



Connecting the Dots

WV Birth to Three RAU-1 Newsletter - Winter 2017 Edition

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We want to hear and share YOUR story!

We love to read and share your stories! If you are interested in sharing your family's story with us for use in our future editions and marketing materials, please contact me!

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Did You Know?

We have created a Facebook page for our friends and families! Like **Catholic Charities West Virginia Birth to Three RAU-1** on Facebook for important updates, events in your community and information on how BTT is supporting our families.



<https://www.facebook.com/Catholic-Charities-West-Virginia-Birth-to-Three-Rau-1>

Four Tips to Building Self Esteem in Children

Parents want their child to have good self-esteem. However, self-esteem doesn't come naturally to children. It is something that must be fostered, developed, nurtured, and grown. Following these four tips can help.

1. Show them you value them.

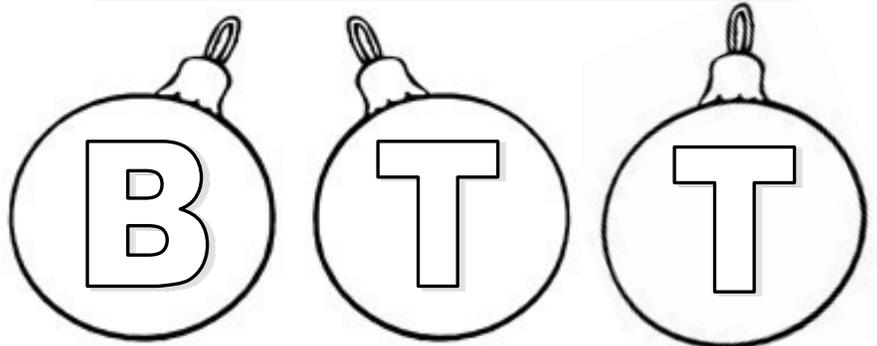
Let your children know you love them. This is done through praise and through direct expressions of love, hugs, and kisses. Children need to be told directly by their parents or caregiver that they are loved. Children need to be held, cuddled, and played with. Quality and quantity of time demonstrate value. Few things speak more to being valued, than just being there.

2. Teach them and let them learn.

Competency is the next ingredient to healthy self-esteem. As the child grows and begins exploring the house (often the kitchen cupboards), the child gains the opportunity to increase competency with access and control of larger objects over greater spaces. Again the response of the parent is crucial. Some parents structure the child's environment for maximum exploration while other parents localize their child's area of living. Either way, making way for the child to play and explore safely, whatever the limits, is often referred to as "baby proofing". The greater the control and mastery of skills a child develops the greater the sense of competency.

3. Participate in doing good deeds.

The third thing parents can do to facilitate healthy self-esteem in their children is to direct and participate with their children in the doing of good deeds. Doing good deeds teaches children to be aware of the life of others beyond themselves. This enables the development of empathy and altruistic behavior. What's important is that children are encouraged or even positioned to be helpful to the extent of their ability. A toddler may carry a plastic cup to the table, an older child a plate and a spoon, while the oldest child can clear the table. Special little projects can be undertaken, visits can be made, and pennies can be put in the charity coin boxes at the check-out counter. *Continued on page two.*



Four Tips to Building Self Esteem in Children

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4. Make the rules of life clear

The last thing parents can provide to facilitate self-esteem in their children is structure. Structure is a word that actually implies two separate concepts: routines and limits. Routines provide structure over time and limits provide structure over behavior.

Another way to think of structure is like the rules of a game. How well could you play Monopoly, Hop Scotch, Tag, or Hide and Go Seek, if there weren't rules? Rules include who goes next, under which circumstances, and when. The rules also include what happens when someone goes outside the normal bounds of play--miss a turn, pay a fine, etc.

Knowing the rules of the game of life is sometimes referred to as internalizing structure. This too is also a form of competency-- when the child knows the how's, what's, when's, and where's of life.

Unfortunately this information doesn't come automatically. Children may pick some of the rules up incidentally as they go along, but this leaves much to chance. Parents can help their children internalize structure by commenting on daily routines, specifying appropriate behavior, providing feedback, and by providing consequences for undesirable behavior.

These four ingredients--value, competency, good deeds, and structure --form the basic building blocks for the development of self-esteem. And why develop self-esteem in children? Children with healthy self-esteem feel good about themselves, relate well to others, behave more appropriately, and are more aware of the world around them.

Direnfeld, G (Spring 2009) *WV Early Childhood Provider Quarterly*
http://www.wvearlychildhood.org/resources/WVECCQ_Spring_2009.pdf.

Experiencing Birth to Three From Both Sides

Jamie Owens, Interim Service Coordinator



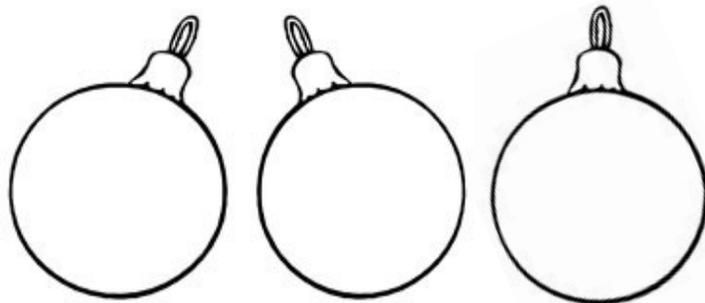
My journey with Birth to Three began in 2016 when I became a Developmental Specialist. In 2017, I changed roles and became an Interim Service Coordinator for RAU-1. My daughter Zylana—Zyla for short—was born on January 6, 2016. As Zyla grew, I began to notice that some milestones were not quite right. At her 15 month well child check, I discussed my concerns with our pediatrician and we agreed to refer her to the Birth to Three program. In the blink of an eye, I went from Birth to Three employee to parent of a child receiving services.

