



Family Support Network Newsletter

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Parent Advisory Group Forming

The Montgomery County Infants and Toddlers Program (MCITP) is striving to create mechanisms to hear directly from families about their needs and experiences within our program. One such vehicle is The Family Advisory Group which is now forming.

We have been working hard to reach families to serve in this capacity. To date, we have heard from at least a dozen families who are interested in this type of role.

The Family Advisory Group will determine the scope of its work, but it is hoped that will make recommendation on services, help manage our trust

fund and also represent us on our Local Interagency Coordinating Council (LICC). The LICC is the body that helps govern our budget, planning and overall operations oversight.

All members of the group are parents of children who are or have been served by MCITP directly. Responsibilities of the members will include attending 4 to 6 meetings a year, creating a work plan for the Advisory Group and participating in communication vehicles such as this newsletter.

We had our first meeting on the 13th and will be hosting our next social gathering on September 30. Membership is still

open. Contact Mario Salazar for more information at 240 777-4809 or by email Mario.salazar@montgomerycountymd.gov.



FSN Newsletter

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Prepared and published by the Infants and Toddlers Program.

Contact Mario Salazar at Mario.salazar@montgomerycountymd.gov

Special points of interest:

- ☉ Parent advisory group forming;
- ☉ Parent participation in the MCITP new staff orientation a HIT!
- ☉ Group list;
- ☉ Give and Take....;

Give and Take....

Available:

- Therapeutic table, "industrial strength". Lightly used by a child with cerebral palsy;
- 2 high chairs for improving posture and doing crafts;
- Wheel chair for a child.

Parents a hit!

We were very fortunate to have two parents to present at our annual kick off meeting. Each parent shared words of wisdom regarding their involvement with MCITP. All staff - both new and returning were moved by these parents words. Their real experience made the orientation not just about process but about real impact

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Give and Take..., a new section

We are starting a new section in the newsletter under the heading of *Give and Take....* In this section we will be the voice of our parents that want to pass on a piece of equipment or anything

else (that is legal..). We are starting with a donation from a family that graduated from the MCITP. We will also present this donation in our group list MCITPcommunity@yahoogroups.com. (Please join first.)

Free group list

To join send and email to: MCITPcommunity-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

THINGS TO DO - Autumn Fun

(taken shamelessly from http://www.our-kids.com/halloween_events.shtml) *Listed alphabetically.*

>> [Black Hill Visitors Center](#)

Dark Waters Ghost Boat Ride: 10/20, 6:30 to 8:30pm, [Black Hill Visitor Center](#). Ages 7 to 12 with adult. Join the "possessed captain"; for Halloween tales, treats, nocturnal creature spotting and a spooky good time, \$5/person, \$3/FOBH member. Boyds, MD. RR via [Parkpass](#).

>> [Brookside Nature Center](#)

The Great Pumpkin Treasure Hunt: 10/25, 9:30 to 10:45am, Brookside Nature Center. Join us as we search for the Great Pumpkin along our trails. Will we find a trick or treat? RR via [Parkpass](#), ages 3 to 5.

>> The Fairy Tale Night Hike: 10/29, 5 to 7pm; , \$5/child; \$2/adult. Hikes begins every 10-minutes, RR via [Parkpass](#).

>> [Glen Echo Fall Frolic](#)

10/29 at 10am. Spend a day at the Park exploring the arts. Enjoy pumpkin painting (2 to 5pm), crafts, trick or treating (3:30 to 5:30pm) and lots more. Admission to the park and most activities are free.

>> [Montgomery County Historical Society](#)

In Search of Ghosts: 10/28: Beall-Dawson House, Rockville; 10/29: Waters House. Do you dare to meet the ghosts of Montgomery County's past? Murder, disease and thwarted love can all be vicariously experienced through our local ghostlore. The Montgomery County Historical Society looks at history from a different angle at this eerie evening of storytelling. The tour lasts approximately 1 ½ hours. Cider and cookies will refresh those daring enough to participate. This program is not recommended for children under 9. Call the [Montgomery County Historical Society](#) for reservations. \$8 (members); \$12(non-members). 301.340.2825.

>> [Olney Boys & Girls Community Sports Association Field of Screams](#)

10/14 & 10/15, 10/20 to 10/23, 10/27 to 10/30 from 6:30 to 9:30pm. The scariest Halloween fun around! Be prepared to experience lots of new thrills and chills as you take a 30-minute walk through the haunted forest. (\$10) Corn Maze of Mayhem!!!! Get lost in the 10-acre corn maze and try to solve the puzzle! (\$5) Kiddie Playland: Younger children can paint pumpkins, jump on a moon bounce and romp in a haystack in the children's play area. (\$5). Apple cider, hot chocolate and other refreshments will be available.

>> [White Flint's Halloween Spooktacular](#)

10/30, 4 to 6pm, Children's activities: magic shows, balloon art and trick-or-treating from store to store. Level One, Centre Court. 301.468.5777, North Bethesda, MD.

New Group List (List Serve)

Technology can be a great equalizer. Just a few years ago, organizations would pay in the 5 figures to have a system for communication amongst or to a large audience. These systems were called "list serves" and a few companies would provide the services at high costs. Today a very similar service is provided for free by companies like Yahoo. Anyone can create a list in "Yahogroups.com" and integrate many communications needs into one easy group list.

