



PARENTING PAGES

FALL 2011

Stanly County Partnership For Children – Albemarle, NC

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CONTENTS:

From Executive Director *Page 2*

The Problem Solving Parent *Page 3*

Fire Safety, Prevention and Preparedness *Page 4*

Healthy Habits, Healthy Families with WIC *Page 5*

Keeping Your Child Safe in the Car *Page 5*

Stanly County's Pre-Kindergarten Program *Page 6*

"Mom I Have Head Lights" *Page 7*



"The mission of Stanly County Partnership For Children is to make early childhood resources available to young children and their families that result in young children being properly cared for (healthy, safe, age appropriately educated) and enabled to enter school ready to learn."



PARENTING PAGES

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Executive Director Speaking... Prekindergarten – Path to our Future

Submitted By: BARBARA D. WHITLEY, MSW, Executive Director

All Children Are Born Wired for Feelings and Ready to Learn-- From the time of conception to the first day of kindergarten, development proceeds at a pace exceeding that of any subsequent stage of life. Efforts to understand this process have revealed the myriad and remarkable accomplishments of the early childhood period, as well as the serious problems that confront some young children and their families long before school entry. A fundamental paradox exists and is unavoidable: development in the early years is both highly robust and highly vulnerable. Although there have been long-standing debates about how much the early years really matter in the larger scheme of lifelong development, our conclusion is unequivocal: What happens during the first months and years of life matters a lot, not because this period of development provides an indelible blueprint for adult well-being, but because it sets either a sturdy or fragile stage for what follows.



WHITLEY

From birth to age 5, children rapidly develop foundational capabilities on which subsequent development builds. In addition to their remarkable linguistic and cognitive gains, they exhibit dramatic progress in their emotional, social, regulatory, and moral capacities. All of these critical dimensions of early development are intertwined, and each requires focused attention.

Striking disparities in what children know and can do are evident well before they enter kindergarten. These differences are strongly associated with social and economic circumstances, and they are predictive of subsequent academic performance. Redressing these disparities is critical, both for the children whose life opportunities are at stake and for a society whose goals demand that children be prepared to begin school, achieve academic success, and ultimately sustain economic independence and engage constructively with others as adult citizens. Early child development can be seriously compromised by social, regulatory, and emotional impairments. Indeed, young children are capable of deep and lasting sadness, grief, and disorganization in response to trauma, loss, and early personal rejection. Given the substantial short- and long-term risks that accompany early mental health impairments, the incapacity of many early childhood programs to address these concerns and the severe shortage of early childhood professionals with mental health expertise are urgent problems.

The conclusion here is that continued substantial investments must be made in the early years of our children to ensure that all children are prepared and ready to learn by the time they enter kindergarten.

The Stanly County Partnership for Children (SCPC) serves children birth to age 5 and their families. SCPC is conveniently located in Albemarle, and is an excellent resource for young children and their families. Please call 704-982-2038 or come by our offices at the Stanly County Commons to visit us and learn more about how we help young children be better prepared to grow up healthy and ready to learn.

On The Cover

Gavin and Grace
Hightower, children of
Phillip and Ashley
Hightower.

Photo courtesy of:
Angela Krol Photography



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2011 - 2011 (effective July 1, 2011)

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The Problem Solving Parent: Both Sides of Humor

*By: ELENOR REYNOLDS, Children and Families Expert
 Submitted by: DENISE SMITH, Child Care Services Coordinator*

We think of humor as a positive way to interact with children, and it can certainly be an effective teaching tool. Any good children's book, toy, TV show, or movie usually contains an element of humor, such as mistaken identity, playing a trick, an absurd accident, or getting the best of a grown-up. However, much of what we adults think of as humor is far too complex and sophisticated for a young child to process positively. If you watch cartoons with children, for example, you will learn that what we find humorous, does not entertain or even elicit a reaction from a young child.

The dictionary defines humor as "a comic quality causing amusement," but humor comes in many varieties, some of which can be harmful to young children. What may seem clever or witty to an adult may actually cause embarrassment or shame to a child. Sarcasm, teasing, mimicking, wisecracking, scoffing, ridiculing, and mocking can result in discouragement, confusion, and low self-esteem.

Children respond to humor that is simple and direct. And they love it when a joke is on the adults in their lives. The next time you spill the juice, lose your keys, break a dish, or burn the toast, turn it into a joke on yourself and show your child that it's O.K. to make mistakes and that you can laugh at yourself, which is an excellent way to counteract perfectionism. Children (who are still learning about language) also laugh at "word plays". When a child asks, "Will you put on my shoes?" respond with, "They won't fit me." Kids think this is hilarious and it encourages them to focus on what words really mean. Young children also laugh at tricks that are played on them, such as peek-a-boo and hide and seek.

