



Ontario Early Years Centre



Peterborough Family Resource Centre

Our mission is the well-being of the whole child, families
and care providers





Early Years Study



- New understanding of brain development in the early years and its effect on subsequent learning, behaviour and health has led to steps being taken to provide better circumstances in and outside the home for early child development
- The 'Early Years Study' was conducted to provide options and recommendations on the best ways of preparing Ontario's young children
- Written by Dr. Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret McCain and a reference group in 1999

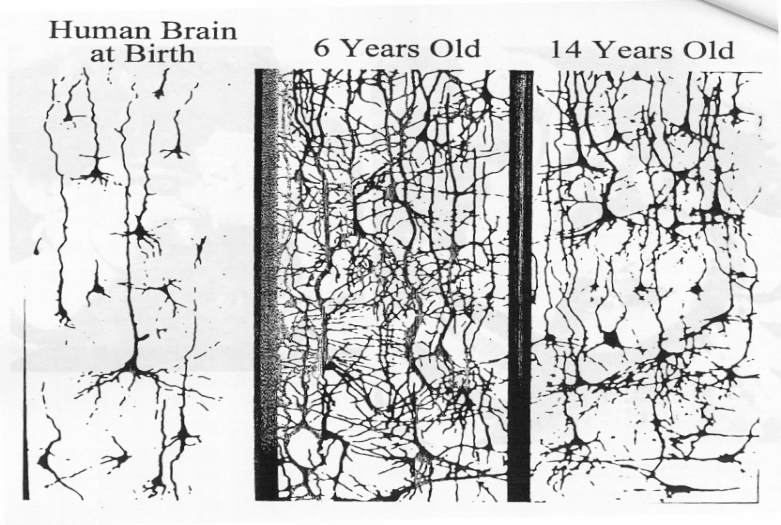


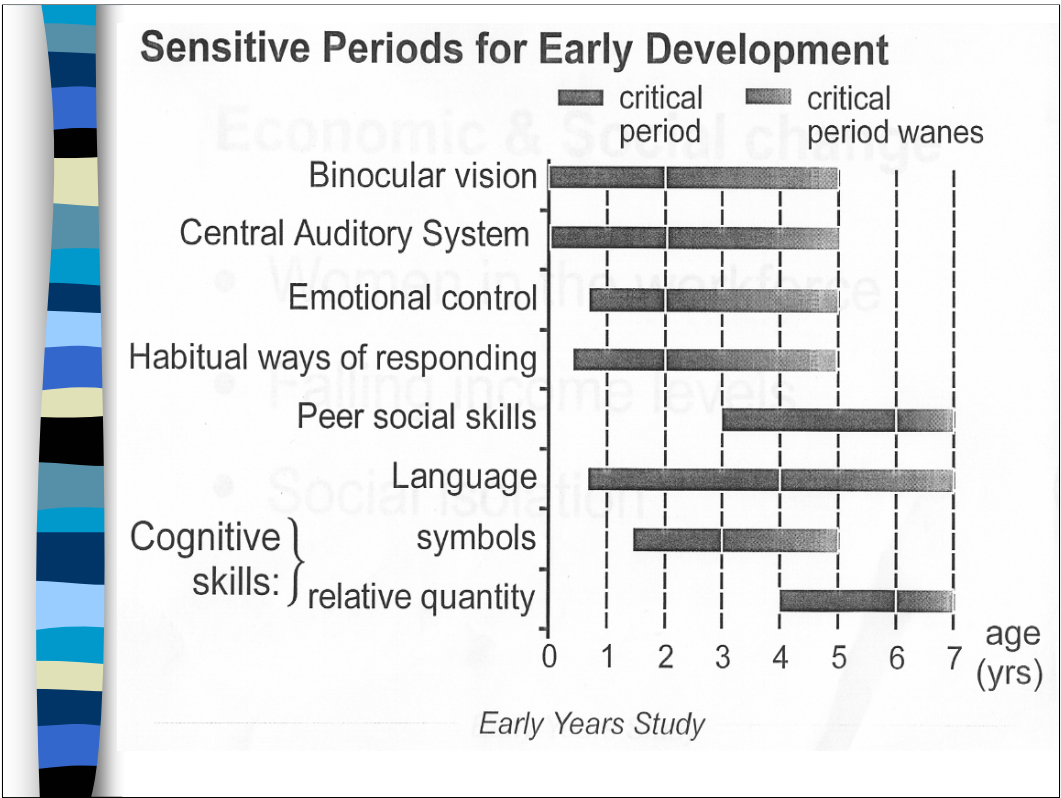
What did the Early Years Study tell us?

