



# Parent Pages

## Welcome!

### We're Glad To Be Back!

Welcome to the relaunch of *Parent Pages*, a family newsletter from the Howard County Office of Children's Services (OCS)! In each quarterly issue, we'll bring you news and tips from many of the programs in our office – the Local Children's Board, Parents as Teachers, the CARE Center, Healthy Kids, and more. Learn more about physical and cognitive development, the importance of nutrition and exercise, building social-emotional skills, parent

education opportunities, and fun family events taking place in our community.



Kids Don't Come With Directions!

*Parent Pages* is part of the Howard County Family Institute, an education and community outreach

program of OCS. In addition to this newsletter, we'll also be offering free or low-cost workshops and seminars on issues critical to parents of children and youth ages 0 to 18. In the next few months, consider attending **Family First**, a series of workshops on development, health and safety, and

positive discipline for parents of children ages 0 to 8, or **New Age Challenges for Parents of Adolescents**, a discussion panel on staying connected with your middle or high schooler. For more information on these educational opportunities, please see page eight.

We welcome your feedback on *Parent Pages* and the other outreach efforts of the Family Institute! Please feel free to email your comments to [children@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:children@howardcountymd.gov). Share your copy of *Parent Pages* with others who may be interested, and stay in touch!

## Safe and Sound

### Emergency Preparedness for Your Family

Whew! August and September were busy months in Howard County, emergency-wise! County residents hadn't finished talking about the earthquake when Hurricane Irene struck, just as schools were getting back in

session and then there was the flooding!

Since September is National Preparedness Month, it's a great time to think back to how you and your family prepared for and recovered from these events. Many of us have emergency kits, or extra bottled water and flashlights, but



were you ready? If you were one of the families without power for a few days, how did you cope? What would you do differently next time – and remember, if you wait until "next time," it may be too late to prepare! Three programs, two local and one national, are excellent sources of information for parents and families.

**Ready.gov** walks you through the three steps of preparedness, Get A Kit, Make a Plan, and Be Informed. Check out this site for lots of helpful information and planning tools, including:

- printable supply lists
- customizable Family Emergency Plans
- wallet-sized Emergency Contact Forms for kids and adults
- what to expect in different disasters
- links to state and local information

**Citizens Emergency Readiness Training (CERT)** workshops are offered by the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue. The next series begins in October, and will cover topics such as:

- Personal Preparedness
- Disaster Recovery
- First Aid, CPR, and Automated External Defibrillator use

For more information, go to [www.howardcountymd.gov](http://www.howardcountymd.gov) and search for CERT.

**CERN, Howard County's Community Emergency Response Network**, has plenty of local information available at [www.bepreparedbeready.org](http://www.bepreparedbeready.org).

If you're interested in helping your own neighborhood be ready in case of an emergency, check out their **Neighbor to Neighbor** page. Plan a get-together with other families on your block to talk about preparedness, resources, and planning!

# Parents as Teachers: Healthy Development for Children 0-5

## Beginning Physical Fitness

Habits for good physical fitness begin early. It's up to parents to create a foundation for lifelong healthy habits. You are your child's first and most influential teacher. By being a good role model, you can teach him to enjoy physical activities, provide him with lifelong health benefits, help strengthen his muscles, develop eye-hand coordination, and build pathways in the brain which will aid the rest of his development. Children love to move, so capitalize on that by giving him many opportunities to practice using his body!

### With Your Infant:

- Provide opportunities to let her move her body without being restrained. Limit time in equipment such as exersaucers, door jumpers, bouncy chairs, and swings.
- Offer lots of Tummy Time. Place baby on her stomach on a firm surface. Stay on her level and talk to her or place her favorite toys so she

can see them. She will work to lift her head, lift her chest off the floor, and ultimately roll over!

- Help develop eye-hand coordination by helping her play with rattles, blocks and other infant toys.



### With Your Toddler:

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education recommends toddlers have 30 minutes of structured physical activity and 60 minutes of unstructured active play every day.

- Turn on music and dance to different rhythms.
- Turn a room into an obstacle course. Pile up pillows to create tunnels.
- Give your child a big box or laundry basket to carry or push around.
- Have him imitate actions that you do such as crouching, jumping, or touching toes.
- Roll, throw, catch and kick a ball with him.
- Play Follow the Leader. Have your



child follow you through an obstacle course.

### With Your Preschooler:

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education recommends that preschoolers have 60 minutes of structured activities and several hours of vigorous free play.

