



SUPPORT FOR EARLY LEARNING & FAMILIES

March - April 2012

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Ahh, it's spring. I love springtime in the Northwest... more sunny days (hopefully!) and so many flowers and trees blooming, and I love the bright colors. Recently, we drove to Woodland to see the tulip fields.

There were a lot of families enjoying the sea of colorful flowers. Children walking (ok, running) with drooping tulips in their hands, exploring and excited by the different colors and shapes they saw.

Spring can be a busy time of year, with things like spring cleaning, yard work, sports, etc. All too often, we become so focused on what needs to be done that we miss opportunities to share with our children the beauty and wonder of nature. Studies show that children are smarter, cooperative, happier and healthier when they have frequent opportunities for free and unstructured play outdoors.

So take some time to enjoy the beauty of spring and to share that experience with your children. Get outside and see what you can discover together. You may not get all of your chores done but honestly they can wait. Your children will only be young for a short period of time. Take advantage of all of the parks, nature walks, trees, streams, rocks and dirt we have locally to play and discover nature with your child. You'll have a great time - because playing outdoors is something that, no matter what your age, you can enjoy. Our daughter, Jennifer, was delighted by the tulips, the gardens, and she liked the ice cream, too! "Let nature be your teacher." - William Wordsworth

Debbie Ham
Director of SELF

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT - CLARK COUNTY

Public Health

Partnerships for Healthy Neighborhoods -- (360) 397-8056 Research shows that neighborhoods that provide healthy, safe, and nurturing environments for children - where families are supported and children are encouraged to learn at an early age - produce children who grow into healthy, successful adults.

Partnerships for Healthy Neighborhoods works with residents and community organizations to create neighborhood changes that improve quality of life and support the health and safety of babies and children. Current efforts are happening in an area of central Vancouver around the elementary school catchment zones of Washington, Roosevelt, Ogden, King and Harney.

Children with Special Health Care Needs

-- (360) 397-8472
Public Health supports families with children with special healthcare needs. All children who are at risk or have a health and/or developmental problem are eligible for care coordination regardless of income.

A nurse care coordinator will:

- Refer you to local resources for early intervention services - physical, occupational and speech therapy, and pre-school.
- Assist with specific area of concerns, such as nutrition, feeding, growth, development and behaviors issues.
- Provide information about your child's medical condition.
- Provide referrals to parent support organizations.
- Help your family locate financial assistance to pay for your child's care.

Nurse-Family Partnership

-- (360) 397-8483 x1
The Nurse-Family Partnership is a nurse home visiting program for women who are having their first baby, are low income and are less than 28 weeks pregnant.

If you are pregnant with your first child, the Nurse-Family Partnership can help you:

- Have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby
- Become a better parent
- Build a strong support network
- Make a safe home for your baby to live and play

- Get referrals for healthcare, childcare, job training and other services in the community
- Find ways to continue your education and develop job skills
- Set goals for your family's future and find ways to help you reach them.

GRADS - Teen Parent Program

-- (360) 397-8411
The GRADS in-school program helps pregnant teens and young parents within Vancouver and Evergreen school districts stay in high school. The program encourages students to remain in school through graduation, work toward the healthiest pregnancy possible, learn and apply positive parenting skills, explore career and work options, set goals toward balancing work and family, and avoid repeat pregnancies.

Clark County Public Health has received a 2-year grant (through August 2013) from the Washington State Department of Health that supports local GRADS efforts while helping other pregnant/parenting youth throughout the county reconnect with school and service agencies. Goals include:

- Improving education and health outcomes for pregnant/parenting teens
- Increasing the rate at which pregnant/parenting teens who have dropped out return to school
- Improving community support and linkages for pregnant/parenting teens

Pregnancy Partners

-- (360) 397-8254

Pregnancy Partners can help you:

- Apply for free health insurance for pregnancy
- Find a clinic and make an appointment
- Connect to other free and low-cost resources

Dental Health Program

-- (360) 397-8020

The Dental Health Program provides:

- Information on how to take care of your teeth and gums
 - Referrals to local dentists
 - Screening and fluoride varnish for young children
 - Services for Medicaid-eligible children ages 0-5 through the ABCD Program
- Screen children who are at risk for development delay.

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SPRING CLEANING & YOUR FAMILY

(reprinted from Organized Home)

“Cleaning your house while your kids are still growing up is like shoveling the walk before it stops snowing.” - Phillis Diller

Spring cleaning is on the horizon, and you could use some help. Many hands make light work ... so how do you get the kids to pitch in when it's time to spring-clean the house?

Try these five tips to involve children with housecleaning chores:

1. Think teamwork

It's downright lonely to be sentenced to clean a bathroom on your own, but paired with a parent, even a young child can work safely and happily. While Dad wields the bowl cleaner and the tile brush, his helper can scrub the sink, polish the fixtures, empty the trash and trundle towels and rugs to the laundry room.

Working as a team involves kids in the cleaning process, helps them learn cleaning skills, and most important, models both the attitude and the job standard you're trying to teach.

2. Take your voice out of the process

Children have an innate ability to “tune out” parents, when the subject is chores. What parent wants to spend a Saturday nagging, threatening and hollering, “You get back here and finish the vacuuming!”?

Instead, post a list of the day's jobs, or write them out on index cards. Divvy the jobs up between the teams, or let each team choose one until the work is done. Putting the work on paper removes the tussle of wills.

3. Make time fly with media motivators

Playing upbeat music or an exciting audiobook keeps spirits high--and dust cloths moving. For maximum motivation, let each helper choose his or her tunes throughout the day.

4. Delegate “big jobs” to teens

Once adolescence hits, working on a parent's “team” loses its appeal. Solution? Delegate big--but safe--jobs to teen children. Whether they clean and organize the garage, shampoo the living room carpet, or restore order to a jumbled linen closet, they'll take pride in their work IF you truly let them own the job ... and make it a big one! The more challenging the task, the more your teen will learn.

Ignore all bleating and moaning, and praise their solutions to the skies. In spite of their complaints, they won't let you down.

5. Reward hard work

Spring cleaning is nobody's idea of a good time, so plan for a reward for your workers. When the chores are done, schedule a family treat. Whether it's pizza for lunch or a trip to the video store for an evening film-fest, you'll get better results--and sweeten attitudes--if there's a payoff at the end of the day.

For more information:

Organized Home
Daily Housecleaning Schedule
Cleaning as a Teachable Moment
Focus on Screen Time

The first two years of your child's life are especially important in the growth and development of her brain. During this time, children need positive interaction with other children and adults. This is especially true at younger ages, when learning to talk and play with others is so important.

Until more research is done about the effects of screen time on very young children, the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly discourages television viewing for children ages two years old or younger, and encourages interactive play.

For older children, the Academy advises no more than one to two hours per day of educational, nonviolent programs, which should be supervised by parents or other responsible adults in the home.