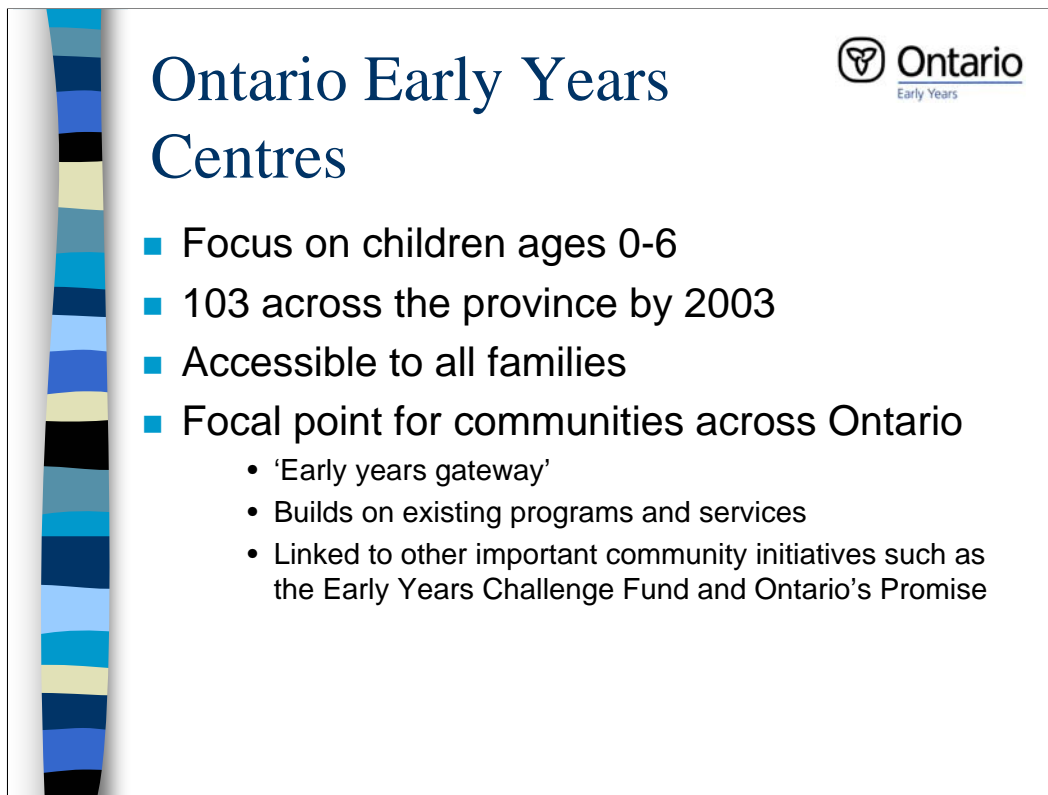


- Early brain development sets the stage for lifelong learning, behaviour, and health
- Positive stimulation, nurturing, and proper nutrition foster good brain development
- Parenting style is more important than income in influencing child development
- Negative experiences in early years have long-lasting effects which are difficult to overcome

Brain Development







Ontario Early Years Centres

- Focus on children ages 0-6
- 103 across the province by 2003
- Accessible to all families
- Focal point for communities across Ontario
 - ‘Early years gateway’
 - Builds on existing programs and services
 - Linked to other important community initiatives such as the Early Years Challenge Fund and Ontario’s Promise

Accessible for all families

The Ontario Early Years Centres are meant for all families regardless of socio-economic background or special needs. They will help children and families by providing information, programs and referrals to other services.

Located across the province

Ontario Early Years Centres will be located across the province.

Focal Point for Communities/“One - Stop Shop”

The Centres will also play a key role in promoting public awareness about the importance of the early years. They will link to and be supported by other important community mobilization initiatives such as Early Years Challenge Fund projects and Ontario’s Promise.

These Centres will serve as a focal point where different groups and agencies will come together and work with parents to support their children.

These Centres will serve as a place where parents can go to find the answers to questions they have about their child, and be referred to services to support them in their parenting role.

Universal Supports/ Targeted Services

All Centres will offer a consistent set of core services that communities can add to in order to meet local needs. The Centres will offer a mix of universal supports that address common needs. They will also include targeted services, tailored to the unique needs of local communities such as supports to children with special needs.

Ontario Early Years Centres will benefit communities through information sharing, service integration, filling service gaps and service provision.

Builds on Services/Structures

Ontario Early Years Centres will build on the community planning/services/structures that are already in place in communities. **Special attention will be paid to rural and northern issues and needs.**



