



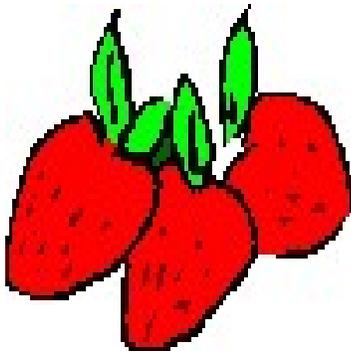
EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH LINK

Uniting Children, Parents, Caregivers and Health Professionals

VOLUME 16: ISSUE 3

SUMMER 2005

Healthy Habits



Healthy habits are learned from infancy. Some key healthy habits are hand washing, sleep and rest, managing stressful situations, oral hygiene, nutrition, and choosing safe ways to avoid or handle risks. Early educators have many opportunities to teach children the measures that will help them live long and healthy lives.

Hand washing is a learned behavior, taught by doing it. Washing hands should be routine upon arrival at the program, when entering a new group, after possible contact with body fluids or germ-laden surfaces, and before doing anything involving food or putting something in the mouth.

Children who learn healthy sleep routines early in life are more likely to organize restful patterns for themselves later on. Babies learn to sleep on their backs during the high risk period for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) by being put down to sleep on their backs. (See brochures enclosed with this issue: *A Child Care Provider's Guide to Safe Sleep* and *Back to Sleep, Tummy to Play*.)

At any age, most children do not need very quiet or dark rooms to sleep. However, slowing the pace and reducing stimulation usually helps relaxation. Learning how to take a break and to use relaxation techniques are life-long tools for managing unavoidable stress.

Older infants learn about oral hygiene by having adults wipe excess milk from their gums and teeth with a disposable cloth (e.g. nasal tissue or gauze.) As soon as teeth appear, brushing with a soft toothbrush after a meal or snack removes food that could cause tooth decay. It also teaches the tooth brushing routine. You only need a cup of water.

(Continued on page 2)



HEALTH AND SAFETY CALENDAR

July

◆ **July 4 Fireworks:** Fireworks are hazardous and should be left to fireworks (pyrotechnic) professionals.

◆ **Vacation Time for Families:** Remind parents to buckle up their children and themselves on trips.

August

◆ **Immunization Awareness Month:** Use the Internet software application, WellCare-Tracker™ to help manage each child's health record. You will be ready with up-to-date records when PA Department of Health asks annually for every child's immunizations.

◆ **August 1-7 is World Breastfeeding week:** See page 5 for an article on how to safely store human milk at the child care facility.

September

◆ **September is Baby Safety Month:** See page 4 for hand-outs on safe products.

◆ **September is Head Lice Prevention Month:** See Q&A on page 3 for more details.



(Continued from page 1: Healthy Habits)

Toothpaste and brushing at a sink is not necessary. Oral hygiene is a good transition activity from meal to nap, or as a step after eating, before washing sticky fingers.

Toddlers learn healthful eating by being fed health-promoting foods for snacks and meals spaced 2-4 hours apart. Many children become "picky" eaters from time-to-time. Still, those who are routinely given vegetables and fruits in childhood are more likely to eat those foods throughout life.

Risk-taking is desirable. Nevertheless, children need to learn how to weigh the rewards of risk-taking against the likelihood of significant harm. Children learn to choose play equipment that is their size by having adults point out the equipment to use that is developmentally appropriate and sized for them. When a toddler or preschool age child uses school-aged sized equipment with spaces that are too wide or bars that are too big for a good grip significant and more frequent injuries occur.

Learning from the adverse experience of others is smart. It isn't necessary to bang your head on the wall or to burn your fingers on the stove to find out that it hurts. So teach children to use seat restraints in motor vehicles, and helmets while riding bikes and scooters. Make it routine to avoid over exposure to the sun with sun-protective clothing and sun block. It's too late to take these steps when skin cancer from sun damage has occurred.

Learning to seek fresh air, food, and water starts in early childhood also. Teach children these key healthful behaviors:

- Avoid environmental smoke or other air pollutants
- Throw away perishable food that has been left out of refrigeration for more than 2 hours
- Drink lots of water throughout the day.

Remember to be a good role model and practice these healthful behaviors yourself!



Physical Activity for Children with Mild Motor Disabilities

Some children don't run very well. Some children have trouble catching a ball. But, these children need to go out and play with other kids!

An article in the *American Academy of Pediatrics News* from January 2005 discussed this dilemma. How can children with conditions such as floppiness, poor balance, or muscle weakness get the exercise they need?

