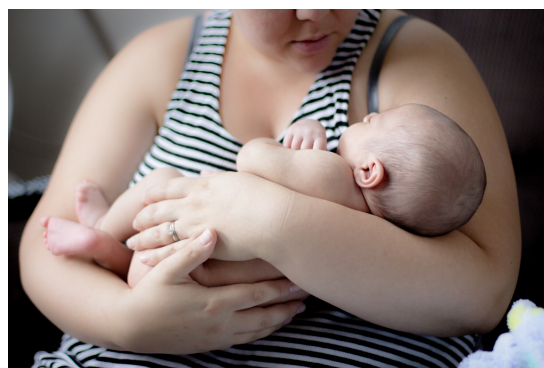


The H-N REACH EarlyON at Home

FAMILY NEWSLETTER

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships, in a young child's life, are the building blocks to healthy development. Healthy relationships support the child socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically, and lay the foundation for their future relationships with others. What we're saying here is, healthy relationships with young children are a really big deal. This week, our newsletter will provide you with information about how to support healthy relationships with your young child, and will give you activities and ideas of how to grow that much needed connection. We hope you enjoy this issue, and please feel free to share it with friends and family!



CO-REGULATION: WHAT IT IS AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD

Most of us are feeling a lot of stress due to COVID-19 and the many changes it has brought to our lives. So are our children. When two stressed people must live together all the time, there can be conflict. Often, this conflict arises over things that really don't matter very much. But every time we argue, we damage our relationship a little bit. Over time, this can take a toll on all of us.

As adults, one of the most important things we can do is learn how to self-regulate when we feel ourselves getting frustrated or angry. When we can calm ourselves, we can think our way through and find a solution to the conflict without getting caught up in a power struggle.

When we can regulate our own emotions and body responses, we can show our children how to do it too. When we self-regulate together, this is called 'co-regulation'. Learning how to co-regulate gives children skills to build healthy relationships throughout their lives.

When conflict arises, as it is sure to do: **first** self-regulate; **then** co-regulate; **then** try to solve the problem together.

This takes very little time and space, and it's free. The more you and your child practice, the more natural it will feel. Soon it will be a habit!

Get some ideas to help you co-regulate with your child on PDEP's website www.positivedisciplineeveryday.com.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK!

Children don't need more things.
The best toy a child can have is a parent who gets down on the floor and plays with them.

Dr. Bruce Perry



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: THE 'SERVE AND RETURN'

According to the 'Centre on the Developing Child' at Harvard University, "child-adult relationships that are responsive and attentive - with lots of back-and-forth interactions - build a strong foundation in a child's brain for all future learning and development." (retrieved from <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/5-steps-for-brain-building-serve-and-return/>).

Serve and return works like a game of tennis or volleyball between baby/child and the caregiver. The baby 'serves' by reaching out for interaction, while the responsive caregiver will 'return the serve' in a number of ways. These back-and-forth exchanges are the building blocks of children's early brain development and will help children learn how to regulate their emotions, cope with stress and learn skills that will serve as a foundation for future development.

The following are ways that you can 'serve and return':

Notice the 'serve' and share the child's focus of attention.

- The child 'serves it up' when pointing, looking, or making sounds and faces at something (or sticking out their tongue!). Notice that and follow their lead.

This strengthens the bond and tells the child "I'm listening to you. I'm your person to trust."

Return the serve

- Listening to their cue was the first step, next it's returning it back. Talk with them, play with them, look at what they see - or stick your tongue out back at them!

This tells them "I hear you AND understand you. I'm your person"

Give it a name

- Talk to them about what they've noticed, striking up a conversation.

This tells your child "I care, and I'll teach you all about this world we live in. You can trust me, I'm your person."

Take turns and wait. Keep the interaction going back and forth.

- Give them a chance to respond, and go back and forth with them as often as your child will allow.

This tells them "I get you, I understand you, let's work on this together - I'm your person."



Want to see a good example of 'serve and return'? Check out this toddler and his dad at <https://youtu.be/RtgMVac1i2I> It's a great example of the power of serve-and-return, and the connection and bond it can create between a caregiver and child.

KINDNESS ROCKS!

