

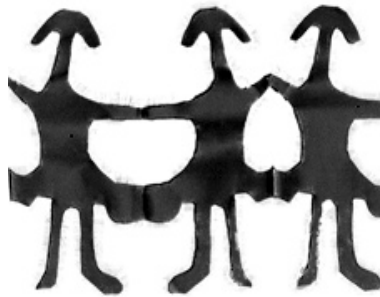
DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE CHILDREN'S CENTERS DBCC NEWS

DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE CHILD CARE, Inc.
Park Avenue Center, 806 Park Ave., Baltimore, MD 21201-4807 • 410-669-1010
University Center, 237 Arch Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-1526 • 410-659-0515

April/May, 2005

Are You Expecting Enough? *by Susan Sandstrom*

Do you assume your child is too young to take on any responsibility? Do you believe that you are only young once so childhood should be fun and easy? Do you feel that getting your child to do anything is too much of a hassle and too time consuming so you do it yourself?



Paper dolls by Maya Florian, age 5

You're probably not alone. Part of the problem is that we are all so busy. Most of us have lost touch with the process of everyday tasks. We do the laundry as quickly as possible. Grocery shopping is a chore. Dinner is quick and simple. Dress the child, fix the breakfast, get to work . . . We want to complete these jobs and get on with our life and children s-l-o-o-o-w us down so much when we involve them.

Unlike adults, children approach things very differently. They love the process of the activity and are "in the moment." Putting on a sock can take a child 20 minutes as she gets lost in thought or intensely studies her toes. Despite her slowness, it is important for a child's development to learn self-help skills and for her to have responsibilities at home. Children can learn how to do many things and adults need to be mindful of this. When you allow children to participate you are increasing their skill level, giving them a chance to feel competent and giving them a sense of belonging to the family.

Think your child is too young? Even the toddlers at DBCC have certain responsibilities such as cleaning up the toys and throwing away their napkin after

lunch. Yes, they need a lot of support and putting one toy away is enough for a toddler. Sometimes you need to patiently repeat a request or wait a beat longer for a child to process your request and respond. We don't make a big deal if a toddler won't cooperate (which is, after all, developmentally appropriate) but, eventually they all want to help. A safety expectation for the toddlers is to sit down while they eat or drink. DBCC children are so used to this rule that when the snack cart comes rolling in the door all the children will automatically sit on the floor or find a chair. Now, this took a grand effort and many times the children heard, "Remember you have to sit while you have your bottle." But, they have responded beautifully! Consistency really works!

Parents get into the habit of taking total care of their child and forget that as the child is slowly but surely gaining the motor, social and intellectual skills he can do more and more for himself. It is so easy to fall into this pattern. Every morning a friend of mine chose her child's clothes and dressed him. He usually had a toy in his hands while she directed, "Put your foot in here." "Chin up." "Put your arm in here." He took no responsibility. One morning he came downstairs all dressed. When mom exclaimed, "You dressed yourself?" he said, "Yeah, I just wanted to see if I could do it myself." This child gave his mother a very strong message. You're doing too much for me. I can do it myself. It is easy to forget

(Continued on page 2)

Don't forget DBCC's Annual "SPRING FLING" • See back page for details

Are You Expecting Enough? (Cont'd from p.1)

that children are always changing and need the chance to learn basic skills.

Little things that adults take for granted are a big deal to a young child—turning off the light, getting juice out of the refrigerator, mixing the pancake batter, etc. Children quickly gain the skills and ultimately, are more independent and able to participate in the household. This is a tremendous boost for their self-esteem.

Some parents believe that they need to show unwavering love and attention. Getting a child dressed and basically tending to her every need shows the child she is loved. Of course, children need to be taken care of and loved. But, if you go too far, you may be sending the wrong message, such as “You are helpless and incompetent.” The world around them constantly reminds children that they are little. Children feel proud of their skills and good about their efforts when encouraged to take responsibility with the support of the adults in their lives.

Even very young children can finish zipping up their coat, put their shoes on (when properly loosened), carry their dish to the kitchen, throw away trash, etc. Small tasks demonstrate that you trust her and that she is a capable and functioning member of the family. These are real tasks and the best kind. If your toddler is finished eating, give her a sponge to wipe the table or high chair tray.

