explore. Staff asks that
visitors be respectful of the space: low noise level & not touching exhibits.

The playground is available to families before and after the each program.

Families who bring snacks and lunch can access picnic tables in the front of the
building and in the playground area.

Please contact Caitlyn Willox-Biron (Ruby & Luna's mom) to sign up.

Caitlyn.WilloxBiron@gmail.com or (203)803-7085

*All images and program descriptions provided by the Ansonia Nature Center
<http://ansonianaturecenter.org/education/>*



Milford 'Helping Hands'

Formed by a group of Milford parents who are on a mission,
one event at time, to help better our community.



FIRST EVENT: Spring Trash Pick-up Month

WHO: Anyone (all ages encouraged)

WHEN: April 2023 (any day(s) of the month)

WHERE: Anywhere in Milford (your pick)

**WHY?: Ever take a walk down your favorite street or beach in town?
I can guarantee you have noticed unwanted litter.**

"HEY ENRIQUE, DID YOU KNOW
THAT WE COLLECTED
2 BAGS OF TRASH IN
UNDER AN HOUR?"

"IS THAT SO, JANICE.
SOUNDS LIKE A TAG
LINE. TWO BAGS/ ONE
HOUR. LETS TELL OUR FRIENDS!"

**DONT FORGET TO SHARE YOUR PHOTOS! AS A THANK YOU FOR YOUR
PARTICIPATION, FOR EVERY PERSON WHO
BECOMES A MEMBER OF OUR FACEBOOK GROUP PAGE AND THEN POSTS A
PICTURE(S) OF THEIR HARD WORK, YOU WILL BE
ENTERED INTO A RAFFLE FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A \$50 GIFT CARD AT THE PLATE
BREAKFAST AND LUNCH RESTAURANT LOCATED AT 587 NEW HAVEN AVE IN MILFORD.**



TOGETHER
WE CAN MAKE AN IMPACT!



Disclaimer: This activity is voluntary, participate at your OWN risk

Room 17 and the Milford Arts Council have designed an event to showcase that Math is EVERYWHERE!

Children ("artists") in grades K-12 have used various media (Music, Digital Media, Dance, Photography, Painting, Sculpting..etc.) to create a piece and share how they incorporated math.

You are invited...

Join us on 4/02 anytime between 1-3pm to support our local "artmaticians"!

Contact Room 17 Today To Learn More!

team@room17math.com



For the younger set check out:

<https://mommypoppins.com/connecticut-family/preschoolers-activities-in-connecticut>

For elementary school students and up, you can visit this site
<http://appinventor.mit.edu/explore/get-started>

