



# BTT Bits

Spring/ Summer Issue

2015

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## Did You Know That Hugs Can Help Your Child’s Brain Development?

<http://news.discovery.com/human/hugs-help-kids-brains-120201.htm>

All those hugs you give your toddler when she skins her knee or gets tucked into bed may be even more beneficial than you thought. A new study shows that the brains of early-nurtured kids have a larger hippocampus. This means it may make it easier for them to learn, improve their memory, and even respond to stress.

Child psychiatrists and neuroscientists at Washington University conducted brain scans on children who had participated in an earlier study as preschoolers. The kids with the most nurturing parents ended up with a hippocampus 10 percent larger than the other children.

Researchers took brain scans of 92 kids ages 7 to 10 who had been part of an earlier study of preschool depression. In the first study, observers rated parents on how they were able to nurture their toddler as he or she waited to open a present. The imaging revealed that mentally healthy children who had been well-nurtured had a hippocampus almost 10 percent larger than children whose mothers were rated as not as nurturing.

*WV Birth to Three*  
 RAU 2  
 912 Market St.  
 Parkersburg, WV 26101  
 Phone: 304-485-2000  
 Toll Free:  
 866-401-8919  
 Fax: 304-865-2072  
 Email:  
 birthto3@thearcmov.org

If you have any questions about your child’s development, contact WV Birth To Three Region 2 at 304-485-2000 or 1-866-401-8919



## Fun Ideas

### [Check Out Our Facebook Page!](#)

WV Birth to Three has created a Facebook page for friends and families. This Facebook page keeps you informed on events going on, pictures, and other important information to your child's development. If you have a Facebook account, you can look up WV Birth to Three, Region 2 or <https://www.facebook.com/WVBirthToThreeRegion2>

#### Peanut Butter Play Dough

2 cups peanut butter

1 cup powdered sugar

1 cup flour

Mix sugar and flour. Add peanut butter and mix well.

Can be played with then eaten!

***\*Note that some children may have a severe allergic reaction to peanuts, and peanut products so use caution.***

#### Homemade Finger Paint

Materials: 1/4 cup cornstarch, 1/4 tsp salt, 1 1/2 tbsp sugar, 1 cup cold water, saucepan, containers (like baby food jars), food coloring

**Directions:** Measure cornstarch, salt, sugar, and water into the saucepan. Cook over low heat for about 10 minutes, stirring constantly. The mixture will begin thin, but will thicken. When it thickens, remove the pan from the heat, and cool. Divide into small containers and stir in a few drops of food coloring. Use white butcher wrap, shiny side done, for finger paint paper.



**PROTECT YOUR BABY'S EYES.**

One in 10 American children has an undiagnosed vision problem.

Schedule a no-cost eye assessment with an optometrist in your area at [www.infantsee.org](http://www.infantsee.org).



#### Follow That Bubble

**Skills developed:** cause and effect, gross motor control, fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination

**Directions:** Blow the bubbles and show your child how to chase them down and pop them. Send them off slowly if your child is still a little tentative on his feet (blow gently to create big, drifting bubbles) or more quickly if your toddler loves to run (blow hard to send out a spray of faster-moving, smaller bubbles).

**A secret trick:** Wet your hand to get a bubble to rest on your fingers.

#### Tear-Free Bubbles

1/4 cup tear-free baby shampoo

3/4 cup water

3 Tablespoons light corn syrup



**How to make bubbles:** Mix all ingredients, then wait for the bubbles to settle before using.

### Thank You Families, For Your Assistance

As children transition from WV Birth to Three when they reach their third birthday, the state WV Birth to Three office, sends a survey for families to complete. It is important the survey be completed and returned. Your feedback is very important to us. Each survey is carefully reviewed in order to ensure the best quality services are provided for children and their families. Thank you in advance for your time and assistance.

## Sippy Cup Tips



To reduce the risk of cavities, please read the following:

- The sippy cup is designed to be a training tool to help children transition from a bottle to a cup. The sippy cup is not a bottle or a pacifier.
- Unless being used at mealtime, the sippy cup should be filled ONLY with WATER.
- Sippy cups should not be used at naptime or bedtime unless they have only water in them and use caution with a sippy cup when your child is in bed.
- Remember to clean your child's teeth before placing him or her in bed.
- Schedule regular visits with your pediatric dentist to help keep your child cavity-free.

