

Community Child Care

CONNECTION

Resources that address the child care needs of Liberty County



**First Impressions Matter
Get Off to a Good Start**



**So Now You
Are a Teacher!**

Welcome to the wonderful world of caring for and educating young children, you are a new teacher! You may have developed many skills for working with children but you will now be on the job side by side with other adults as well. The first few days on the job as a new teacher in child care are important. They often determine the way you will permanently feel about the job. First impressions count, the way you present yourself initially will set the tone for future interactions at your new child care center.

Off To A Good Start



- Be Positive.
- Ask for help. Your supervisor and other teachers will expect you to ask questions. They will be willing to help when you ask.
- Don't be a know-it-all. You are new on the job. No matter how much you know, how skilled you are, you don't know everything about this particular job. Take the first few weeks to learn. You will gain the respect of your co-workers and supervisor by demonstrating your ability to do your job well. Then you can begin making suggestions to improve the ways things are done.
- Have a good sense of humor.
- Find a Buddy. Look for someone who seems to know the job well and ask for help. This may or may not be a co-teacher in the same classroom.

- Follow Instructions. Read Company Policy. Day-care centers often provide teachers with printed materials explaining their policies and procedures. Read this carefully. Ignorance will not be considered a reason for doing something wrong or not knowing what to do.

Ways to Work Well With Others

1. Don't try to change everything.
2. Be honest and get to know others.
3. Avoid romance with co-workers. They can make relationships with other co-workers awkward and often create an unpleasant situation when the romance ends.
4. Don't limit friendships to just co-workers.
5. Don't let friendships with co-workers interfere with your work performance.
6. Be direct. Let people know when they have done something that bothers you.
7. Avoid gossip.
8. Be positive and supportive, daycare can be a stressful job.
9. Show appreciation and Return favors.
10. Share credit when it's deserved.
11. Live in the present. Avoid talking about the way things used to be.
12. Avoid battles.
13. Follow Good Standards.
14. Work together and share resources. Communicate openly with co-workers.

Joni Levine

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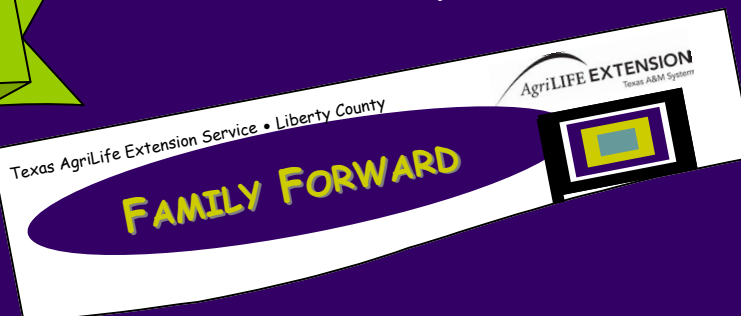
NAEYC Radio

**New Parent Newsletter
Ready to Copy and Send!**

New!

Parent Newsletter: Ready and Send Home!

**See
Insert.**



Questions?

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Toy Safety

New Laws Combined with Parent Supervision Help Maintain Safety

Just about a year ago (February 10, 2009), the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) became effective, placing heavier restrictions on chemical use (such as lead and phthalates [“thahlates”]) in toys. The new act bars lead (more than trace amounts) in products for kids under age 12 *and* partially prohibits phthalates – chemicals used to soften plastics and rubber – in toys and child-care items. “The new law also [gave] the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) the power and resources to regulate the industries for toys and children’s products (like cribs and high chairs). Now, the CPSC... will be able to:

- enforce and oversee mandatory testing of products *before* they ever leave the manufacturing room floor,
- remove unsafe merchandise from shelves faster, and
- heavily penalize companies that don’t follow the letter of the law.

Before the bill, the CPSC scoured store aisles for unsafe items, took consumers’ reports about injuries and concerns, and instituted recalls when they verified a hazard. But what the organi-

zation could *not* do was monitor the safety of merchandise – including toys and children’s stuff – *before* it was actually sold.

Toys and kids’ products previously did have to meet federal and industry safety standards (for things like lead paint, as well as choking hazards and sharp points). But these products were *not* tested or approved for safety by a federal agency before they made it to the marketplace. So, although companies were expected to comply with the standards – whether they manufacture products in or import them to the United States – no government entity made sure that the standards were really being followed pre-sale.”

