

Keeping Information, Data & Services Accessible to All the Families We Serve

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES

## Benefits of Baby Story Time

When you read to your child, even before he or she can use words, you are building your child's brain and helping him or her prepare for success in school and in life. But it may not always be easy to read to baby, especially when he or she cannot communicate back.

Reading to a baby at an early age may feel challenging at times; however, studies have shown that children who are routinely read to from a young age develop improved language skills, an increased interest in reading, and an increased social foundation. Even from early infancy, reading to your baby teaches him or her to recognize sounds and rhythm of language. Plus, reading is a great bonding exercise.

### Why Read to My Baby?

Have you ever wondered why there are so many commercials and billboards telling parents to read to their child? An infant won't understand everything you are saying so why shouldn't you wait until your child could understand what you were saying before you started speaking to him or her?

According to many research studies conducted on this topic, reading aloud to your baby is an important form of stimulation. Reading aloud teaches a baby about communication, introduces concepts such as numbers, letters, colors, and shapes in a fun way, builds listening, memory, and vocabulary skills, and gives babies information about the world around them. Plus, it is a wonderful shared activity you can continue with a child for years to come.

Believe it or not, by the time infants reach their first birthday they will have learned all the sounds needed to speak their native language. The more stories you read aloud, the more words your child will be exposed to and the better he or she will be able to talk.

Hearing words helps to build a rich network of words in a baby's brain. Children whose parents frequently read to them know more words by age 2 than children who have not been read to. Children improve their language skills by imitating sounds, recognizing pictures, and learning words they have heard before.

Children who are read to during their early years are more likely to learn to read at the right time. Spending time reading to your baby shows that reading is a skill worth learning. And, if infants and children are read to often with joy, excitement, and closeness,



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### Check It Out!

#### News You Can Use

You may already know that fish contains healthy fats called omega-3s. But, did you know that fish could help your child get a good night's sleep? Check out page 7 to learn more about the benefits of eating fish.

Take your test and survey online at: <https://goo.gl/mkJwL>

Our Winter test winner is  
**Silvia Soriano**

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they begin to associate books with happiness—and budding readers are created.

But perhaps the most important reason to read aloud is that it makes a connection between the things your baby loves the most: your voice and closeness to you.

### What to Read to My Baby?

During the first few months of life, your child just likes to hear your voice, so you can read almost anything, especially books with a sing-song or rhyming text. Books for babies should have simple, repetitive text and clear pictures. Young babies may not know what the pictures in a book mean, but they like to hear your voice and can look at the faces, bright colors, and contrasting patterns in books. As your baby gets more interested in looking at things, choose books with simple pictures against solid backgrounds.

Between 4 and 6 months, your baby may begin to show more interest in books. He or she will grab and hold books, but will chew and drop them as well. Choose sturdy vinyl or cloth books with bright colors and repetitive or rhyming text. When your baby begins to respond to what's inside of books, add board books with pictures of babies or familiar objects like toys. When your child begins to do things like sit up in the bathtub or eat finger foods, find simple stories about daily routines like bedtime or bathtime. When your child starts talking, choose books that invite babies to repeat simple words or phrases.

Books with mirrors and different textures (crinkly, soft, scratchy) are also great for this age group, or books with flaps that open for a surprise. Babies of any age like photo albums with pictures of people they know and love. And every baby should have a collection of nursery rhymes!

Between 6 and 12 months, your child is beginning to understand that pictures represent objects, and most likely will develop preferences for certain pictures, pages, or even entire stories. Your baby will respond while you read, grabbing for the book and making sounds, and by 12 months will turn pages (with some help from you), pat or start to point to objects on a page, and repeat your sounds.

One of the best ways you can ensure that your little one grows



up to be a reader is to have books around your house. When your baby is old enough to crawl over to a basket of toys and pick one out, make sure some books are included in the mix.

In addition to the books you own, take advantage of those you can borrow from the library. Many libraries have storytime just for babies, too. Don't forget to pick up a book for yourself while you are there. Reading for pleasure is another way you can be your baby's reading role model.