The first step is identifying children who may have a motor difficulty. Pediatricians check for this at the child's health assessment. Nevertheless, the problem may not be evident during the examination or get attention unless someone mentions it. Parents and teachers may notice that a child falls a lot, or doesn't play sports as well as the other children of the same age. If the child has a severe motor delay, the child may need physical or occupational therapy.

For children with mild motor differences, there are lots of ways to include them in play – both indoors and outside. Activities such as Simon Says, yoga, dance and tumbling are good options.



The AAP Committee on Children with Disabilities makes a few suggestions to encourage inclusion and ensure success.

- Start early to include young children in group physical activities. Younger children expect that everyone will get a turn to play in a game, even if some are less able. Older children are apt to exclude children who have difficulty performing the skills required for the game.
- Allow kids to choose – let the child have a say in what to do. Then encourage the child to do it!
- Know the child's limitations – This will help to direct the child into appropriate activities.



ECELS Q & A



Q: What do we do if someone has lice?

A: Lice are very small brownish creatures that move. Nits are tiny, whitish rice-shaped eggs that do not move. Lice and nits usually stick to the hair shaft near the scalp. It is easiest to see them at the nape of the neck or near the ears.

Lice can be treated with shampoo or lotion that contains a pesticide that kills most of the lice and nits. After this treatment, the lice and nits may be removed with a special comb.

Children who have lice should be excluded until they have been treated. They do not need to be excluded until the end of the day as long as there is no sharing of clothing or head-to-head touching. For further guidelines, see *Caring for Our Children*, Standard 6.038, the Lice fact sheet in the book *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools*, and the website www.headlice.org.

Q: Is there a new meningitis vaccine?

A: The FDA approved a new meningitis vaccine called Menactra. The vaccine is also known as MCV4.

The vaccine provides protection against four types (called serotypes) of the bacteria called *Neisseria Meningitidis*. These bacteria are the most frequent cause of meningitis in children ages 2 years to 18 years.

The vaccine was studied in more than 7,500 adolescents and adults. The studies showed that the vaccine is safe and effective. The vaccine is indicated for those in the age group 11 to 55 years of age with certain risk factors. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends the vaccine for adolescents and college students.

For more information about this new vaccine, please check out the American Academy of Pediatrics website at www.aap.org.

Take a Deep Breath—Care for Children with ASTHMA

Asthma is one of the most common chronic illnesses of childhood. ECELS offers several educational opportunities to learn about asthma, and how teachers and caregivers can take care of young children with asthma. Go to www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org and search for Asthma.

- **Asthma Workshop**
Interactive discussion, visual aids and hands-on demonstrations to address the causes, symptoms, body responses, and current prevention and management for asthma episodes. (K7C2-Topic A7 Special Health Needs; 2 hours Training Credit)
- **Asthma and Smoking Fact Sheet**
General information for parents and caregivers about the adverse effects of smoking on children with asthma
- **Asthma Fact Sheet**
General information for parents and caregivers about asthma in children
- **Asthma Self Learning Module**
This module includes easy-to-understand print material and a video on asthma. It is available to order. Follow instructions in the self-learning module to receive training credit. Note - videos must be returned to ECELS within 10 days. (K7C2-Code A7-Special Health Needs; 2 Hours Training Credit) .



OUCH!

It is great to be outside in the summer. Unfortunately, we share the outdoors with insects that may sting us – namely bees, wasps, and hornets! In most cases, stings do not represent a serious medical problem.

Here are a few things you can do to lessen the chance of a sting:

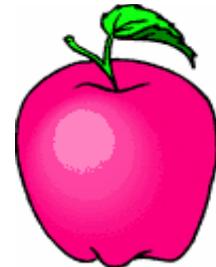
- Check for nests in the outside area where the children play. Look especially carefully under eaves and in corners of buildings.
- Don't serve sweet beverages outside.
- Be sure trash is kept in a closed container.
- If a child is stung, be sure the stinger is out. Then apply a cold pack to the area for 10 minutes.

In the rare event that the person who is stung has an allergy to the insect venom and has a prescribed auto-injector (Epi-pen) or oral medication use the auto-injector or oral medication immediately. Any child with a bee sting allergy should have a special care plan on file in the child care center, including a signed medication consent form.

An Apple A Day ...

We are all reading about the obesity epidemic in the United States. Children are heavier and less active than they were ten years ago.

Child care providers can play a helpful role in keeping kids fit by offering lots of healthful food choices and lots of fun physical activities.



