



Time to Register for Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts

If your child will be 3 or 4 next fall, now is the time to think about enrolling your child in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts.

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts provides 11,000 children with quality pre-kindergarten experiences in full-day and half-day classrooms around the state. Classes are offered in public schools, child care, Head Start and nursery schools.

Quality pre-kindergarten prepares children for reading and math, but also for paying attention, following directions and getting along with others. This strong early start in pre-kindergarten means they have a better chance of doing well in school, going on to college or career training, and getting a good job. All of this can start by enrolling your child in a PA Pre-K Counts classroom.

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts offers quality preschool to help your child learn the skills they need to be ready and excited for kindergarten.

- Highly qualified teachers, with experience working with young children.
- Small class sizes so your teachers have lots of time for your child.
- A curriculum and learning activities that help your child thrive.
- Review of your child's development with teachers to help your child reach his promise.



Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is designed for children who are at risk of school failure, either because of income (300% of the federal poverty level, or a family of four earning \$63,600), language (English is not your first language), cultural or special needs issues. If your child falls into one of these categories, you may be eligible to apply.

Programs began accepting enrollments on April 1. As this newsletter goes to press, the budget is pending approval. The Governor's budget proposal by the General Assembly would serve approximately 12,000 children through Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts in 2008-2009.

To find out about PA Pre-K Counts programs near you and to apply:

- Visit www.papromiseforchildren.com; or
- Call 1-877-4-PA-KIDS (1-877-472-5437).

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts is made possible by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

A Message from the Executive Director

As this newsletter goes to print we are all thinking of vacations! With gas prices so high many of us will be staying close to home. This newsletter highlights some of the things your family can do in the Pittsburgh area.

If your child is turning 3 years of age, be sure to read the column on the Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts program. This pre-kindergarten service is an exciting new opportunity for young children to receive services through many settings.

All of us at the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers are wishing you a happy, safe and fun summer. Keep cool and remember to use sun screen on yourselves and your children!

Sincerely,

Michele Myers-Cepicka



Keeping Your Baby Healthy

PROTECT FROM THE SUN

A young child's skin is very sensitive. Be sure to keep your baby out of the direct sunlight when you can. When you are outside, make sure you have used sunscreen on all parts of your child that are not covered by clothing – it will save her from painful sunburn and protect from later development of skin cancers.

PROTECT FROM THE HEAT

All of us need to drink more water when we are in hot temperatures. As we perspire, we need to replace the water we are losing. Toddlers exert a lot of energy every day, hot or cold. In the hot weather, though, we need to be extra careful that they are drinking enough. Interrupt your child's play and have him take a drink of water frequently.

MAKE YOUR BACKYARD A DANGER-FREE ZONE

Summer is a fun time for tots. With the warm weather, you and your toddler will probably be venturing outdoors more often. Your backyard needs to be a safe place for your toddler to explore. Use these tips to help protect your child from backyard hazards.



BBQ AREA

Your toddler should see the grill as a stove. Teach him or her that the BBQ is never a safe object to touch. Even when the grill is cold, ashes can get into your child's eyes if he tips the grill over or pokes a stick in the wrong place. Other items to keep out of reach:

- Lighter fluid
- Charcoal (especially the kind that is doused in flammable fluid)
- Sharp grill utensils and scrub brushes

POWER TOOLS AND LAWN EQUIPMENT

One of the biggest hazards in your yard is a running lawnmower. Generally, you can't hear if a child is running up next to you – or in front of you. What's worse, a child's head and neck are in the direct firing line of objects that can be thrown from the

bottom of the mower (such as sticks, small toys, rocks and other dangerous debris). Keep all small kids indoors when mowing the lawn or using other trimming equipment (like weed-eaters and hedge trimmers).

If you have a shop or garage, you may have other power tools that can be very dangerous to your child. Place these tools on high shelves and always unplug them after use. Keep your shop or garage door locked.

POISONOUS PLANTS AND CHEMICALS

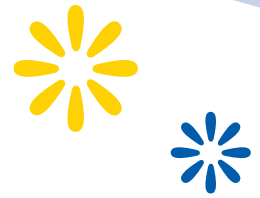
Did you know that many "average" outdoor plants are extremely poisonous? Daffodils and wild mushrooms (which often grow in small patches in backyards), for example, can cause very severe symptoms when eaten. Teach your toddler to never pick berries, leaves or flowers without your permission. While it can be fun to explore the woods looking for edible berries and herbs, wait until your child is older so that he or she doesn't get the wrong idea. Ask your local nursery if the plants you have in your yard are dangerous. If something is deadly, consider replacing it.

