

family time

Newsletter from Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital



Kid BITS



Keep Medications Away From Kids

According to Safe Kids Worldwide, medication is the leading cause of accidental poisoning. Daily, emergency rooms treat about 165 young kids who gained access to medications. Parents can prevent these accidents.

- Keep medications up and out of reach of children.
- Look out for medication bottles when you travel and when you have visitors. **Child-resistant packaging is not childproof.** If left within eyesight and reach, a small child may be able to open and ingest medication.
- Talk with family and friends about ways to keep medications out of your child's reach.

During the holiday season, families often have guests. Grandparents and adults without children may not think about storing their medication safely. They would appreciate a gentle reminder.

Puzzles are Good for Your Brain

From toddlerhood to adulthood, puzzles are fun and *good for your brain*. Toddlers can begin with wooden puzzles that are easy for little fingers to use. Puzzle pieces with knobs help develop fine motor skills. Placing puzzle pieces on a board improves eye-hand coordination.

Working puzzles encourages thinking and reasoning skills. Kids learn to develop a strategy for completing the puzzle. The trial and error that comes with placing puzzle pieces improves problem-solving skills and memory.

It takes patience to find puzzle pieces that fit. Laying that last puzzle piece gives everyone a sense of achievement. It boosts self-confidence.

Whether you have a toddler or teenager, break out a puzzle and have fun *working together*.

Things We Learned from Mr. Rogers



For fifty years, Mr. Rogers has been teaching the critical life skills that parents want their child to know. On his show, *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood*, **everyone** was his neighbor. And all who came to visit were shown love, respect and *kindness*.

Mr. Rogers wanted children to be able to work through difficult feelings without hurting themselves and others. Everyone has many different feelings. He would tell them that it is OK to have those feelings. It is what you do with those feelings that matters.

He knew that kids needed to be seen and heard *without distraction*. When talking to a child, he was always focused. He made eye contact, nodded, responded – *really* listened. His interactions included a soft voice, slow words and gentle mannerisms.

No topic was off limits when a child had questions or concerns. He was not afraid to address challenging issues such as death, divorce, bullying and racism. Knowing that children must have skills to cope with challenges, he spoke honestly. These resiliency skills would enable them to handle the unexpected in healthy ways.

Mr. Rogers never linked love to an accomplishment or outward appearance. He would tell a child, “I like you just for being you.” That simple statement could eliminate much stress in a parent-child relationship.

Through song, discussion and role modeling, Mr. Rogers showed parents and kids that the most important thing we can do is love and care for people, animals and the world we live in.

A new documentary called “*Won’t You Be My Neighbor?*” was released in 2018.

Make Eating Fun

Parents want their child to learn to eat healthy. But providing healthy choices may not be enough, especially for picky eaters. Sensory-based food education encourages the use of the 5 senses to help kids explore new foods.

Kids naturally love to learn. Hands-on activities allow them to *personally* direct an activity. By using sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing, your child can explore new foods in a fun and creative way.

Parents can provide sensory-based food education. Allowing toddlers to play with food is a good beginning. Though messy, kids learn as they see, feel and taste food in a relaxed, fun setting. Rolling blueberries, squishing avocado and crunching little oat circles is both fun *and* nutritious.

Talk about the sounds that food makes when eaten – crunchy popcorn, crisp apples. Feel the skins of fruits and vegetables – a fuzzy kiwi, bumpy avocados. Name the colors of food. Provide paper and crayons, and let your child create food pictures.



As kids gets older allow them to choose *their own* fruits and vegetables. Give them a baggie and let them pick fruits and vegetable from the produce section at the grocery store. Visit an orchard or farm. Grow produce in your backyard garden. Shop farmer’s markets.

Involve your child in food prep. Even preschoolers can use a plastic knife to cut up soft fruits, cheeses, breads and cooked vegetables. Teach them how to prepare and cook food. Let them smell herbs and seasonings. Provide taste tests at various stages of cooking.

