

Family Matters

Strengthening families...
...Building Community

A newsletter from The Family Center ... A Partner at The River Center: community resources and connections



WINTER 2009 PROGRAMS

— Call 924-6306 to register —

Home Visiting Program Early Home Support and Community Connections

This is a home visiting program for pregnant and parenting young women and their families. It provides someone to talk to during pregnancy, help to prepare for baby's arrival, information about caring for new babies, development, and connections to other community services and resources. Young women will have access to a dedicated home visitor, a nurse, and a social worker for information and support until the baby's first birthday.

Parenting Programs/Workshops Why Punishment Doesn't Work and What to Do Instead

With Bonnie Harris
Thursdays, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
4 weeks, Jan. 22, 29, Feb. 12 and 19

When children misbehave, they are *having* a problem, not *being* one, and blaming or punishing their behavior doesn't help. Parent educator, author, and child-behavior specialist Bonnie Harris shows how to connect with the roots of challenging behavior using principles from her new book, *Confident Parents, Remarkable Kids*.

Adolescents: Reasoning versus reacting and the teen brain

With Mary Seebart of Monadnock Family Services and Liz Broderick
Wednesdays, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
3 weeks, Feb. 4, 11, and 18

Parents will gain an overview of adolescent brain development, teen thought processes, and decision making. Sometimes beyond parental influence, teen brain activity directly impacts perceptions, reasoning, and emotional and behavioral responses. Parents will gain insights to guide them through these exciting years. If participants are interested, the group may continue meeting on dates and times convenient to the participants.

He Hit Me First!

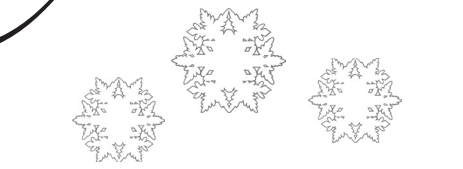
With Wendy Hill
Thursdays, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
5 weeks, starting March 5

All children have their conflicts. What happens with those conflicts and how children resolve them can vary depending on the parent's response and stress level. In this program, parents will explore ways to reduce stress, increase their skills in problem solving, and identify their own child's temperament to shift expectations. Parents will learn how and when to intervene effectively in children's conflicts and teach them to be their own best problem solvers.

First Friday Playgroup – With Kelli Tourgee
The first Friday of each month, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Families come with their children to play in Callie's Room. Activities will be guided by the interests and needs of the attendees. Kelli will be on hand to facilitate these interests, play with families, and answer questions. Cost: \$2/person; \$6 family maximum.

Call The Family Center at 924-6306 to register for any of our programs

- UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED...
- All programs are free or offered on a sliding-fee scale, ranging from \$1 to \$20 per week.
 - Children's program available for weekly morning programs.
 - All programs are held at The Family Center.



From the Director Winter greetings!

The Family Center is pleased to introduce our new program brochure in partnership with the Monadnock-Ledger Transcript. Program information will appear quarterly with various articles as well. You may also download this program brochure from our website: www.thefamilycenter.us or you can send us an email at info@thefamilycenter.us and ask to have a copy automatically emailed to you. Our website offers past newsletters, parenting articles and information, and more. If you prefer U.S. mail, please call us at 603-924-6306 and we will be happy to mail you a program brochure.

Mark your calendars for Sunday, March 29, 2009 for our 4th annual Community Spelling Bee! The event hosts 26 spelling teams of three people each and begins at 2:00 p.m. at The Peterborough Town House. We are currently soliciting teams, sponsors, and advertisers for the Bee program. This is The Family Center's gala fundraising event and great fun. Please join us!

With all good wishes for you and your families,
Liz Broderick, Executive Director

With thanks to our
Family Center funders...
making it possible to serve 500 families per year!

- A. Erland and Hazel N. Goyette Memorial Fund; James & Ruth Ewing Fund & MCF Community Fund of the NH Charitable Foundation-Monadnock region
- Fairpoint Communications
- Individuals and Corporations
- Medicaid Reimbursement-Home Visiting
- Monadnock United Way
- NH Children's Trust Fund
- NH Department of Health and Human Services: Bureau of Maternal and Child Health
- NH Department of Health and Human Services: Division of Children, Youth and Families; Cheshire County Incentive Funds; Hillsborough County Incentive Funds
- Women's Fund of NH



Are you falling into the Happiness Trap?

By BONNIE HARRIS

Have you noticed that a lot of children seem to think the world revolves around them? Children and young adults who behave as if rules don't apply to them are giving progressive parenting a bad name. Many traditional parents are skeptical of new ideas for fear of letting children "get away with murder." It is not progressive, but reactive, parenting—specifically, the desire to make sure children are happy—that caused this epidemic of entitled children.

Many parents are reacting to their own parents' autocratic ways. Raised without a voice to defend their own opinions, they often lack the confidence and authority to deal with strong-willed children. Too many submit to their children's demands instead of balancing them with their own opinions and values. Intimidated by their children's anger over not getting what they want, they give in.

We want our children to be happy and have high self-esteem, but as a culture, we aren't sure how to do that. We praise and reward children for every page they read and each time they stand in line without fidgeting. We have forgotten the character-building aspects of delayed gratification and disappointment, that self-esteem comes from hard work and accomplishment, something children can only experience through trial and error. Praise is an empty reward that smart children see through quickly and learn to distrust, just like the dangled car-

rots—stickers, trophies, money, and special privileges for normal behavior—that actually undermine accomplishment.