To help improve children's health, the USDA has a campaign called "Eat Smart. Play Hard.TM" The campaign offers practical suggestions to help motivate children and their caregivers to eat healthy and be active. The Eat Smart. Play Hard.TM Campaign messages and materials are fun for children and informative for caregivers. The messages are kid-tested. They are based on the new Food Guide Pyramid and Dietary Guidelines for Americans. For more information go to www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard/

The USDA website has many nutritious recipes geared for child care programs. These recipe suggestions can be downloaded and printed. Go to www.nal.usda.gov/childcare/Recipes/index.html

Check It Out — Print It Out!



September is Baby Safety Month. The Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association created a brochure to guide parents and caregivers in baby product safety, use, and selection. The brochure is not manufacturer-specific. It is entitled *Safe & Sound for Baby*. The brochure has illustrations to show the proper use of many juvenile products. It highlights car seats, changing tables, cribs, crib toys, pacifiers, infant bedding, carriers, swings, carriages, strollers, high chairs, gates, infant seats, and play yards. The brochure also has information on bathing, feeding, and safety. This brochure is available on line at www.jpma.org/consumer/ You can order up to 500 print copies for free from:

JPMA Safety Brochure
15000 Commerce Parkway, Suite C,
Mt. Laurel NJ 08054.

Other Web Resources:

ECELS-Healthy Child Care PA announces training opportunities and updated materials on the newly redesigned website: www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org. For example, ECELS contributed its pediatric first aid course to a complete revision of pediatric first aid training materials for national publication by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The new spiffy and technically state-of-the-art course is scheduled for release Fall 2005. Find out more on the ECELS website.

Breast (Human) Milk Storage

Human milk is precious! It has excellent nutritious and anti-infective qualities. It must be stored and used properly to make sure that it retains its high quality.

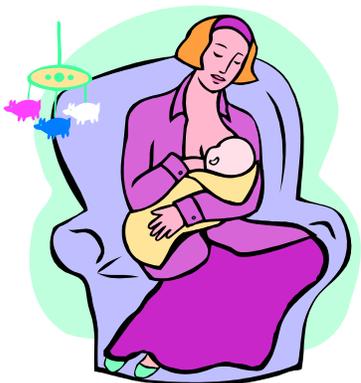
Human milk should be stored in 2-4 ounce amounts. The best containers are glass or hard plastic with well-fitting lids. It also may be stored in freezer milk bags. These containers must be well labeled with the name of the child and date the milk was expressed or pumped.

Unused expressed human milk must be discarded after 48 hours if refrigerated, or by three months if stored in a deep freezer at 0°F. Frozen milk should be thawed under running cold water or in the refrigerator, and then used within 24 hours. (See *Caring for Our Children*, Standard 4.017.)

Gently swirl the container to mix the fat into the milk, but do not shake it. Shaking human milk damages the cellular components that give the baby some protection from infections.

Never use a microwave to warm or defrost breast milk.

Source: *La Leche League website*. For more information go to www.lalecheleague.org.



Keystone STARS

Keystone STARS is Pennsylvania's voluntary quality improvement program for Pennsylvania's Department of Public Welfare (DPW) regulated Early Education and Child Care programs. Keystone STARS provide Standards, Training, Assistance, Resources, and Supports (STARS) to improve the quality of child care.

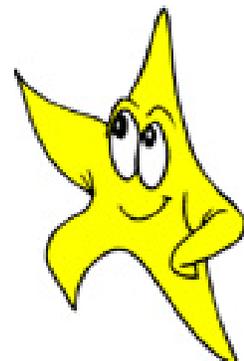
Early education and child care providers progress from STAR One to STAR Four. Each STAR rating has its own research-based performance standards or benchmarks that are linked to improving outcomes for children. The performance standards exceed state health and safety licensing requirements.

Other benefits for becoming a STARS program are improving learning skills and school readiness as it promotes increased parental and community awareness of quality child care.

For more information on the Keystone STARS program for any licensed

1. Child Care Center
2. Group Home, or
3. Family Child Care Home.

Log on to <http://www.ccrdpa.org>.



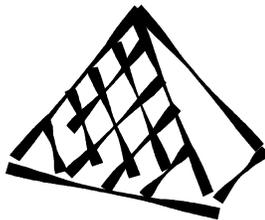
Water Safety



Summer is a time when children swim in community or back yard pools. Portable wading pools should be used with caution in group care settings. PA regulations permit use of wading pools if a sanitizing solution is added to the pool water, the pools are emptied daily, and they are supervised with required staff-child ratios. (See 55 Pa.Code §3270.115(b), §3280.115(b), or §3290.115 (a).) However according to standard 5.213 in the national health and safety guidelines for out-of-home child care, *Caring for Our Children*, portable wading pools should not be permitted in group settings. Portable wading pools can spread infectious diseases easily. Playing in a sprinkler hose and with individual water buckets are great ways to stay cool, have fun, and stay healthy.