Zyla began walking near her first birthday and had the cute little baby stumble and giggles. As Zyla became more confident in her ability to walk, we noticed that her gait seemed off. We she walked, she would drag her left leg and trip frequently, which made it difficult for her to play outside. Zyla's physical therapist was amazing—instead of screaming to be carried, now she wants to go, go, go!

Raising a child is a mix of rewarding and challenging moments, but raising a child with no words can bring nightmare moments. Any parent with a child who has or had a speech delay can relate to our daily nightmare, the infamous game of "let's guess what Zyla wants now." Zyla would attempt to communicate her wants and needs by pointing and grunting. Each wrong guess would bring more tears, and inevitably ended with Zyla screaming on the floor and a dumbfounded parent who had emptied everything from the kitchen cabinet. Going out to eat or to the grocery store? It was always a game of rock, paper, scissors as to who would stay in the car or run into the store so we could avoid the stares and glares of other shoppers when Zyla became upset because we couldn't figure out what she wanted.

Zyla is now a 22 month old happy little girl. Zyla can run and play with the other children at daycare, thanks her to physical therapist. Zyla still receives speech therapy through Birth to Three. Since beginning our journey with the program, Zyla has made tremendous strides in her communication skills. We enjoy shopping trips, going out to eat, and no more "lets guess what Zyla wants now." Zyla is now using simple signs and verbally requesting her wants and needs with no tears.

As an employee of Birth to Three, I knew that our program was absolutely amazing but seeing and experiencing this program as a parent has given me a different perspective and love for this program. As an Interim Service Coordinator, I strive to give families the same experience that I have received.





Mitten Match Up

This homemade matching game for toddlers and preschools is the perfect activity for a snowy day! Kids will pair up colored or patterned paper mittens and pin them together with clothespins. It's a great activity to help young kids develop their matching skills, identify colors and patterns, and strengthen their fine motor skills.



To make the mitten matching game, you'll need:

1. Colored and/or patterned paper.
2. Small clothespins.
3. Scissors (only adults should handle scissors!)
4. A mitten template, like this one—<https://happyhooligans.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Free-Mitten-Template-.pdf>

Using fun and eye-catching colored or patterned paper, cut out several pairs of mittens. Place your mittens and a basket of clothespins on a table, and watch the fun begin!

- <https://happyhooligans.ca>

The Brainy Benefits of Bedtime Stories

Bedtime stories have long been known to foster parent-child bonds and prepare children for sleep. But lately researchers have attached other powers to this nighttime routine. They say that while you and your little one are sailing with Max to the land of the Wild Things or sampling green eggs with Sam, you're actually boosting your child's brain development.

"Neural research shows that when parents and caregivers interact verbally with children—which includes reading to them—kids learn a great deal more than we ever thought possible," says G. Reid Lyon, Ph.D., chief of the child development and behavior branch of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in Bethesda, MD. These gains range from improved logic skills to lower stress levels. But perhaps the most profound benefit discovered in recent years is the way bedtime stories can rewire children's brains to quicken their mastery of language.

Here's how the rewiring works: When you read Margaret Wise Brown's classic bedtime story *Goodnight Moon* to your baby, exaggerating the *oo* sound in *moon* and drawing out the word *hush*, you're stimulating connections in the part of her brain that handles language sounds (the auditory cortex). In English, there are 44 of these sounds, called phonemes, ranging from *ee* to *ss*. The more frequently a baby hears these sounds, the faster she becomes at processing them. Then, when she's a toddler trying to learn language, she'll more easily be able to hear the difference between, say, the words *tall* and *doll*. As a grade-schooler learning to read, she'll be more adept at sounding out unfamiliar words on the page.

"To break down unknown words into pieces, you have to first know the pieces," Dr. Lyon explains. "When kids hear the word *cat*, for example, they usually hear it folded up as one sound (*cat*) instead of three (*c-a-t*)," he says. "But when asked to say *cat* without the *c*, thus deleting the *cuh* sound to make *at*, they'll more easily understand that words are made up of individual sounds." Reading rhyming books to kids is one way to help them practice this skill.

To enhance a child's language skills even more, parents can use storytime as a stepping stone for conversation, says Lise Eliot, Ph.D., assistant professor of neuroscience at Chicago Medical School and author of *What's Going On in There? How the Brain and Mind Develop in the First Five Years of Life*. For instance, if a mother points to Curious George's baseball cap and asks her child, "Do you have a hat like that?" she's offering him practice in using language correctly.

However, Dr. Eliot cautions parents not to continually correct their child's speech errors. "My own toddler is always saying *him's*, as in "That's *him's* hat," she says. "But I don't say, 'No, you should say *his* hat,' because I don't want to discourage him. Instead I just model the proper speech by repeating his sentence correctly: 'Yes! It is his hat!'"

In time, reading with a child will expand her vocabulary even more than just talking with her will. That's because books can introduce kids to ideas and objects—such as porridge or kangaroos—that are out of their direct environment and therefore not a part of their daily conversation. Look for stories that contain particularly rich or colorful language, like the works of Caldecott-winner William Steig, who often drops four-star words such as *discombobulated* and *sinuous* into his books.

—<http://www.parents.com/fun/entertainment/books/the-brainy-benefits-of-bedtime-stories/>

West Virginia Birth to Three Region 1 RAU

Is your child moving, hearing, seeing, learning and talking like other children their age?
If you have any questions, please give us a call!

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West Virginia Birth to Three Region 1 RAU is a program of Catholic Charities WV. West Virginia Birth to Three services and supports are provided under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It is administered through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health.

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