Centre Services – Peterborough Family Resource Centre

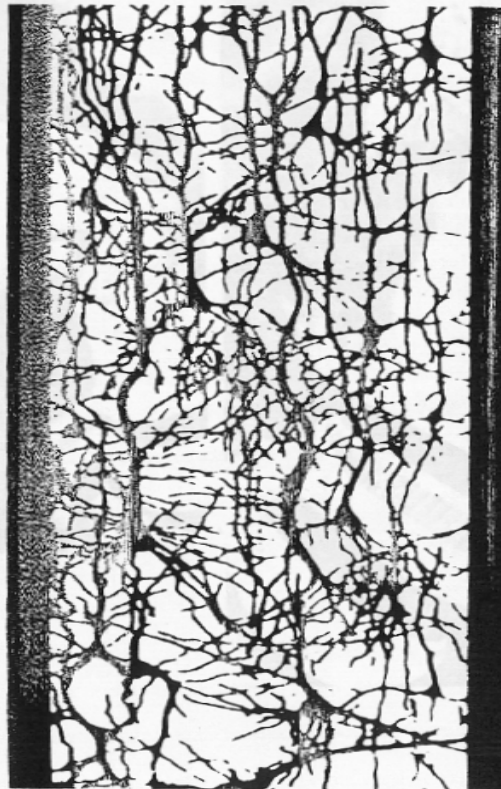
- **Common set of core programs and services for children and families including:**
 - Early Learning activities
 - Parent resources and training
 - Pre and post natal resources and information
 - Information about and links to other Early Years Services
 - Outreach services
 - Speakers bureau
 - Coordination of volunteer services
 - Monitoring program effectiveness and tracking community progress in improving child development outcomes-DATA ANALYSIS
 - Early Literacy Specialist