### When and How to Read to My Baby?

The great thing about reading aloud is that all you need is you, your baby, and some books. Since there is no need for special equipment, you can read to your child anytime. Take at least a few minutes each day to read aloud to your child. You do not need to get bogged down by finishing every book you start. If it helps, focus on a few pages that you and your baby enjoy.

Set aside time to read every day, perhaps before naptime and bedtime. This will help you and your baby establish a routine, and set expectations about when it is time to sleep. You can also read to your child at other points in the day. Choose times when your baby is dry, fed, and alert. Books also come in handy when you're stuck

*Benefits of Baby Story Time continued on page 7*

## K.I.D.S.

Published quarterly for San Francisco County foster parents, resource families, NREFMs and kin care providers. To suggest a topic, submit an article, promote an event, or provide feedback, email Sharon.Walchak@sfgov.org.

### Editorial Staff

Editors: Agnes Balla and Sharon Walchak  
Amabel Baxley, Kimberlee Pitters, Cynthia Ramsell

City and County of San Francisco/Family & Children Services  
PO Box 7988 • 170 Otis Street, San Francisco, CA 94120

**Newsletter Website:** <https://www.sfhsa.org/newsletters>

### Helpful Phone Numbers

HSA Operator	(415) 557-5000
CPS Child Abuse Hotline	(800) 856-5553 or (415) 558-2650
Foster Care Ombudsman	(415) 558-2828
Transportation Duty Line	(415) 557-5376
Licensing/RFA/Recruitment Hotline	(415) 558-2200
Free Foster Parenting Respite Service	(415) 861-4060 x3035
Community Services	211
Non-emergency Government Services	311

FCS Agency Directory: [www.sfhsa.org/174.htm](http://www.sfhsa.org/174.htm)

April 2018

## Hello Esteemed Resource Parents:

We are excited to announce a change to the publication of the KIDS Newsletter as you know it now and to introduce the new way you will receive lots of useful information in the future.

This KIDS Newsletter is the final one you will be receiving in this format. Instead of receiving this 12-page publication on a quarterly basis, moving forward, you will be receiving a magazine called “Foster Family Times” on a bimonthly basis. The magazine will cover topics that are relevant on a national level and will keep you posted and up to date with what and how the rest of the foster parent community is growing and learning nationwide.

Within the “Foster Family Times” magazine, you will find a 4-page “KIDS Newsletter” that will be much like the newsletter you are familiar with. We will continue to cover topics and provide information specific to San Francisco children and their care providers. You will see a medical article, a Licensing Regulation feature (now called the Written Directives), and a Champions for Children section that highlights the amazing work of a care provider. We will also continue to include a training section to keep you up to date on local trainings provided by Human Services Agency, the Parenting for Permanency College (Bay Area Academy), and City College of San Francisco’s FKCE Program.

There will also be the same learning opportunities. Each edition will include a quiz for you to complete and send in with an envelope provided. Completing this quiz will allow you to gain annual required training hours necessary for maintaining your RFA certification.

As always, I hope that you will contact us if there are any topics you would like to see featured in the newsletter.

We believe you will continue to grow and learn from the information in this new publication.

It is a pleasure for us to work with so many of you amazing resource parents! Your dedication, commitment and love for the children of San Francisco is inspiring, commendable and makes us feel so incredibly lucky to work with you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sophia Ison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

## Join us in welcoming our newest Resource Family Participants

The Parenting for Permanency College is excited to congratulate the latest participants from the January 2018 and February 2018 Resource Family Approval (RFA) PreService training and SA/HIV Infant Training Programs. Participants dedicate time from their personal lives to learn and develop their skills during RFA PreService training. This dedication is focused on providing a loving, safe and nurturing environment for San Francisco County's most vulnerable children and young adults.

We would like to apologize to the January RFA PreService participants. We were not able to recover the photo. We welcome them to our network of dedicated Resource Families.

Warm regards,

AMABEL BAXLEY, MSW  
WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST



February 2018 RFA PreService (English)



February 2018 RFA PreService (Spanish)



SA/HIV Series (English)

### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Please save the date to join us for City & County of San Francisco, Human Services Agency, Foster Care Licensing and Resource Family Approval Program and the Parenting for Permanency College for the:

### Annual FCS Resource Family Appreciation and Training Event Friday, May 18, 2018

Look out for invitations in the mail. Registration is open April 1, 2018 to April 27, 2018. You can register through your RFA Worker or by following the instruction on the invitation. It will be an evening of great food, dancing and games as we celebrate and show appreciation to our wonderful RFA Families, Foster Parents and Relative Care Providers.