### Did you know?

- Children and adolescents with Medicaid dental coverage were more likely to experience tooth decay than those with CHIP or private insurance (2012-2013)
  - 56% of 3rd graders experienced tooth decay (2013-2014)
  - 21% of 3rd graders had untreated cavities (2013-2014)
- 19% of children and adolescents had dental sealants on their permanent molar teeth (2013-2014),  
1 and 2 WV Children have dental cavities before they enter school

## Early Smiles provided by The Mid Ohio Valley Health Department

Have you every heard that baby teeth do not matter because they will be replaced by permanent teeth? Baby teeth are important for speaking, chewing, holding space for permanent teeth, looks, and overall health. The healthier the baby teeth, the better chance of having healthy adult teeth.

How do I keep my child's teeth healthy? One suggestion is to try this program offered by The Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department called Early Smiles. Early Smiles first dental visit is for any child between the ages of 1 and 5 years who have never been to the dentist. A friendly hygienist will make sure that each child will have a great first dental experience. The hygienist will check the teeth, clean and apply fluoride to prevent cavities. WV Medicaid and WV Chip pays 100 % for all dental treatment for kids. If your child does not have dental insurance, the following fees apply: Dental Screening (Free), Prophylaxis (Cleaning \$40), and the Fluoride Varnish (\$25). You may also qualify to pay on a sliding fee scale with proof of income.

Other suggestions to keep your child's teeth healthy:

- \* Do not put your child to sleep with a bottle or sippy cup
- \* Give your child healthy foods ( you may qualify for your local WIC program)
  - \* Brush the front and back of your child's teeth at least twice a day
    - \* Check the teeth for early signs of decay
    - \* Be a role model
    - \* Visit the dentist by age 1.

Please call the Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department for more information at (304) 485-7374 ext. 106.

## Why is Active Play Important?

<http://www.kidspot.com.au/Toddler-Development-The-importance-of-active-play-for-toddlers+6069+26+article.htm>

It's during the toddler years that good exercise and behavior patterns can be established, and through active play toddlers can become healthy adults.

Physical activity in babies and toddlers has many benefits such as increased muscle strength, coordination and bone density. These activities can boost physical wellbeing later in life by reducing the risk of injury and diseases like osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease. Active play also teaches confidence and encourages the little ones to challenge themselves such as going from little slides to bigger slides.

Guidelines from the National Association for Sport and Activity suggest toddlers engage in two hours of physical activity and active play every day, and that no child should be inactive for more than one hour at a time (unless, of course, they are sleeping). Encouraging movement is the most successful approach for toddlers when it comes to active play. Some suggestions in encouraging toddlers to move: have enticing objects for them to reach out to or walk towards, play games and sing rhymes that encourage your child to move their arms and legs, and plan to have enough time to let your child walk, rather than be carried.



## Sun Safety for Infants, Babies, and Toddlers

<http://www.skincancer.org/prevention/sun-protection/children/sun-safety-tips-for-infants-babies-and-toddlers>

### **Sun Safety**

Sustaining five or more sunburns in youth increases lifetime melanoma risk by 80 percent. "Children should not be getting sunburned at any age, especially since there are a range of very effective sun protection methods that can be used," said Perry Robins, MD, President, The Skin Cancer Foundation.

Below are some of The Skin Cancer Foundation's recommendations:

**Infants 0-6 months: Infants under 6 months of age should be kept out of the sun. Their skin is too sensitive for sunscreen.** An infant's skin possesses little melanin, the pigment that gives color to skin, hair and eyes and provides some sun protection.

- Use removable mesh window shields to keep direct sunlight from coming in through the windows of your car or invest in UV window film.
- Take walks early in the morning before 10 AM or after 4 PM and use a stroller with a sun-protective cover.
- Dress baby in lightweight clothing that covers the arms and legs.
- Choose a wide-brimmed hat or bonnet that protects the baby's face, neck, and ears. A baby who wears a hat during the first few months will get used to having it on.

**Babies 6-12 months: It's now safe to use sunscreen on babies.**

- Apply broad-spectrum, SPF 15+ sunscreen to areas left uncovered such as baby's hands. There are tear-free formulas that won't sting baby's eyes.
- If you are using a spray sunscreen, it should not be applied directly to the face; sprays should be misted into the hands, and then spread on the face.
- Most importantly, sunscreen must be applied 30 minutes before going outside and reapplied every two hours or after swimming or excessive sweating.