So, hopefully, as far as chemicals and other major hazards (like choking and sharp points) are concerned, the toys you found under the tree this year were a little bit safer. Still, the responsibility for safe toy use lies in good part with the parent. It is still up to us as parents to monitor appropriate toy use among the children in our care and to maintain toys appropriately. This issue will provide information on how to keep toy use safe in your home.

Old or New Heirlooms, keepsakes, and hand-me-downs

Perhaps what you found under the tree this year was a family heirloom or keepsake for your child. Or maybe you found a terrific bargain at a garage sale or resale shop. Take into consideration any manufacture date that you can find on the item. Lead paint was not banned from manufacture until 1978, so chances are, if you are passing on a family heirloom, it may contain lead paint. “Coming into contact with a toy

– or anything else containing lead – once or twice probably isn’t cause for too much concern. It’s continual exposure over a period of time that usually causes lead poisoning. Kids can ingest the dangerous, naturally occurring metal when they mouth or swallow something made with lead or lead paint, or when they simply touch it and then put their fingers in their mouths.

Age-Appropriate Toys The surest way to keep kids safe, happy and developing appropriately at play is to make sure they’re playing with age-appropriate toys. That may mean keeping older children’s toys out of the reach of younger kids, particularly when safety is an issue. Here are some recommendations for age-appropriate toys from the National SAFEKIDS Campaign.

Infants

- activity quilts
- stuffed animals (without button noses and eyes)
- bath toys
- soft dolls
- baby swings
- cloth books
- squeaky toys

Ages 1 to 3

- books
- blocks
- balls
- push-and-pull toys
- pounding toys
- shape toys

Ages 5 to 9

- craft materials
- jump ropes
- puppets
- books
- trains and other electric and battery-operated toys for kids ages 8 and over

Ages 9 to 14

- computers
- microscopes
- table and board games
- sports equipment (with protective gear included)

The U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission offers information on safe toys that are ideal for kids at different ages. Visit online at www.cpsc.gov and type “age appropriate toys” into the site’s search field.





Online Training

<http://childcare.tamu.edu>

Set up Free Account Today!

**Clock hours
average \$5.00
per hour and
some are FREE!**

- Online courses for child care professionals seeking to fulfill state-mandated training requirements or obtain hours toward the **Child Development Associate (CDA) National Credential**.
- To receive **official credit** for the courses, participants must pass a course exam and pay a processing fee to obtain a printable certificate.



Silsbee, Texas

**The ABCs of Early
Childhood Conference
August 2 & 3, 2010**

8:30 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Region 5 ESC is offering over 100 English and Spanish online Self Study courses that cover the entire Texas Child-care Licensing Minimum Standards professional Development requirements.

Take an unlimited number of online courses for \$20 a month. Plus, you print your certificate immediately after you complete the online course. You must register at www.esc5.net for workshop. Monthly workshop codes are as follows:

- April - 1852
- May - 1853
- June - 1854
- July - 1855
- August - 1856

For more information contact Sharon Kruger at: 409-923-5440 skruger@esc5.net or Sharon Tidwell at: 409-923-5403 stidwell@esc5.net

You may register for one day or both days.
\$15 fee for each day includes lunch.
Mark Your Calendars and Register Early!
For more information contact Sharon Kruger at: 409-923-5440 skruger@esc5.net



**Summer Mini-Sessions
Child Care Provider Trainings
June 26 & July 10**

**Bibbity
Bobbity
Boo!**

Date/Location/Cost	Session/Time	Location
June 26; Liberty; \$10/session <i>Facilitator:</i> Sharon Kruger, Region 5 ESC	“Bibbity Bobbity Boo: Phonological Awareness” 8:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.	Church of Christ 3201 N Main Liberty, TX
July 10; Liberty; \$10/session <i>Facilitator:</i> Sharon Kruger, Region 5 ESC	“Guiding the Spirited Child” 8:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.	Church of Christ 3201 N Main Liberty, TX



Registration opens May 3.

Space is limited to the first 40 pre-paid providers. No registration will be taken at door.

Call 936-336-4558, x221 or 281-593-0405, x221 to Register.