Children can drown in less than 2 inches of water. Most drowning occurs quickly, when a child is out of sight for less than 5 minutes. Children should wear properly fitting and safety-approved swim aids such as vests. For children over 3 years of age, swimming lessons can reduce the risk of drowning and add to the fun!

Remember: Children who are playing in water should be closely supervised at all times.



New and Improved!

The 2005 Revised Daily Food Guide Pyramid and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The 2005 Food Guide Pyramid replaces the one that was developed in 1992 by the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services. Its purpose is to help the American consumer make healthful food choices. It is based on the latest scientific and medical research as summarized in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The Guidelines provide advice for people over two years of age about how proper dietary habits can promote good health and prevent major serious chronic illnesses.

The Food Guide Pyramid was redesigned after the release of a newly updated version of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans in 2005. It provides the cornerstone of government food and nutrition policy. It also influences the implementation of all federal nutrition programs.

An alarming percentage of children and adults are overweight in the United States today. The new Dietary Guidelines place a stronger emphasis on reducing calorie consumption, selecting nutrient-dense foods by using dietary food labels, and increasing physical activity. They promote a healthful eating plan that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat free/ low fat dairy products. They recommend more of other protein rich foods such as fish, beans, peas, nuts and seeds instead of just lean meat, poultry or eggs. They also recommend limiting the intake of saturated and trans fats, added sugars, salt and alcohol.

You can find more specific information at www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines. There is also a brief introduction to the problem of overweight in children and adolescents in the Surgeon General's Call to Action at www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity

Submitted by Thelma Herlich, RD, MD, FAAP

Handy Resources:

Here are four web sites that have fun ideas for those lazy summer afternoons.

- www.nfpa.org/sparky/cooloff.html is the website of the National Fire Protection Association. Their mascot, Sparky, has lots of good ideas on how to stay cool this summer. Log-on and check it out!
- Ever wonder how a power window works? Why do we dream? The website www.howstuffworks.com has explanations for how lots of stuff works.
- Visit the Produce for Better Health Foundation website at www.5aday.com. It has lots of suggestions on how to offer colorful, healthful snacks for kids. They also have several learning modules for teaching children the importance of eating fruits and vegetables.
- Visit the new ECELS-Healthy Child Care PA website for lots of good stuff that is now very easy to find and use. You'll find training opportunities, handouts, links to other sites to address health and safety in your program. Newly designed in the winter of 2005, the website is regularly updated with new materials and revisions. The search engine on the site allows you to find materials by topic. Order forms on the site let you request self-learning modules, videos and handouts on-line easily. To find ECELS-Healthy Child Care PA on the Internet, sign on to the Internet, type into the internet address box on your computer screen "<http://www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org>" and then click enter. You can also make requests by email: ecels@paaap.org or by Fax: 484-446-3255

REQUESTING PRINTED MATERIAL AND ADVICE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY ECELS ORDER FORM

(Pennsylvania Child Care Providers & Pennsylvania Health Consultants Only)

To receive the handout listed below, check the box and **return the form with a self-addressed, stamped business envelope. Send a mailing label for the self-learning module.** Return the order form to the **new address for ECELS** PA AAP, ECELS-HCCPA, Rose Tree Corporate Center, Bldg. 2, Suite 3007. 1400 North Providence Road, Media, PA 19063.

Handouts: (One copy per organization)

- NPA Lice Brochure
- Water Safety Brochure



Health & Safety Training Opportunities: See the newly revised training brochure enclosed with this issue.

Read the Asthma Workshop and Asthma self-learning module description on page 3.

To request training, send an e-mail to ECELS@paaap.org, use the ECELS website order form that you will find at www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org, or call ECELS at 800-24-ECELS (32357)

Why Are Babies So Adorable?

According to the anthropologist Dr. Sarah Hrdy, babies are so adorable to encourage us to take care of them. Babies are helpless. They depend on us to feed them, to soothe them, to keep them clean, to transport them, and to keep them safe. Parents and caregivers are willing to do this, in part, because babies are so adorable! Their skin is so soft. Their smiles are so sweet. Their legs are so wonderfully plump. They respond so happily to our cooing. These traits encourage us to want to continue to care for them. Having an infant fall asleep in our arms can be the best thank you of all!

From:

In *Mother Nature: A History of Mothers, Infants, and Natural Selection*, Dr. Sarah Hrdy



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