Brain Development

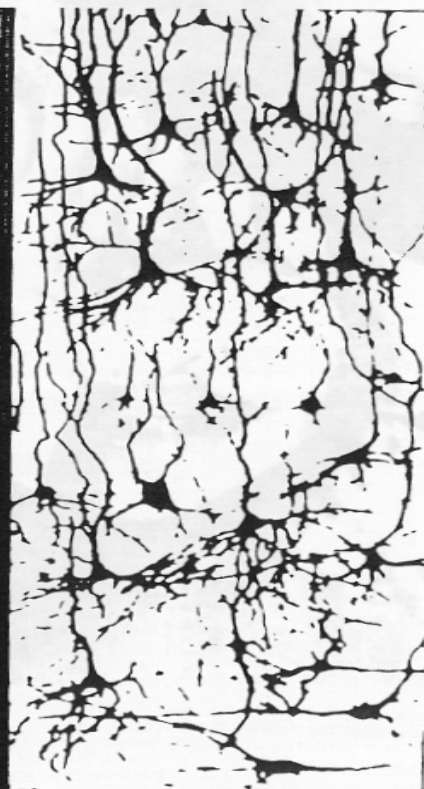
Human Brain
at Birth



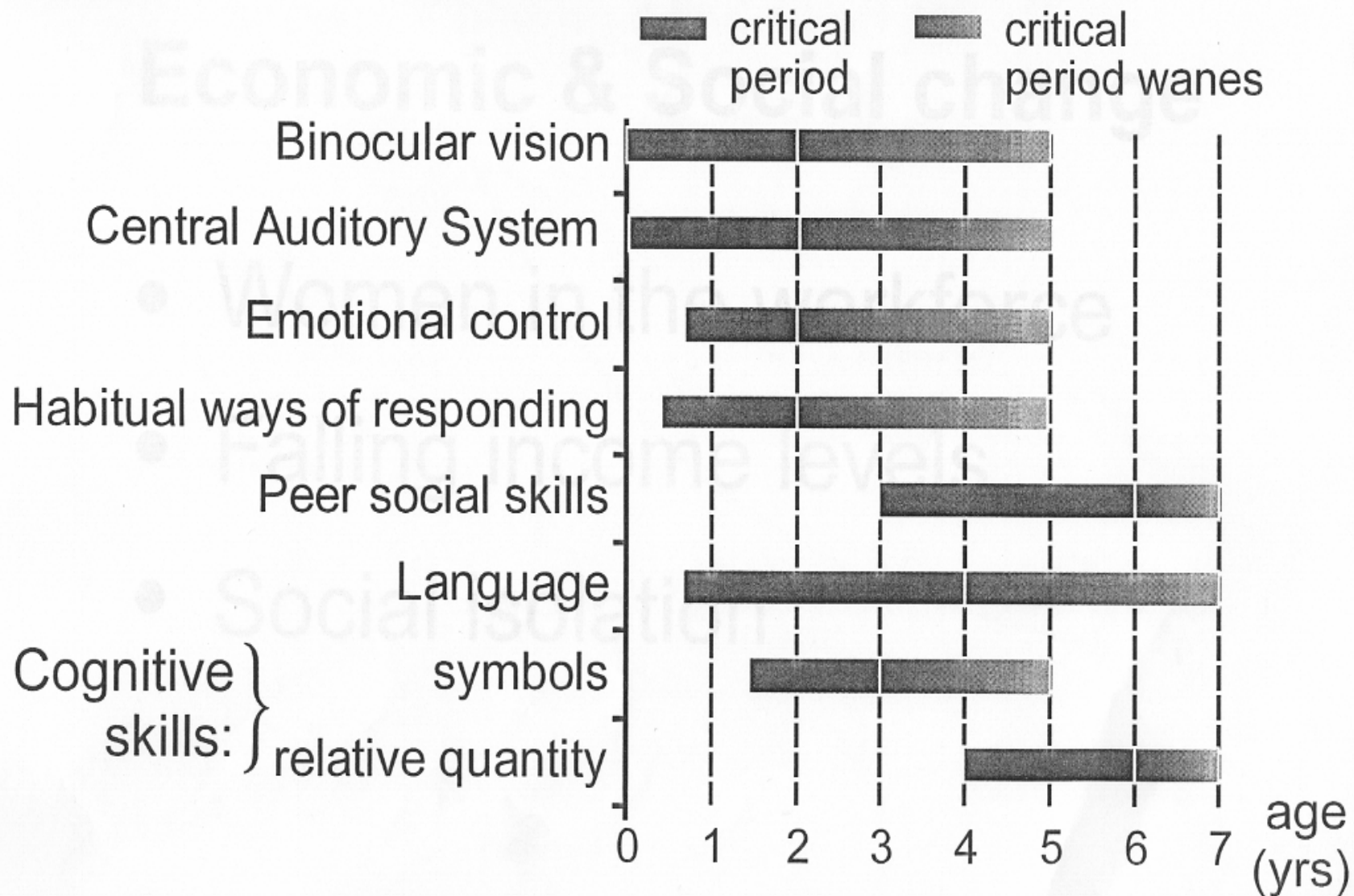
6 Years Old



14 Years Old



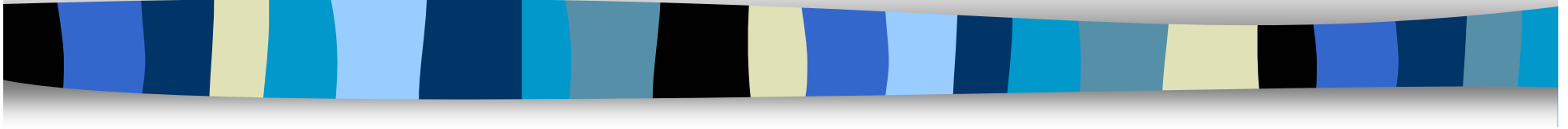
Sensitive Periods for Early Development



Early Years Study



Early Learning Activities



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The way children develop

- Understanding the developmental stages of learning can help you be patient with your child and to help you recognize appropriate times to offer learning experiences.
- Developmental stages can be categorized as:
 - Infants (0-12 months)
 - Toddlers (12-24 months)
 - Pre-Schoolers (2-5 years)
- Each child may not be developmentally ready to learn a certain thing precisely at a certain time but the stages take place roughly within a broad time-frame.



Examples of children's developmental skills and abilities

	3-6 months	13-18 months	2-3 years	4-5 years
Cognitive Development	Eyes locate source of sound	Follows one-step requests	Counts to three	Can put together toys with different parts
Social-emotional Development	Likes beek-a-boo	Plays away from familiar people	Inflexible and rigid	Understands the needs of others
Motor Development	Stands firmly when held	Jumps up and down with both feet	Hops on one foot	Catches many things
Language Development	Recognizes own name	Uses single words often	Responds to simple questions	Can tell stories with some sequence
Self-Help	Stretches arms to be picked up	Uses spoon without a lot of spilling	Unbuttons large buttons	Can take responsibility for acting safely



The value of play

- Through play children learn what no one can teach them. They learn about their world and how to deal with this environment of objects, time, space, structure and people.
- It benefits children by improving:
 - Sensorimotor development
 - Intellectual development
 - Socialization
 - Creativity
 - Self-Awareness
 - It has therapeutic value
 - It has moral value

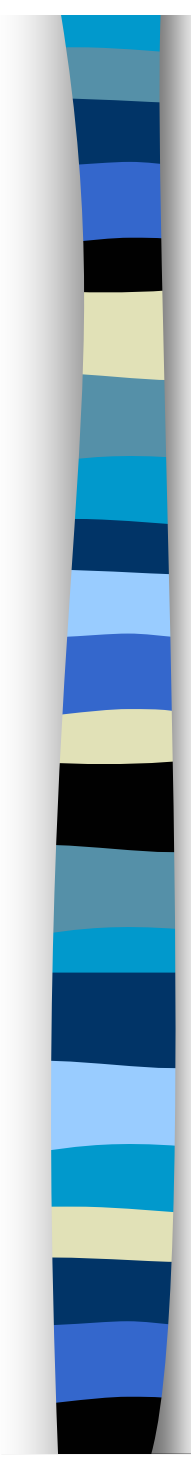


Activities to Develop a child's mind

■ Infants (0-12 months)

– Babies are born with the need for human contact and stimulation. This can be done through:

- Talking - talk to the baby when you change a diaper, give a bottle, give a bath. Speak to the baby as if they were an adult and explain what you are doing
- Music - sing songs and nursery rhymes or listen to music that your infant and you like
- Toys - infants don't need special toys, every day objects can be great learning experiences
- Play - interact with the child. Play "peek-a-boo" or use your hands to act out songs like "Itsy bitsy spider"
- Movement - if the child can crawl then give them a safe space to move freely



- Toddlers (12-24 months)