Over time, lead poisoning can bring on a host of health problems like learning and hearing disabilities, behavior and attention problems, hyperactivity, and delayed development. But even low levels of lead in a child's blood can cause subtle difficulties with behavior and learning.

The only way to know for sure whether a child has lead poisoning is through a blood test. All kids should be routinely screened at 1 and 2 years old, says the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).



With older or used toys, you also have to be concerned about phthalates. "When it comes to phthalates, scientists know a lot less. Limited studies have been done on their effects on young children, but previous research has suggested that phthalates may:

- be toxic to the development of the reproductive organs of animals - and possibly male fetuses,
- affect grown men's reproductive function, and
- change hormone levels in unborn and breastfed babies.

So, some governments worldwide (like European Union and California) have banned phthalates from being used in toys and child-care products that babies and young kids might put in their mouths.

Unfortunately, you can't just pick up a product to find out if it contains phthalates by looking at the label...." Consider this when choosing toys manufactured before the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act went into effect (February 2009).

It is best to "steer clear of older toys, even hand-me-downs from friends and family. Those toys might have sentimental value and are certainly cost effective, but they may not meet current safety standards and may be so worn from play that they can break and become hazardous."

Age & Stage Not intelligence & maturity

When choosing toys, always read the label to make sure it is appropriate for the child's age. You can use guidelines published by the CPSC for children **birth through age five and six through age twelve** to help make these decisions. "Still, use your own best judgment - and consider your child's temperament, habits, and behavior whenever you buy a new toy.

You may think that a child who's advanced in comparison to peers can handle toys meant for older kids. But the age levels for toys are determined by safety factors, not intelligence or maturity."

Here are some age-specific guidelines from the American Academy of Family Physicians to keep in mind:

For Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers:

- "Look for toys that are sturdy enough to withstand pulling and twisting. Make sure that eyes, noses, buttons, and other parts that could break off are securely attached.
- Make sure squeeze toys, rattles, and teethingers are large enough that they won't become lodged in a child's mouth or throat, even if squeezed into a smaller compressed shape.



- Avoid toys with cords or long strings, which could present strangulation hazards to young kids.
- Avoid thin plastic toys that might break into small pieces and leave jagged edges that could cut.
- Avoid marbles, coins, balls, and games with balls that are 1.75 inches (4.4 centimeters) in diameter or less because they present choking hazards."

For Grade-Schooler:

- "Bicycles, scooters, skateboards, and inline skates should never be used without helmets that meet current safety standards and other recommended safety gear, like hand, wrist and shin guards. Look for CPSC or Snell certification on the labels.



- Nets should be well constructed and firmly attached to the rim so that they don't become strangulation hazards.
- Toy darts or arrows should have soft tips or suction cups at the end, not hard points.
- Toy guns should be brightly colored so they cannot be mistaken for real weapons, and kids should be taught to never point darts, arrows, or guns at anyone.
- BB guns or pellet rifles should not be given to kids under the age of 16.
- Electric toys should be labeled UL, meaning they meet safety standards set by Underwriters Laboratories."

Also, consider safety when you have children in multiple age groups. Teach children to put their toys away and older children to keep their toys out of reach of their younger siblings. "Toy boxes, too, should be checked for safety. Use a toy chest that has a lid that will stay open in any position to which it is raised, and will not fall unexpectedly on a child. For extra safety, be sure there are ventilation holes for fresh air. Watch for sharp edges that could cut and hinges that could pinch or squeeze. See that toys used outdoors are stored after play – rain or dew can rust or damage a variety of toys and toy parts creating hazards."

Choking, Points, & Parts Tips for avoiding hazards

Choking on small parts, small balls, and balloons is the leading cause of toy-related deaths and injuries. "Since choking is such a big risk

in the early years, if your child is

3 years old or younger, consider buying a small-parts tester, also



known as a *choke tube*. These tubes are designed to be about the same diameter as a child's windpipe. If an object fits inside the tube, then it's too small for a young child." If you don't have a *choke tube*, consider that anything that would fit in a toilet paper tube or be smaller than a golf ball is too small for this age group.

