



**PARENT TRUST**  
FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN



**Strong Families Begin At Home**

# Child & Teen Services Newsletter

Summer 2012

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**FAMILY HELP LINE**  
1-800-932-HOPE

Parent Trust's statewide, toll-free phone number provides callers with a greater understanding and awareness of child development, guidance and resources.


If you have any comments, or suggestions for future articles, please contact:


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## OUTDOOR PLAY

"Being outdoors correlates strongly with physical activity for children, which is important for preventing obesity in the preschool years and on through adulthood. A new study led by Pooja Tandon, MD, MPH, of Seattle Children's Research Institute found that nearly half of preschoolers in a sample representing four million U.S. children did not have even one parent-supervised outdoor play opportunity per day. The study, "The frequency of parent-supervised outdoor play of U.S. preschool age children," was published in the Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine." *press release, Seattle Children's.*

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**MOVE** 



*Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity. ~JFK*

**RELAX**



*Every now and then go away, even briefly, [and] have a little relaxation, for when you come back to your work your judgement will be surer...  
-Leonardo da Vinci*

## 5 SENSES

The signs and symptoms of stress vary from person to person, but we all have them. Perhaps you become short-tempered, start biting your nails, or feel anxious. Maybe your child starts having more outbursts than usual or gets stomachaches. Knowing these warning signs and recognizing when they are occurring is the first step to attending to stress. From there, you can use the 5 Senses technique as a way to relax in the midst of you and/or your child's busy life. Take a walk outside to find a place to sit;  
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## OUTDOOR PLAY, CON'T.

Recently I spent some time with my three year old niece (and her mommy, Peg.). After running a quick errand we decided to go for a short hike in the woods. As they live on Vashon Island, it was pretty easy to find trail access.

As we walked along we debated the difference between a hike and a walk. I confused things by suggesting that we were actually on a ramble. None of us were sure what we were on, just that we were having fun looking at the trees, the moss, the leaves, the fallen logs (squirrel bridges, according to my niece) and wildflowers. (further consult to wikipedia suggested that a hike is a walk in a natural environment, and a ramble is British for "hike".) My niece spent a good amount of time running on the trail, stopping to look at interesting things. I taught her about marking a trail with stick arrows and piles of stones to remind you where you were going on the way back from your hike/walk/ramble. Of course, from that moment on, she was also busy making rock piles and stick arrows. ....continued on next page →

### MOVE



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### RELAX



*Every now and then go away, even briefly, [and] have a little relaxation, for when you come back to your work your judgement will be surer...*

*-Leonardo da Vinci*

## 5 SENSES, CON'T.

or look out of a nearby open window or door. Once comfortable, move one-by-one through all 5 of your senses: sound, smell, sight, touch, and taste. Take your time with each sense. Gently bring yourself back to focus when you sense yourself drifting into worry or other thoughts.

With your eyes closed, pay attention to the sounds around you. Perhaps it's the sound of tree limbs moving in the breeze, or the birds chirping near a homemade bird feeder. Next, what do you smell? Maybe notice the scent of grass or even the lingering fragrance of the laundry detergent on your clothing. Next, touch what is around you – what does the sensation feel like? Is the texture smooth or rough, and is the temperature cool or warm? Opening your eyes, focusing on something simple like a flower or rock. See if you can simply look without starting to tell a story

inside your head about what you see. If you notice yourself thinking, just re-focus your attention. Lastly, if you have food around, take a bite and notice the taste. Is it sweet, salty, juicy, or textured? You can use the 5 Senses technique to bring your focus back to the present whenever you notice that you are stressed or worrying. Using this technique with your child, who also gets stressed and worried, is a great way to teach them about stress management in a fun, active way. If you are interested in more techniques like this one, please check out [www.parenttrust.org/smartonline!](http://www.parenttrust.org/smartonline!)

**MOVE**

*Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity. ~JFK*

**OUTDOOR PLAY, CON'T.**

The hike was short and Peg shared with me how she admired families who were able to take their children on long hikes when they were very young, and keep them interested and have them actually grow up into hikers who enjoyed walking the trails. We talked about realistic expectations about distance, the importance of planning your hike, keeping the hike interesting to the children, and the parental attitude about the hike. If you are interested in incorporating outdoor time with your children, even a walk through your neighborhood park can be a hike! There are some great tips on the Washington Trails Association website: <http://www.wta.org/kids/children/how-to/tips-for-hiking-with-kids>

YouTube video of Dr. Tandon (of the study) discussing getting outdoor play time for children: [http://youtu.be/q1\\_Me951ZwQ](http://youtu.be/q1_Me951ZwQ)

Press release for article: <http://www.seattlechildrens.org/Press-Releases/2012/Nearly-Half-of-Preschool-Children-Not-Taken-Outside-to-Play-by-Parents-on-a-Daily-Basis--Study/>

**HOMEMADE BIRD FEEDERS**

Flowers are blooming, the sun is shining, and the birds are singing! This is a great time of the year to make homemade bird feeders, a task that is fun for all ages. The National Audubon Society's webpage provides instructions for six different feeders. Supplies and directions can be found at the Audubon website: [http://web4.audubon.org/educate/educators/bird\\_feeders.html](http://web4.audubon.org/educate/educators/bird_feeders.html).

The most basic feeder to construct is a pinecone feeder. For supplies, gather pinecones of any size, peanut butter, suet (or Crisco as a substitute), birdseed, and string, yarn, or other hanging materials. The directions are simple: slather peanut butter and suet onto your pinecones, then roll them in birdseed. Tie the now-coated pinecone with a piece of string, and hang outside. If you are concerned about peanut allergies, use substitutes such as Crisco or Sunbutter. For additional enjoyment, you can rent a bird watching book at the library and start documenting all the flying friends who visit your feeder!