- Play "Freeze." Have your child move to music and then freeze when music stops.
- Blow bubbles and have your child chase them and pop them.
- Pretend to be kangaroos. With your feet together, jump, jump, jump!
- Beanbag Balance. Have him walk from one place to another, balancing a beanbag on his head, in different directions, or quickly/slowly. Now try balancing on another body part.



For more information about the **Parents as Teachers** program, which offers home-based education for parents of children 0 - 5, please call 410-313-1453 or visit [www.parentsasteachers.org](http://www.parentsasteachers.org).

# Developmental Assets: Growing Great Kids

## The Local Children's Board – Supporting Quality Programs in Our Community

As the blazing summer passes and the falling leaves welcome us into a new season, the Howard County Local Children's Board (LCB) continues to support many quality community programs for children, youth, and families. The LCB applies for grant funding, and in turn, grants it to local programs that emphasize Developmental Assets. According to the Search Institute, which pioneered this idea, Developmental Assets are forty common-sense, positive experiences and qualities that help influence the choices young

people make, and help them become caring, responsible, successful adults. LCB-sponsored programs serve children of many ages:

- For the **Starters, Walkers and Joggers** (Elementary): Community Homes, STARS at Bollman Bridge, Bear Trax, and Club LEAP assist school-agers with homework, tutoring, mentoring, character building, enrichment activities and much more.
- Next are the **Sprinters and High Speeders** (Middle School and High School!): Alpha Achievers, Cougar Time, The Drop In, and the Education and Career Empowerment Center provide older youth with opportunities to expand their



knowledge and develop the maturity to handle the challenges of life.

- Finally, there are the **Transformers** (parents and families): The MENS Program and Healthy Families Howard County allow new parents to explore family structure and child development, learn parenting and coping skills, and enhance the quality of life for themselves and their children.

For more information on any of these programs, please contact the Local Children's Board at 410-313-1940. In upcoming issues, look forward to hearing more about the work of these programs, as well as ways you can use Developmental Assets to encourage positive youth development in your own children.

# The CARE Center Corner

## Be Crazy About Your Child!

Life is about making connections to other people. Children develop their sense of self through their relationships with those around them. As a parent, you are the biggest initial investor in your child's self



-confidence bank. Urie Bronfenbrenner, a founder of Head Start, stated, "Every child needs one person who is crazy about him."

With that in mind, how can you best help your child develop a strong sense of self and a good personal foundation?

The first step is encouragement! Keep it positive with these tips from the Center for Social-Emotional Foundations in Early Learning:

- Get your child's attention
- Use behavior specific language

("You were very kind when you.." "You were such a helper when you..")

- Keep it simple—avoid combining encouragement with criticism
- Encourage with enthusiasm
- Double the impact with physical warmth
- Use positive comments and encouragement with your child in front of others

Consciously consider when you can do this. Life is very busy, so it takes planning to make a relationship investment with your child. Think about when you could weave these moments into your daily schedule.

- Morning wake-up can be a 5 minute snuggle time to start the day off right
- A note in your child's lunchbox can keep you both connected in the middle of the day

- Focus on conversation, not TV, at the dinner table
- Set a bedtime ritual that focuses on individual attention and conversation about how each child is doing

As children grow older and more independent, it's easy to assume they're not interested in spending time with you. However, they still need your involvement and encouragement as they mature. Making a strong connection with your child at an early age and maintaining that connection is so critical to help them through all of life's ups and downs. Even during the teen years, when there may be more downs than ups, you can help them realize that there is at least one person out there who is crazy about them.

*"Every child needs one person who is crazy about him."*

*Urie  
Bronfenbrenner*



Have questions about a child? Get help from

**The CARE Center**  
Child and Adolescent Resources

**Howard County  
Department of Citizen  
Services**

**Office of Children's  
Services**

3300 N. Ridge Rd Ste. 380  
Ellicott City, MD 21043  
Phone: 410-313-1940

[www.howardcountymd.gov/  
children](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/children)

Email: [children@  
howardcountymd.gov](mailto:children@howardcountymd.gov)

Parent Pages is published quarterly by the Office of Children's Services. Please feel free to copy and distribute this publication. Available in alternative formats upon request.

Are you looking for information or resources to help with a child or teen in Howard County? Do you have questions about:

CARE Center staff work with families to identify their needs and help them find solutions that work.

- Behavior Issues
- Childcare
- County Resources
- Special Needs and Evaluations
- Parenting Classes
- Early Childhood Programs
- Health Care
- Mental Health Concerns
- Grandparent Support
- Financial Assistance

Call the CARE Center 410-313-CARE (2273)

[children@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:children@howardcountymd.gov)

[www.howardcountymd.gov/children](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/children)

# Adolescent Arena

## Back to School – For Teens and Parents

The new school year is now in full swing, and many parents of adolescents worry that they are not doing enough. Usually, it's enough to just make sure your child is adjusting to the new routine, and to keep encouraging them to do their best. It's natural for parents to feel more overwhelmed than a child seems, especially when children are transitioning into a new school or a new environment.

