



Brain Building Bulletin



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HAPPY GRANDPARENTS DAY

Did you know that 4 million children in 3 million households are being raised by their grandparents?

Sunday, September 9th is National Grandparents Day!

For all that those grandparents do, we celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of our senior citizens

Would you be surprised to learn that more than 5 million children live in a household with a grandparent present?

on Grandparents Day. How will you mark the occasion? If you haven't made your plans yet, have no fear! Take a look at these great, free activities for grateful kids!

- * Spend time together outside—go for a walk or pack a picnic lunch for the park.
- * Design a handmade card and seal it with a kiss— or a chocolate kiss!
- * Complete a puzzle together, play cards, or paint a picture together.
- * Take selfies and create a collage to hang on the fridge—or frame it!
- * Cook together and gift a keepsake.
- * Start a new tradition!

Winchendon Community Playgroups!

Fall 2018 Playgroups

Wednesdays

Ages 0 to 3 — 9:00 - 10:00 am

Ages 3 to 5—10:00 - 11:00 am

September 12, 19, 26

October 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

November 7, 14, 29

December 5th

You're invited to
Playgroup!



Like us on Facebook! **Winchendon Community Playgroups**

Tell us you can join us! 978-297-3436 or Kbrooks@winchendonk12.org



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Parenting success in the early years



RECIPE FOR HAND DEVELOPMENT

Today's focus seems to be on academic success and achievement. Standards for starting kindergarten have changed drastically over the years...*from* a focus on play and peer interaction *to* reading and writing. Children are often more easily fatigued with classroom demands, making writing and coloring a non-preferred task; a task where children are able to show their creativity. Development of writing skills within the classroom involves many components, however overall grasp on tools is the key!

Development of grasp patterns begins at birth. Infants use their reflexes to hold a parent's finger...later they build strength and coordination to grasp a rattle. We then see how the hand develops in order to reach for objects of different sizes and shapes. From here we watch a full hand grasp progress to a raking/hook grasp to a refined pinching grasp.

Children typically achieve this around a year old. More and more we are seeing weak, underdeveloped hands that are becoming fatigued when attempting to perform tasks within the classroom.



How can we help to get a child ready to hold a pencil correctly? The answer: **through play!** Starting early on, present children with age-appropriate toys to grasp and hold. Have your children play in a variety of positions...sitting, lying on tummy, while being held. As toddlers it is important to expand their play; hand development occurs both inside and outside. Allow time to play on the playground...climbing and swinging builds hand strength. Play ball games with various sizes to build eye-hand coordination. Scooping, digging, dumping with water and dirt serves many purposes! Inside, encourage coloring and drawing on various surfaces (paper bags, salt trays, shaving cream, dry erase, tub crayons). Play with blocks of various sizes and shapes, cars, trucks, figurines! Use of board games, dress up, play dough. The list goes on; variety is the key....

If children's hands are *holding* and *moving* you cannot go wrong!

DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESSION OF PENCIL GRASP

Palmar Supinate
1-1.5 YEARS



Digital Pronate
2-3 YEARS



Static Tripod
3.5-4 YEARS



Dynamic Tripod
4.5-5 YEARS



Naturally encourage children to manipulate fasteners, open small containers, use zipper bags, place coins into a bank, help with chores...hand development happens on a daily basis. This also helps to nurture independence and responsibility.

How can we help our children develop hands skills to help with success in the classroom? Simple...**PLAY!**

**Shared by: Paula Lashua- Brisbois, Occupational Therapist
Winchendon Public Schools**

*The above was para-phrased from the *Pawprint Newsletter*, written by Occupational Therapist Deanna Macioce.



Everyone can be a Brain Builder. Visit www.brainbuildinginprogress.org for more information.

Easy Ways to Build Math into Your Child's Day



Math is everywhere. That's great news for parents, because we can talk with our kids about math in fun, natural ways. And that kind of math-talk is really important. Studies show that a child's math skills at kindergarten entry are a better predictor of future academic success than reading skills, social skills, or the ability to focus. As parents, we can give our kids a head start by helping them get comfortable with math concepts like measuring and counting at home.

