

PARENT CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter for First Steps Families ❖ Spring 2015

Summer Safety Tips

For many families, summer is a time for outdoor fun, adventure and exploration. Here are some tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to keep your family safe as you explore the great outdoors.

SUN AND HEAT SAFETY

• To prevent infants under 6 months from sunburn, avoid sun exposure and dress infants in lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and brimmed hats that shade the neck. However, when adequate clothing and shade are not available, parents can apply a minimal amount of sunscreen with at least 15 SPF (sun protection factor) to small areas, such as the infant's face. If an infant gets sunburn, apply cool compresses to the affected area.



- To avoid heat stress, make sure your child stays hydrated. Plan for more time to rest than usual as heat can often make young children feel tired. Stay in the shade whenever possible, and limit sun exposure during the peak intensity hours - between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. When your child is feeling hot, give him a cool bath or water mist to cool down.
- Never leave children in a car or other closed motor vehicle. The temperature inside the car can become much higher than the outside temperature, and can rise to temperatures that cause death.

WATER SAFETY

- Whenever infants or toddlers are in or around water, an adult – preferably one who knows how to swim and perform CPR – should be within arm's length, providing "touch supervision." Never leave children alone in or near water, even for a moment.
- Children should wear life jackets at all times when on boats or near bodies of water. Avoid inflatable swimming aids such as "floaties." They are not a substitute for approved life vests and can give children and parents a false sense of security.

BUG SAFETY

- Don't use scented soaps, perfumes or hair sprays on your child and avoid dressing your child in clothing with bright colors or flowery prints. When outside in the evenings or other times when there are a lot of mosquitoes present, cover up with long-sleeved shirts, pants and socks to prevent bites.



- Ticks can transmit Lyme Disease, and mosquitoes can transmit West Nile Virus and other viruses. Use insect repellents containing DEET when needed to prevent insect-related diseases. Products containing DEET should not be used on children younger than 2 months of age. Children older than 2 months of age may use products which contain 10% to 30% DEET. Combination sunscreen/insect repellent products should be avoided because sunscreen needs to be reapplied every two hours, but the insect repellent should not be reapplied.

Reprinted with permission from the American Academy of Pediatrics. For more tips on how to keep your family safe this summer, visit the AAP website at: www.healthychildren.org



A Missouri Family's Story

By Amey of St. Peters, MO

I do not know where we would be without our First Steps therapists.

My son was born with a cleft lip and palate and was diagnosed with failure to thrive as an infant. Little did we know, he had Celiac's Disease as well. He has had a feeding tube and multiple surgeries, each one setting him back more and more. Our First Steps Dietitian, Speech Therapist, and Special Instructor worked together with our medical team. They monitored him closely and made sure we had all the resources we needed to get him on a road to good health.

My son is two years old now and is getting ready to turn three. I really do not know what I will do without the First Steps team in our life. Our therapists have loved our son as if he were their own. There is no better feeling as a mother than knowing your child is truly loved and cared for by their First Steps team. Not only are they amazing with children but they truly love what they do. They are passionate about helping children and families be successful! He is healthy and strong and making progress every day, I am so truly thankful for the services they have provided for the past 2 ½ years.

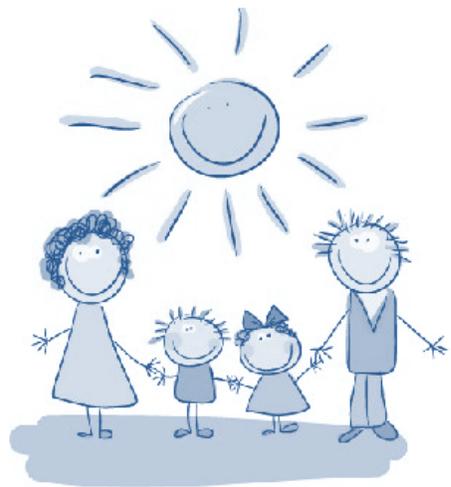
Just for Fun...Promoting Language Development

By a MPACT provider: Katie Mank, MA-SLP

Encourage your baby or toddler's language development by reading to them daily. Choose small cardboard, cloth, or vinyl books with pictures of babies in familiar activities. Babies like seeing baby animals pictured in books, as well. Encourage them to make the animal noises, while you say the name of the animal and make the noise of the animal.

Outdoor exploration and play is another wonderful way to enhance your baby's language development. Lay some blankets on the grass and put your baby on their tummy where they can feel the grass. Talk to them about what they are feeling, what they are hearing, etc.

For toddlers, you can put a large plastic bowl out in the grass and fill it with lukewarm water for some fun water play. Add in some cups for pouring, and some bath toys for fun. Use this time to talk to your child about what they are doing. Use lots of language to describe their actions. If you have a pitcher of water with you, you can add to the water as it splashes out of the bowl.



The First Steps Parent Connections newsletter is written in collaboration with MPACT, Missouri's Parent Training and Information Center.



Office of Special Education
205 Jefferson St., P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480
Website: <http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/first-steps>

Phone: 573-522-8762
Fax: 573-526-4404

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