

THE CHILD CARE PROFESSIONAL

The Newsletter of the Child Care Resource & Referral at WKU

Western Kentucky University

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Keep Your Sleeping Areas Safe!

Amy S. Hood, CCR&R Infant and Toddler Consultant

Every day infants and toddlers are exposed to daily routines that encourage their learning and development. The naptime routine is a very critical time and there are many issues that face child caregivers that are often overlooked. This article is written to provide safety information as well as a focus on appropriate practices for infant and toddler naptimes.

Safety must always be top priority for child caregivers, especially when they work with infants and toddlers. Recent studies have revealed that there are many hazards associated with sleeping infants that we never thought about. The crib itself can hide several safety hazards, including the bedding, toys, and positioning of the infant.

The most recent hazard being uncovered is the fitted crib sheet. According to research conducted, there have been five reported deaths that were caused by infants being strangled by fitted crib sheets. Certain types of sheets have been found to shrink after washing, this shrinkage causes the sheet not to fit the mattress. These sheets can become loose enough that infants can pull it loose and strangle



themselves. Children as young as seven months, have the ability to pull up the sheets, get tangled up in them, but may not have the ability to untangle themselves and have died due to suffocation.

Each child should have their own crib or cot as well as their own bedding. Approximately fifty babies a year suffocate or strangle because they become trapped between broken crib parts or when older cribs are used with unsafe designs. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has established regulations and guidelines for safety of cribs both full-sized and non-full-sized cribs, including requirements for spacing of the slats in cribs. When choosing cribs for the child care, or to investigate cribs already being used, please use the following guidelines set forth by CPSC:

- The crib should have a certification seal showing that it meets the national safety standards.
- There should be no loose, broken or inappropriate brackets, screws or other hardware.
- The slats should be no more than 2 3/8 inches between crib slats (so that a baby's body can not fit through).
- There should be no corner posts over 1/16 of an inch above the end panels.
- The mattress should be firm and snug-fitting so that a baby cannot get trapped between the slats and the mattress.
- There should be no cutout areas on the foot board or head board for head entrapment.
- There should be no cracked or peeling paint.
- There should be no splinters or rough edges.

After investigating the cribs, also be sure that they are placed in order to prevent the spread of germs and to reduce communicable disease. While children are sleeping, the cribs need to be spaced at least three feet apart or the cribs must have a solid barrier. This will help reduce the spread of germs that can be spread as children sleep.

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As soon as children wake up, they should be removed from their cribs! Cribs should **not** be used for extended play or as a feeding area. Children should **not** be placed in their cribs with bottles or sippy cups. If children are put to bed with bottles or sippy cups, the risk of ear infection and baby bottle tooth decay increases. Children should be held while feeding, especially if bottles are still being used!

The position of a sleeping infant is also very important to consider when thinking about the naptime routine. The American Academy of Pediatrics began a "Back to Sleep" Campaign in 1992. This campaign urged people to place healthy infants on their back while sleeping in order to reduce the number of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The reason that the sleeping position is so crucial is because babies are weak, and have very weak lungs. When a baby is placed on the stomach for sleeping, they may get their face mashed into the mattress or bedding. If this happens the breathing passage can become blocked.

Sleeping on the back allow the baby's nose and mouth to be uncovered. There may be some exception to this rule of placing infants on their backs. This exception is for infants with certain medical conditions or malformations which may mean they be placed on their side or stomach. If there is any question about a child's sleeping position, their pediatrician should be consulted.

Not only is the positioning important in order to reduce the risk of SIDS, but also the types of bedding used in the crib is crucial. Mattresses need to be firm and



flat, all fluffy pillows, quilts, comforters and stuffed animals need to be removed and babies should **never** sleep on sheepskin. Since this campaign began in 1992, the number of SIDS deaths decreased from approximately 5,000 deaths per year to fewer than 3,000 deaths per year.

In order to ensure that the naptime routine is developmentally appropriate, each child should have their nap individually scheduled. It is not appropriate to put young children down for a nap as a group. Each child is unique and their need for sleep varies in time and length. Caregivers should make sure that the schedule they have in child care matches the schedule they have at home.

Being aware that the sleeping area is not always the cozy spot we hope it is, having all of this information allows child care providers to investigate the various practices as well as items to choose for sleeping areas, and helps increase children's safety. For further information you may contact the Consumer Public Safety Commission and the American Academy of Pediatrics, or access their web pages on the world wide web (www.cpsc.gov/ and www.aap.org/respectively).

Do You Live in Allen or Butler County?

We would really like to find a child care center or family child care home in these counties to participate in the KIDS Now STARS rating system. Participants receive free technical assistance visits and lots of encouragement.

