

Early Childhood Connections

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Special Request!

- > We want to hear from you!
- > What topics would you like us to include in future editions?
- > What websites do you frequent when looking for child development and parenting information?
- > What favorite children's book would you like others to know about?
- > Email or call our office and let us know!



You are an Advocate for Your Child and Family

As the Director of Early Childhood and Parenting Programs at the Mecosta-Osceola ISD I have the privilege and responsibility to be an advocate for children and families. This advocacy takes many forms from writing formal letters to members of our Congressional Delegation, sending an email to our State Representative or Senator or writing this column for our local newspaper. It could also be talking to a daycare provider about the needs of a child or participating in a parade celebrating the Month of the Young Child. Advocacy is putting your passion into action on the behalf of or in the interest of someone or something. Advocacy does not have to be a formal activity. Just remember the following three advocacy principles:

Presence: Just by being present and entering into relationship with others we are advocating by showing that we care. In the early childhood world parents are encouraged to be involved at every level, from attending playgroups to volunteering in or visiting the classroom. We want families to be as involved as much as possible in the care and education of their child. The same principle holds true for personal relationships, clubs,

church, community or organizational involvement. You must be present (fully engaged, not just a warm body) so that you are ready and able to build relationships with others. Just by being present you are an advocate.

Dialogue: Relationships are strengthened and made more meaningful through dialogue. Remember dialogue is an open exchange of ideas between two or more people. There is give and take involved in this activity with all views being given airtime. Parents are advocates for their children when they enter into conversation with care providers, physicians, therapists, teachers, case workers and family members about what they want and need for their child. Sharing concerns as well as helping others to see your child's strengths makes you an advocate for your child. Just by entering into dialogue you are an advocate.

Action: Be part of the change process. If you want something to happen, suggest solutions, provide ideas, and act to make things better. Write letters, serve on committees, organize an event to help raise awareness or to gain support for your initiative or idea. We have opportunities for families to get involved in







early childhood initiatives in our community—it takes everyone even if you do not have young children! By taking action, you are an advocate.

Given that we are in the midst of a Presidential election year I can hardly end this article without mentioning some important dates: **October 6**—this is the last day to register to vote in the upcoming General Election on **November 4th**. If you are not currently registered to vote you can get registered at the County or Township Clerk's office or by visiting any Secretary of State office. Many publicly funded agencies can also help you register or you can even call my office at 866-592-9605 and we can send you the registration forms. Visit the candidates' websites to discover their positions on the issues that are important for your family. Read the newspaper and listen to the debates. Talk to others to clarify your decision. Be present at the polls and vote for your best choice. By voting you are being present, being part of the dialogue, and taking action—you are an advocate.



Schedule of Events & Activities

- > **October 1**—Playgroup at MOISD—9:30-11
- > **October 1**—Parenting Classes 5-6:30 PM at Mid Michigan Community Action Agency located at 405 S. Third Ave. in Big Rapids—231-629-6389
- > **October 3**—Playgroup at Evert Elementary—9:30 AM—11:30 AM
- > **October 6**—Playgroup at MOISD—9:30-11
- > **October 6**—Parenting Classes 5-6:30 PM at Mid Michigan Community Action Agency located at 405 S. Third Ave. in Big Rapids—231-629-6389
- > **October 10**—Early On fall Speech and Language Workshop at the Miller Wing (MOISD)—8:30 AM-12:00 PM. Register at www.moisd.orgASAP-PIE. Free. Light lunch provided.
- > **October 13**—Playgroup at MOISD —9:30-11
- > **October 13**—Parenting Classes 5-6:30 PM at Mid Michigan Community Action Agency located at 405 S. Third Ave. in Big Rapids—231-629-6389
- > **October 16**—Better Kid Care Workshop— *—6-8 at the MOISD's Miller Wing*
- > **October 17**—Playgroup at Evert Elementary—9:30 AM—11:30 AM
- > **October 20**—Playgroup at MOISD —9:30-11
- > **October 20**—Parenting Classes 5-6:30 PM at Mid Michigan Community Action Agency located at 405 S. Third Ave. in Big Rapids—231-629-6389
- > **October 25**—Children's Costume Parade in Downtown Big Rapids, line up is at 10:30 AM by the Big Rapids Cinema
- > **October 31**—Playgroup at Evert Elementary—9:30 AM—11:30 AM

