

firstSteps

NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 2012



CONNECTING FAMILIES TO LOCAL RESOURCES

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT:

Baby & Kids Expo

February 25, 2012

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Verizon Wireless Center

If you are searching for helpful parenting information, but don't know where to look for it, or how to find the time, between stopping your 2-year-old from flushing everything down the toilet to keeping your 5-year-old from not just painting her nails with new nail polish, but the kitchen table and everything else she thinks would look better pink, this is the place to go.

- Free Admission
- Activities for the whole family to enjoy featuring the Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota.
- Booths from many area organizations offering many types of resources and information for parents



Age Group – Birth – 1 year

Skill - to focus for a short time when others interact with them

Activity – What are your family's favorite childhood rhymes? Using traditional nursery rhymes helps enrich language, builds relationships and increases attention span. As parents repeat rhymes they are teaching their child to anticipate actions. Anticipation is a developmental step in memory, comprehension and attention span. Human ears are drawn to rhyming words in the same way the eyes are attracted to interesting patterns. (The Language Instinct, Harper Collins)

Spotlight on Research - Ready! For Kindergarten classes use "invitational learning" to empower parents to help their children reach their full potential. Parents who "play with a purpose" for 5 minutes each day help their child develop the skills needed for success in school.

**REMEMBER TO READ 20 MINUTES
EACH DAY WITH A CHILD!**

CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL

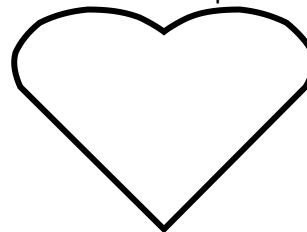


. Trying to find a care provider for your child can be very scary and difficult.

Parent Aware the resource available in Blue Earth and Nicollet counties that helps parents find nurturing programs that will help prepare their babies, toddlers and preschoolers for school and life. Also, a checklist for parents to help them choose quality child care can be found at www.mnchildcare.org, or call 507-389-1716 and ask for the "Is This the Right Place for My Child" brochure.



Ages 3-5 years: Teach your child how to make hearts. Start by writing a lower case 'm'. Then draw the letter 'v' under the 'm' and connect them to form a heart. While you are writing the letters, talk about their sound and what things begin with each of these letter sounds. For Example: "Mom begins with 'm'."



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 2012

Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota – Will be opening the doors to their new location at 121 E. Cherry Street, Mankato on February 1st. The hours will be Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. The cost is \$5.00 per person over the age of 1. Family Memberships are also available starting at \$50.00 (all previously purchased memberships have expired).

READY! For Kindergarten – Will be holding three 90-minute classes to parents and care-givers of children ages birth to 5 on knowledge and skills that best prepare children for kindergarten. The classes will be held:

- February 9th at Rosa Parks Elementary from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- February 16th at Kennedy Elementary from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- February 21st at Franklin Elementary from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Free child care is provided. For more information call Linda Kilander at 387-5501 x3080.

Blue Earth County Library Preschool Story Times - Will be held every Tuesday and Thursday at 10:30 am.

- Tuesday storytimes will include Key City Kennel Club members and their dogs.
- Saturday, Feb. 11th, Key City Kennel will host their annual Dog Show at the library from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., including agility and obedience demonstrations.
- The First Thursday of each month features readers from Greater Mankato Diversity Council with stories from around the world. Please mark March 1st on your calendar for the next featured story from around the world.

Mankato MOPS (Mothers of Pre-Schooler's) - Will be meeting on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month at Hosanna Lutheran Church from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Come and check us out!

ECFE - Will be having an informational meeting for parents looking for preschool classes beginning Fall 2012. Come to meet some of our preschool teachers at Lincoln Community Center, Room 201, on Thursday, February 9th at 6:15 p.m. Teachers will be available to answer questions regarding our classes. Call our office regarding childcare during this meeting- 625-4620.

On Monday, February 13th preschool registration begins. Call or stop into the ECCE office to register. Class schedule and information is available online at www.mankatoecfe.org

- **Open Playtime - Early Childhood Center**- This is a free playtime Thursday evenings from 5:45 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Located at 2077 Lookout Drive, North Mankato
- **Open Gym Time- Early Childhood Center** - On Fridays we have our Open Gym Time at Lincoln Community Center from 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. The fee is \$2 per family. Located at 110 Fulton Street, Mankato.

Blue Earth County Historical Society's Heritage Center - Children can enjoy the friendly hands-on exhibits in our kid's area which includes books, dress-up clothes, puzzles and puppets (which one doesn't belong on the farm?) plus, farm figure cut-outs for a photo opportunity. Open Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., Wednesday 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Thursday 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Friday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. The Heritage Center is located at 415 Cherry Street, Mankato. Admission: \$5/adult, \$2/Children 5-17.