Parents often view these times as just something to get through, when this is

actually a great opportunity to celebrate a child's growing independence. Just keep in mind: independence is not necessarily separation. It's important to stay involved, interested, and engaged. Attend school functions and learn about your child's peer group. The simple act of being present reassures your child that you are interested.

Adolescents have so much more going on today than just classroom learning. As a parent, you can help prepare them with self-management skills and social skills in addition to study skills.

Between academics, athletics, and peers, school can be a stressful time for

adolescents. Allow for independent decision-making, but stay connected – be there for your child when things happen. This is especially comforting when there is so much change for parents and teens. Young people need a good home base to recharge, just as parents do, so keep your home environment comforting and supportive.



Have a great year!

# Healthy Kids News

*Healthy Kids, a program of the Office of Children's Services, takes nutrition education into community and after school programs. An OCS staff member visits several after school programs each school year to hold fruit and veggie tastings, teach simple nutrition information, and get kids excited about eating right. Funding for Healthy Kids is provided by the Horizon Foundation.*

## Fruits and Veggies - More Matters!

Looking for a brighter future? Try eating a diet rich in colorful fruits and vegetables. The potential benefits



associated with eating more fruits and vegetables stack up quickly; reducing your risk of certain chronic diseases is only the beginning.

Whether fresh, frozen, canned, dried or 100% juice, these 200+ taste sensations are quick, delicious and convenient, and will keep you healthy all year round.

### Top 10 Ways to Get Kids Involved in Healthy Cooking & Shopping:

10. **Mean Green Cleaning Machine.** Let them wash [fruits](#) and [vegetables](#) when preparing for cooking or eating.
9. **Pick A Peck!** When shopping, let them select a new fruit or vegetable to try ... or several!
8. **Make It Snappy!** Let them snap the [green beans](#), [snap peas](#), or break the flowerets from the [broccoli](#) or [cauliflower](#).
7. **I Spy.** Play "I Spy" in the produce section when grocery shopping.
6. **Tear It Up!** Let them tear the lettuce for salads and sandwiches.
5. **Measure Up!** Let them measure the [frozen](#) vegetables before cooking them. [See How Much You Need](#)
4. **Peel & Slice.** Older children can peel and slice [carrots](#), [cucumbers](#), [potatoes](#) ... the list goes on!
3. **Stir & Spice.** Make applesauce from fresh [apples](#). Let them help stir and add the cinnamon.
2. **A Sprinkle A Day...** Let them sprinkle herbs or other seasonings onto vegetables.
1. **Monster Mash!** Pull out the potato masher!

For more information, contact: [teaton@pphfoundation.org](mailto:teaton@pphfoundation.org) or [www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org)

*Courtesy of Produce for Better Health (PBH) Foundation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

# Community Calendar Fall 2011

## October 2011

**October 11; 6-8 pm**

**Family First: Positive and Practical Parenting: Building Blocks for Parents**

The Howard County Family Institute presents this workshop where you will learn ways to encourage healthy development for children ages birth-8. Held at the North Laurel-Savage MultiService Center (9900 Washington Blvd., in Laurel). \$5 per adult. Enrollment is limited, so register early. Child care is not provided. For more information or to register, call 410-313-1940.

**October 21; 9am-4pm**

**50+EXPO**

Back for a 13th consecutive year, this premiere event for adults age 50 and older, younger adults with disabilities, their caregivers and family members features exhibitors, workshops, a health fair, great food, all day entertainment and free shuttle service from the Mall in Columbia. Stay tuned for more information at <http://www.howardcountygaging.org/50plusexpo>. Wilde Lake High School, 5460 Trumpeter Rd., Columbia, Contact: Office on Aging, 410-313-6410

**October 24; 6-8 pm**

**Family First: Positive and Practical Parenting: Raise a V.I.P.!**

The Howard County Family Institute presents this workshop that addresses temperament types and building self-esteem in children from birth to age 8. Held at the North Laurel-Savage MultiService Center (9900 Washington Blvd., in Laurel). \$5 per adult. Enrollment is limited, so register early. Child care is not provided. For more information or to register, call 410-313-1940.