When children are in a group and laugh at each other, it is usually because one child is doing or saying something "bad" or "wrong". Words that are frowned upon by grown-ups almost always bring laughter. Sometimes the laughter is a bit apprehensive because children feel some anxiety in laughing at what is forbidden, but they'll join in as long as everyone else is laughing. In a group, kids will also laugh if someone trips and falls, by accident or on purpose. Again it might be anxious laughter or an outlet to release a sense of relief that something has happened to someone else. If another child has an accident or is hurt and crying, a parent or teacher should interject with a comment such as, "I'll bet you're glad that wasn't you. How can we help our friend feel better?"

Humor that is positive and enriching comes from a sense of gratitude and joy. Much of this feeling toward life comes from a person's inborn temperament. Even a child whose inborn temperament is less than positive can learn joy and gratitude from role models. As with so many things, gratitude and joy begin with the adults in a child's life. Are you a joyful person? Are you grateful for your family, work, and community? Do you talk to your children about your values, hopes, and aspirations?

Gratitude is an attitude that can be passed on to your child. Point out the small wonders that surround your child and express that you are thankful for them. Stop to look for worms under a rock, birds nesting in a tree, icicles dripping from frozen branches, a beautiful sunset, or clouds skimming across the sky. Sing and dance with your child, make up stories, be spontaneous and silly. Greet your neighbors and show your child that the world is a friendly place. Trust that life is good. All of these things will contribute to your child's joy, and to the sense of humor that will give her strength for every day of her life. Humor based on joy is a gift, and it is one you can easily give to your child.

Eleanor Reynolds is the editor of The Best of the Problem-Solver: Articles for Parents and Teachers and the author of Guiding Young Children: A Problem-Solving Approach. She can be reached by email at problem@blarg.com.

Fire Safety, Prevention and Preparedness

Submitted by: BRIAN TAYLOR, City of Albemarle Fire Marshal and Safe Kids Stanly County Coordinator

Home Fires

One home structure fire was reported every 87 seconds in 2009.

On average, seven people die in home fires every day. Adults 65 and over face the highest risk of fire death.

In 2009, U.S. fire departments responded to 362,500 home structure fires. These fires caused 12,650 civilian injuries, 2,565 civilian deaths, \$7.6 billion in direct damage.

Escape Planning

According to an NFPA survey, less than one-fourth of Americans have both developed and practiced a home fire escape plan.

Almost three-quarters of Americans do have an escape plan; however, less than half actually practiced it.

One-third of American households who make escape plans estimate they would have at least 6 minutes before a fire in their home would become life threatening. The time available is often less. And only 8% said their first thought on hearing a smoke alarm would be to get out!

Smoke Alarms

Roughly two-thirds of home fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. About one in five smoke alarm failures was due to dead batteries.

Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in reported home fires in half.

In fires considered large enough to activate the smoke alarm, hardwired alarms operated 91% of the time, while battery powered alarms operated only 75% of the time.

Home Fire Sprinklers

Automatic fire sprinkler systems cut the risk of dying in a home fire by about 80%.

Home fire sprinklers can contain and may even extinguish a fire in less time than it would take the fire department to arrive on the scene.

Sprinklers are highly effective because they react so quickly in a fire. They reduce the risk of death or injury from a fire because they dramatically reduce the heat, flames and smoke produced, allowing people time to evacuate the home.

Cooking

Cooking equipment is the leading cause of home structure fires and associated injuries, and was tied for the third leading cause of home fire deaths.

Unattended cooking was by far the leading cause of these fires.

Households using electric ranges have a higher risk of fires than those using gas ranges.

Children under five face a higher risk of non-fire burns associated with cooking than being burned in a cooking fire.

Nearly half (45%) of microwave oven injuries seen at emergency rooms in 2009 were scalds.

U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 155,400 cooking-related home fires each year between 2005-2009, causing an average of 390 deaths, 4,800 injuries and \$771 million in direct property damage.

Heating

Fires involving heating equipment peak in December, January and February, as do deaths from these fires. Overall, homes fires and home fire deaths are also more common in the cooler months of the year.

Heating equipment was the second leading cause of all reported home fires and home fire deaths.

The leading factor contributing to heating equipment fires was failure to clean, principally creosote from solid fueled heating equipment, primarily chimneys.

Half of home heating fire deaths resulted from fires caused by heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding.

U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 64,100 heating-related home fires each year between 2005-2009, causing an average of 560 deaths, 1,620 injuries and \$904 million in direct property damage.