- Just learned to walk and talk, need to interact with their environment by touching and exploring. Give children freedom to express their feelings and independence. You can provide it by:

- Walking and Talking - talk about the objects you see while you are walking, everything is new to a child at this age
- Music and Dancing - sing songs with actions like “row, row, row your boat”
- Books and Stories - listening to stories helps prepare children to read
- Painting and Messy Play - let them play with finger paint, play-dough, water toys
- Toys - toddlers enjoy toys that imitate real life objects, puzzles and matching games
- Pretend - play along with them and pretend, it encourages their imagination

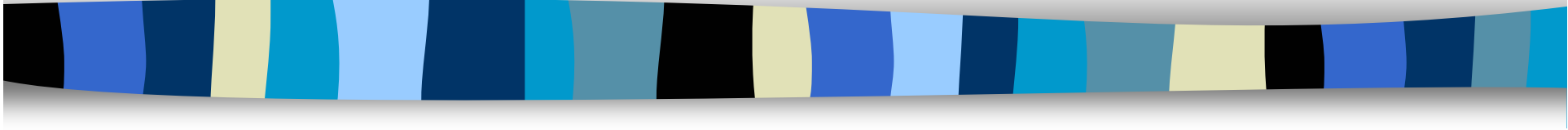


- Pre-schoolers (2-5 year olds)

- They have a large vocabulary, able to remember stories, rhymes and simple songs.
- They have lots of energy and need to run around, jump, climb and skip.
- The need to interact to develop friendships with other children.
- You can provide this by:
 - Creative activities - they love to make things with their hands so let them play with paint, play-dough, crayons and scissors
 - Outdoor play - take children to a nearby park where they can play safely on playground equipment. This will help to expel some energy
 - Other activities - many of those listed for toddlers are still fun for pre-schoolers



The Importance of Father Involvement



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Why be an involved father?

- There is lots of research that indicates that children of involved fathers are:
 - more cognitively competent
 - are better problem solvers
 - are better achievers and get higher grades in school
 - are more likely to enjoy school and participate in extracurricular activities
 - have a greater tolerance for stress and frustration
 - have better friendships
 - less likely to get into trouble
 - more satisfied with their life overall



What happens when fathers are not involved?

- Children who live with uninvolved fathers or without their fathers are more likely to:
 - have problems in school performance
 - experience behaviour problems
 - drop out of school
 - have problems with social and emotional adjustment
 - get into trouble and/or have friends who get into trouble
 - experience health problems



What is my role as a father?

- Dad's are not just substitute moms, they have their own important roles in helping to meet the needs of their children:
 - economic provider (for the necessities of life)
 - friend and playmate (for human interaction)
 - nurturing (for care and comfort)
 - affectionate (for warmth and love)
 - responsible (for guidance and protection)
 - committed (for being important to someone)



Challenges to being an involved father

- No role model of your own
- Work
- The early parenthood shock
- Crossing over into mom's territory



How to overcome the challenges?

- Don't just stand back, show that you want to be involved.
- When work takes you away from home, find ways to stay connected.
- Take the time to practice, fathers can become very skilled at parenting.



What about the children?

- The best way to learn about kids is through the experience of spending time with them
- Key ideas to keep in mind when interacting with your child:
 - Attachment or the connection between you and your child
 - Let your child show you how to play
 - When it comes to discipline, teach them don't punish them
 - children go through many stages of development and behaviour
 - try to understand your child's temperament or personality

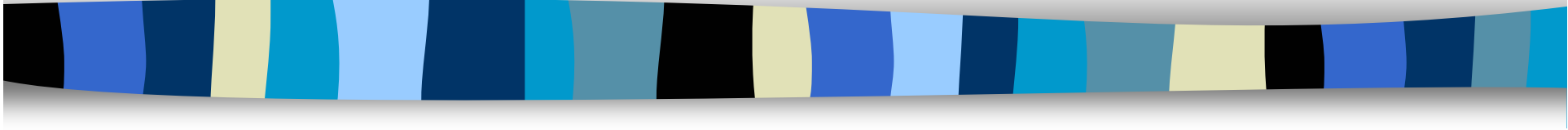


Being an involved father not only benefits the children but is good for dad as well!

- Men who are more involved with their children...
 - Feel more self-confident
 - Feel effective as a parent
 - Find parenthood satisfying
 - Feel important to their child and more connected
 - Are encouraged to get involved even more
 - Are more likely to be involved in the community and do more socializing



Postpartum Mood Disorders



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Postpartum Mood Disorders and Symptoms

- Baby Blues
- Postpartum Depression
- Postpartum Anxiety Disorder
- Postpartum Mania
- Postpartum Obsessive Compulsive
- Postpartum Psychosis



Causes of Postpartum Mood Disorders

- We don't know the exact cause
- Hormonal and biochemical changes
- Genetics and life circumstances
- Can happen to any woman having a baby
- Risk factors can increase chances



Detection and Diagnosis

- Despite the high risk for postpartum mood disorders they frequently go undetected
- This may be due to:
 - Feelings thought to be “normal”
 - Women don’t like to say how they feel
 - Lack of prenatal education
 - Emotions blamed on hormones



Depression During Pregnancy

- Being pregnant and the idea of becoming a parent can be upsetting but most women are able to cope
- Mood changes, such as irritability, tearfulness, insomnia, lack of motivation and anxiety attacks can be frequent
- Proper treatment is important to ensure that you and your baby bond



Treatment Options

- Individual Counseling
- Couple Counseling
- Support Groups
- Medication
- Individualized Self-Care Program



How can women with postpartum depression help themselves?