Please contact Taylor at the toll free number 1-800-621-5908 or email her at taylor.tucker@wku.edu if you are interested. Be the first!

Child Care Resource & Referral

The staff of the CCR&R at Western Kentucky University includes:

*Connie Jo Smith, CCR&R Specialist
Sherri Meyer, CCR&R Coordinator
Jill Norris, Early Childhood Health Coordinator
Taylor Tucker, Quality Coordinator
Kim McIntyre, Professional Development Coordinator
Amy Hood, Infant and Toddler Consultant
Terri Mills, Office Assistant*

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Environment Rating Scale: Language

Taylor Tucker, CCR&R Quality Coordinator

The third subscale in the Environment Rating Scale covers language, talking and reasoning. This subscale covers the way caregivers talk to children in both formal and informal ways. The scales look at how the caregivers use the environment to teach language skills based on the child's developmental age.

Informal use of language looks at when and how the caregivers talk to children. Language should not be used to primarily control children's behavior and manage routines. Staff members need to respond to children's communication. Children need to be allowed and encouraged to talk most of the day. There should be many staff-child conversations during free play and daily routines. If the caregiver is working with younger children, the caregiver should frequently respond verbally to infant's/toddler's crying, gestures, sounds, words, and questions.

Maintaining eye contact while talking to children is important for Caregivers to remember. Caregivers should name and talk about many objects and actions for infants/toddlers. For older children, caregivers should add information to expand on ideas presented by children. Staff should encourage communication among all children.

To receive an *excellent* rating in this area, staff must have individual conversations with most of the children. Children should be asked questions to encourage them to give longer and more complex answers. For younger children, caregivers must talk to each infant and toddler during play and routines about the child's activities. Caregivers must repeat what toddlers say, adding to the child's understanding of language.

Books and pictures are an important part of language. You must have books available and accessible for a substantial portion of the day. This means that the books have to be on a low shelf where children can reach them, and it is essential that children be in center time for at least one-third of their day. It is necessary that books represent a variety of topics.

Caregivers must initiate at least one receptive language activity a day. The caregiver must also use additional language materials daily. Examples of language materials include posters and pictures, flannel board stories, picture card games, and recorded stories and songs.

For younger children, participation should only be encouraged while children are interested and children should never be forced to participate. Caregivers should talk about pictures, read books, or say nursery rhymes daily with individuals or very small groups of interested children.

To receive an *excellent* score in this area, each infant/toddler should be given an opportunity daily for at least one language activity using books, pictures, or puppets. A cozy book area should be set up for independent use by the children. Books and language materials should be rotated to maintain interest. Some books that relate to current classroom activities or themes should be present.

For preschool age children, caregivers need to use language to develop reasoning skills. This means the staff should talk about logical relationships or age appropriate concepts. Children should be encouraged to talk through or explain their reasoning when solving problems. To score an *excellent* score in this area, staff should also encourage children to reason throughout the day, using actual events and experiences as a basis for concept development. Concepts should be introduced in response to children's interests or needs to solve problems.



If you would like more information on the Environment Rating Scale or if you want a representative from the Child Care Resource and Referral to come to your facility and provide technical assistance based on the Environment Rating Scale, please contact Taylor Tucker, CCR&R Quality Coordinator at 1-800-621-5908 or e-mail taylor.tucker@wku.edu.

Choosing Appropriate Toys for Children

Sherri Meyer, CCR&R Coordinator

Toys and materials wear out over time. Parents often wonder what appropriate toys they should get for their children to encourage them to learn. Caregivers are also frequently trying to determine which toys to purchase or make available for children. There are a few guidelines to follow when shopping and purchasing toys and materials. Remember that no matter what is purchased, be sure that the toy is of interest to the child(ren) or it will not be manipulated and played with.

For parents and child care providers, remember to look for toys and materials that will allow for children to use them in many ways. For example, children will use

blocks in a variety of ways from stacking to building buildings, to laying them flat and creating roads. This kind of “open ended” toy has lots more flexibility and can be used over time as the children grow and change.

Children need to have toys and materials that have been designed for children their age. Please do not give a one year old a toy that says it was designed for children older than that. Those toys typically will have very small parts and that is a choking hazard for those young children. Some children still put items in their mouths past the toddler years so keep that in mind and know the child(ren) the toys are being purchased for.

Look for toys that will encourage the child to be active and not sedentary. Many children are overweight and need exercise. Look for toys that will encourage movement of children and not leave them sitting for long periods of time. Children need to move - it builds their bodies to be strong and builds their minds to making strong brain connections. Art supplies such as plain paper, markers, crayons, and paint will run out and need to be replenished. Toys that are not consumables need to be made well so that they do not wear out quickly or get broken easily.

