

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 29	Anti-Bullying
Fee: \$50.00	http://txr5.escworks.net
Barbara Baldwin	409-951-1713
December 7	Work Jobs & Work Systems
Fee: \$60	
Shalyn Droddy	adroddy@esc5.net
January 28, 2017	Bootcamp: Back to Basics
Fee: \$25	Church of Christ
Registration to be mailed out in December.	



WHY YOUR KIDS NEED YOU TO HELP THEM FIT IN

It is from a place of belonging that someone can flourish as a unique individual.

Help them find and accept their group

You can't change your children's natural personality and temperaments. Maybe they are truly different than most other kids. And, honestly, that will be a good thing eventually. But even someone who is different and embraces that fact needs to belong somewhere. And not just at home. What happens at home determines how solid their foundation is upon which the rest of their life is built.



If they're having trouble making friends at school, help them find a club, sport, activity or other group where they can meet like-minded kids. It's okay if they don't easily get along with others, seek out others with whom they naturally mesh.

Help them develop a positive self-image

Children need to hear they are loved and accepted for the way God made them. Musical, artistic, nerdy, brawny, etc. You brought them into your family and you love them. Help draw out your children's positive attributes and qualities and call attention to them. Without giving empty compliments, praise your children for their good character and celebrate their successes. The goal is not to make your child fit into a mold, but to help them be

comfortable with who they already are. Those who are comfortable in their own skin find it a lot easier to make friends. You love your child, but you want others to love them too.

Make a change when necessary

We will all, at some point or other, experience rejection. As sure as we live and breathe. Some rejection here or there isn't a death sentence, nor will it mean your child is a serial loner. But sometimes you must step in. I changed schools in 3rd grade to go where my mom taught. In the 5th grade everyone decided they weren't going to be my friend anymore. By the end of the 5th grade things had leveled out, but I was so over those girls so my mother decided I'd go back to my old school for the 6th grade with the friends I'd started Kindergarten with. Mom listened to me, let me cry about it, and ultimately made a physical change to our situation to help me "fit in."

Make them feel accepted at home

Your children must know they are accepted and loved by you. They must feel loved and accepted by you. And if that's the case, more often than not, they'll have a positive self-image. And kids who feel good about themselves don't have to try to be different just to get noticed. Kids with positive self-images are comfortable with themselves and easy to like. Even if they are "weird" or "different."

Help them accept others

I've often befriended people others thought were weird. My close friends were popular enough and I never worried about who I'd sit with at lunch or what I'd do on the weekends. From that place I was able to be friends with people that others wouldn't. Why? Because I felt accepted for me and so was free to break out of the mold.

If you teach your children to be kind to those on the outskirts, and to make others feel welcome, they'll never get lonely. There are always others who remain on the sidelines. Whether because they're shy, they've been rejected one too many times, or it's simply the luck of the draw. Teaching your children compassion and kindness will never go amiss.

Help them be them

It's not about having a "normal" kid. What's normal anyway? Some of the best people I know would be considered "weird." The goal is not to encourage our kids to conform to some societal norm. It's to help our kids—our unique special kids—find a place they belong.



This article was adapted from:

<http://amotherfarfromhome.com/help-your-child-socialize/>, and can be found in its entirety at the above website.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

Families Matter

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ENERGY BURNERS FOR TODDLERS DURING THE WINTER

Winter is hard on all of us: big and small people alike. Come the middle of February everyone is sick of being inside, longing for those lighter jackets, some sunshine, time at the park and even just a quick walk around the block would be wonderful. Keeping an energized toddler busy and active during the winter months can be tough. Exercise for our little ones is just as important as it is for us. It is recommended that our toddlers be active for 2-3 hours per day! I know this seems like a lot and sometimes it is easier to just allow them to watch one more episode of Mickey Mouse Clubhouse, but we need to make sure our kids are MOVING. The good thing is that it is easy to turn play into physical activity.

Try these indoor energy burners to keep your kids moving. Everyone will be happier with a little more movement.

1. **Dance**-Toddlers love to dance and it can be a great way for parents to let loose too.