- Tell yourself you will get better
- Avoid making important decisions
- Don't expect too much of yourself
- Avoid alcohol
- Keep your appointments with your doctor or therapist
- Join a support group



How can a friend or partner help?

- Learn about postpartum depression
- Listen to her feelings and treat them with respect
- Encourage her to seek help
- Encourage her to keep her appointments and to take any prescribed medication



Key points to remember...

- It is not your fault
- This is a treatable illness
- You are not alone
- You will get better

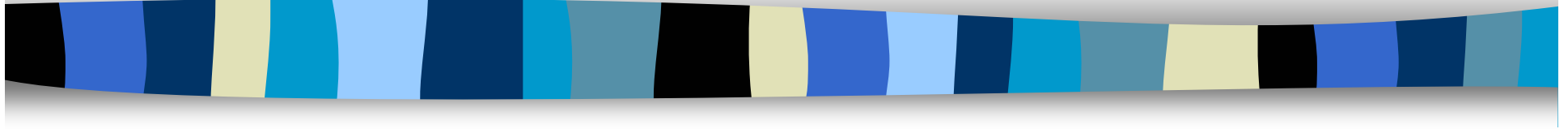


Resources for women with Postpartum Mood Disorders

- Peterborough Family Resource Centre
(705) 748-9144
- Women's Health Care Centre
(705) 743-4132 or 1-800-419-3111
- Peterborough County/City Health Unit
(705) 743-1000
- Peterborough Regional Health Centre
(705) 743-2121



Sibling Rivalry



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Adapted from the "Siblings Without Rivalry Course"





Brothers and Sisters - Past and Present

- Sibling rivalry is a routine part of growing up in families
- When fights turn into constant arguments, fights, and the creation of some potentially dangerous situations, it should be dealt with



Not till the feelings come out

- Emotions need to be welcomed and treated with respect not shoved out the door
- Instead of dismissing feelings, acknowledge them
- Give children in fantasy what they cannot have in reality
- Help children to channel their hostile feelings into symbolic or creative outlets
- Stop hurtful behaviour - show how angry feelings can be discharged safely (that means not attacking the attacker)



The Perils of Comparisons

- Avoid unfavourable comparisons
 - ie: “Why can’t you be more like your brother?”
- Avoid favourable comparisons
 - ie: “You are much better at this than your sister”
- Save enthusiastic comments or praise for the child who deserves it
 - telling a child how proud you are of their sibling will only make them feel less special
- Speak to the child only about behaviour that pleases/displeases you and not how it relates to anyone else



Equal is Less

- Instead of worrying about giving equal amounts focus on each child's individual needs
- Instead of claiming equal love show children how they are loved uniquely
- Equal time can feel like less - give time in terms of need
- There will be times when you should give the identical item to each child
- Don't show favouritism



Siblings in Roles

- We put children in roles, children put themselves in roles and children put each other in roles.
- Don't give your attention to the aggression as this enforces aggressive behaviour as a way of getting attention
- Treat children not as they are but as you would like them to be
- No more “bullies” or “victims” - help each child to see their potential as being nice or standing up for themselves
- No more “problem” children - focus on the abilities of the child and not what they cannot do



When Kids Fight

- Try to ignore normal bickering - tell yourself the children are having an important experience in conflict resolution
- When things start heating up...
 - acknowledge the anger and other feelings
 - reflect each child's point of view
 - describe the problem with respect
 - express confidence in the children's ability to find their own solution
 - leave the room



- If the situation could get dangerous...

- Inquire

- is this a real fight or a play fight (play fights are permitted, real fights are not)

- Let the children know what they are doing

- play fighting is only good when both want to play

- Respect your feelings

- ie: “your playing is too rough for me, please find another activity

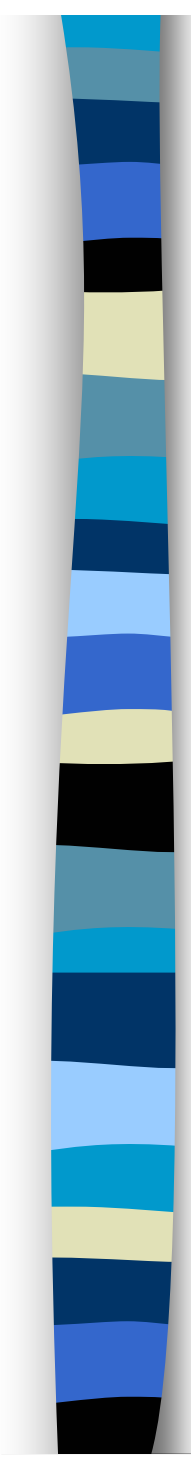
- If the situation is definitely dangerous...