1. Bake something together

You can't help but use math when you're baking. Doubling recipes requires multiplying, halving a recipe requires dividing, & measuring a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup or a $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon gets you working with easy fractions. At a more basic level, kids love counting out chocolate chips. **Ask your child:** *How many chocolate chips do you think it will take to fill one cup? How many for $\frac{1}{2}$ cup? Count together and see how close you came to the right answer!*



2. Measure, count, and record

Most kids love stopwatches, and watching the seconds tick by gives them opportunities to practice counting. Measure distances and heights. Count jumping jacks, push-ups, or consecutive kicks of a soccer ball. **Ask your child:** *How far can you throw a ball? Take a guess, then throw the ball as far as you can and measure the distance. How many jumping jacks can you do in a minute? Try it! How many times can you jump rope or bounce a ball without missing? Count and see.*

3. Build something together



Big or small, any project that involves measuring includes counting, adding, and multiplying. It doesn't matter whether you're making a clubhouse out of shoeboxes or building a genuine tree house. Legos and other building toys are wonderful tools for incorporating both numbers and spatial thinking into playtime. **Ask your child:** *How high can you build that stack of Legos? How many Legos do you need to stack to reach as high as the coffee table? Can you make a square? A rectangle? Other shapes? Talk about the shapes of whatever your child has created.*

4. Plan dinner or a party

Whether you're planning a party or just getting ready for family dinner, there are plenty of math concepts involved. Have your child help set the table and count out the plates, napkins, and silverware. For a party, have your child help with the shopping. You know you're going to have to do some math since all of those plates, balloons, and party favors are packaged in different quantities!

Ask your child: *How many plates, napkins, and forks do you need for dinner? If you're inviting 10 guests to a party, and the plates come 8 to a pack, how many packs are you going to need? How many are going to be left over? If you're not planning a party in the near future, get creative. Why not host a tea party for your child's favorite stuffed animals?*

5. Mix math into your everyday experiences

There are plenty of other ways to keep kids thinking about math—board games, stickers, and stargazing, to name a few. The important thing is just to encourage your child to see the numbers all around us and to keep things fun. This is how we'll raise a next generation that thinks math is cool!



*Excerpts taken from Laura Bilodeau Overdeck, shared from naeyc

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Keep Your Child Healthy During Busy Back to School Days

Use the 80-20 Rule for Healthy Eating

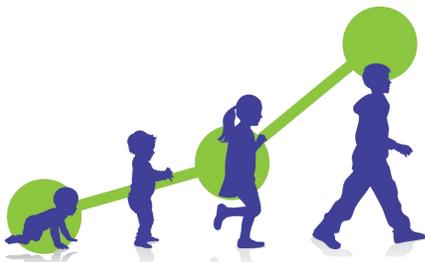
Robyn O'Brien, author of the best-selling book "The Unhealthy Truth," urges parents to recognize that they will not be able to control 100 percent of what their child eats. "Don't make perfect the enemy of good," she advises. "80 percent of the time, you try to do the best that you can. And then the other 20 percent of the time, you have to have the grace and flexibility to live in the real world, to know that these kids go to birthday parties. They're going to get stuff at school, and to be able to roll with that."

"80 percent of the time, you try to do the best that you can — And then the other 20 percent of the time, you have to have the grace and flexibility to live in the real world..."



Explain Why Healthy Eating is Important

Instead of telling children to eat healthy foods, explain to them why it is important. If they know that certain foods will make them taller & stronger, or make their hair shinier, they will want to eat them. "Kids' relationship with food gets increasingly complicated as they get older," says Natterson. "If you start when they're very young by teaching them that food is about growing healthfully and having energy to get through the day and fueling their brain, then you're teaching them everything they need to know for the rest of their life."



Curious about your child's wellness & development?

Call us for the Ages and Stages Questionnaires. Your answers

will show your child's strengths, and highlight any areas in which your child may need more help or practice. Set them up for success before Kindergarten starts!

For FREE local events visit :

BrainBuildingInProgress.org

Interactive books for young children :

ReadWithMe.cast.org

More Resources

Stay tuned in for the next "Fun, Seasonal Activities" newsletter coming later this month!

Tell your friends to join our mailing list by emailing Ncormier@WinchendonK12.org

Winchendon SEPAC

Looking to get involved? The Winchendon Special Education Parent Advisory Council welcomes all parents and caregivers, especially those with students with IEPs and 504 plans.

The SEPAC provides access to resources, community outreach and engagement through activities geared for students with disabilities of all types and provides parent leadership opportunities. Most importantly, the SEPAC connects parents with each other and with the school district in a respectful communication model.

If you would like more information or to become involved please email Pam or Sam at sepac@winchendonK12.org



Everyone can be a Brain Builder. Visit www.brainbuildinginprogress.org for more information.