**CREATE**

*Art washes from the soul the dust of every day life.  
~ Pablo Picasso*

**EAT**

*Tell me what you  
eat and I will tell  
you what you are.  
~ Anthelme  
Brillat-Savarin*

**TREE NUTS: HEALTH BENEFITS**

A recent study, published in the journal *Nutrition Research* (March 2012), concludes that there are multiple health benefits for children and adults who consume out-of-hand (OOH) tree nuts on a daily basis. Out-of-hand (OOH) refers to eating the nuts as nuts, and not as ingredients in other products (like bread, cereal, bars, etc.) Tree nuts studied included brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios and walnuts. The study looked at over 24,000 individuals ages 2 years old and older.

The consumption of at least 1/4 ounce of OOH tree nuts per day in all age

groups showed no higher weight or BMI than non-consumers (even though the energy intake was higher in the OOHN consumers). And for adults, there was a 19% decrease in risk of hypertension and a 21% decreased risk of low HDL (the good cholesterol) levels. Both of these risk factors are risk factors for cardiovascular disease, so the reduction in risk levels is significant.

The FDA recommends consumption of 1.5 ounces of nuts per day, and current research shows most people's consumption is much lower than that. A handful of nuts a day, as a snack, added to yogurt, cereal, salad, rice, etc. can help you and your family be healthier.

**PARENT TRUST READS**

Me...Jane  
By Patrick McDonnell  
Caldecott Honor Book  
Ages 2 and up

Patrick McDonnell's non-fiction picture book is a breezy tale of Jane Goodall's childhood love of the outdoors, animals, scientific observation and learning.

McDonnell's simple yet evocative illustrations, paired with a few of Goodall's childhood sketches and notes, are mixed with a couple real photos of Jane with chimps.

The result is a lovely tale of a little girl with a stuffed chimpanzee who dreamt of helping animals, and grew up to see her dreams come true.

For more books recommendations:  
[www.parenttrust.org](http://www.parenttrust.org)

## PRINT FOCUSED READING

A longitudinal study (a study that includes observations over a long period of time) about early literacy was recently published online in the journal *Child Development*.

The study looked at reading skills of preschoolers who were read to in a specific way: by teachers who read while also identifying letters, tracking the shape of letters, and discussing the words formed by the letters.

550 4-year-olds took part in the project. The study lasted 30 weeks and was spread out over 85 low-income preschools. Children's reading levels were assessed at one and two years after the intervention.

Specifically:

1. In some classrooms, teachers read while they: asked whether children knew certain letters, traced the print with their fingers, noted type directionality (like reading English left to right), discussed how words on the page "mapped" to spoken words.
2. In other classrooms, teachers read to the children without drawing attention to the print on the page.

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### LEARN



*Learn from  
yesterday, live for  
today, hope for  
tomorrow.  
~ Albert Einstein*

### CONNECT



*We need 4 hugs a  
day for survival.  
We need 8 hugs a  
day for maint-  
enance. We need  
12 hugs a day for  
growth.  
~ Virginia Satir*

### GOAL TREE

Setting and accomplishing goals are important life skills. However, we all need to practice these skills in order to master them, and this activity is a fun way you can do that with you family.

Materials:

Tape  
Construction Paper  
Markers/Crayons  
Scissors  
(magazines for pictures-optional)

Using the construction paper, draw and cut out a large tree shape. Tape this to a wall or your fridge. The point of this activity is to have your family set realistic goals together at the beginning of the weekend, and then experience a ... *continued on next page →*

**CONNECT**

*We need 4 hugs a day for survival.  
We need 8 hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth.  
~ Virginia Satir*

**GOAL TREE CON'T.**

sense of mastery as each goal is accomplished at the end of the weekend. For preschool age/kindergarten children, have goals be simple, daily goals. For older children you can set goals for the entire weekend. As children enter school age, you can try aiming for weekly goals.

With additional construction paper, cut out leaf shapes. Write down a fun activity or chore that family members want to accomplish. If you want to do some cutting and pasting and get creative, you can find magazine pictures that show the activity and glue it to the paper. This can be very helpful for younger children. You may want to use thicker paper for this--index cards would work well. There should be at least as many fun activities as chores--or more fun! Be realistic, and start small--maybe 2 chores and 2 fun activities. If that is too easy, try more next weekend.

Whenever a chore or activity is accomplished, take the leaf/ index card where it is written, and tape it to the tree. At the end of the weekend you can admire together how much your family accomplished!

If you have older children and want to do a larger project, you can take a branch fallen from a tree and put it in the empty canister. Fill the canister with sand to keep the branch standing up--as if it were a planted tree! Now you can punch holes in the leaf-shaped index cards/construction paper and tie string through them so you can actually "hang" the leaves on the tree as each activity is accomplished.

**PRINT FOCUSED READING, CON'T.**

3. The study also looked at frequency of reading to the children: some children received 4 times a week, some 2 times a week.

The results showed that reading comprehension and spelling developed better in children who were read to 4 times per week, and those who received specifically print-focused reading 4 times a week developed better skills than those read to 2 times a week.

Not only is this method of reading successful for certain outcomes, it's free and parents can do it at home with their children too!

You can find the abstract published online in the April 17th, 2012 journal edition of Child Development.

**LEARN**

*Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.  
~ Albert Einstein*

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Remember to check out our website for additional parenting tips,  
fun activities, book reviews and resources!

[www.parenttrust.org](http://www.parenttrust.org)

You can find previous editions of this newsletter at:

[www.parenttrust.org/child-teen-programs](http://www.parenttrust.org/child-teen-programs)

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