- Describe what you see

- ie: “I see two angry children about to hurt each other”

- Separate the children

- ie: “It is not safe to be together. We must have a cooling off period”



When children can't work out a problem themselves

- Call the children to a meeting and explain the purpose and the rules
- Write down each child's feelings and concerns, read them aloud
- Allow time for rebuttle
- Invite everyone to come up with solutions. Write down all ideas without evaluating
- Decide upon the solutions you can live with
- Follow-up



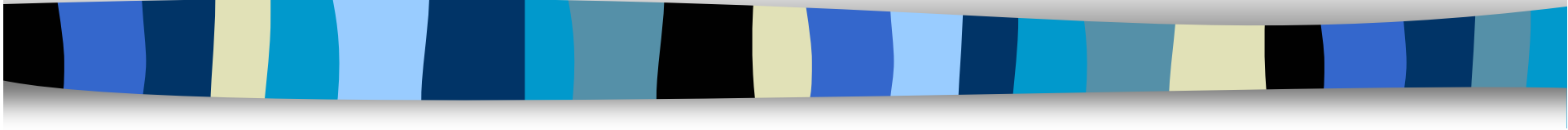
Coping with Young Rivals

Getting off to a good start

- Prepare your child for the arrival of the new baby the very moment that you give him the news to help avoid sibling rivalry and jealousy issues
- Let him know that this is his baby too
- Encourage him to talk to the baby inside mommy's tummy
- Allow your child to pick out a special gift for the new baby
- Let him hold the baby and help out no matter how inconvenient it may seem
- There may be times when you need to put the baby down and give your toddler a hug and some one-on-one time



Single Parenting



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Your role as the sole parent

- Accept the fact that you cannot possibly do everything and do it well
- Reframe yourself
 - allow yourself to grieve the ‘loss’ of your perceived role as a parent
 - embrace your new role
 - let go of the way things used to be
- Turn negative energy into positive steps
- Overcome fear
 - instead of trying to hide from your fears, take them on. The sooner you conquer them the better you will feel.



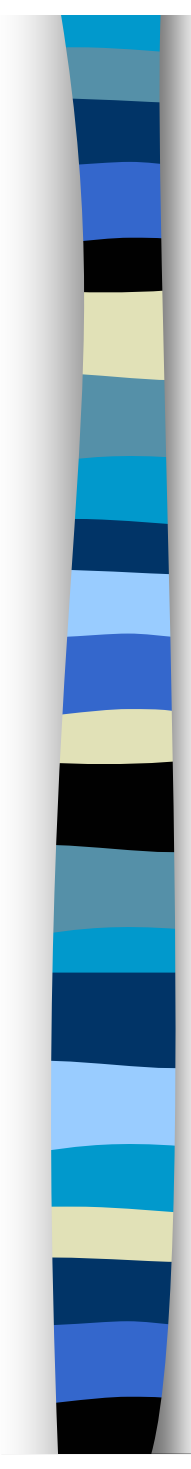
Self-Development

- Learn new skills
 - Analyze yourself: are you what you want to be
 - Read or take courses on how to become what you want to be
- Take care of yourself
 - You will be no good to your children if you do not take care of yourself
 - Try your best to get sufficient sleep and exercise
 - Be sure to take time for yourself away from your children



Child Development

- Let your children know that you love them
 - hug them, kiss them, give them a smile and tell them you love them as often as you can. You will not only brighten their day but you will also feel better
- Ensure your child's needs are being met
 - Make sure you are meeting not only the physical needs of your child but the emotional needs as well
 - Compliment your child on his/her strengths and downplay the weaknesses
 - Go the extra mile even when you don't feel like it - a little more love and understanding all add up

- 
- Guide your child with effective discipline
 - Teach them the right way to behave rather than focussing on punishing them
 - Try to ignore the little things
 - Give your child the best chance for success
 - Take a parenting course to help you be a better parent to your child
 - Take opportunities to talk to your child about values
 - Encourage your children to get involved in extracurricular activities - look for ones that don't cost as much if money is an issue



Networking and Support

- Keep your friends and make some new ones
 - Family members
 - Other single parents can be great sources of information.
 - Start by meeting people at drop in centres, library, or other places where children and their parents hang out
- Join a support group
 - It's nice to know that you are not the only one going through this, others have been in your situation and may be able to offer some good advice
- Parent-Relief Childcare
 - This service can provide you with a short period of free or reduced childcare



Money Matters

- Cutting back and making sacrifices
 - This means that you may have to lower your standards in some areas
- Look at new options
 - Perhaps maybe you or your kids don't need the name brand items when the non-brands will do
- Start saving and keep saving
 - Although money may seem tight, putting money away for the future can help during extra tight times or for your child's future education