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	1	2	3	4 
5 	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 	15 Rake Leaves Together	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 	27	28	29	30	31 	
Make a Jack-o-Lantern						

Are you receiving our monthly mailings? If not, call the office and sign up today! Your child could be receiving a free book every month. Every month the packet has activities and ideas to enjoy with your child along with developmental and parenting information—tailored to the age of your child.

In partnership with your local school we are able to provide this service to families free of charge through Great Parents, Great Start grant funds from the Michigan Department of Education.

The Superintendents of your local school districts—Big Rapids Public, Chippewa Hills Public, Crossroads Charter Academy, Evert Public, Morley-Stanwood Community, Reed City Area Public Schools, and the Mecosta-Osceola ISD encourage you to get involved in your local school and in the education of your child—beginning at birth!

October is Fire Safety Awareness Month

A home fire occurs every 76 seconds, and families should take several steps to prevent them. A working smoke alarm cuts your chances of dying in a fire by nearly 50 percent so you need to put a smoke alarm on every level of your home, outside every sleeping area, and in each bedroom. And it's important to test the alarms once a month and change the batteries once a year to make sure they stay in good working order. There are many other important measures to take from making and practicing an escape

plan to keeping kids away from stove and fireplaces. Here are some more tips to keep your family safe:

- Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach and sight.
- Never use matches or lighters as a source of amusement with children.
- Keep and maintain a safe distance (36 in.) between space heaters and anything that can burn.
- Test smoke alarms monthly; install a carbon monoxide detector in a central location outside sleeping areas.

- Create and practice an escape plan with your family.

Remember to teach your child what to do in case of a fire—practice crawling out of your house and stop, drop and roll!

Remember to change the batteries in your smoke detectors!

Are You Ready for Flu Season?

The 2008-09 Influenza season will soon be upon us and now is the time to talk to your pediatrician or public health professional about immunizing your child and yourself against seasonal influenza disease, its complications, and other vaccine preventable respiratory illnesses. The CDC flu vaccine recommendations have changes since last year and now include virtually all patients from 6 months of age and up. To protect infants less than 6 months old, it is important to vaccinate those around the baby, including grandparents, parents, siblings, and other caregivers against both pertussis and influenza, because caretakers influence the air that the

baby breathes daily.

Dr. Julie Gerberding, director for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and prevention said the shots will save lives as well as prevent “headaches with cranky children.”

Officials say they can't predict how severe this year's influenza will be. But annually, the illness kills about 36,000 Americans and sends 200,000 to the hospital. While the majority of flu deaths occur among seniors, last year 86 school-age children died of influenza. Apart from seniors, infants and toddlers require hospitalization for the flu more often than any other age group.

“it's a fact that the influenza vaccine saves lives by not only helping to prevent flu, but also by preventing the serious complication that sometimes result from infection with influenza,” said Gerberding.

Check with your pediatrician or local public health professional for flu shot availability in your area.

Mecosta County District #10 Health Department: 231-592-0130

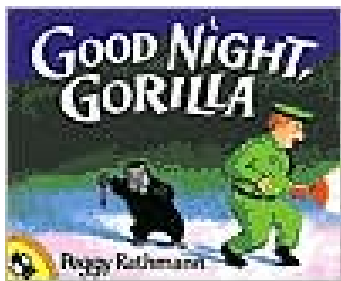
Osceola County Health Department: 231-832-5532

Halloween Safety—For Trick-or-Treaters of All Ages

- Always use common sense.
- Young children should always go trick-or-treating with an adult.
- Never trick or treat alone. Have at least 2 buddies go with you.
- Plan your entire route and be sure everyone knows what it is.
- Wear flame retardant costumes.
- Check candy before it is eaten
- Be cautious of strangers.
- Accept treats only in the doorway.
- Do not enter anyone's home.
- Be sure to say thank-you for your treats.
- Visit only houses where the lights are on.
- Walk, do not run and be sure your costume does not hinder your vision.
- Walk on sidewalks and driveways.
- Carry a flashlight.
- Cross streets only at the corners or at crosswalks.
- Make sure your costume does not drag on the ground.
- Do not play near lit jack-o-lanterns.
- Have fun—safely!