Smoking Materials

The risk of dying in a home structure fire caused by smoking materials rises with age.

In recent years, Canada and the United States have required that all cigarettes sold must be "fire safe," that is have reduced ignition strength and less likely to start fires.

U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 18,900 smoking-related home fires each year between 2005-2009, causing an average of 660 deaths, 1,270 injuries and \$492 million in direct property damage.

Electrical

41% of home electrical fires involved electrical distribution or lighting equipment.

53% of home electrical fires involved other known types of equipment, including ranges, washers/dryers, fans and space heaters.

During 2005-2009, electrical distribution and lighting equipment was involved in the ignition of 23,400 home structure fires, on average, per year. These fires caused an average of 390 deaths, 970 injuries and \$822 million in direct property damage.

Candles

On average, there are 35 home candle fires reported per day.

Roughly two-fifths of these fires started in the bedroom.

More than half of all candle fires start when things that can burn are too close to the candle.

During 2005-2009, candles caused an average of 12,900 home fires, 140 home fire deaths, 1,040 home fire injuries and \$471 million in direct property damage.

"Reproduced from NFPA's Fire Prevention Week website, www.fireprevention-week.org. ©2011 NFPA."

Children...

a wise investment.

The Stanly County Partnership For Children is working every day to make a difference in the lives of local children. Your support makes that difference possible. If you want to invest in the future of children in Stanly County, please volunteer or make a tax-deductible donation.

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Please contact us about volunteer opportunities with Stanly County Partnership For Children

Please make checks payable to: Stanly County Partnership For Children, P.O. Box 2165, Albemarle, NC 28002. Return this form in person to: Stanly County Partnership For Children, 1000 N. First St., Albemarle, NC. • www.stanlypartnership.org

Healthy Habits, Healthy Families with WIC

*Submitted By: LUCY WALTERS,
Stanly County Health Department WIC Director*

More families than ever are finding it hard to put healthy food on their dinner tables. For young children, a lack of good nutrition can put them at risk for health problems and problems in school. North Carolina's WIC program helps low income families meet the nutritional needs of pregnant and post-partum women, infants and children up to age 5.

An important part of the WIC program is nutrition education and counseling. Topics range from healthy drink choices, healthy ways to prepare foods, and grocery shopping on a budget. Supplemental foods are the best known aspect of WIC participation, but health care referrals and breastfeeding support are part of the mission as well.

The North Carolina WIC program currently serves an average of 270,000 participants each month. Stanly County serves over 1500 WIC participants. Studies show that children who participate in WIC are more likely to receive regular preventive health services and are better immunized than children who did not participate in WIC.

Breastfeeding promotion and support is an important part of the WIC Program. All WIC agencies have trained staff ready to assist moms in making informed decisions about how they feed their babies. WIC also teaches moms the basics of breastfeeding.

The nutrition education and healthy foods WIC provides give children a healthy start in life. Better educated moms mean healthier babies. Medicaid beneficiaries who participated in WIC had lower infant mortality rates than Medicaid beneficiaries who did not participate in WIC. WIC participation also decreases the incidence of low birth weight and pre-term births.

The WIC Program is available at the Stanly County Health Department, 1000 N. First Street, Albemarle, NC. You may apply for WIC by calling (704)986-3003 or (704)986-3004 on Monday – Friday between 8:00-8:30 am. You may also visit the WIC web site at www.nutritionnc.com. The WIC Program is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Keeping Your Child Safe in the Car: New Recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics

Submitted By: MARGARET HIGHTOWER, PAT Coordinator

The experts are buckling down on the ways that children buckle up. The leading cause of death among children is car crashes, prompting the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to update its recommendations on car seats:

- Children should ride in rear-facing car seats until age 2, or until they reach the maximum height and weight for their seat.
- Children should ride in belt-positioning booster seats until they have reached 4 feet 9 inches tall and are between 8 and 12 years of age.

These changes are supported by research that shows that using rear-facing seats has been effective at reducing injuries and death. Children under age 2 are 75 percent less likely to die or be severely injured in a crash if they are riding rear-facing, according to a study by the journal *Injury Prevention*.

The new recommendations also clarify the importance of meeting height and weight requirements rather than age requirements before transitioning to the next car seat stage.

"Parents often look forward to transitioning from one stage to the next, but these transitions should generally be delayed until they're necessary, when the child fully outgrows the limits for his or her current stage," said Dennis Durbin, MD, FAAP, lead author of the AAP's policy statement and accompanying technical report.