### SAN FRANCISCO FAMILIES MAKING A DIFFERENCE MENTOR PROGRAM

Our mission is to provide support, guidance and resources to enable newly approved Resource Families the tools needed to provide children with a safe, healthy and loving environment. Our mentor team is committed to encourage mutual respect, compassion and open communication. You can reach us through our mentor phone line at (415) 557-5400.

We have two new trainings offerings:

- Administration of Psychotropic Medication being offered in April
- Whole Family Foster Home being offered in June

You can register through your RFA worker or by contacting:  
Bay Area Academy  
Care Provider Registration Line  
(510) 271-0951 x 117

## Parenting for Permanency College Trainings January–March 2018

### Register Today!

You can register for classes through your RFA worker or by contacting Bay Area Academy Care Provider Registration Line at our new number: (415) 557-6618. Location for all support group meetings is 3801 3rd Street, unless otherwise stated.

<b>April 2018</b>	English RFA Pre-Service Training	April 3 – 12, 2018 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm Tuesdays/Thursdays
	Spanish RFA PreService Training	April 7 – 14, 2018 9:00 am – 3:30 pm Saturdays
	Spanish RFA PreService Advanced	April 21, 2018 9:00 am – 3:30 pm
	English CPR/ First Aid	April 14, 2018 9:00 am – 3:30 pm
	Spanish CPR/ First Aid	April 28, 2018 9:00 am – 3:30 pm
	Quarterly Caregiver Meeting: Bed Bug Infections	April 19, 2018 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm
	RFA Orientation/ Information Session	April 26, 2018 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm
<b>May 2018</b>	English RFA PreService Training	May 5 – 12, 2018 9:00 am – 3:30 pm Saturdays
	English SA/HIV Infant Program Training	May 5 – June 9, 2018 9:00 am – 5:00 pm Saturdays
	English CPR/ First Aid	May 19, 2018 9:00 am – 3:30 pm
	Spanish ABC's of Baby Care	April 28, 2018 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm
	RFA Orientation/ Information Session	May 24, 2018 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm
<b>June 2018</b>	English ABC's of Baby Care	June 13, 2018 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm
	English CPR/ First Aid	June 2, 2018 9:00 am – 3:30 pm
	RFA Orientation/ Information Session	June 28, 2018 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

## Parenting for Permanency College Calendar



### *Parenting for Permanency: A Journey of the Heart*

*Training:* to enhance care providers' knowledge base and skills. *Support:* to elevate care providers' spirits and to create bonds of positive and healthy relationships.

Register for English and Spanish Support Groups with Sharon Walchak at (415) 401-4313 or sharon.walchak@sfgov.org. Location for all support group meetings is to be determined.

### ENGLISH SUPPORT GROUPS

Held every 3rd Tuesday of the month  
5:30 pm refreshments • 6 – 8 pm meeting

**April 17, 2018**  
**Movie Night**

**May 15, 2018**  
**Grief and Loss**  
**Presenter: Judy Leffler**

**June 19, 2018**  
**TBA**

### SPANISH SUPPORT GROUPS

Held every 3rd Thursday of the month  
5:30 pm refreshments • 6 – 8 pm meeting

**April 19, 2018**  
**Tandem Reading**

**May 17, 2018**  
**Topic TBA**  
**Presenter: Natalia Estasi**

**June 21, 2018**  
**Topic TBA**  
**Presenter: Rocio Rodriguez**

## SPRING 2018 SCHEDULE

City College of San Francisco Child Development & Family Studies Department

### Foster & Kinship Care Education

CCSF Evans Campus • 1400 Evans Avenue, Room 107, San Francisco

All classes meet the requirements for Continued Education for Licensed Foster Parents and Kinship Care Providers and specifically meet the mandated 8 hours of Continued Education. Certificates of Completion issued at the end of each session. Please register early by calling Brenda at (415) 452-5605.

