When caregivers spend time with their children, they may primarily meet basic needs. It is important for them to consider the quality of these times and other informal interactions. Through high quality interactions, caregivers have the power to influence their child’s well-being, as well as have the opportunity to model desired behaviors, specifically social behaviors. A child who is able to exist in and contribute to healthy relationships with adult caregivers have been shown to perform better in school and are able to proactively cope with stressors.

Caregivers can apply high quality interactions – nurturing, responsive and supportive behaviors – during feeding, diapering and even play. However, they may not know how to play with their child in a way that is social-emotionally beneficial.

There are different types of play caregivers can use to help their child build intra- and interpersonal relationships that will help them navigate various situations, emotions and experiences, including stressful situations.

Pretend play. Activities that include role-play allow children to confront their emotions in a safe way. This type of play also gives children the opportunity to practice skills like caring for others, solving problems and understanding perspectives of others.

Linguistic play. This type of play includes rhyming games, exploring poetry and music. Linguistic play allows caregivers to introduce children to words that will help them express their needs, wants and feelings, and describe and appreciate their unique qualities as well as others’. It also gives caregivers a peek into their child’s concept of themselves that can help them in assuring their child develops a healthy self-concept.

Cooperative play. This type of play requires sharing of materials, taking turns and cooperation; board games, dramatic play and block play are some examples. Through this type of play, children learn to build trusting and cooperative relationships with others. They also learn how to solve problems, deal with delayed gratification, practice language, and enhance their understanding of cause and effect.

Regardless what type of play a caregiver and child engage in, caregivers play an important role as nurturer and guide. When choosing an activity it is important that both caregiver and child have a say in what activity to engage in together.

Allowing children to have different types of experiences fosters their development and plays a part in securing their long-term success.

Resource
The Importance of Play between Parents and Children

Many American families have a hurried life style. As a result, many parents and guardians are too busy and exhausted to have playtime with their child. However, research reveals that parent and child playtime is essential to the social, emotional, cognitive and physical well-being of children beginning in early childhood.

When a parent plays with a child, it builds trust and creates a bond between the child and parent. Having a child play with a sibling or another child is different from when a parent plays with a child. Research studies indicate that a positive, quality, playful environment can lower a child's stress chemicals. When mothers engage in affectionate play with their infant and fathers engage in stimulatory play, the social bonding hormone, oxytocin, increases. Play enhances a child’s memory, attention span and ability to focus, as well as builds hand-eye coordination and strengthen muscles. Interactive play can help a child learn how to regulate their emotions and help parents see the world from the child's perspective.

It is paramount for parents to utilize various skills and techniques to enhance parent-child playtime. A few play activities include making music with safe household items such as empty, paper towel rolls or playing with a sticky, masking tape ball. Parents can ask a child to help sort laundry items such as socks, shirts and pants. Parents may have categorized piles of laundry in various areas of a room with signs, allowing the child to hop, skip or crawl to the designated piles, which combines building literacy, motor and other developmental skills.

It is important for parents to incorporate praise, active listening, imitation and description during play with a child. When a parent praises and imitates a child's positive behavior during interactive play, a child is more often to repeat the behavior. When parents describe a child's play activity, it provides affirmation and positive communication to the child. When a parent actively listens, he or she is fully engaged which demonstrates to the child the parent is focused and attentive; it helps a child know the parent hears and understands him or her.

Parents should allow the child to lead the activity, try to have playtime at the same time during the day. Even if playtime is just five minutes a day, it can help build a positive relationship between a child and parent. The lifelong benefits that children gain from interactive play with parents promote healthy, safe, and proactive children now and adults for the future.

Resources

Together for Families National Conference

October 15-17, 2018, Cleveland, Ohio

The Together for Families Conference is a unique new opportunity to gather various stakeholders from across the country in the family support and strengthening field. The conference will: focus on national, state and local levels on supporting and strengthening families through family support, strengthening families, and the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support; provide an opportunity for peer sharing on effective practice at various levels of responsibility – system, program and funder; provide opportunities for those with shared interests to learn about each other’s work and network; and energize and motivate all stakeholders to continue this critically valuable work.

Who should attend?
National, state, and local policy makers, public departments, children’s trust fund staff, private funders, state and community Strengthening Families leadership team representatives, Family Support and Strengthening network representatives, program directors, managers, direct service staff, and parent leaders.

More about the Together for Families National Conference

Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund
Battery Safety Tips

Facts
• When a child swallows a button battery, the saliva triggers an electrical current. This causes a chemical reaction that can severely burn the esophagus in as little as two hours.
• The scary part is that it may not be obvious at first that there is something wrong, since kids can still breathe and act normally after ingesting a battery, though it may seem like your child has a cold or flu.
• Repairing the damage from battery ingestion is painful and often involves multiple surgeries. Even after a battery is removed, kids can experience terrible side effects to their vocal chords and windpipe.

Keep Out of Reach
• Search your home, and any place your child goes, for gadgets that may contain coin-sized lithium batteries.
• Keep coin lithium battery-controlled devices out of sight and reach of children. These include remote controls, singing greeting cards, digital scales, watches, hearing aids, thermometers, children's toys, calculators, key fobs, flameless or tea light candles, flashing holiday jewelry or decorations.
• Keep loose batteries locked away, and place a piece of duct tape over the controller to secure the battery compartment.

Get Treatment Right Away
• If you suspect your child has ingested a battery, go to the hospital immediately. Do not induce vomiting or have your child eat or drink anything until assessed by a medical professional.
• The symptoms may be tricky to recognize – coughing, drooling and discomfort. If you have even the smallest doubt, do not take any chances, go to the emergency room right away.
• Enter the National Battery Ingestion Hotline (202) 625-3333 into your phone. You can call anytime for additional treatment information.

Tell Family and Friends
Share this life-saving information with caregivers, friends, family members and sitters. It only takes a minute and could save a life.

Source
The Sharing Corner

The Sharing Corner is for you, by you. Share your expertise, celebrations, testimonies and news. Send an email with the information you would like to share to Wenda Deardorff.

Center for Schools and Communities reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of the information.

Family Support

Family Support Webinars
First Wednesday of the month
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Sep 5 Families in Recovery: Understanding the Big Picture & Approaching with Empathy
Oct 3 TBA

Family Support at the Center for Schools and Communities provides training and technical assistance to Parents as Teachers providers, Children’s Trust Fund grantees and the Strengthening Families Leadership Team.

Partnerships Project Manager
Karen Shanoski
(717) 763-1661 x139
kshanoski@csc.csiu.org

Family Support Specialist
Wenda Deardorff
(717) 763-1661 x116
wdeardorff@csc.csiu.org

Family Support Technical Assistant
Coordinators
- Children’s Trust Fund and Strengthening Families
  Rijelle Kraft
  (717) 763-1661 x221
  rkraft@csc.csiu.org
- Parents as Teachers
  Alexia Brown
  717-763-1661 x146
  abrown@csc.csiu.org

Parents as Teachers

Until one month prior to the event, registration will only be open to Pennsylvania participants. If you have a new hire in the month before the event, contact Wenda Deardorff.

PAT Foundational & Model Implementation
For new supervisors/parent educators of affiliate programs
Sep 10-14, Homestead, Pa.

PAT Foundational
For new curriculum subscribers
Sep 10-12, Homestead, Pa.

PA Foundational 2: 3 Years through Kindergarten
Sep 24-25, Homestead, Pa.
Dec 3-4, Camp Hill, Pa.

Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers is based at the Center for Schools and Communities. Learn more at the following sites:
Children’s Trust Fund
Strengthening Families