1. **Tumble**-Teaching your toddlers basic tumbling moves such as a forward and backward roll are great exercises for developing those core muscles as well as working on their coordination.



1. **Balance**-Play a balance game and see how long your toddler can stand on one foot. You might be surprised that they can't at all! This is a skill that is difficult for our little ones-keep practicing.



1. **Run & Bikes**-Yes, run and bike...In the house! Trust me, it isn't going to hurt your house.



1. **Paper Plate Activities**-Place the paper plates in a circle or line and have your child do something different at each paper plate- and you do it with them! Hop, jump, spin around and even have them try a jumping jack- it doesn't have to be complicated, just get them to move.



Adapted from:

Toddler Energy Burners {Part I}

February 16, 2015 By Hollie

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*A person's a person,
no matter how small.*
-Dr. Seuss

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HOW TO BRING CULTURE INTO THE CLASSROOM AND THE HOME: ANTI-BIAS ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

Making Playdough

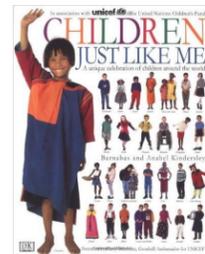
Place four or five colors (choose from colors like white, red, orange, yellow, brown or black) out for the kids to explore. Encourage them to mix the colors to create new colors. Encourage them to try to create a color that matches their skin.

Exploring Hair

Ask children to touch their hair and look at their hair in the mirror. Ask the to describe it. Then show pictures of how people from around the world use hair to express themselves and their culture. This Sesame Street clip: I Love Hair is an excellent conversation starter.

Everyday Images

Simply look at images from around the world and ask questions. Take time to either print out images and prepare cards or simply call you child over to your computer. I found this great Pinterest board called "People/Faces from Around the World" that is a good resource. This site's around the world project is also very interesting. If you google "houses around the world" or "food around the world" you will find good images for the exercise. This book Children Just Like Me: A Unique Celebration of Children Around the World is excellent too.



What is Different?

Gather images of African American children, Hispanic children, Euro American children and Asian American children. Start with images that exemplify the most obvious differences, then move onto the more subtle differences. Kids may want to sort into similar and alike. Encourage them to do so. I have found Melissa & Doug's Create-A-Face Pad to be a great basic learning tool in discussing skin color differences.



Family

My MEIPN instructor demonstrated a fabulous lesson to introduce the concept of family to children. All you need is a basket preferably with a cover or deep enough so you can reach into it and various "people". I purchased Pretend & Play Families. The figures are detailed and fairly "real" looking. I purchased Black, Asian, Hispanic and People with Differing Abilities. Start by asking the children what makes a family. Then introduce various types of families using these figures: "This is Joe. He is married to Bill. They have a daughter, Melissa. They are a family." or "This is Rosa. She lives with her grandmother, Helena. They are a family." The possibilities are endless.



Mothers & Babies

This activity introduces similar features and similar cultural heritages. You need images of mothers & images of babies from around the world within various cultures, an image of a cat and her kittens, card stock and a glue stick. Prepare the cards and invite the child to match mother and baby. Ask what is different about the mothers' faces, then ask why the child chose that mother to go with that particular child. Then show the image of the cat and her kittens. Explain how she is still their mother even though they might look different from her.

Crack the Egg

I saw this diversity activity on Kids Activities Blog and fell in love with it. Take a white and brown egg. Ask the children what they notice is the difference between the eggs. When they answer the color, crack the egg open and show the children how the eggs are the same on the inside even though they look different on the outside.



Bread Tasting Party

This one might be my favorite. Go to the grocery and gather various "breads from around the world" such as naan, corn bread, tortillas, matzo, pita, scones, etc. Introduce the name of the bread and from which culture it originates. Then invite the children to taste it. Talk about the traditions of those cultures. Maybe even make your own bread together. I love this learning activity because it brings in the senses and is truly hands on. If you don't have access to the breads, then seek out images from a library book or the internet.

