



B A B Y steps

a newsletter for the parents of babies

Spring 2012

In this issue:

Fathers on the loose with Dr. Seuss	1
Sun safety for children	2
Impact smoking has on unborn babies, infants, and children	2
Car seat recommendations for children	3
How many years can I use my car seat?	3

Fathers on the loose with Dr. Seuss

By: Angela Reinhart, The University of Illinois Cooperative Extension

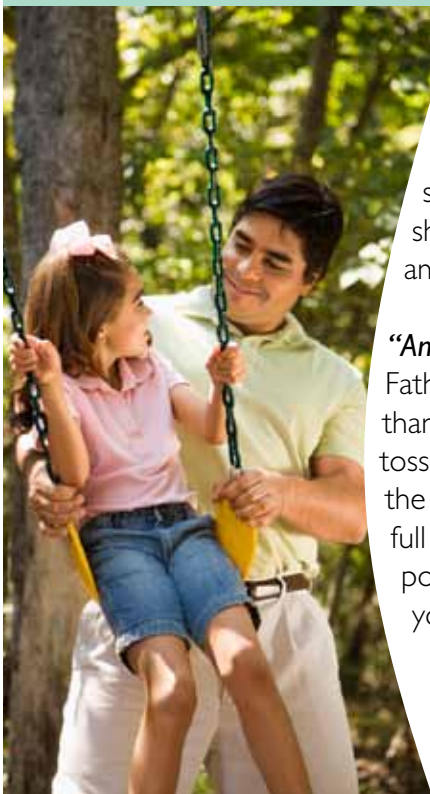
Celebrating Father's Day was established in June 1910. The original celebration honored a widowed father raising six children. Today, all who celebrate this occasion try to capture their feelings for their fathers, grandfathers, and male role models on paper. The number one gift fathers receive on this occasion is a card.

Researchers Garret Evans and Kate Fogarty from the University of Florida Extension have summarized the many roles dads play into five P's: participator/problem solver, playmate, principled guide, provider, and preparer. These are unique to fathers, though similar to the roles mothers play.

Presented in an open letter to fathers, with a little humorous help from Dr. Seuss, the importance of these roles can be described as follows:

"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." Fathers, children need you to be a participator and problem solver as often as possible. Sometimes this is easy to overlook day to day, but your role is very different than that of a mother. Your children learn so much from you, especially how to handle challenges in life. You are natural at listening, solving problems, and setting an example on how to do many things. You have opportunities to not only show your children how to make friends and act on decisions, but also how to make amends and handle the consequences of those decisions. Be involved!

"And when they played they really played. And when they worked they really worked." Fathers, research shows you spend more time in rough and tumble, high-energy play than mothers do. You are a master at generating excitement and surprises, from gently tossing baby in the air to acting as a human jungle gym. What child hasn't anticipated the moment they get to play with you? You have a unique window into their world, full of imagination and very real fears, hopes, feelings, and dreams. You have many opportunities to start serious conversations and build a solid, healthy relationship with your children. Don't miss them!



...cont'd on page 4



Sun safety for children

By: The University of Florida Cooperative Extension

While enjoying the beautiful outdoors, parents need to protect their children and themselves from the sun's damaging rays. Just a few serious sunburns or even too much tanning over long periods of time can dramatically increase your child's risk of skin cancer later in life. One sunburn may double a child's risk for developing melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.

Every year more than one million Americans, including children, are diagnosed with skin cancer and more than 10,000 will die from the disease. This is more than all other types of cancer combined. Even as skin cancer is becoming more common in children, only about one-third to one-half of children and their parents are taking even basic steps to prevent sun damage.

Health care experts recommend that parents take precautions to protect their children from too much sun:

- Keep children out of the sun between the hours of 11:00am and 4:00pm when the sun is strongest
- Dress children in clothing that covers them up – a long sleeved shirt, pants, and a wide-brimmed hat that shades the face, scalp, ears, and neck. In hot-

ter climates like Florida's, a tee shirt, beach cover-up, and long shorts are also good choices when combined with plenty of sunscreen and staying in the shade as much as possible

- Provide sunglasses that protect your child's eyes from UV rays. Look for broad spectrum protection that blocks close to 100 percent of UVB and UVA rays, absorbs UV light, and wraps around the eyes
- Use plenty of sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 every time your child goes outside. Apply it at least 30 minutes before heading out and use it even on cloudy days. Make sure to apply a thick dose and remember to cover the backs of knees, ears, under the eyes, and the neck and scalp. Don't forget to reapply every two hours or more after swimming or heavy perspiration. Even in cool and cloudy weather, children need protection
- If your child looks even a little pink, get him or her out of the sun to prevent further burning. It can take up to 12 hours for skin to show the effects of sun exposure
- Keep sunscreen handy. Fun things to do outdoors can come up unexpectedly, so be prepared