"A rear-facing child safety seat does a better job of supporting the head, neck and spine of infants and toddlers in a crash, because it distributes the force of the collision over the entire body," Dr. Durbin said. "For larger children, a forward-facing seat with a harness is safer than a booster, and a belt-positioning booster seat provides better protection than a seat belt alone until the seat belt fits correctly."

Booster basics

- Children should not transition from a rear-facing seat to a forward-facing seat with a harness until they reach the maximum weight or height for that seat.
- A booster will make sure the vehicle's lap-and-shoulder belt fit properly.
- The shoulder belt should lie across the middle of the chest and shoulder, not near the neck or face.
- The lap belt should fit low and snug on the hips and upper thighs, not across the belly.
- Most children will need a booster seat until they have reached 4 feet 9 inches tall and are between 8 and 12 years old.
- Children should ride in the rear of a vehicle until they are 13 years old.

Of course, it's important to be sure your car seat or booster seat is installed correctly, whatever your child's age. In many communities, local fire departments and hospitals offer free car seat installation and safety checks. To find resources in your neighborhood, visit www.seatcheck.org.



Looking for Child Care?

Call Child Care Resources, Inc.'s

Child Care Search

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and talk with one of their parent counselors or search for child care online using Child Care eSearch at www.childcareresourcesinc.org

Child Care Search can help you choose and find a quality child care program for your child. This free service includes referrals to licensed, regulated, or legally-exempt child care programs, tips on what to look for when choosing a quality program for your child, information on child care financial assistance options, information on child development/parenting, and guidance in accessing other community resources that can meet your family's needs.

Stanly County's Pre-Kindergarten Program

*Submitted By: BONNIE ALDRIDGE,
School Readiness Coordinator*

The Pre-K program that Stanly County has offered to eligible 4 year old children for the past several years underwent major changes over the summer, at both the state and local levels. Although a program does continue to exist, it was forced to face extreme cuts in funding, due to the state's budget.

At the state level, the program is being run by a different agency. Until this past summer, the program known as More at Four (MAF), was part of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). As of July 1, the program began being supervised by the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE), and had its name changed to the North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Program (NC Pre-K). While the two agencies tried to make the transition an easy one, it has proven to be rather difficult. Some definitions and requirements changed slightly, making the way for much extra work to be done here at the local level (call Stanly County Partnership for Children if you have questions about eligibility, etc). As a result of budget cuts, the number of children that our program is able to serve has been cut by 72 from last year. Locally, our public school system faced budget cuts of its own, and is no longer able to serve as many Pre-K children as in the past. Because of this, some new non-public child care facilities (4 and 5 star centers) are participating, and centers that have been participating, have added classrooms as necessary.

Luckily, after a long summer, the first day of Pre-K came for some of our county's 4 year olds! We are hopeful that we will be given the opportunity to serve more eligible 4 year old children in our county as we move through the fall. Currently, all of the spaces that the state has given us are filled, but it is our hope that money will become available to support more Pre-K spaces, and that some of those spaces will be offered to Stanly County!

Listed below are the non-public child care centers and public schools that are participating in the North Carolina Pre-Kindergarten Program for the School Year 2011/2012:

- All Star Learning Center
- Badin Elementary School
- Countryside Kids Club
- Kiddie Kare, Too
- Little Friends Day Care
- Norwood Head Start and Child Development Center
- Oakboro Elementary School
- Oakboro Kid's Club
- Quality Child Care Center
- Richfield Child Development Center
- Stanly County Head Start

If you have any question about Pre-K, call Stanly County Partnership for Children at 704-982-2038 and ask for the Pre-K Department.



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“Mom I Have Head Lights!” (head lice)

By: Joy Heglar, RN CCHC, STANLY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Head lice (Pediculosis Captitis)-is a phrase that always strikes fear in parents. Head Lice are common in preschool and school age children, but are not a sign of poor hygiene. The length of hair, and the frequency of shampooing or brushing do not influence lice infestation.

So, one may ask where do lice come from? Lice have been around since the beginning of time! Dried head lice and their eggs, which are known as nits have been found on the hair and scalp of Egyptian mummies. Lice are human parasites that require human blood to live. We can't get lice from animals; they have their own parasites known as fleas.

Lice can live about 30 days if they can feed off of the human scalp, but only 1-2 days off of the human scalp. Female lice lay 3-5 eggs (nits) a day. It takes about 7-10 days for the eggs (nits) to hatch, then it takes another 7-10 days for the lice to mature and lay eggs (nits) on their own.

Eggs (nits) are small, yellowish-white, oval shaped eggs that are glued at an angle on the side of a hair shaft. You can see the eggs (nits) with the naked eye and using a bright light or the sunlight helps to spot them even better. When the lice hatch, they are clear in color until they feed on the human scalp and then turn reddish-brown. Lice are about the size of a sesame seed and have 6 legs with claws so that they can easily grasp the hair.