Adapted from:

Marnie @ Carrotsareorange.com



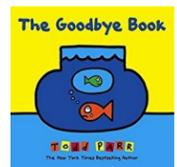
www.theshopthebooks.com

10 TIPS FOR HELPING A CHILD COPE WITH DEATH, LOSS AND GRIEF



1. Art is a wonderful venue for exploring feelings. Ask the child to draw or create whatever they want. Let them take the lead and don't push them at first. Over time you can gently guide them into exploring their thoughts and feelings through the medium.
2. Music is another fantastic funnel for emotions. We really enjoyed combining music and art. Have the child pick a song, or chose a song that has some special meaning, then has the child to paint or draw while listening to the music.
3. Structure and routine can help, or it can hurt. If the person was a part of your daily lives and routines it can be extremely painful to try and continue that routine without them. In those situations changing things up and doing things differently can help. If the loss is not something that impacts daily routines the routines can be soothing and comforting. Familiar.
4. Books that relate to the child and help them develop context around the loss can be very helpful. For younger children Todd Parr has an amazing book call The Goodbye Book.
5. Create photobooks. We have found it really helpful to create a book for our children featuring pictures of our child with their treasured people. We keep this book in their bedroom so they can look at it any time.
6. Exercise is so important. When you are feeling depressed or upset the last thing you may want to do is get moving, but it really will help you and your child. Get them running and playing. Make it a part of your daily schedule.
7. Create your own small memorial by planting a tree. This is one of our favorite ways of celebrating a life. At the base of the tree we will often bury small tokens like a piece of art the child has created.
8. Be there. Simply be there with your child. Talk if they want to talk. I have found hard topics are often easier to talk about while doing things like gardening, doing puzzles, riding in the car. But if they don't want to talk just be there with them. Help them to not feel alone in their pain.
9. Bring in help. If you are struggling too much or if your child simply seems to want to talk to someone else, that's OK. Sometimes talking to the other parent, or a grandparent or other trusted person is what the child needs. Embrace this and build a safe support network for your child. Helping a child cope with death is not something you need to do alone.
10. Therapy can be a blessing if you or your child seem to be struggling more than what you feel is normal. Getting extra help is especially important if you notice any self harm or significant behavioral issues. There are many options available such as grief counselors, therapists, psychologists and support groups. There are many grief support programs that are free of charge and grief support groups are in almost every community. Some of these resources are free and programs are usually available for all ages.

Adapted from
www.STEAMPoweredFamily.com



10 SIGNS YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED AT SCHOOL

1. Difficulty explaining (or can't explain) injuries or having reoccurring injuries
2. Having damaged or lost possessions (including their clothing, books, toys, electronics, etc.)
3. Frequently feeling sick or faking sick (examples: frequent headaches or stomach aches)
4. Changing eating habits (including skipping meals, binge eating, coming home from school hungry because they didn't eat lunch, etc.)
5. Frequently having nightmares or having other difficulty sleeping
6. Not wanting to go to school or ride the bus, losing interest in schoolwork, or getting worse grades than usual
7. Suddenly avoiding social situations or losing friends
8. Beginning to bully younger siblings or kids (sometimes they start to mimic what is happening to them)
9. Feeling helpless, having a decreased self-esteem, or having other personality changes (including being more reserved or sad)
10. Having self-destructive behaviors (examples: hurting themselves, blaming themselves, trying to run away from home, or talking about suicide)

Tips for Dealing with Bullying

It is important to note that not every child who is bullied at school will show these specific signs of bullying. Remember, your child may not want to tell you that they are being bullied. However, if you really think your child is being bullied at school, don't ignore the problem—take action! (Click here for advice on how to proceed and address bullying.)

Whether you do or do not think your child is currently being bullied at school,

it's a good idea to talk with your child about bullying. Because communication is a crucial relationship building block, it's important to show your child you are listening. (Read our post 7 Ways to Show Your Child You are Listening.) As you listen to them, the trust between you will strengthen, and your child will begin to see you more as an ally, someone who they can confide in. Click here for a great resource to help you know how to talk to your child about it and what you, as the parent, can do and say.