Impact smoking has on unborn babies, infants, and children

By: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Women's smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of pregnancy complications: premature delivery, low-birth-weight infants, still birth, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- The nicotine in cigarettes may cause constrictions in the blood vessels of the umbilical cord and uterus, thereby decreasing the amount of oxygen available to the baby
- Nicotine can be transferred through breast milk
- Babies of mothers who smoked during pregnancy have lower birth weights. Low birth weight is a leading cause of infant deaths
- In general, pregnant smokers eat more than pregnant nonsmokers, yet their babies weigh less than babies of nonsmokers. This weight deficit is smaller if smokers quit early in their pregnancy
- Smoking by the mother could cause Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Compared with unexposed infants, babies exposed to secondhand smoke after birth are at twice the risk for SIDS and infants whose mothers smoked before and after birth are at three to four times greater risk
- Mothers' smoking during pregnancy reduces their babies' lung function



Car seat recommendations for children

- Select a car seat based on your child's age and size. Choose a seat that fits in your vehicle and use it every time
- Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer's instructions; read the vehicle owner's manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or latch system, and check height and weight limits
- To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer's height and weight requirements
- Keep your child in the back seat at least through age 12

Birth – 12 months

Your child under age 1 should always ride in a rear-facing car seat. There are different types of rear-facing car seats:

- Infant-only seats can only be used rear-facing
- Convertible and 3-in-1 car seats typically have higher height and weight limits for the rear-facing position, allowing you to keep your child rear-facing for a longer period of time

1 – 3 years

Keep your child rear-facing as long as possible – It's the best way to keep him or her safe. Your child should remain in a rear-facing car seat until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the rear-facing car seat, your child is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness.

4 – 7 years

Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the forward-facing car seat with a harness, it's time to travel in a booster seat, but still in the back seat.

8 – 12 years

Keep your child in a booster seat until he or she is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. For a seat belt to fit properly the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snug across the shoulder and chest and not cross the neck or face. Remember, your child should still ride in the back seat because it's safer there.

www.nhtsa.gov



How many years can I use my car seat?

By: *National Highway Traffic Safety, Car-Safety.org*

Many manufacturers now put expiration dates on their car seats. Six years is the general recommendation. At most, 10 years is the accepted maximum lifetime of a car seat. The reasons for these limits involve possible degradation of the plastic shell and other parts, the possible loss/breakage of parts, and the fact that older seats will often not meet current government safety standards.



...cont'd from page 1

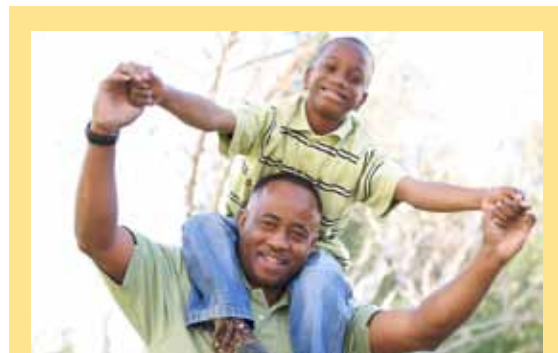
“Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don’t matter and those who matter don’t mind.” Fathers, you help your children learn the rules of life and important skills like taking turns, how not to physically hurt someone, how to love someone, and how to be a good sport. Your goal is to encourage your children and reward successful behavior while defining consequences for unacceptable behavior. This process is part natural and part learned. It evolves through an ongoing partnership with your children, their mother, and others who care for your children. Be open to learning. Make opportunities to enjoy friendships with other fathers along the way.

“A person’s a person, no matter how small.” Even though life can sometimes be very complicated dad, your children are very special and you are not alone. Your children need you to help earn a living for your family, provide food, clothing, money, shelter, and other life necessities. As more of you are becoming Mr. Mom in this economy where more men than women have lost their jobs, you may also discover the rewards of being involved with your children every day.

“I have heard there are troubles of more than one kind. Some come from ahead and some come from behind. But I’ve bought a big bat. I’m all ready you see. Now my

troubles are going to have troubles with me.” Fathers, you can’t prepare yourself or your children for everything, but remember – you influence all areas of your children’s lives from what occupation they choose and who they will marry to what kind of parent they will someday become. Continue to provide practical “batting lessons” about how and when to “swing” and what to do when they “strike out.” Provide moral guidance throughout your children’s lives. You are shaping the next generation. What’s more important than that?

“You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You’re on your own. And you know what you know. You are the guy who’ll decide where to go.” If you need some help, ask! The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension is here to help you with your parenting questions.



Gwinnett Cooperative Extension
750 South Perry Street, Suite 400
Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Baby Steps is a quarterly publication sent to you by Gwinnett Cooperative Extension. If you would like to receive notification of newly published newsletters by e-mail, please send your e-mail address to extensionservice@gwinnettcountry.com or contact Tricia Smith at 678.377.4010.

Ines Beltran
FACS Agent, Gwinnett County