#### TALK TIME TUESDAYS AT EVANS CAMPUS

April 3	April 10	April 17	April 24
10 am - 1 pm	10 am - 3 pm	10 am - 1 pm	10 am - 1 pm
The Reunification Process	Accessing Summer Resources	Communication Skills When Working with Families	Working with Youth with Special Health Needs—HIV/ Diabetes/Asthma

May 1	May 8
10 am - 1 pm	10 am - 1 pm
From Boys to Men	Youth Related Depression & Mental Health Concerns

#### ADOLESCENT WEDNESDAYS AT EVANS CAMPUS

April 4	April 11	April 18	April 25
10 am - 1 pm	10 am - 1 pm	10 am - 1 pm	10 am - 1 pm
Adolescent Development	Foster Youth Rights	How to Talk to Youth About Saying "No" to Alcohol & Drugs	Avoiding Power Struggles

May 2	May 9
10 am - 1 pm	10 am - 1 pm
From Girls to Women	Summer Safety

### RESPITE/CHILD CARE PROGRAM

You may have heard of Family Support Services before, but did you know that they have expanded their respite/child care services to Contra Costa, Alameda and San Mateo counties?

The Respite/Child Care Program is a free service available to all San Francisco certified resource parents and foster parents. The Respite/Child Care Program largely provides emergency respite care, most often outside of a family's home at licensed family day care homes day or night, including the weekends. Services can also be provided during the day in a family's home by one of the program's Family Support Specialists.

All care providers are trained to provide services for children with special needs. Services are available when adult care providers just need a break.

If you are interested in free respite care, contact (415) 861-4284 to speak to a Respite Childcare Coordinator directly. The intake process is short so parents can receive free respite care quickly.

If you have any questions about the Respite/Child Care Program, contact a coordinator at the above phone number or contact N. Bruce Williams, Family Support Services Respite/Child Care Program Director, at [bwilliams@fssba-sf.org](mailto:bwilliams@fssba-sf.org).



# New Study Shows Benefits of Eating Fish

Eating fish is an important part of a healthy diet. Many may know that fish and other seafood contain omega-3 fatty acid, a healthy fat, and are also rich in other nutrients such as vitamin D. But did you know that eating fish have even more benefits? In a new study published in December 2017 found that children who eat fish once a week, have on average better sleep and score higher on IQ tests than children who never eat fish or do so less than once a week.

Researchers from the University of Pennsylvania analyzed the IQs, fish-eating habits and sleeping patterns of more than 500 children in China ages 9 to 11. Children who participated in the study completed a questionnaire about how often they had eaten fish in the past month, with options that ranged from never to at least once a week.

The children also took the Chinese version of an IQ test that rated verbal and nonverbal skills. In addition, the children's parents answered questions about their child's sleep quality. The information collected included how long their children slept, how often they woke during the night and whether they were sleepy during the day.

As part of the study, the researchers took into account other factors that could influence the findings, such as the parents' education, occupation and marital status and the number of children in the home.

The research team found that children who ate fish at least once a week scored 4.8 points higher on the IQ test than those who seldom or never ate fish. Children whose meals sometimes included fish scored slightly more than 3 points higher.

Moreover, eating more fish was linked with better sleep. The study found that increased fish consumption was associated with fewer disturbances of sleep. According to the researchers, there may be a chain of effects: fish consumption is associated with better sleep, and better sleep is associated with better cognitive performance.

"Fish helps with sleep, and this results in higher IQ," said the lead author, Jianghong Liu, a professor in the school of nursing at the University of Pennsylvania. "If parents want their kids to be healthy and high performing in school, they should put fish on the table."



Previous research has suggested that eating fish or taking fish oil is good for the heart. The strong and consistent evidence for its benefits is such that the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the American Heart Association, and others suggest that everyone eat fish twice a week. Specifically, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends one to two 2-ounce servings of low-mercury fish a week for children ages 4 to 7, 3-ounces for children 8 to 10, and 4-ounces for children 11 and older.

Unfortunately, fewer than one in five Americans listen to that advice. About one-third of Americans eat seafood once a week, while nearly half eat fish only occasionally or not at all. Although some people may simply not like fish, the generally low consumption of fish is likely also caused by other factors, including the worry that children will be harmed by mercury or other possible toxins that are in some types of fish.