**Toddlers/Pre-School Age Protecting toddlers from the sun requires a little more thought and effort. It is important to educate your child and caregivers.**

- Look for broad-spectrum sunscreens with an SPF 15 or higher. Water-resistant, spray-on sunscreens are a good choice for toddlers who won't sit still. Spray sunscreens should not be applied directly to the face; sprays should be misted into the hands, then spread on the face.
- Make sure your child seeks the shade between 10 AM and 4 PM. Check the outdoor area where your child plays to make sure there is adequate shade.
- Don't forget hats and sunglasses. Choose a wide-brimmed hat that protects face, neck, and ears.



## Secondhand Smoke

by Jamie Jacobsen

As a parent you are always concerned about the safety of your children. You are careful about whom they spend time with, what they watch on television, and you childproof your home. But could there still be danger lurking around your home? If there is a smoker in your home, or smokers who visit your home, you could be exposing your children to thousands of chemicals every day. When smokers light up in your home over 7,000 chemicals are released into the air. These chemicals which are found in the smoke exhaled by the smoker and in the smoke from the burning end of a cigarette are known as *secondhand smoke*. The chemicals in

secondhand smoke include:

Arsenic-Used in Rat Poison  
Nickel-Metallic Element  
Formaldehyde-Used to preserve dead bodies

So how much exposure to secondhand smoke is safe? None. Just five minutes of exposure is the same as smoking one cigarette. After two hours of exposure you are at greater risk of experiencing an irregular heartbeat.

Exposure to secondhand smoke has been linked to many diseases, complications, and developmental issues in children. Some of these are caused by exposure to secondhand smoke before birth and some are caused by exposure after birth. Children who are exposed to secondhand smoke during pregnancy are at higher risk for SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome), low birth weight, and higher levels of behavior problems. Each year 1,900 to 2,700 deaths are caused by SIDS related to secondhand smoke exposure.

Children who are exposed to secondhand smoke are at higher risk for bronchitis, pneumonia, and ear infections than those who are not exposed. Exposure to secondhand smoke results in 100,000 to 1.6 million physician office visits each year and 7,500 to 15,000 hospitalizations each year. Children with asthma are at risk of having a severe asthma attack that may require a visit to the hospital and could lead to death.

It is not enough to designate one room of your home as a smoking area. Smoke travels through ventilation, windows, doors, and cracks from one room to another. The only way to ensure that your children are not exposed to secondhand smoke is to make your home a smoke-free environment.

If you are a smoker who wants to quit, there is free help. The West Virginia Tobacco QuitLine is a free service available to all West Virginia residents. The QuitLine provides counseling, information, support and nicotine replacement therapy. The West Virginia Tobacco QuitLine phone number is 877-966-8784. In addition to the QuitLine you may contact Jamie Jacobsen at the Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department for more information or to find out about tobacco cessation support groups in the area.

### Parent Reminder: Lending Library

We have a variety of books for adults and children, and DVDs. New books include "Optimistic Parenting Hope and Help for You and Your Challenging Child" by V. Mark Durand and What's Going On In There? How the Brain and Mind Develop in the First Five Years of Life" by Lise Eliot, PH. D. Topics include child development, behavior, discipline, autism, down syndrome, hearing, epilepsy, and other subjects.

Please stop in to see what is available or call the WV Birth to Three RAU 2 at (304) 485-2000.



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Call- 1-304-485-2000 or  
1-866-401-8919  
[www.wvdhhr.org/birth23](http://www.wvdhhr.org/birth23)



## **Friendly Reminder from your Parent Partner, Shannon Hedrick**

I will be sending out e-mails with current activities, resource guide, and fun things you can do with your family every month. If you are interested in receiving these e-mails please provide your e-mail address to [shannon.hedrick@thearcmov.org](mailto:shannon.hedrick@thearcmov.org). Also, If your family would like to share a short article, craft, poem, or other information that would support other WV Birth to Three families. We would love to hear from you.

## **Interesting Websites**

<http://www.toddlertoddler.com>

<http://www.parents.com>

<http://www.familyeducation.com>

<http://www.autismspeaks.org>

<http://www.speechtherapyweb.com>

<http://www.thearcmov.org>