In order to leverage our limited resources we have created a list for all providers and the families of our service audience. This list is called "MCITPcommunity" and the common email address is MCITPcommunity@Yahogroups.com. Please participate by joining the list. It is easy, just send a blank email from the address you want to use to: MCITPcommunity-subscribe@yahogroups.com.

Benefits include being connected with the rest of a community that has the same goals that you do, make the lives fo our children better. Additionally we get:

1. Safe communication among ourselves;
2. Free space to post documents, photos, do surveys, and most importantly,
3. A forum to get assistance, help others, disseminate important information, etc.

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By Julieta T. Banan-Rubin, M.A. MCITP Special Educator

"Play," is central in a child's life. Play teaches a child how to problem solve, increase and practice their language skills, work with others, share, learn to make choices and expand their creativity.

Play can also decrease anxiety, teach coping skills, help children gain self-control and teach children how to express themselves (NAECS/SDE, 2006). Play, specifically symbolic play, is also an important precursor for language development (Klinger & Dawson, 1996).

Play helps a child learn new skills. From infancy and beyond, play encourages children to learn about the world around them and creates a positive bond between a child and their caregiver.

Exploration is how a child makes sense of his surroundings, and is an active effort to figure out the basic properties of novel objects or unfamiliar people. (Rubin, 2002). A parent or caregiver plays a vital role in this capacity in their role of encouraging children to explore and learn through play. However, for some children, play doesn't come as easily as it does for others. Some tips in helping engage your child in play include:

Following your child's lead: Allow your child to explore a toy and encourage him/her to problem solve.

Modeling a new skill and allowing your child time to practice it, use it, and even change it to suit his or her own needs.

Finding a motivator: If your child likes cars, encourage vehicle play: rolling cars down a pillow, pushing them under books like a tunnel, crashing cars against a stack of blocks, etc.

When deciding on a toy, it's best to choose the ones that allow your child to be an active participant. Toys that seem to entertain, but only allows your child to look and not touch are not useful for learning. (Lerner & Greenip, 2004).

Lastly, have fun. This a great bonding experience between you and your child. Don't be afraid to get down on the floor and act silly. Playing with your child presents an opportunity for you to get to know your child in *his* environment, and by *his* rules. It is also a great chance for you and your child to form a closer or better relationship.

References:

Grofer, L.K., Dawson, G. (1996). Autistic disorder. In Mash, E.J., & Barkley, R.A. (Eds.), *Child psychopathology*. New York, NY: Guilford Publications, Inc.

Lerner, C. & Greenip, S. (2004). The power of play. *Zero to three*.

NAECS/SDE (1/2006). *Recess and the importance of play: A position statement on young children and recess*. National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education

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Penguin Putnam, Inc. : Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England.



get to know your child in his environment, and by his rules.



CHILD'S PLAY - IT WORKS!

As a new parent I never thought that sitting down playing with baby dolls with your little girl would help with speech development nor did I ever think that putting a puzzle together would help with dexterity and coordination. I had a lot to learn. I was introduced to the Infants & Toddlers Program when we brought our little girl home at 19 months. Our little girl did not speak English at all, as a matter of fact she

never heard English until she was 18 months. We qualified with a special educator to come over once a week to assist in getting our little girl to communicate. We sat at the table and played with puzzles, play-dough, and more. I never would have thought this was teaching her how to communicate. Later we joined in a class called CHILD'S PLAY and was enrolled into the HANEN PROGRAM with a speech therapist. The program made me a firm believer that getting down to their level and playing with them would assist in communication. The CHILD'S PLAY class assisted our little girl into a new level

of communication. There were other children in the class that taught our little girl how to not only communicate, but to be very social. Each week there was a different theme and as the children played the communication and dexterity skills came out. After being in the program for 18 months our little girl was caught up with her age group. Most importantly we discovered that CHILD'S PLAY, whether the class or getting down to their level and playing works. Don't forget to take turns and wait for them to respond because IT WORKS!

Wendy Ratnavale, Parent

Mental Health

While it is likely that our children are too young to have been diagnosed with any type of mental health problems, a few siblings can benefit from this site.

The Maryland Coalition provides advocacy and other services for affected children at a very useful site

<http://www.mdcoalition.org/>

In this space we could have included part of your article. Maybe next time?

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Infants and Toddlers Program Web surfing?

Please visit:

<http://www.infantstoddlers.org> or

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hhstmpl.asp?url=/content/hhs/cyf/ECC/welcomepage.asp>

Join our group list, send an email message to: MCITPcommunity-subscribe@yahoogroups.com



TO:

Infants and Toddlers Web address

Our partners at the Montgomery County Public Schools have created and maintain a site for our program. You can visit this excellent site at:

<http://www.infantstoddlers.org>

We will post copies of this newsletter, a resource list and other relevant information in these pages.

Thank you Debbie Dorcus for all your work in making these pages very useful and in giving us the opportunity to post our information there.

MCITP Services

The following information is a summary of children being served through the Infants and Toddlers Program as of July 31, 2006. Provided as an example only.

Total Children in Service: 1852 (1910 - '05)

Down County: 490

Mid County: 393

Up County: 509

East County: 460

Intakes for the Month: 123 (138 - '05)

Down County : 31

Mid County : 23

Up County : 37

East County: 32

Evaluations for the Month:

Down County: 35 initial/5 transition

Mid County: 40 initial/15 transition

Up County: 54 initial/20 transition

East County: 29 initial/12 transition

Total Children Receiving MCPS Services: 1591 (1446-'05)

Provided as an example only.