However, as the research suggests, the benefits of eating fish seem to outweigh the benefits of avoiding it. In fact, the FDA has issued advice for parents and caregivers of young children aimed to help them make informed decisions about fish that are safe to eat. The FDA recommends eating fish low in mercury, such as, anchovy, canned light tuna, catfish, salmon, shrimp, and tilapia.



April, May, June

## Birthday Shout-Outs!

Mary O. Adams	Magdalyn Cain	Anthony Miller
Kelley Alford	Brian Cody	Diarra Reed
June Armstead	Lorraine Hanks	Alicia Robinson
Deloris Betha	Brenda D. Jackson	Cristina Villatoro
Larry Brown	Joyce Lee	Charlene Woullard
Lessie Brown	Charlene Major	
Charlesetta Burks	Yvonne Mauroni	

Use the enclosed survey form to be added to the birthday list.

## San Francisco Foster Parent Association Announcement

### Join Us for Our Monthly Meetings!

Please join us at our meetings to meet other foster parents. We are a stand-alone and member-run nonprofit organization to empower ALL foster, adoptive, relative and non-relative care providers. Our goal is for all care providers to come together to achieve high-quality care for the well-being of our children and youth.

**Call or text Lorraine Hanks, Foster Parent Association President, at (415) 756-5240 for date and location of upcoming meetings. Light dinner served.**

# Importance of Teen Sleep

**Most teens** need about 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night. Getting the right amount of sleep is essential for anyone. Unfortunately, many teens do not get enough sleep.

Until recently, teens often got a bad rap for staying up late, oversleeping for school, and falling asleep in class. But recent studies show that adolescent sleep patterns actually differ from those of adults or children.

Experts say that during the teen years, the body's circadian rhythm (the body's internal biological clock) is temporarily reset, telling a person to fall asleep later and wake up later. This change might be due to the brain hormone, called melatonin, that is produced later at night for teens than it is for children and adults. This can make it harder for teens to fall asleep early.

These changes in the body's circadian rhythm coincide with a busy time in life. For

most teens, the pressure to do well in school is more intense than when they were in elementary school, and it is harder to get by without studying hard. Teens also have other time demands—everything from sports and other extracurricular activities to working a part-time job to save money for college.

Early start times in some schools also might play a role in lost sleep. Teens who fall asleep after midnight may still have to get up early for school, meaning that they might squeeze in only 6 or 7 hours of sleep a night. A few hours of missed sleep a night may not seem like a big deal, but it can create a noticeable sleep deficit over time.

A sleep deficit affects everything from someone's ability to pay attention in class to his or her mood. According to a National Sleep Foundation Sleep in America poll, more than 25% of high school students fall asleep in class, and experts have tied lost



sleep to poorer grades. In addition, lack of sleep is linked to emotional troubles, such as feelings of sadness and depression.

Therefore, adequate sleep is crucial to help keep teens emotionally and physically healthy to re-energize them for everyday activities.

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 **Licensing Regulation**

# Car Seat Safety for Every Age

**Car seats** and boosters provide protection for infants and children during a car crash. Choosing the right car seat correctly every time for a child in the car is very important.

Both the RFA Written Directives and California Law require that children who are riding in a car be properly seated with an age, size and weight appropriate car seat or booster.

Children under the age of 2 are at greater risk of injury in crashes. This is because their spines are developing and their heads are large for their bodies. Children under 2 must ride in a rear-facing car seat unless the child weighs 40 or more pounds or is 40 or

more inches tall. A rear-facing car seat cradles and moves with the child to reduce the stress to the child's fragile neck and spinal cord.

Children under the age of 8 must be secured in a car seat or booster seat in the back seat. The car seat or booster must position the child so that the seat belt fits properly over your child's body.

Children who are 8 years of age or have reached 4 feet 9 inches in height may be secured by a booster seat, but at a minimum must be secured by a safety belt. Passengers who are 16 years of age and over are subject to California's Mandatory Seat Belt law, meaning that they must wear their seat belt at all times.

## RFA WRITTEN DIRECTIVES

A Resource Family shall ensure that the motor vehicles used to transport a child or nonminor dependent have current registration and automobile insurance.