All pesticides and other chemicals should not be used near your child. If you must use them, read the warning labels very carefully to find out when your child should enter the area you are treating again. Store all chemicals (including fertilizers, pool chemicals and pet products) in a locked cabinet.

RELAXATION AND PLAY AREAS

If you have a deck or stairway outside, make sure the railings are no more than 4 inches apart. If they are, nail up lattice or netting so that your child won't be tempted to stick his head or other body parts through

and Safe During Summer Months



To view this article, see the *I Parenting Web* site: <http://www.toddlerstoday.com/articles/safe-family/summer-safety-for-toddlers>

and get stuck. Decks and pool sides can become incredibly slippery when wet, so be sure to teach your child not to run in these areas.

Swing sets and other play equipment can rust and deteriorate over the winter months. Be sure to check all bolts, screws and fittings each spring before use. If you plan to buy a swing for a tree or swing set, be sure to buy lightweight plastic ones that won't hurt a child if it strikes him. Rope or tire swings in trees should be able to hold an adult's weight (if more than one child gets on the swing, it could be a problem) and should swing freely in all directions. To ease falls, consider placing 8 to 10 inches of wood chips under and around all play equipment.

POOL SAFETY

Toddlers can drown in just a few inches of water, so always supervise your child when in or around a pool. Even kiddie pools can be dangerous. Empty all pools and large basins (like a large water tub for dogs) when not in use. Larger pools should be fenced and the gates should swing closed by themselves and have locks. Carefully scrutinize all fenced areas to make sure kids can't climb through or over the fence at any point.

Even if your toddler has had swimming lessons, never leave him or her unattended in or around the pool for any length of time. If you have a gathering or party near the pool, do not be responsible for more than two to three children at a time. Get another adult to help you watch the kids.

NEIGHBORHOOD KNOW-HOW

Most toddlers don't realize that they could be in danger in the street or that all they have to do is walk a little ways and they could be lost. As par-

ents, we need to keep them from neighborhood dangers until they can understand. A fenced yard makes it easier to watch the kids. Gates should be latched.

Some neighborhood dogs may be a little rambunctious. If you have trouble getting in and out of your car or yard without being bothered by an either over-friendly dog or a less-friendly animal, try talking with the owner or call animal control if you can't find the owner.

the temperature goes up so do the neighborhood fights. Every day on the local news we listen to stories of children being caught in the cross-fire. It can and does happen in every neighborhood. Unfortunately we have to teach our youngest children what to do when they hear adults or teenagers fighting, what to do if they hear gun fire, and how to play in public parks safely. Infants and toddlers should always be supervised. Teaching your child to drop to the ground if they hear guns being fired



OTHER YARD DANGERS

- Remove all clotheslines and ropes when not in use to prevent strangulation.
- Keep all gardening tools out of reach – some can be sharp.
- Make a safe place to climb in the trees or cut down low branches to discourage it.
- Check for bees' nests and ant hills periodically.
- If you live in an older home, check for lead paint chips.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Any policeman can tell you that as

is important. But it is also important not to terrify the child so they are so fearful they can't enjoy their play. Parents need to teach this skill along with not going with a stranger, not allowing anyone to touch their bodies, etc.

Summer is such a fun time for toddlers! Let your little one explore your backyard safely by taking a few simple precautions. After all, summer is all about bugs and water fights – not about accidents. So slather on the sunscreen and enjoy!

JUST A THOUGHT

“Every baby born into the world
is a finer one than the last.”



Charles Dickens

New Web Community Brings Together Parents of Visually Impaired Children

When parents learn their child has a visual impairment, it can be overwhelming. Parents wonder, “Will my child fall behind at school?” or “Will my child make friends?” or “Will my child have a successful career?” With only 93,600 visually impaired school-aged children in the U.S., over half of whom have additional disabilities, it’s easy for families facing vision loss to feel alone.

To help these families connect with each other and give busy parents, grandparents and other caretakers a place to find comprehensive resources and support 24 hours a day, the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) and the National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI) launched FamilyConnect, an online, multimedia community for parents and guardians of children with visual impairments.

Located at www.familyconnect.org, FamilyConnect gives parents access to message boards where they can talk to other parents, compelling videos featuring real-life families, parenting articles, a mom-authored blog, a glossary of more than 30 eye conditions, and links to local resources. The site also features sections dedicated to multiple disabilities, technology, education, and every age group from infants to teens.