Here are some tips for avoiding choking, parts, and points:

- "Avoid cylindrical pieces of toys that can lodge in a child's airway. Balloons and pieces of balloon can completely block a child's airway. Never give balloons to children under 8. Mylar balloons are a safer alternative to latex balloons."
- Check toys occasionally for worn,



loose, or broken parts. Throw broken or worn toys away, or repair them immediately. "Older toys can break to reveal parts small enough to be swallowed or to become lodged in a child's windpipe, ears, or nose. The law bans small parts in new toys intended for children under three. This includes removable small eyes and noses on stuffed toys and dolls, and small, removable squeakers on squeeze toys." "Toys which have been broken may [also] have dangerous points or prongs. Stuffed toys may have wires inside the toy which could cut or stab if exposed. A CPSC regulation prohibits sharp points in new toys and other articles intended for use by children under eight years of age."

- Avoid toys with long strings or cords. "Toys with long strings or cords may be dangerous for infants and very young children. The cords may become wrapped around an infant's neck, causing strangulation. Never hang toys with long strings, cords, loops, or ribbons in cribs or playpens where children can become entangled. Remove crib gyms for the crib when the child can pull up on hands and knees; some children have strangled when they fell across crib gyms stretched across the crib."

Fun with a Bang Electronics, noises, & propelled objects

Toys that are electronic, make noise, and/or propel objects can be a lot of fun, but also come with some distinct hazards.

Electronics.

"Electric toys that are improperly constructed, wired, or misused can shock or burn. Electric toys must meet mandatory requirements for maximum surface temperatures, electrical construction, and prominent warning labels. Electric toys with heating elements are recommended only for children over eight years old. Children should be taught to use electric toys properly, cautiously, and under adult supervision."



Noise.

"Children's ears are sensitive and especially vulnerable to noise-induced hearing loss. Nearly 15 percent of children 6 to 17 show signs of hearing loss. This can happen gradually, without pain, which is why prevention is important." "Toy caps and some noise-making guns and other toys can produce sounds at noise levels that can damage hearing. The law requires the following label on boxes of caps producing noise above a certain level: "WARNING – Do not fire closer than one foot to the ear. Do not use indoors." Caps producing noise that can injure a child's hearing are banned." To avoid noise hazards, consider these tips:

- If a toy seems too loud for your ears, it is probably too loud for your child. Don't buy it.
- Toys used close to the ear (like toy cell phones) should not be louder than 65 decibels, measured from 10 inches away.
- Other toys should not be louder than 85 decibels measured from 10 inches away.

- Take the batteries out of loud toys.
- Cover the toy's speakers with tape.

Propelled Objects.

"Projectiles – guided missiles and similar flying toys – can be turned into weapons and can injure eyes in particular. Children should never be permitted to play with adult lawn darts or other hobby or sporting equipment that have sharp points. Arrows or darts used by children should have soft cork tips, rubber suction cups, or other protective tips intended to prevent injury. Check to be sure the tips are secure. Avoid those dart guns or other toys which might be capable of firing articles not intended for use in the toy, such as pencils or nails." Read labels, and use safety goggles or other safety equipment when recommended.



Keep Children Safe at Home Select, Teach, Play, Supervise

"Protecting children from unsafe toys is the responsibility of everyone. Careful toy selection and proper supervision of children at play is still – and always will be – the best way to protect children from toy-related injuries."

When selecting toys, read labels and be sure:

- toys made of fabric are labeled as flame resistant or flame retardant;
- stuffed toys are washable;
- painted toys are covered with lead-free paint;

- art materials are labeled "nontoxic"; and
- crayons and paints say ASTM D-4236 on the package, which means that they've been evaluated by the American Society for Testing and Materials.

"After you've bought safe [age appropriate] toys, it's also important to make sure kids know how to use them. The best way to do this is by supervising play. Playing with your kids teaches them how to play safely while having fun.

Parents should:

- Teach kids to put toys away.
- Check toys regularly to make sure that they aren't broken or unusable:
 - Wooden toys shouldn't have splinters.
 - Bikes and outdoor toys shouldn't have rust.
 - Stuffed toys shouldn't have broken seams or exposed removable parts.
- Throw away broken toys, or repair them right away.
- Store outdoor toys when they're not in use so that they are not exposed to rain or snow.

And be sure to keep toys clean. Some plastic toys can be cleaned in the dishwasher, but read the manufacturer's directions first. Another option is to mix antibacterial soap or a mild dishwashing detergent with hot water in a spray bottle and use it to clean toys, rinsing them afterward."