(e) (1) A Resource Family shall ensure that a child is properly restrained in an appropriate child passenger restraint system based on the child's age, weight, and size while being transported in a motor vehicle in accordance with applicable laws.

# Child Sexual Abuse Fact Sheet

**Child** sexual abuse is any interaction between a child and an adult (or another child) in which the child is used for the sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or an observer. Sexual abuse can include both touching and non-touching behaviors. Touching behaviors may involve touching of the vagina, penis, breasts or buttocks, oral-genital contact, or sexual intercourse. Non-touching behaviors can include voyeurism (trying to look at a child's naked body), exhibitionism, or exposing the child to pornography.

Abusers often do not use physical force, but may use play, deception, threats, or other forms of coercion to engage children and maintain their silence. Abusers frequently employ persuasive and manipulative tactics to keep the child engaged. These tactics—referred to as “grooming”—may include buying gifts or arranging special activities, which can further confuse the victim.

## Who is sexually abused?

Children of all ages, races, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds are vulnerable to sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse affects both girls and boys in all kinds of neighborhoods and communities, and in countries around the world.

## How can you tell if a child is being (or has been) sexually abused?

Children who have been sexually abused may display a range of emotional and behavioral reactions, many of which are characteristic of children who have experienced other types of trauma. These reactions include:

- An increase in nightmares and/or other sleeping difficulties
- Withdrawn behavior
- Angry outbursts
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Not wanting to be left alone with a particular individual(s)
- Sexual knowledge, language, and/or behaviors that are inappropriate for the child's age

Although many children who have experienced sexual abuse show behavioral and emotional changes, many others do not. It is therefore critical to focus not only on detection, but on prevention and communication—by teaching children about body safety and healthy body boundaries, and by encouraging open communication about sexual matters.

## Why don't children tell about sexual abuse?

There are many reasons children do not disclose being sexually abused, including:

- Threats of bodily harm (to the child and/or the child's family)
- Fear of being removed from the home



- Fear of not being believed
- Shame or guilt

If the abuser is someone the child or the family cares about, the child may worry about getting that person in trouble. In addition, children often believe that the sexual abuse was their own fault and may not disclose for fear of getting in trouble themselves. Very young children may not have the language skills to communicate about the abuse or may not understand that the actions of the perpetrator are abusive, particularly if the sexual abuse is made into a game.

## What can you do if a child discloses that he or she is being (or has been) sexually abused?

If a child discloses abuse, it is critical to stay calm, listen carefully, and NEVER blame the child. Thank the child for telling you and reassure him or her of your support. Please remember to call for help immediately. If you know or suspect that a child is being or has been sexually abused, please call the Childhelp® National Child Abuse Hotline at 1.800.4.A.CHILD (1.800.422.4453) or visit the federally funded Child Welfare Information Gateway at: <http://www.childwelfare.gov/responding>. If you need immediate assistance, call 911.

Many communities also have local Children's Advocacy Centers (CACs) that offer coordinated support and services to victims of child abuse (including sexual abuse). For a state-by-state listing of accredited CACs, visit the website of the National Children's Alliance ([http://www.nca-online.org/pages/page.asp?page\\_id=3999](http://www.nca-online.org/pages/page.asp?page_id=3999)).

*This article was previously published in Caring for Kids: What Parents Need to Know about Sexual Abuse by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network Child Sexual Abuse Committee and was reprinted with permission.*

# National QPI Conference

**Resource parents** are encouraged to attend conferences related to caring for children. If you are interested in attending an approved conference by San Francisco Family & Children Services (FCS), FCS may sponsor a resource family to attend. To be considered, please fill out and return the enclosed conference form. If you do attend a conference, we invite you to submit an article about your experience and share with other resource parents what you learned. This article was submitted by **Patricia Hoskins**.

In January, I had the wonderful opportunity to travel to New Orleans, Louisiana to the National QPI Conference. I attended lots of different workshops, heard what is going on in lots of other counties in California and around the country and let me tell you something: San Francisco's got it going on!

I walked away from each workshop and the entire conference feeling so grateful at the numerous programs and support we have for folks like me, a relative care provider (I care for my 10 year old grandson), for biological parents and ultimately for the children in our care.