What some call the helicopter parent, but what I think of as the hovercraft parent, is so focused on her child's happiness that she can't distinguish between the child's needs and wants. Hovercraft parents sacrifice their own needs—if they even know what they are—for their child's wants. The children come to think their needs are more important than those of others.

Once I was in a long line for airport security when two well-dressed, thirty-something men with briefcases slipped in ahead of me. I said, "The line ends back there." One of them replied, "Not anymore. So call the police." I made a few choice comments, hoping to appeal to conscience and prompt an apology. These men, along with so many who push their way through life with little regard for others, sneak in without paying, and refuse to pay speeding tickets, ignore the rules believing they are above them.

Modeling goes a long way. If you want your children to honor the end of the line and respect the rights of others, watch what you teach them with your own sense of self-worth and responsibility. Strong boundaries tell us what we are really responsible for—everything we say and do—and what we're not responsible for: our children's feelings, thoughts, and behavior; and especially, their happiness. Most parents think they are responsible for all of it, so they either control their children or try to fix all their



Children's Teacher, Nisa Simila, having fun with the kids.

problems. Either way, children learn that they don't have to take responsibility—their parents will take it for them.

The happiness trap sucks in too many of us. When the result is disrespect, lack of appreciation, and refusal to help, we blame children for doing exactly what we have taught them. We raise children who never learn the values of gratitude, cooperation, and accomplishment—the benchmarks of happiness and self-esteem.

Mark Your Calendar for a Special Workshop!
Over-Parenting: Falling Into the Happiness Trap
with Bonnie Harris
Saturday, April 18, 9 a.m. - 12 noon

Family Support Programs

On-going weekly parent and family support programs, starting the week of January 12. Participants may join at any time, provided there is space.

Parent-Child Connections Programs

Parent Group: Discussion topics, largely dictated by group interests, focus on appreciating children for who they are, setting limits, communication, and ways to discipline positively while still having fun parenting. "The Parent-Child Connections Program has helped me to make a connection with my children, to put the process of parenting into perspective, and to choose new ways to help my children learn and grow. Having a place to come for support, guidance and communication with other parents in similar situations makes being a parent much easier," said one PCC parent. Program is available for parents of 1 to 5 year olds and 6 to 12 year olds.

Children's Enrichment Program: Early childhood educators and trained volunteers provide guidance and support with consideration for each child's unique temperament. Children enjoy imaginative free play, circle time with songs and finger plays, a planned activity, snack, story and outdoor playtime.

Children's Staff: Kim Robbins, Kelli Tourgee, Nisa Simila and Wendy Hill

Volunteers: Abby Meyer and Jeannette Perron
9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Mondays – Carol Lunan
Tuesdays – Bonnie Harris for parents of 6 to 12 year olds (No children's program available.)
Wednesdays – Wendy Hill

Off-Site Programs

With Kelli Tourgee and Erika Alusic-Bingham In partnership with Southern New Hampshire Services.
Tuesdays – Prescott Hill Apts.
Thursdays – Riverview Apts.

Attention Deficit Disorder Support Group

With Kelli Tourgee
Mondays, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Join other parents for discussion and support for those with a child diagnosed or potentially diagnosed with ADD or ADHD. Parents can share their stories of the challenges, frustrations, joys and passion for their child, figure out ways to help them succeed, and take advantage of their gifts. Call 924.6306 if child care is needed.

For Single Parents

With Carol Lunan
Thursdays, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Single parenting is stressful and adds many challenges to parenting. Being "it" 24 hours a day can be overwhelming. Join other parents in this free program and be supported, share parenting information, and talk to other adults who are having similar experiences. Speakers may be invited to talk about areas of group interest. The program includes a children's program and \$1 per person donation for pizza supper.

Would you like to receive this newsletter via email?

Send us an email: info@thefamilycenter.us and we'll add you to the list.

For Parents and Their Little Ones (or those expecting babies!)

For Parents Age 25 and Under
With Kelli Tourgee
Tuesdays, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

For Parents Age 26 and Over
With Wendy Hill
Wednesdays, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Gather together to talk while playing with and observing your growing baby. Topics of conversation vary according to the interests and needs of group members. Potential topics: milestones of infant development, parenting tips, resources, breast/bottle feeding, child support, job applications, etc. Guest speakers may be invited to come to address different topics if the group chooses. Program is free; donations appreciated.

Parent-Child Playtime

With Family Center Staff
At Peterborough Unitarian Universalist Church
Wednesdays, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. after the Community Supper
An expense-free evening out for families. Free supper followed by playtime with parents and children, with experienced Family Center staff available to answer questions.

Stepfamily Support Group

With Maureen O'Brien
1st Thursday of the month 7-8:30 p.m.
Join other stepfamily parents for support and discussion about a variety of topics: roles within the family, nurturing relationships with partners, parenting stepchildren, and other ideas the group brings forward.

Thanks to Maureen O'Brien MSSA, of Peterborough Clinical Associates, for volunteering her time with this support group.

- 46 Concord Street
- Peterborough, NH 03458
- 603.924.6306
- www.thefamilycenter.us

To request a topic
If you have a group interested in a one-night parenting lecture or series, call us to request a topic and we'll provide a facilitator.