There are also great written resources available that you can give your child. For example, The Survival Guide to Bullying: Written by a Teen covers everything from cyber bullying to how to deal with fear. Aija Mayrock's deep experiences and sincere suggestions is a good read for any young adult, especially those experiencing bullying.

Adapted from: thediylighthouse.com

Crafts for Toddlers: Ideas and Tips

Stuck inside on a rainy day? Looking for some high-value play-time ideas? These easy crafts and activities for toddlers aged 2 years and above are quick to set up, cheap and only require a few basic supplies.

Engage all five senses. Cook up some spaghetti and place a handful into four or five bowls. Drip a few drops of food coloring to change the pasta's color. Let her dig her hands in and have at it! She will love the uniqueness of the colored pasta, the slipperiness of the noodles, and the squishy sound they make when squeezed.

Fine-tune those motor skills. Set out a muffin tin and some different colored pom-poms (most craft stores carry these inexpensive colored puffs). Let your child sort her poms into the

individual muffin holes. She'll have fun grabbing at the soft balls and also learn the names of the colors.

Boost creativity. Finger-painting is a toddler-craft staple. Simply squeeze some paint onto a plate or tray and let your toddler use his fingers or hands to draw designs on blank pieces of paper. Be sure to protect the surface with a washable cover or old newspapers. You can use a clipboard to keep the paper from shifting around. You could also frame and hang a few masterpieces in her room.

No matter which craft you pick, keep toddler safety in mind. All activities should be closely supervised, especially when you're working with smaller pieces and sharp objects.



3 craft activities for toddlers

7 THINGS EVERY KID NEEDS TO HEAR

1. I Love You
2. I'm Proud of You
3. I'm Sorry
4. I Forgive You
5. I'm Listening
6. This Is Your Responsibility
7. You've Got What It Takes

JOSH SHIPP.COM

"When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it's our job to share our calm, not join their chaos."

-L.R. Knost



6 Preschool Hibernation Themed Crafts

1. **Paper Bag Hibernating Bear Craft**— Learn about a bear's natural world with this creative art project that utilizes many different materials. Make cardboard tube bears to play with inside a cave! (Pink Stripey Socks)
2. **Paper Bag Chipmunk**—Have fun playing with this puppet craft and chipmunk fort activity. (I Heart Crafty Things)
3. **Build a Cave Engineering Challenge**—Learn about how bears hibernate in winter while having fun with different cave building challenges. (Handmade Kids Art)
4. **Paper Plate Hedgehogs**—Read *One Snowy Night* and then make a craft inspired by the Little Hedgehog. (Artsy Momma)
5. **Paper Plate Hibernation Bear Craft**—Free bear templates to use for creating your own paper plate bear cave. (A Little Pinch of Perfect)
6. **Hibernation Sensory Bag**—Read the book *Do Polar Bears Snooze in Hollow Trees* and then match animals to the place they would hibernate! (School Time Snippets)

Affirm a Child

It is easier to build up a child than repair an adult. Choose your words wisely. Matthew Jacobson

1. I think you're awesome!
2. You did a great job!
3. You make me smile.
4. I'm grateful God gave you to me.
5. That was a really kind thing to do.
6. Thanks for being such a great kid!
7. Thanks for working so hard.
8. You give the best hugs.
9. I love being your (parent, grandparent, aunt)
10. I saw you helping your mother.
11. I saw you being kind to your little brother/sister.
12. I believe in you.

Affirming words from moms and dads are like light switches. Speak a word of affirmation at the right moment in a child's life and it's like lighting up a whole roomfull of possibilities. Gary Smiley

LEARN THE UNDERWEAR RULE

TALK PANTS AND YOU'VE GOT IT COVERED!

PRIVATES ARE PRIVATE

Parts of your body covered by underwear are private. No one should ask to see, or touch them. No one should ask you to touch or look at parts of their body that are covered by underwear. Sometimes doctors, nurses or family members might have to. But they should always explain why, and ask if it's OK first.

ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR BODY BELONGS TO YOU

It's your body, no one else's. No one should make you do things that make you feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. If anyone tries, tell an adult you trust.