So here, in no particular order, are the things I appreciate about being a relative resource mother in San Francisco County:

Resources! We have allowances that help us cover the cost of clothing, beds,

and sheets. CASA Workers help to bond with children and explain how they are seeing the system and being away from their parents. Transportation for children to get to their visits and their activities that enable them to stay connected to their parents and engaged in community activities. We also have an educational liaison working with us to make sure children have the proper support in schools, to get their IEPs set up and working so our children can learn! It is also pretty amazing that we have substance treatment programs that actually allow children to be with their moms while they get clean and learn to stay clean.

Training! We are so blessed to have so much to help us caregivers prepare for placements and keep us informed as we

continue to care for our children. Some of these trainings are the monthly SA/HIV support groups, the Mentorship Program, QPI meetings that help improve the relationships of all the people working for the children, the Resource Parent Holiday Event and the Resource Parent Appreciation event, the SA/HIV Infant Program to help us learn how to meet the needs of young children in foster care, Baby Sign Language classes and Infant massage classes.

Conferences! I feel so lucky to have gone to New Orleans and I think anyone reading this should consider going to a conference – you will learn a lot of new information and also feel how lucky you are to be doing this hard work in San Francisco!

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*Benefits of Baby Story Time continued from page 2*



waiting, so have some in the diaper bag to fill time sitting at the doctor's office or standing in line at the grocery store.

Here are some additional reading tips:

- Cuddling while you read helps your baby feel safe, warm, and connected to you.
- Read with expression, pitching your voice higher or lower where it is appropriate or using different voices for different characters.
- Don't worry about following the text exactly. Stop once in a while and ask questions or make comments on the pictures or text. ("Where is the bunny? There he is! What a cute little bunny.") Your child might not be able to respond yet, but this lays the groundwork for doing so later on.
- Sing nursery rhymes, make funny animal sounds, or bounce your baby on your knee—anything that shows reading is fun.
- Babies love—and learn from—repetition, so do not be afraid of reading the same books over and over. When you do so, repeat the same emphasis each time as you would with a familiar song.

# Common Questions from Resource Families

Whether you're a seasoned pro or just starting out, resource families have questions. Here is your opportunity to get them answered. Send us your questions and we'll provide you with our best advice.

Some children in our care have had really intense outbursts of anger. Sometimes it's expressed verbally, but there have been other children who hit, bite, or have tried to destroy things. I need help figuring out how to de-escalate this type of behavior and ways to talk about anger with children in my home.

Teaching children to deal with their anger constructively is not easy, especially if they have only practiced aggressive ways to deal with their frustrations. But doing so will make a significant difference in their lives, because they will be able to use these skills not only now but forever. Below are some techniques you can teach children to help them de-escalate their anger.

**Model Calmness.** The best way to teach children about how to deal with anger constructively is by showing them through your example. Here's an example. Suppose you get a phone call from the auto shop saying your car estimate has now doubled. You're furious! Standing nearby is your child hearing the conversation and now watching you very closely. Muster every ounce of calmness and use it as an instant anger control lesson for your child.

**Exit and Calm Down.** One of the toughest parts of parenting is when children address their anger towards us. You may find their anger fueling emotions in you that you never realized were in you. Beware, anger is contagious. Therefore, make a rule in your home to solve problems only when everyone is calm. Then, consistently reinforce the rule.



Here's an example of how you might use it. The next time your child is angry and wants a quick solution, you might say, "I need a time out. Let's talk about this later." Then exit calmly and don't answer back. It might take a few "time outs" before your child realizes that you mean business.

**Develop a Feeling Vocabulary.** Many children display anger because they simply don't know how to express their frustrations any other way. Kicking, screaming, swearing, hitting or throwing things may be the only way they know how to show their feelings. To help them express their anger, create a poster that describes feelings associated with anger. Hang the poster in a common space.

**Develop an Awareness of Early Warning Signs.** Explain to your child that we all have little signs that warn us when we are getting angry. We should listen to them because they can help us from getting even more upset. Help your child recognize what specific warning signs he or she may have that signals early stages of anger. For example, some signs may include flushed cheeks, clenched fists, increased heart rate, or faster breathing.