"To report a product hazard or a product-related injury, write to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, D.C., 20207, or call the toll-free hotline: 1-800-638-2772. A teletypewriter for the deaf is available at (301) 595-7054."

May this be a year of safer toy manufacture and use as parents and manufacturers work together to keep children safe at play.

To view the references used in this newsletter, go to :
<http://fcs.tamu.edu/health/healthhints/2010/jan/ref.php>



Tune-In to NAEYC Radio

NAEYC and BAM Radio Network have partnered to bring you NAEYC Radio. Rae Pica and Mark Ginsberg host the program that will focus on a different topic each month. The program was developed to bring the best and latest insights on early childhood education directly to parents and educators.

<http://www.naeyc.org/newsroom/NAEYCradio>



FAMILY FORWARD

Family Meetings

How well does your company or your spouse's company operate without at least an occasional staff meeting? Families should have set days and times when children can expect to meet as a family and discuss pertinent issues.

Not only will this promote family intimacy, but parents can put heated arguments on hold until family meetings when each person is more calm and willing to work together on solutions to the problem. Following are suggestions adapted from Dr. Jane Nelson's Positive Discipline.

1. Choose a weekly day and time.
2. Place a family meeting agenda in a central location in the home. When issues arise, such as siblings are continually arguing over riding in the front

seat of the car or even a decision needs to be made about the family summer vacation, write them down on the agenda.

3. Begin the meeting by going around the circle and sharing a compliment or appreciation of each person; make sure everyone shares. It always helps to begin with positives.

4. Have a parent call the meeting to order, call on those who wish to speak, and keep the focus on the agenda. Rotate children as "recorders." The recorder will write down all suggestions of solutions to issues and mark the chosen one.

5. Solutions do not necessarily have to be agreed upon in one meeting; some items can be placed on the next agenda for further discussion until it is resolved. Give each solution a week or two; if it is not effective,

place it back on the agenda to discuss other options.

6. Consequences and the solutions discussed may not always be necessary once brainstormed in a family meeting. Sometimes we all need to be heard and understood and then are motivated to change. Avoid the opportunity to lecture!

7. After issues are resolved, move to business items, such as coordinating calendars and events, planning carpool rides, etc.

8. Lastly, sandwich the meeting with positive experiences for everyone! You began with encouragement; end with a fun game, dessert, or "tickle time!"

Be consistent with meetings. Children will take them as seriously as you do. Most of all, have fun together!



Tip: Mealtimes with Tasteful Results

So what do you do when little Nickie looks at her plate in disgust, pushes it away, and demands chicken nuggets or will not eat at all? Bear with me, but the outlook is positive if you consistently apply the following tip: **Pick up her plate and push the food into the trash can. Dinner for Nickie is over!**

Allow me to put your concerns to rest:

Nickie will go hungry! Not really. She will be very hungry that night, and you can assure her that there will be a good breakfast in the morning. Ask

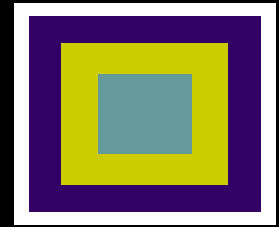
her why she is hungry and then what she could do the next night to not be so hungry.

There are starving children in Africa! Yes, there are. Frankly, your children do not care; using this line does not move them emotionally. If you are applying this consequence correctly (by not giving snacks or dessert or more dinner later), then you should not have to toss their plate too many times before they learn to eat what they are given. *Nickie will learn that she can refuse her dinner in order to go play.* This is true, unless

you also prepare for these moments by determining that all family members must stay at the dinner table, regardless if they are eating or not, until all have finished.

This seems like a mean approach. The reality of boundaries is that you do not have to be mean! Boundaries speak for themselves, eliminating your need to yell, threaten, nag, and bribe. You can even sweetly empathize with your very hungry child while regretting with them the choice they made.

Source: www.ParentFamilyLife.com



FAMILY FORWARD is provided by Alexis Cordova, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent, with Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Liberty County.



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FREE Healthy Living
Classes available
Topics of Interest:

Stretching Food Dollars
Interpreting Food Label
My Pyramid
Bone up on Calcium
Menu Planning
Food Safety