Happy shopping and have fun trying out the toy. Chances are if you play with it and enjoy the toy, you will have fun playing with the child for which it was purchased.

A Warm Welcome to Jill Norris

The CCR&R at WKU is very pleased to announce that Jill Norris has accepted the position of Early Childhood Health Coordinator. Jill has formal training and experience in health administration and has also served as the Training Coordinator for the Small Business Development Center. Her experience, skills, and enthusiasm will benefit the child care community in many ways.

Jill is available to provide assistance in the area of health and safety issues for all child care facilities, but will be focusing especially on support for the family child care homes and registered providers. So, give Jill a call and welcome her and invite her to your center or home. She can be reached at 1-800-621-5908 or by e-mail at jill.norris@wku.edu.

A Parent's View On Professional Development for Teachers

As a single mother who has attended school full time and now works 9-5, it is very important to feel at ease when leaving your little one at a child care center for eight hours per day. It is wonderful to have teachers who enjoy their jobs; and it feels even better to know that an individual is eager and willing to go the extra mile to become even better at what they enjoy doing.

My son attends *Angela's Place Child Care Center*, where Ms. Lovie Watson is one of his teacher/caregivers. Lovie is involved in the KIDS NOW program where she is earning (the clock hour training for the) Child Development Associate Credential through WKU Child Care Resource Referral.

I would like to acknowledge that I have seen Lovie get even better in her profession, which plays a major role in the very important early childhood development of my two year old son as well as many other children. In commending all who are involved in this program, I would like to say, “You all are doing a beautiful job and it really shows.”

Sincerely,
Shannon Radford

Earn the Commonwealth Child Care Credential and Get \$100

Kim McIntyre, CCR&R Professional Development Coordinator

Beginning in January, the CCR&R will offer another term of the Kentucky Commonwealth Child Care Credential training program. The 60 clock hour training program will occur in Bowling Green on Saturdays between January and June 2003. Scholarships, which pay for the cost of the training hours, are available on a first-come basis.

Child care providers working at least 20 hours a week in a licensed child care facility or certified child care home qualify for the scholarships. Caregivers who successfully complete the 60 clock hours of approved child care training will be awarded the new Kentucky Commonwealth Child Care Credential. Scholars will also be eligible for the \$100 milestone achievement award.

Previous Commonwealth Child Care Credential Scholar, Dawn Sumner of Glasgow's *Let's Go Play Academy* indicated, "I am really glad I chose to take these classes. I left each of these classes feeling excited because I had learned so much."

Susan Beth Wise of *La Petite Academy* indicated "I feel that these trainings have made me a more competent child care provider. I have taken the things I've learned in training and have applied them to my classroom. It had made such a big difference."

If you are interested in learning the new Commonwealth Child Care, the Child Development Associate, or early childhood college classes, please contact Kim McIntyre, the CCR&R Professional Development Coordinator at (270) 745-2216 or 1-800-621-5908 regarding scholarship information. Scholars from all counties are encouraged to apply, but we are especially seeking scholars from Allen, Monroe, and Hart.

Come on - give it a try! Call toll free at 1-800-621-5908 or e-mail kim.mcintyre@wku.edu.



Promising Practices for After School Programs

Connie Jo Smith, CCR&R Specialist

Check out the web page at the AED Center for Youth Development and Policy Research (the Center) at www.afterschool.org. The Center started the *Promising Practices in Afterschool System* in October of 1999 with funding from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

A process to identify and distribute promising after-school program practices was developed by the Center and the *Promising Practices in After School* Advisory Panel during the first two years of the project. The Advisory Panel included professionals from the youth development and educational school-age care programs. Seven component areas were identified for the categories of Promising Practices:

- Community & Family Involvement
- Programming
- Management & Administration
- Staffing & Training
- Financing
- Research, Evaluation, & Knowledge Base
- Policy & Advocacy

In addition to searching for best practices in these seven areas, the web page also has sections on funding, resources, activities, and frequently asked questions. Use the web page to get ideas and to share your best practices.



JUST FOR PARENTS

Education News Parents Can Use

Education News Parents Can Use, a new television series produced by the U.S. Department of Education began on October 15, 2002. The first show was *Protecting Your Child at Home and School*. You can still see it by viewing the webcast on the Internet. See resources at the end of this article to find out how.

Education News Parents Can Use is taking the place of the Satellite Town Meeting, produced by the U.S. Department of Education for the past decade. This new series is a livelier and more parent-focused program that includes resources, practical tips, and activities to help all children achieve.

Education News Parents Can Use is scheduled on the third Tuesday of each month during the school year. The target audience is parents and educators with a general knowledge of and strong interest in education. Dates and topics are listed below.

