



EARLY CHILDHOOD UPDATE

FARMINGTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL
OCTOBER 2019

October is Fire Safety Month



In honor of Fire Safety month, here are some tips to help keep your family safe year round.

Smoke Alarm Safety Check for Parents

Smoke alarms are very easy to install and take care of. To help teach your children about smoke alarms, ask them to help you install and maintain them.

Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement.

For extra safety, install smoke alarms both inside and outside the sleeping area.

Also, smoke alarms should be installed on the ceiling or 6 to 8 inches below the ceiling on side walls. Always follow the manufacturer's installation instructions.

Each month, ask your child to help you test all of the alarms in the home.

Ask your child to pick at least one special day a year, like a birthday, holiday or other special event. Designate that day as "Smoke Alarm Safety Day" and replace all of the batteries in your smoke alarms with new ones. If your home has "hard-wired" alarms (connected to the household electrical system), they may or may not have battery backup.

Home Fire Escape Drill for Parents

Ask your child to lead you out of their bedroom and then your home, practicing two ways out of each. As you practice the plan, reinforce the following safety tips along the way:

Crawl low to avoid heat and smoke.

Feel doors with the back of your hand before opening them. Do not open the door if it feels hot - use your second exit. Get out fast!

Important News!

All of our classrooms use the HighScope curriculum which is a play-based curriculum. Please keep this in mind when dressing your child for school. They should come dressed in clothing that is appropriate for dirt, sand, play dough, paint, markers, glue, etc. as we use many of these materials on a daily basis. Also, their footwear should be appropriate for running, jumping, climbing, dancing, etc. as these are important activities for their gross motor development. If your child is one who likes to choose what they wear to school, simply remind them of the best choices for a creative and active day.

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Parking Lot Information

Parking is located on the East and West side of the building. Please be aware of moving vehicles at all times.

For safety we ask that parents and guardians hold their child/children's hand while in the parking lot area.

Thank you!

Mark Your Calendar:

- 10/11—DIA Rooms 1 & 3
- 10/18—ECSE No School
- 10/22—Parent Meeting
- 10/25 ECSE, GSRP and Head Start—No School

NO SCHOOL -10/25 See you at the event below:

Fall Friends and Family at Alameda (32400 Alameda Street, F.H. 48336)

10/25/19 1- 3 pm

Join us at Alameda for a pumpkin hunt, donuts and cider!



Our Mission Statement:

The Farmington Early Childhood Department will provide high quality programs that nurture and stimulate our multi-cultural population. This will be accomplished in a safe, healthy, challenging environment that promotes lifelong learning, responsibility, and respect using developmentally appropriate play-based curriculum.

Living on the edge: Young children at Halloween

By Dr. Kyle Pruett, Psychiatrist

Some weeks back, Olivia Zoey, our 21 month old, started randomly muttering "...scary, scary..." under her breath several times a day, while stretching her arms and wobbling them around at the shoulder. Was she suddenly in the market for some weird anxiety disorder? A few days later, mystery solved: as she and her mother bicycled past the local farm stand, now decked out with a spook-laden pumpkin patch, she practically launched herself out of her bike seat with excited recognition, pointing at, and now yelling at "Scary, Scary!" the stuffed scarecrow guarding the entrance to the market. We chuckled warmly at our little language-maven, but this story was not over. Just this week, our own stuffed "scary," who'd been sitting quietly on our stoop for days, required major repairs after an over-anxious attack by an upset OZ-baby, necessitating re-glued eyes, re-stuffing of most body parts, and a reattached head.

Just a little too much?

Like most toddlers and preschoolers, she is telling us that Halloween as practiced in our current pop culture can, at first glance appear entertaining, but often turn out to be a bit much when one is little. Though parental explanations help, there is still a lot that is just too bizarre for even young elementary school children to feel okay about. True, many of our young seem quite fascinated by the masks, costumes, nighttime shenanigans, and cornucopia of typically forbidden junk, not to mention the scaries. Yet the fascination is less a sign of understanding than it is of developmentally appropriate fearful anticipation. Preschoolers are still working hard on the issue of what is real and what is pretend. Is that Uncle Greg under that oozing brain tissue, or not? That howling wolf IS hungry (for me?)—it's not just noise! Add a sugar high, darkness, insufficient sleep, and confusion to an already overloaded central switching station and you are headed for blackout real fast.

I adored Halloween as a school aged kid and its socially sanctioned one-night-only, pseudo-delinquencies. But I see a lot of overwhelmed preschoolers and kindergarteners, even a few first-graders staggering around our neighborhoods. Not to be a killjoy, but I think this spooky entertainment can be done better on behalf of our younger kids. Let's begin with what adults understand about their kids' emotional lives and their tolerance for fear, pretense, and the downright toxic.

What adults understand

"What Grown-Ups Understand About Child Development: A National Benchmark Survey," a highly significant poll released by the respected Zero to Three (where I served as president) and Civitas non-profits (and funded by Brio), showed that parents have important gaps in their knowledge about their kids' emotional lives. Most adults, for example, think that young kids are much less affected by TV, violence (domestic and social), family anxiety, stress, and depression than they actually are. I thoroughly understand the wish for us to think our children have more insulation around them, and that we adults have plenty of time to protect them, but the science is far from reassuring. They take it all in, including the nuttiness and frightening overstimulation that can be Halloween.

A more pleasant experience.

Here are some suggestions to make Halloween a more pleasant experience for younger kids:

Home parties for small groups of younger kids up to age 6 or 7 with plenty of adults around work better than trick or treating for preschool, even younger elementary kids.

Soft-pedal the costumes and masks in this first grade or younger age-group. True enough, you might feel a little lonely or prudish here. Hold your ground, it is your child's imagination, not theirs, and you'd probably like it to not burn out too soon.

Be cautious about mixing little ones and teenagers. The older ones have a whole different agenda that they, too, are entitled to explore within the bounds of local standards of taste and tolerance. Too much of this even good-natured scary and violent imagery accumulates like toxic waste in the minds and imaginations of our kids, and it has a longer half-life than most adults think. The kids WILL push the limits of taste and fearfulness (it's their job), and I encourage you to hold your ground.

Enchantment, the unexplained, the relationship between light and dark, fear and safety, life and death itself are the fascinating angles and horizons of the human condition and the childhood imagination. These elements are also the catalysts to creativity and curiosity. Yet balancing this stuff is hard for small ones, whether learning to ride bicycles or managing Halloween. They will enjoy the spooks a lot more later, if you help them now, with a firm hand on the seat and handlebars.