NO MEANS NO

You have the right to say 'no' – even to a family member or someone you love. Remember, you're in control of your body and your feelings are important.

TALK ABOUT SECRETS THAT UPSET YOU

Secrets shouldn't make you feel upset or worried. If they do, tell an adult you trust. You will never get into trouble for sharing a secret that upsets you.

SPEAK UP. SOMEONE CAN HELP

Talk about stuff that makes you worried or upset. An adult you trust will listen, and be able to help. It doesn't have to be a family member. It can be a teacher or a friend's parent – or even ChildLine.

ChildLine 0800 1111

NSPCC Really in children's best step. FRL 5738

DR. ROBYN OFFERS THESE TIPS:

7 Ways To Help Your Kids Concentrate:

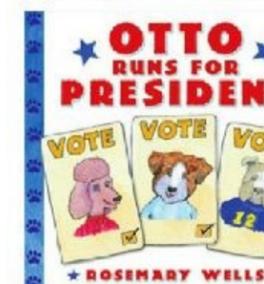
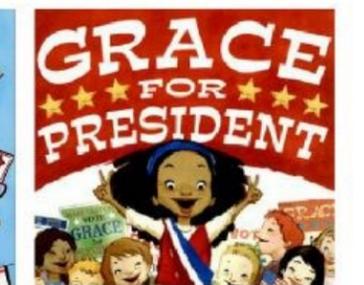
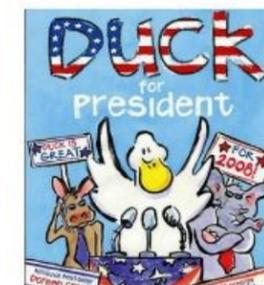
1. Get Into A Routine
2. Give Them Time For A Break
3. Encourage Setting Goals
4. Praise Progress
5. Provide A Quiet & Clutter Free Place To Work
6. Inform Others Of Quiet Time
7. Teach Children How To Focus



POWERFUL WORDS

knowmore.TV BE IN THE KNOW

picture books about



CHANGES TO MINIMUM STANDARDS

OLD: At least 1 hour of annual training must cover abuse/neglect.

NEW: Abuse/neglect training **MUST** include: risk factors, warning signs, reporting procedures, and community organizations with resources for child care staff, children, and parents.

OLD: Infant/toddler caregivers must have 1 hour of annual training on SIDS/safe sleep, shaken baby syndrome and early brain development.

NEW: Training on shaken baby syndrome must include information about abusive head trauma.

NEW: Annual training must also include the following topics, but there are no specific clock hour requirements.

- Emergency preparedness
- Preventing the spread of communicable diseases (MUST include immunizations)
- Administering medication, if applicable
- Preventing/controlling/responding to food or other allergic reactions
- Understanding building and physical premises safety
- Handling, storage and disposal of hazardous materials, including proper procedures for wearing gloves and disposing of contaminated gloves

How to Teach FINANCE TO KIDS AGE 5-12 YRS

As kids continue to grow, their understanding of money will, too. By age 5, you can start introducing them to some of the really big and basic concepts that will carry them into a financially responsible adulthood and through the rest of their lives.

The Big Lessons

At this age, kids can really start to understand the true value of money, where it comes from and that you have to be careful with it.



Money Doesn't Grow on Trees: Start talking to your kids about where your money comes from. Let them know you only make so much every month and you need to be mindful about how you use it.



You Have to Make Choices: Having limited funds means choosing wisely about how you spend those funds. Let your child know that every time you decide to spend your money on something, it means you can't spend it on something else.



Needs vs. Wants: At this age, kids can start to understand the difference between the things they want and the things they need. Explain to them how you need to be careful about how you spend your money every month, setting aside most of it for necessities like food and clothing before using a little bit of it for fun.

Fun and Games

Bring money lessons to life with these fun games and activities.

CUPCAKES AND TATTOOS
Their Very First Business: Teach kids about earning money by letting them make a little bit of their own with their very first business. Lemonade stands are the classic, but creative, modern-day alternatives include cupcake stands, doggie treat stands or temporary tattoo parlors.