Imagine you are feeling lonely, isolated and at your wits end with the growing concerns and the uncertainty of the everyday we are living right now. Your worries are mounting, with home schooling and bills pending and bored children at home. You just don't know what you will do next and you're feeling glum . . .

Now imagine that you are out for a walk and you look down and see a message, one that gives you a warm feeling inside. A message that gives you hope, one that makes you smile. You don't know who left it, but it still creates a feeling inside that there is kindness in the world. Seeing that message helps you to lift your head a bit higher, helps you to see the sun shine a bit brighter, helps you to smile.



This is Kindness Rocks! A kindness rock, sometimes called a kindness stone, is simply a rock that someone has taken and decorated with an inspirational message. They can be any size or shape, as big or small as you like! The point of these cute stones is to sprinkle positivity around your life and around your community. As we all know, sometimes a simple message of kindness can spark joy and brighten someone's entire day.

A fun activity that families can do together is to collect rocks, tree branches or pieces of bark. Take them home and get creative. You can paint them however you would like, add a meaningful phrase or word, and display them in your home, in your garden, or out in the community. For a list of ideas or some inspiration, visit:

<https://inspirekindness.com/blog/rock-painting>

. . . FIVE, SIX, PICK UP STICKS!

It's that time of year - cleaning up the yard and getting the lawn ready for running and playing! Have lots of sticks to pick up?

Now is the time to get help from your children, and turn it into a game!! You'll inspire curiosity and creativity with these tips:

- Model the gathering - yes, you'll have to pick some up too!
- Hand them one or two - not only are you modelling the gathering, you're inviting them to join in when you hand them some!
- Make a pile - what a great way to see your progress, and it makes it easier to clean up at the end.
- Play!! Try making music with them, or sticking them in the ground or mud, or making a mouse fort with them.

Any way you're doing it, you're getting them outside and strengthening connections with your child!



CREATING THE CALM DURING COVID-19

Did you know that you can 'Create the Calm' by just being kind!! Find ways to be kind to others in your house or in the community. Helping others helps us!

Try:

- Talking with family and friends through video or phone
- Writing emails or old-fashioned letters to friends and family
- Making encouraging posters and signs and putting them in your windows to show support for your neighbours and community

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Baking together in the kitchen is a great way to foster math skills (measuring and counting), fine motor skills (pouring and stirring), focus and attention (following directions and waiting their turn) and it promotes healthy choices and confidence.

Yogourt Jello Bites

480 mL Greek yogourt (plain or vanilla for added flavour)

1 package of Jello powder (any flavour you like)



1. In a medium bowl, mix the ingredients together.
2. Place bowl in a microwave and cook for one minute. Then stir well. Continue to cook in 30 second bursts, stirring well each time, until the Jello crystals have completely dissolved in the yogourt.
3. Spoon the mixture into a silicone mold. You may like to spray the mold with some mild non-stick spray first.
4. Level off the mold with an icing spatula, and tap the mold a few times to remove any air bubbles. Place the silicone mold on a board (to stop it from bending), then place it in the fridge until they have set - at least 3 hours.
5. Carefully turn out each yogourt bite, and enjoy! Store in fridge.

For more cooking ideas like this, check out <https://stepawayfromthecarbs.com>

MAIL A HUG

Why not send an email or text with a hug? You could take a picture of your child with open arms, or hugging a family member, and send it with the following poem to a loved one, neighbour or friend:

I miss you when you're far away,
I'd love to see you every day.
But since I can't come over to play,
I'm mailing you a hug today!



WE ARE STILL HERE FOR YOU!

Yes, things have changed a lot over the past month, but we are still here to help! Haldimand-Norfolk REACH is considered an essential service, and even though our sites are closed, we are working at home to stay connected with everyone, and to help those in need during these turbulent times.

If you or your child are in crisis, our Child and Youth Crisis Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 1-866-327-3224

Feel free to find us on Facebook - we are the Haldimand-Norfolk REACH EarlyON Child and Family Centre! We're always posting activity ideas, circle time videos and stories, and tips to stay healthy at home.

Have an idea you'd like to see us try? Email us at earlyon@hnreach.on.ca