Making time for it all

- It can be difficult to keep a full-time job, maintain the household and look after the kids all at once
- Prioritize - what is really most important to you, a clean house or happy, healthy children who know that you love them
- Try preparing meals ahead of time to minimize preparation time
- Develop a list of people, including your children, who can help you with some of the tasks that need to be done



The benefits of single parents on kids

- While most people only talk about the negative there are some positives that children gain from living in a single parent family:
 - they assume more responsibility around the house
 - keep this positive by giving only developmentally appropriate tasks - they are only kids
 - they have more power in family-making decisions
 - they feel they are an important part of the family by helping to make decisions
 - single parents grant their children more autonomy
 - make sure you don't give them too much space, they still need someone to watch over them and give them guidance

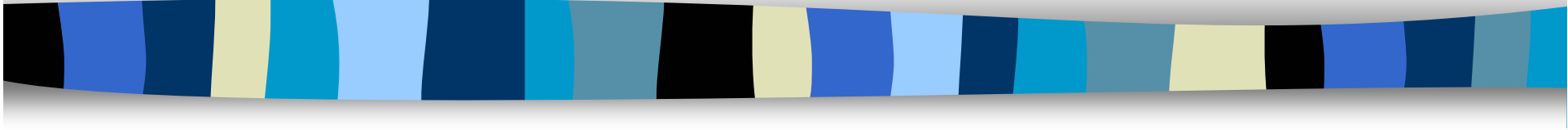


Some final words for thought...

- Remember you are not super-parent, don't expect too much from yourself
- Don't try to change the world, just focus on your children
- Enjoy your freedom to make the decisions for your family



Toilet Training



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What is toilet training?

- Also called potty training or toilet teaching
- Is the process of helping your child learn to use the toilet instead of urinating or passing bowel movements in diapers
- It is not an overnight experience and may take two weeks to six months for your child to learn
- Many difficulties can be prevented or minimized if parents wait until their children are ready



When to start?

- When do you start potty training? The key is to start when your child is ready
- Over the course of months children gradually become physically and emotionally ready to be potty trained, but not before 12-15 months
- Watch for signs of readiness
- Begin to show signs of readiness 24-30 months but can vary depending on the child
- Avoid clothing with buttons or snaps
- If your child can wait until summer it will be easier because of less clothing



Signs of Readiness

- Your child should show most of these signs to indicate that he/she is ready to start potty training:
 - over the excitement of learning to walk and run
 - able to sit and play quietly for 5 minutes
 - able to help dress and undress (pull down pants)
 - has regular, well formed, bowel movements every day
 - able to remain dry for 2-3 hours
 - understands and has words for urine and bowel movement
 - takes an interest in others using the toilet
 - can demonstrate when a bowel movement is taking place (eg. Squatting or grunting noises)



When to wait...

- It is usually best not to start potty training your child during times of stress such as:
 - the arrival of a new baby
 - starting a new child care arrangement
 - moving your child from a crib to a bed
 - moving house
 - family relationship problems (children can pick up on the stress even if you don't express it)
 - when a family member is ill



Before you start

- To make the process easier you should prepare your child before you start potty training
 - Read books about potty training with your child
 - Promote body knowledge and tell your child where urine and bowel movements come from and give them names your child will understand
 - If you feel comfortable allow your child to watch a member of the family (same sex) use the toilet
 - Let your child pick out a potty chair and then leave it in the bathroom or living room for your child to get familiar with it
 - let your child explore the toilet by flushing it



Teaching your child to use the toilet

- After your child has become comfortable with flushing the toilet and sitting on the potty chair you can teach your child to go to the bathroom
- Place your child on the potty chair whenever he/she signals the need to go to the bathroom or at regular intervals
- Stay with your child when he/she is on the potty. Reading or talking to your child helps your child to relax
- Praise your child when he/she goes or even attempts to go. Don't get mad if he/she has an accident
- Never force a child who is reluctant to sit on the potty



Helping your child get clean

- You can help foster bathroom independence by teaching good cleaning habits
- Teach your child how to properly wipe from front to back
- Remind them to close the toilet lid before flushing
- Teach them to wash their hands with soap and water



Rewards and toilet training

- Should we use rewards?
 - They work best when a child needs an extra little push to do something he is almost ready to do on his own (like remembering to use the potty when inside but forgets when he goes outside).
 - Rewards should be used immediately following the desired behaviour in order for the child to make the association between the reward and the behaviour (as opposed to a bribe which precedes the behaviour).



Rewards and/or incentives

- What kinds of incentives are best?
 - Something small but important to the child like stickers, small prizes or a pair of underwear will work well if your child is ready to be toilet trained anyway
 - A charting system can act as an incentive and can also help you keep track of your child's progress.
- What kinds of rewards don't work?
 - Avoid using food as a reward for going to the potty
 - If it is given too late and the child does not make a connection between using the potty and the reward
 - Avoid using rewards to extract a promise because toddlers can't keep promises