Start Them on an Allowance: An allowance is more than just free money; if handled properly, it's a chance for your child to learn about the value of saving. Let them spend it how they want and allow them to see that spending it immediately prevents them from saving up for bigger things they might want.

Make a Savings Goal Chart: Let them pick out a big item they want to save up for, then make a chart on which they can track how their savings is building up for that. It will be a fun, visual way to remind them to keep saving.

Get Them Involved

Get your kids involved with these everyday financial activities.

Paying With Cash: Give your kids the opportunity to pick out an item and pay with cash themselves.

Comparison Shopping: Let them help you find the best deals on items when you go grocery shopping.

Trip to the Bank: Take them on their first trip to the bank. At this age, you can even help them set up their very first savings account. Make depositing money into it a fun weekly activity.

Involve Them in Decisions: Talk them through the financial decisions you make every day and why you make them. Show them how you'll make a budget, setting aside most of the money for the things you need and a little bit for the things you want.

Apps

These age-appropriate apps are fun ways to keep your kids' financial education going, even when they're playing games.

Bankaroo: This cashless allowance manager enables kids to keep track of the money they're saving while you hold on to the actual cash.

Flocabulary: An online library of thousands of educational music videos with a huge section on financial terms. More than 35,000 schools nationwide utilize the site, and it grows up with them so they can start young but keep using it into their teens.

The Game of Life: The classic board game is now an app. It's a modern twist on a fun, old-fashioned way to learn about saving and planning.

TV Shows and Books

There are a ton of fun books and TV shows you can expose your kids to that will help teach them about finance.

Amelia Bedelia Means Business by Herman Parish
The classic children's book character learns about the value of hard work and saving when she wants to buy her very first bike.

When Times are Tough by Yanitzia Canetti
A little boy in a family with a tight budget has to learn the value of making sacrifices and differentiating between the things he wants and the necessities his family needs.

BizKids
A kids' show about finance from the producers of "Bill Nye the Science Guy." It uses sketch comedy to teach kids about important financial concepts.

<http://www.fatwallet.com/blog/teach-finance-to-kids/>

LET THEM BE little



Mitten Math
Snowflake Counting

Stir the Wonder
ABC SNOWFLAKE MATCH
Hands-On Learning

ABC Snowflake Match

8 WAYS TO STUDY NATURE IN WINTER

- 1. Keep a cloud chart.** The clouds do not go away in the winter! Study the clouds and their patterns. Learn about the different types of clouds with your kids. Look for cloud shapes. You can even do this from your window if it is too cold!
- 2. Study geology.** Rocks can easily be found and studied in the winter months. Learn to identify common rocks in your area. Let your kids have a rock collection of their favorites and teach them the names of each type.
- 3. Learn what the winter night sky looks like and study the constellations.** There are different constellations visible in the winter months and summer months. Learn the difference!
- 4. Study Evergreen trees and their pinecones.** We have a lot of different types of evergreens on our property, so it is a fun thing for us to do in the wintertime. We compared the different types of pinecones and the different types of needles. You could sketch them in your notebooks, as well.
- 5. The moon is always there in the winter, too. Do your kids know the phases of the moon?** Observe the moon an chart it with your kids. There are some neat constellation apps you can get to watch it and learn about it, too.
- 6. Most birds leave our area in the winter, but there are a few that stick around.** Learn about the birds that stay through the winter. You can also learn about bird migration patterns.
- 7. If it is too cold to venture out, if you have a case of winter blues, stay inside and use our field guides to study some new animal and plant species that you are not yet familiar with.** Find videos and pictures online, too. Nature can be studied from inside! A couple of our favorites are North American Wildlife by Reader's Digest and The Handbook of Nature Study by Anna Botsford Comstock.
- 8. We have a spot on our house where some amazing icicles form.** Learn about icicles. How and why do they form? Measure them for a few days and see how they change.



Adapted from: iHomeschoolNetwork.com

Snow Paint
1 Cup Salt
1 Cup Flour
1 Cup Water

<http://ready-set-read.com>