“We created FamilyConnect to give parents the support and information they need to ensure their children can achieve their dreams – whether that is playing sports or music, learning to read braille, getting a first job, surfing the web, making the cheerleading squad, traveling the world or going to graduate school,” said Carl R. Augusto, President & CEO of AFB.

A recent NAPVI/AFB survey of parents of children with visual impairments showed that parents/guardians turn most commonly to physicians (82%), educators (76%), and web sites (65%) for information and support regarding their children's vision problems. This is consistent with national statistics from the 2006 Pew Internet & American Life Project that show 80 percent of American adult Internet users have searched for health information online. For parents living in rural areas with fewer resources, the web is particularly important to finding relevant, trustworthy information and the right services.

“When I talk to parents of visually impaired children they almost always ask about three things: they want to talk to other parents who have children with the same eye condition as their child, they want access to the latest health and education information, and they want to know what the future holds,” said Susan LaVenture, Executive Director of NAPVI. “FamilyConnect offers parents all these things – and more – in one place.”

In addition to joining a community of parents, visitors to www.familyconnect.org can create a personal profile and receive information on news and events based on their child's age, eye condition and location. Families can also find articles written by parents and professionals on topics such as:

Finding the Right Eye Care Professionals for Your Child

- Developmental Milestones: What Do They Mean?
- Your Child's Individualized Educational Program
- Friendship in the Teen Years
- College Life Begins

In designing this website, AFB and NAPVI partnered with leading national organizations and hundreds of local agencies that serve children who are visually impaired to keep FamilyConnect content complete and up to date. AFB and NAPVI also solicited input from families across the country.

Date Saver

Some of the Invited Speakers

- Duane Alexander
- Margaret Bauman
- Teresa Bolick
- Jane Case Smith
- David Celiberti
- Peter Gerhardt
- Brian Iwata
- Roseann Schaaf
- Brenda Smith Myles
- Mark Sundberg
- Vicci Tucci

NEW for 2008 Content Tracks

- Autism 101
- Leadership and Training
- Diagnosis and Early Intervention
- Asperger's Syndrome
- Behavior
- Medical
- Family
- Functional and Sensory
- Communication and Social
- Instruction and Inclusion
- Secondary Issues

See website for PSU graduate
credit opportunities

SUPPORT LINE FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

Allegheny Family Network (AFN) has established a new support line for parents of children with emotional and mental health needs. The phones are staffed by parents. If you would like to talk to another parent, call 1-888-273-2361.

2008 NATIONAL AUTISM CONFERENCE TWELFTH ANNUAL PROGRESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

AUGUST 4 - 8, 2008

THE PENN STATER CONFERENCE CENTER HOTEL
STATE COLLEGE, PENNSYLVANIA

Conference Mission

This conference provides comprehensive, evidence-based information to assist educators, other professionals and families in developing effective educational programming for all students with autism spectrum disorders.

Who Should Attend

Family members, physicians, speech-language pathologists, administrators, higher-education faculty, general and special education professionals, early-intervention staff, related service personnel, behavioral health professionals, and anyone interested in autism spectrum disorders.

Registration

Registrations for the 2008 National Autism Conference will be accepted April 30th through July 18th, 2008. You may register online at www.outreach.psu.edu/conference/autism or download a complete conference program and fill out the registration and mail or fax it in. The conference website will be live on April 30, 2008.

Registration Fees

PA Education professionals: \$125.00 flat fee for entire conference

Other PA professionals: \$175.00 flat fee for entire conference

Out of state professionals: \$200.00 flat fee for entire conference

Family members or adults living with ASD: \$25.00

Continuing Education Credits offered: Act 48, ASHA, Psych., BACB, AMA, Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapist and Professional Counselors

For a complete conference agenda visit
www.outreach.psu.edu/conference/autism

Welcome to Pittsburgh Mom

There's a great new website for parents of young children. Started by Dr. Heather Starr Fiedler, a local mother who wanted to have one place to find information rather than searching lots of places, Pittsburgh Mom.com keeps the promise of offering information on many topics. The site's goal is to help parents raising young children in Pittsburgh quickly find local resources and information they need in their daily lives.

Pittsburgh Mom is updated constantly. Parents submit information about things they have found fun to do, while some parents have given tips that they have found helpful. It includes information on many topics, such as hair cuts, play groups, swimming lessons and child-friendly restaurants, etc.

The goal of this website is to make the lives of parents easier by:

- Providing them with centralized information about things of interest to parents.
- Taking the guesswork out of where to go, what to do and how to do it.
- Creating a networking community to share ideas with other parents.
- Sharing some of our personal parenting experiences with you to give you a new perspective, a piece of information, or just a good laugh.