“A grandmother pretends she doesn't know who you are on Halloween.”
~Erma Bombeck

Book of the Month: *Good Night Gorilla* by Peggy Rathmann



A special thanks to Susan Saladin for writing this month's book review. This is a favorite story requested by her daughter Anna. Thanks for sharing with us!

Good Night Gorilla is lots of fun to read with a young child. An unsuspecting zoo keeper has his keys lifted by a gorilla. Using

the stolen keys, the gorilla releases himself and other animals as the zoo keeper walks through the zoo saying “good night” to each of them. Unaware of the ‘escape’, the zoo keeper walks home; the animals following. Rather than dialog, the brightly colored pages tell the story. It is fun to turn the page and ask your child, “What

is the gorilla doing now?”
Check your local library for a copy of this fun to share story!
Feel free to submit a brief review of your child's favorite book at kschneider@moisd.org.



Early Childhood & Parenting Programs

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Phone: 866-592-9605
Fax: 231-796-9971
Web: www.moisd.org/ASAP-PIE



Make an Early Childhood Connection! Check out these links:

- www.ecic4kids.org
- www.4cchildcare.org
- www.milhs.org
- www.michiganschildren.org
- www.bornlearning.org

Keeping that Smile Bright!



Your baby's teeth start to develop even before he or she is born. When your baby is about 6 to 9 months old, the first tooth (also called milk tooth or deciduous tooth) will normally start to appear. Take care of your baby's milk teeth as if they were gold. They will serve as the foundation of how the mature teeth will eventually form.

How Can You Prevent Dental Problems in Babies?

Aside from proper brushing and regular dental visits, there are still several things that you can do to make sure that your baby's or any younger child's teeth remain healthy. Here are some suggestions that you may find useful:

- Load up on calcium. Make sure that your baby drinks enough milk and starts eating calcium-rich foods when he or she is old enough to do so. This will help ensure proper teeth development and may help maintain good dental health as well.
- Say no to sugar! Steer away from sugar-rich foods and drinks. You may also want to try sugar-free

Try This Recipe!

You'll want milk with these!

Chewy Goopy Bars

- 20 oz. pkg. refrigerated chocolate chip cookie dough
- 2c. miniature marshmallows
- 12 oz. package chocolate chips
- 1c. caramel fudge ice cream topping



Preparation: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Slice cookie dough into 1/2" slices and arrange in greased 10 x 15 pan. Press evenly into pan using floured fingers so dough covers the bottom of the pan.

Bake crust for 10-13 minutes or until golden brown. Sprinkle crust with marshmallows and chocolate chips. Return to oven and bake and additional 8-10 minutes or until marshmallows are puffy and light golden brown. Remove from oven and drizzle caramel topping evenly over bars. Cool completely and cut into bars. Makes 32 servings.

medications whenever possible.

- Minimize contact with sugar - Sugar is not in any way good for your baby's dental health. However, if it cannot be avoided, try to feed your baby with sugary foods only during mealtimes. It will minimize the amount of time that the sweet foods spend in your child's mouth and may help lessen the risk of developing dental problems later on.
- Do not add sugar in a baby's bottle. Sugary drinks in baby's bottle are an absolute no-no since it can play a significant part in promoting dental decay. When feeding your baby with juice, dilute it first and have him or her take it from a cup.
- Opt for healthy alternatives - Offer your baby some cheese or fruits as snacks between meals. These contain essential nutrients vital for good dental health.

The American Dental Association recommends that you being regular dental visits with your child beginning around his or her first birthday! And remember to enjoy those Halloween treats—in moderation and always brush your teeth after eating candy!

Taken in part from: <http://ezinearticles.com/?Dental-Care-for-Babies-and-Young-Children&id=745714>