Make eating fun and educational.

Maternal Bliss is a Myth

Magazines, Instagram pictures and television programs often portray blissful new moms with perfect hair, smiling faces and a happy content baby. For most moms, nothing could be further from the truth. *Maternal bliss is a myth.*

It is not possible to completely prepare for motherhood. Pregnancy, the birthing process and the scary task of caring for a baby tires and overwhelms most moms.

In their book *Good Enough is the New Perfect: Finding Happiness and Success in Modern Motherhood*, the authors stress the need for new moms to forget perfection. Their survey of working moms found that those with a “good enough” mindset were happier than those with a “never

enough” attitude. We simply do not have to be the best at everything.

Unlike moms of past generations who kept their true feelings hidden, many of today’s moms share their real story. In that sharing, moms can let go of their guilt. Admitting struggles sets them - and other moms - free.

As a new mom, know that:

- The motherhood experience is highly personal,
- Some days are better than others, and
- *You are not alone.*

TO LEARN MORE

- Visit <https://blogs.webmd.com/art-of-relationships/2018/10/why-we-shouldnt-expect-new-motherhood-to-be-blissful.html>



Timely Tip

Every month major federal agencies compile a list of child-related product recalls. For monthly up-to-date recalls and information on child safety concerns go to:

- www.safekids.org, and
- cpsc.gov

You can also subscribe to receive updates by email. Stay informed.

classes & events

Carol Jo Vecchie Women & Children's Center at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital
Pre-registration required for the following classes. Unless otherwise noted, call 217-744-2229.

- Baby Basics I - All About Baby
- Baby Basics II - Parenthood
- Birth Center Tours
- Childbirth Express (Saturday class)
- Dinner for Two—Breastfeeding Your Baby
- First Steps Mom-and-Baby Support Group
- Joy of Grandparenting
- Marvelous Multiples
- New Daddy Boot Camp
- Welcome Baby Sibling Class

For information on these classes and other support groups, log onto www.st-johns.org.

HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital
Breastfeeding 24-hr. Warmline—
217-535-3983

Dealing with Feelings Support Group for Pregnancy, Baby Blues and Postpartum Depression

Learn coping skills, receive comfort and support, and share feelings. Meets in the NICU Conference Room on the 4th floor of the CJV WCC at St. John's Children's Hospital. Go to the www.parenthelpline.org home page for a list of dates and times.

Memorial Medical Center
Pre-registration required for the following classes. Unless otherwise noted, call 217-788-3333.

- Adoptive Parents Class
- Baby Care Users Manual
- The Get-Real Breastfeeding Guide
- Grandparent Class
- I'm Going to Be a Big Brother/Sister
- Infant Safety Classes
- Lactation Consultation
- Mom/Baby Support Group
- Teen Pregnancy Class
- Working and Breastfeeding

For information on these classes and other support groups, log onto www.memorialmedical.com

The winter season offers many ways to enjoy time spent with your family. Sled down a snowy hill or ice skate at one of Springfield's parks. Visit local historical sites or the Kidz Museum. Check the websites below for more events.

- visitspringfieldillinois.com
- illinoistimes.com
- springfieldmoms.org
- illinoisstatemuseum.org
- lincolnlibrary.info
- kidzeum.org
- alplm.org - Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum
- hcfta.org/events - Hoogland Center for the Arts

Parent Help Line

Parenting tips New ideas Referrals

We welcome all parenting concerns - big or small.

Call **(217) 544-5808** or **(888) 727-5889**.

10 a.m. to 10 p.m. – 7 days a week – 365 days a year



Log onto www.parenthelpline.org.

We continue to add new tips to help parents.

Find information on

Holiday Safety Tips

Parents, Be Kind To Each Other

Stop Making Excuses For Your Child's Bad Behavior

10 Ways Dads Can Connect With Their Children

Talk With Your Kids About Politics

Routines and Rituals Make Family Life Easier



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