To visit this new website, go to www.pittsburghmom.com.



SAVE THE DATE! with the Down Syndrome Association of Pittsburgh **Buddy Walk 2008**

Join the Down Syndrome Association of Pittsburgh in our 14th Annual Buddy Walk to raise funds and awareness for Down Syndrome.

Saturday, October 18, 2008 at Hartwood Acres

Down Syndrome Association of Pittsburgh

For more information, visit us at: www.dsappgh.org or contact Virginia Marton: vmarton@dsappgh.org or Meredith Ford: mcford@dsappgh.org

Hope to see you October 18 at Hartwood Acres!



FRIDAYS!
Kids Play Market Square

ANNOUNCING
FUN PLAYTIMES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN ALL-SUMMER LONG!

Join in the good times that will be happening in Market Square every Friday: **May 23 – August 1 – 10:30 – 11:30 am.** (except July 4)

• STORYTIMES	• ART PROJECTS
• GUEST READERS	• SPECIAL ACTIVITIES
• SURPRISE VISITORS	• SONG, DANCE, AND MAGIC!

Plethora of special activities and summertime fun in the heart of downtown Pittsburgh!

For more information, contact the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership at **412-566-4190**, or visit www.downtownpittsburgh.com.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
The stories that teach our lives

KIDSA 02
Your Future.

Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children

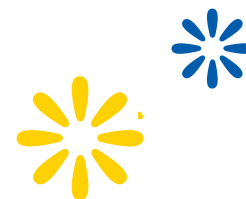
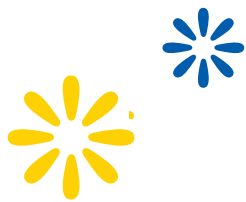
READ!
READ! With a language of beginning with books.

children's museum
PITTSBURGH

PITTSBURGH DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

P
KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

Study Lane



FUN THINGS TO DO THIS SUMMER

KIDSPLAY MARKET SQUARE

If you are going to be downtown Pittsburgh on a Friday in the month of July, take your child to hear stories in Market Square. There'll be arts and crafts, songs, special guests and the best readers of all - KDKA celebrities. Presented by READ! 365, Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership, Point Park Children's School Shady Lane and Children's Museum – Pittsburgh, these events are open to the community and local childcare centers. For more information please call 412-361-8560.

THE BEST SPOTS FOR TODDLERS IN PITTSBURGH

The Children's Museum

10 Childrens Way, Pittsburgh, PA 15212
Phone: 412.322.5058

Lots of areas to explore for children of all ages, but be sure to check out the second floor with activities geared more to the pre-K set.

Carnegie Science Center

1 Allegheny Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15212
Phone: 412.237.3418

Experience an "earthquake", see the world through the eyes of a fish or just have fun at the water play table in Exploration Station.

Carnegie Museum of Natural History

4400 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Phone: 412.622.3131

Dinosaurs are a preschooler favorite and Carnegie's exhibit is second to none.

Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium

7326 Butler St., Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: (412) 665-3640

Head straight for Kids' Kingdom - one of the top three children's zoos in the country.

SouthSide Works Town Square

415 South 27th St., Pittsburgh, PA 15203

The fountain is a fun free way to entertain your toddler on a warm summer afternoon - be sure to bring their swimsuit!

National Aviary

700 Arch St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212. (412) 323-7235

Make sure to stop at the Lories & Friends exhibit at feeding time for a friendly encounter with a rainbow lorikeet.

Listen to Music: Babies love to move with the music. Even very young babies will move their arms and legs. Toddlers begin to dance to the music. The immediate joy of dancing is so much fun for babies. Encourage them. Dance with them!

Running Outside: As the weather gets nicer, we all spend more time outdoors. Going to the park, playing on the slide, riding a swing, can all be great fun. Also, encourage your child to explore while you are walking. Remember to use sun screen on your baby when you are outdoors.

Exploring and Learning: Allow him/her to pick up and examine blades of grass, leaves, flowers, etc. Movement can include using small muscles, too!

Playing in Water: Always supervise your child when they are in or near any water. But moving in water is great exercise and children love it. If you use a plastic swimming pool for your baby, put a few floating toys in and watch your baby splash and giggle!

The Best Spots for Toddlers Column
<http://www.listerlist.com/tabid/57/listid/9311/Local/The+Best+Spots+for+Toddlers+in+Pittsburgh.aspx>



2801 Custer Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15227
Phone: 412.885.6000
Fax: 412.885.1688
www.afit.org



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