Children need to do real work because real work is empowering. While I was in the classroom, I brought in the vacuum cleaner to clean up a mess. The children all wanted a turn at the vacuum and they put their names on a list so they would be sure to have a turn. The vacuum was rather large and heavy but most of the children wanted the challenge of using all of their strength to move it around the room. Children are capable of hard work but be careful. Young children do not need to be overly burdened by chores so one needs to achieve a balance. Here are some guidelines:

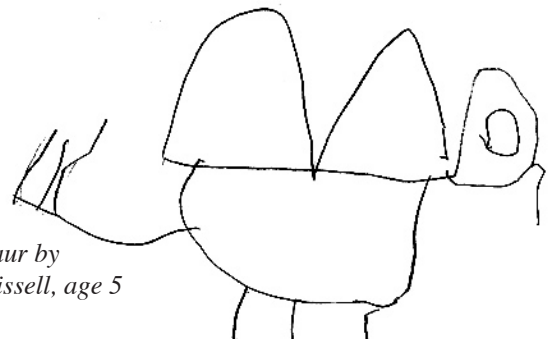
- Start with one job; let the child know: “Your job is to feed the cat.” Make sure the job is appropriate for the child’s age and keep the cat food in a place where she has to ask for it. Putting a scoop of cat food in the bowl will be fairly easy yet very satisfying for the child.
- Cleaning up all his toys is probably too hard without lots of help and encouragement. The point is that the child still needs to help clean up his toys (it’s an expectation).
- Timing is important. The child shouldn’t be hungry or tired.
- The language you use is important (“We need to wash the dishes. You wash the sippy cups and I’ll wash the plates.”) Avoid orders.
- Tell grandma about the work your child does within his earshot. He’ll love to overhear your words of admiration! What follows are examples of some of the things young children can do.

- *Throw tissues (papers, yogurt cups, etc.) in trash.*
- *Choose their clothes (younger children can choose which shirt they wear from two options). When they are older they may choose their outfit. Careful not to overwhelm the child with too many choices.*
- *Put their PJ’s away in the morning.*
- *Put dirty clothes in the hamper.*
- *Brush their teeth (with help if needed).*
- *Wash themselves in the bathtub (with help if needed).*
- *Dust.*
- *Wash things (with a small bucket with soap suds and a sponge) outdoor furniture, kitchen cabinet doors, walls, car, etc.*
- *Carry in groceries. Help put out the trash.*
- *Vacuum.*

It is easier to communicate with young children if adults slow down their movements and their speech into “child time.” Work along side your child and keep the mood light. You will be surprised at the cooperation you receive. You will be helping your child’s self-esteem grow and you will be sending your child some very clear messages: You are big! You are competent! Taking responsibility is not an option. You are a participating member of this family. We help each other! These messages will serve them well as they become school-agers, teenagers and grow into adulthood.



- Micah is a big brother! Emmet Asher Neff-McGready was born on January 26, 2005 and weighed 8 lbs. 1 oz. Congratulations to Roni, John and Micah!
- Teacher Margo Simpson is a grandmother again! Dante Lorenzo Simpson was born on February 1, 2005 and weighed 7 lbs. 9 oz. Congratulations to Nicole, Margo and Lorenzo!
- Teacher Margo Simpson had another grandchild! Warren Postman was born on February 14, 2005 and weighed 7 lbs. 2 oz. Congratulations to Erica, Warren, Lorenzo and Margo!
- Garrett is a big brother! Gwynn Howard Munger was born on March 7, 2005 and weighed 7 lbs. 14 oz. Congratulations to Caroline, Steve and Garrett!



Dinosaur by
Sam Fissell, age 5

Brain Development and Fat

(One) . . . way of measuring brain development is to look at the speed of neural processing. A newborn's brain works considerably more slowly than an adult's, transmitting information some sixteen times less efficiently. The speed of neural processing increases dramatically during infancy and childhood, reaching its maximum at about age fifteen. Most of this increase is due to the gradual myelination of nerve cell axons (the long "wires" that connect one neuron to another neuron's dendrites.) Myelin is a very dense, fatty substance that insulates axons much like the plastic sheath on a power cable, increasing the speed of electrical transmission and preventing cross-talk between adjacent nerve fibers. Myelination (the coating or covering of axons with myelin) begins around birth and is most rapid in the first two years but continues perhaps as late as 30 years of age.