The most common sign of head lice is itching, but there are some children that don't have any itching. If you notice the child is red behind the ears and at the bottom of the neck, then you would want to check that child's head for lice. Adult

lice and their eggs (nits) are found lots of times behind the ears and at the nape of the neck.

So, one may ask how do I get lice? Lice are spread from direct contact with the head or hair of an infested person. No, lice can't fly or jump like some may think. It is so very important to teach your child(ren) not to share personal items such as, hats, pillows, brushes, combs, towels, hair ties, etc, because this is how lice is spread.

There are many over the counter products out there, but you would want to check with your MD first before using chemical based products. Using a fine tooth-comb or manually removing the nits is as important as using any of the treatments. Making sure all nits are removed and you have a doctor's note stating that the child is nit free, is what you need before the child can return to child-care.

Things you can do to help prevent the spread or recurrence of head lice is to vacuum the upholstered furniture, rugs, stuffed animals, car seats, and couches. The bedding and recently worn clothing of an infested person should be washed in hot water and machine dried using a hot cycle. Combs and hairbrushes should be washed in hot water. If one member of the family has lice, then check all family members and inform playmates and childcare director.

September is head lice awareness month so teach your child(ren) to share a toy, share a slide, share the feelings deep inside, but never share a hat or comb, or lice could make their head their home.

Stanly County's Four and Five ★ ★ ★ Star Facilities ★ ★ ★

A Little Piece of Heaven Home Day Care	4 star
All Star Learning Center	4 star
Bright Beginnings	4 star
Countryside Kids Club	4 star
Fahondzi Learning Tree Child Development	4 star
Fun-N-Learning	4 star
Just Us Kids	5 star
Kiddie Kare	4 star
Kiddie Kare Too	4 star
Little Creations Day Care Home	5 star
Little Friends #2	5 star
Love and Laughter Home Day Care	4 star
Miss Debbie's Day Care Home	4 star
Norwood Head Start and Child Development Center	4 star
Oakboro Kids Club	5 star
Quality Child Care Center	5 star
Quality Home Day Care	4 star
Richfield Child Development Center	5 star
Stanly County Head Start	5 star
Susie's Friends Day Care	5 star
Sweet Home Child Development Center	4 star
The Son-Shine Kids Learning Center	5 star

These child care facilities have strived to obtain and maintain these ratings. Stanly County Partnership For Children is very proud of these facilities for all that they do for our children. Let's remember to thank our child care providers for trying to improve the quality of care for our children. If you would like more information about these facilities, please call the Child Care Services Department at 704-982-0286.



Come visit the Albemarle Early Childhood Resource Center

A lending library for parents and child care providers who serve children birth through five years old

Family Memberships – \$15.00

(Membership valid July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012)

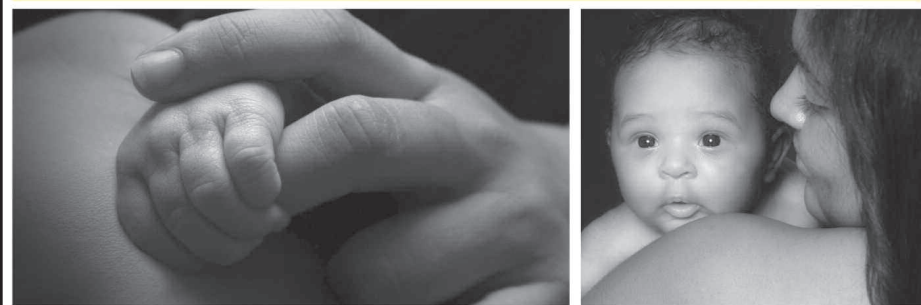
ECRC Open From 9:00 am-4:30 pm



Gavin and Grace Hightower, children of Phillip and Ashley Hightower.

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Sponsors Include:

Partners in Health, Infant Mortality Reduction Team, Stanly Regional Medical Center and Stanly County Health Department.



To register for the next Embrace educational series, call the Stanly County Health Department at (704) 982-9171.

MARK YOUR 2012 CALENDAR



Stanly County Partnership for Children
presents

"The Commedia Cinderella"

by the Tarradiddle Players

Sunday, April 1, 2012 at 3:00 PM

Central Elementary School
Auditorium

Tickets: \$5.00

Tickets are available at the following locations:

Stanly County Partnership for Children
First Bank locations

*Limited number of tickets for sale the day of
the show.*

For more information,
call 704-982-2038