Math and Science. Tuesday, November 19, 2002 at 7:00 PM CT

No Child Left Behind Anniversary. Tuesday, January 21, 2003 at 7:00 PM CT

Title IX. Tuesday, February 18, 2003 at 7:00 PM CT

Teacher Quality. Tuesday, March 18, 2003 at 7:00 PM CT

Special Education. Tuesday, April 15, 2003 at 7:00 PM CT

Educational Technology. Tuesday, May 20, 2003 at 7:00 PM CT

Summer Reading. Tuesday, June 17, 2003 at 7:00 PM CT



Viewing Options:

Join other parents and educators to watch the series together on the campus of Western Kentucky University. Call Sherri Meyer at 270-745-2216 or 1-800-621-5908 to register and get location information. There is no fee to register, but we need to arrange for the right size room. Child care training hours will not be provided for this activity.

To view live or archived web casts of this series on Internet please visit <http://www.connectlive.com/events/ednews/>. Handouts and identified related web resources for the most recent show can be accessed at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OIIA/television/>

The U.S. Department of Education web page indicated that In some communities the local cable channels are carrying the program and that sometimes local school boards may also be providing a viewing space. The program is also rebroadcast on the Discovery Networks' TLC (The Learning Channel), the Channel One Network, and some Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) stations.

Are you interested in arranging for a downlink to bring this series to your location? See <http://registerevent.ed.gov/> for more information. There is not a fee for accessing this series, but registration is required.

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JUST FOR PARENTS

Safety Tips for Children

Sadly, in today's news, parents, caregivers, and children are almost routinely exposed to tragic or frightening stories. As adults, we face the difficulties of talking to children about what they see and hear, often when we are as confused and unsettled as they are. We don't want to make them fearful of everyone they meet, or overly anxious about things that could happen, but it is extremely important that we teach our children things they can do to protect themselves.

Child Protection Education of America, Inc. has published **Safety Tips for Children** on their website (www.find-missing-children.org/Pages/safetytipsforchildrenbrochure.htm). The site suggests that we explain to our children that learning basic self-protection rules is just like learning what to do in a fire drill. We may never need to do it in real life, but it's important to know what to do - just in case. Here are just a few of the tips listed:

Children Are Allowed to Say "No!"

We want our children to respect adults, but many children have been abducted for lack of screaming or fighting back. Suggest that a child scream as loud as they can if someone attempts to grab or hold them. Tell them to yell, "Fire!" or "Help!" or "Not my Mama!" Experts also suggest that children practice locking their arms around any object (a bike, a tree, a fence, or even the leg of another adult) that will make it difficult for an abductor to pick them up.

Teach Your Child The Tricks Used by Bad People

Abductors and molesters repeatedly use the same tricks to lure children. **Bribing:** "Come for a ride with me and I'll buy ice cream." Teach the child never to accept gifts from strangers and that a stranger is anyone that they do not know well. **Asking for Help:** "Will you help me find my lost puppy?" Teach the child to keep his/her distance and say "I can't help you. Ask a grownup." **Pretending There is An Emergency:** "Come with me; your mother is sick." Learn and regularly use a *family code word* and let the child know never to go with anyone - even someone they know - if they don't use the code word. **Threatening:** "Come with me or I'll hurt you." Teach the child to scream, or to run to a place where there are other people. **Pretending to Be An Authority Figure:** "I'm a police officer; you need to come with me." Teach the child to find an adult they know and ask them to talk with the person and check their identification.

Practice Makes Perfect

Role-play the part of a person trying to trick them so the child can practice what they learn. Do this repeatedly; children need constant reminders. Present as many situations as possible, using the child's increasing knowledge as your guide. Involve the child in the learning process; it's the best way to make sure they understand and remember what to do in a real-life situation. Play *What If?* "What if you get lost at the mall?" "What if you miss the school bus?"

Finally, there are a few things every child - even very young ones - should learn: Their full name, address and phone number; their parents' full names and where they work; how to dial 911 or "0" for an operator; how to recognize "Safe Spot" signs and community friends, such as police officers; and directions home from various locations within their neighborhood.

WKU Child Care Resource & Referral asks that you copy and distribute this

November is . . .

Aviation Month
Child Safety and Protection Month
Good Nutrition Month
International Drum Month
Latin American Month
National Adoption Month
National Epilepsy Month
National Model Railroad Month
Peanut Butter Lover's Month

2nd Week is American Education Week
2nd Week in National Children's Book Week
November 1 is National Author's Day
November 1 is National Family Literacy Day
November 3 is Sandwich Day
November 7 is Hug a Bear Day
November 9 is Parade Day
November 13 is Mom's and Dad's Day
November 15 is Recycle Day
November 21 is World Hello Day
November 28 is Thanksgiving Day



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