Because of the rapid pace of myelination in early life, children need a high level of fat in their diets—some 50 percent of their total calories—until about two years of age. Babies should receive most of this fat from breast milk or formula in the first year of life, and breast milk remains an excellent source of liquid nutrition into the toddler years. However, whole cow's milk can be introduced after the first birthday, and provides an excellent source of both fat and protein for toddlers in the second year. After two years of age, children should begin transitioning to a more heart-healthy **level** of dietary fat (no more than 30 percent of total calories), including lower-fat cow's milk (1 or 2%). Excerpt from "Brain Wonders," Boston University School of Medicine, Erikson Institute, and ZERO TO THREE, www.zerotothree.org/brainwon-

we found worms

Clark Stikeleather,
age 5



•M•I•L•E•S•T•O•N•E•S•

DBCC recently lost a dear friend. Robert Bradley died suddenly on January 21, 2005. Robert was a talented woodworker and was responsible for many of the unique wooden structures at both centers. He built the reading centers upstairs at Park Avenue, the cabinets in Evelyn's office, all of the radiator covers and the some of the lofts. He created the library at University Center, attached cubbies to walls, put up bulletin boards, etc. Robert was there when both centers opened and we depended on his woodworking skills to make both centers ready for opening day. Robert was someone we could call on to fix things, to build an odd piece of equipment or simply to ask his advice. Robert had many friends at DBCC and we will miss his talent, his generous spirit and his friendship.

CREATIVITY KILLERS

According to research by Dr. Teresa Amabile, a psychologist at Brandeis University specializing in creativity, the main creativity killers are:

Surveillance: hovering over kids, making them feel that they're constantly being watched while they're working. When a child is under constant observation, the risk-taking, creative urge goes underground and hides.

Evaluation: making kids worry about how others judge what they're doing. Kids should be concerned primarily with how satisfied they are with their accomplishments rather than focusing on how they are being evaluated or graded, or what their peers will think.

Rewards: excessive use of prizes, such as gold stars, money or toys. If overused, rewards deprive a child of the intrinsic pleasure of creative activity.

Competition: putting kids in a desperate win-lose situation, where only one person can come out on top. A child should be allowed to progress at his own rate.

Over-Control: telling kids exactly how to do things—their schoolwork, their chores, even their play. Parents and teachers often confuse this micro-management with their duty to instruct. This leaves children feeling that any originality is a mistake and any exploration a waste of time.

Restricting Choice: telling children which activities they should engage in instead of letting them follow where their curiosity and passion lead. Better to let a child choose what is of interest and support that inclination.

Pressure: establishing grandiose expectations for a child's performance. For example, those "hothouse" training regimes that force toddlers to learn the alphabet or math before they have any real interest can easily backfire and end -up instilling an aversion for the subject being taught.

Time Pressure: restricting time for a child to explore a particular activity is a sure killer of intrinsic motivation. Children enter the ultimate state of creativity called flow, more naturally than adults. This is a period in which total absorption can engender peak pleasure and creativity. In flow, time does not matter; there is only the timeless moment at hand. It is a state that is more comfortable for children than adults, who are more conscious of the passage of time.



Man in a Hat
by Peter French, age 5

**Come on out and SWING!...at
DBCC's Annual Spring Fundraiser**

(to support children's scholarship program)

"SPRING FLING"

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2005

**at Eubie Blake National
Jazz and Cultural Center**

847 N. Howard St., Baltimore MD

• **Silent Auction**
• **Light Fare • Music**



Ticket Prices:
\$40/person or
\$70/couple

Parking
available at
Md. General
Hospital

Questions?

Call
410-669-1010
or visit

www.dbcckids.org

CHILDSPEAK

- **Maddie Parsley**, age 3, asked her teacher, "Do you know my mom's first name? The teacher replied, "Yes, it's Luciene." "No," said Maddie, "It's Mommy."
- A teacher from the other center said, "I don't think I know you. What is your name?" **Julian Chang**, age 5, announced in a clear voice, "I am Julian from America!"
- The children all started talking about their ages. **Emile Charles**, age 3, said, "I'm three going on 21!"
- **Eli Sherbakov**, age 3, and his teacher were making snoring noises, pretending they were asleep. Eli picked up his head and said to the teacher, "When I was asleep I was dreaming I love you."
- Peter's dad was talking to a friend, "Your daughter really has stage presence." **Peter MacKinnan**, age 4, was listening and said, "I want presents, too!"
- **Hayden Bessette**, age 5: "I care about you, Brooksie, but what I really care about is art. Art is my past and my future."
- The fours were having a math discussion at the snack table. **Jake Lamason**, age 4, said, "1 and 1 is 2."
- **Atlas Pyke**, age 4, said, "No, 1 and 1 is 11."
- **Tomas Meisner**, age 19 months, politely pulls out his cousin **Charlie Meisner's** chair at lunch time every day and says, "Sit down."



Downtown Baltimore Child Care, Inc.
806 Park Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21201-4807

Address service requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BALTO. MD.
PERMIT NO. 5402



*Childhood should be
a journey, not a race.*