**October 27; 6:30-8:30pm**

**“New Age” Challenges For Parents of Adolescents**

Presented by The Howard County Family Institute. Join us for an honest and practical panel discussion on issues facing today’s parents of middle and high schoolers. Our panel of representatives from several community programs will address ways to maintain open communication with teens. The Bain Center, 5470 Ruth Keeton Way, Columbia, MD 21044. Free. Space is limited; please pre-register by calling 410-313-1940 or emailing [children@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:children@howardcountymd.gov) (we’ll need your name and contact email). This discussion is for parents only!

## November 2011

**November 3; 7pm**

**Healthy Food in our Schools - Howard County Conservancy**

Anthony Geraci is inspiring and energizing the nation's school systems to provide fresh and local foods to our school children. How can we introduce and support healthy eating habits and menus? What does it take to change school cafeterias and home lunch boxes? Good food means Great Kids! Don't miss this high energy presentation from the Director of Food and Nutrition for Baltimore City School System and nationwide childhood nutrition consultant whom the White House has tapped for first lady Michelle Obama's efforts in combating childhood obesity. \$5/family, all students free. [www.hcconservancy.org](http://www.hcconservancy.org)

**November 5; 9am-Noon**

**Family Volunteer Day**

Join the Department of Recreation & Parks for the 12th Annual Family Volunteer Day. This is a day for families, friends and community groups to increase their sense of unity by performing tasks that improve the community. Bring a canned good or paper product to be donated to the Howard County Food Bank. For more information on this event, contact Ann Combs at 410-313-4624 or at [acombs@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:acombs@howardcountymd.gov). The rain date for this event is Saturday, November 12.



**November 7, 6-8pm**

**Family First: Discipline & Communication That Really Work**

The Howard County Family Institute presents this workshop where you will learn about transitions, communication, structure and consistency for your children from birth to age 8. Held at the North Laurel-Savage MultiService Center (9900 Washington Blvd., in Laurel). \$5 per adult. Enrollment is limited, so register early. Child care is not provided. For more information or to register, call 410-313-1940.

**November 21, 6-8pm**

**Family First: Positive Discipline**

The Howard County Family Institute presents this workshop where you will learn about expectations, rewards, and consequences for your children from birth to age 8. Held at the North Laurel-Savage MultiService Center (9900 Washington Blvd., in Laurel). \$5 per adult. Enrollment is limited, so register early. Child care is not provided. For more information or to register, call 410-313-1940.

# Fall 2011 Workshops for Parents

Whether you're parenting a high schooler or a first-grader, we know you have questions! Consider joining us at one or more of the trainings below. The Family Institute is developing other workshops for future seasons - if you have any ideas for topics, please feel free to email us at [children@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:children@howardcountymd.gov).

**For more information on any of these workshops, please call 410-313-1940.**

## "New Age" Challenges for Parents of Adolescents

Join us for an honest and practical panel discussion on issues facing today's parents of middle and high schoolers. Our panel of representatives from several community programs will address ways to maintain open communication with teens, including:

- ✧ Social media challenges and how to bridge the technology gap between generations
- ✧ Adolescents and dating
- ✧ Bullying, cyber-bullying, and harassment
- ✧ Transitioning to middle or high school

After presentations from each panel member, all parents will have the opportunity to take part in an open discussion or submit questions anonymously, depending on their comfort level.

**Thursday, Oct. 27, 6:30 - 8:30 pm**  
**The Bain Center** - 5470 Ruth Keeton Way,  
Columbia, MD 21044

**FREE** - Space is limited; please **pre-register** by calling 410-313-1940 or emailing [children@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:children@howardcountymd.gov) (we'll need your name and contact email). This discussion is for parents only!



Howard County  
Family  
Institute

Kids Don't Come With Directions!

## Family First:

## Positive and

## Practical Parenting

Designed for parents and guardians raising children  
from birth to age 8

**Building Blocks for Parents** - ways to encourage healthy development (Tues. Oct 11)

**Raise a V.I.P.!** - temperament types, building self-esteem (Mon. Oct 24)

**Discipline & Communication That Really Work** - transitions, communication, structure and consistency (Mon. Nov 7)

**Positive Discipline** - expectations, rewards, and consequences (Mon. Nov 21)

**Keeping Kids Healthy** - planning healthy snacks, meals, and beverages; exercise (Mon. Dec 5)

**Keeping Kids Safe** - safety-proofing tips, car seats, child abuse, stress (Mon. Dec 19)

Classes meet from 6 to 8 pm on the dates indicated. All workshops are held at the North Laurel-Savage MultiService Center (9900 Washington Blvd., in Laurel). Each workshop is \$5 - you may enroll in all six sessions, or just choose one or two. Enrollment is limited, so register early. Child care is not provided.

**To register, call 410-313-1940.**