The more parents help children recognize those early angry warning signs when their anger is first triggered, the better they will be able to calm themselves down. Anger escalates very quickly, and waiting until a child is already in "melt down" to try to get her back into control is usually too late.

**Teach Anger Control Strategies.** An effective strategy for helping children to calm down is called "3 + 10." As soon as your child feels the early warning sign of anger, tell him or her to do two things. First, take 3 deep slow. Then count slowly to ten.

*We want to hear from you, so send us your questions! Write us your questions on the lines provided on the survey form in this newsletter—we've even provided an envelope.*

# Spring Spread

**Help your** kids grow strong by building healthy bodies.

- Make sure fruits and veggies are washed, cut, and ready to eat when your children are hungry.
- Let your children be “produce pickers.” Help them pick fruits and veggies at the store.
- Store fruits and veggies in clear containers on refrigerator shelves instead of in drawers so that your children may easily see and reach them.
- Show your children how to snack healthy by choosing fruits, veggies, nuts and cheese instead of processed snack foods.
- Serve tap water to help children stay cool and healthy - it’s free and easy!
- Serve fat-free or low-fat milk at meals.

## Spring Spread

Serves: 4

Ready in: 10 minutes

Children will love this spread—let them do some of the measuring, chopping and mixing!

- 4 ounces cream cheese whipped or softened
- 2 tablespoons carrot grated
- 2 tablespoons red bell pepper finely diced
- 1 tablespoon chives finely diced
- 1 teaspoon fresh dill, thyme, rosemary, or combination chopped
- 1 teaspoon lemon or lime juice freshly squeezed

Mix all ingredients with a rubber spatula until creamy.

Serve with sliced veggies, crackers, toast or bagels; or substitute for the hummus in Hummus and Veggie Wraps.

**Chef Tip:** This is a great way to use up leftover herbs and vegetables.

### *Nutrition Info*

Serving size: 2 tablespoons

Total calories: 101 Total fat: 9.7 g Saturated fat: 5.5 g Fiber: 0.2 g

Sodium: 94 mg

*From EatFresh.org, a project of Leah’s Pantry and SFHSA.*

*Leah’s Pantry works with individuals and organizations to support cooking healthy, nourishing meals. Learn more or contact us at [info@leahspantry.org](mailto:info@leahspantry.org).*

 **Activities for All**

# Tinkering: Learning through Making

**What should** you do if your child is more interested in taking a toy apart rather than playing with it? Encourage it. Taking something apart fuels children’s natural curiosity, and research shows there are many benefits to this type of play.

Known as tinkering, this type of play is about hands-on experiences, learning from failures, and unstructured time to explore and invent. It is about taking things apart and putting them back together with improvements made along the way. Tinkering materials can include small electronics, Legos, or even craft sticks. Tinkering teaches children valuable lessons by helping them develop fine motor skills, problem-solving abilities, and builds their confidence.

Tinkering relies on children using their hands to shape, move, and manipulate small objects. This helps children develop their fine motor development by coordinating small muscles in fingers and hands. Strong fine motor skills are necessary for writing, cutting, using utensils, and tying shoelaces.

Developing problem solving skills is an equally important tinkering quality. Children engage in problem solving as they

figure out how to make piece fit together again. This trial and error (emphasis on the error) allows children to explore and experiment. Children try things, without the pressure of a grade or a big red mark on their paper. Instead, in this environment, where they are working and failing, they are freer to say, “Oh this didn’t work out, how can I make it work?” Therefore, it is not making mistakes, but how children react to the mistake that matters.

Problem solving skills benefit children at any age and can help older children develop confidence in a stimulating environment. By providing problem solving practice in playtime, you equip your child with a lifelong skill that can be used in all areas of learning.

To create a tinkering space, dedicate an area on a table or floor equipped with materials ranging from LED lights, hobby model kits, to craft sticks, pipe cleaners, and cardboard. If caregivers do not feel comfortable turning your home into a tinkering space, try one of these Bay Area tinkering labs: the Tinkering Studio at the Exploratorium; the Innovation Lab at the Children’s Creativity Museum; Bricks 4 Kidz in Noe Valley; the Butterfly Joint in the Mission district; and Play-Well in San Anselmo.