

Seasons Greetings everyone!

Well, the snow-pants, hats and mitts are out of storage and that most enjoyable time-consuming "getting out of the door in winter" ritual begins, bringing with it the best part of the frosty season -- the Holiday Season! Winter means fun-filled days building snowmen and making snow angels outdoors -- and speaking of the outdoors, the outdoor Halloween party featured very innovative activities and was a tremendous success. Congratulations to the Kids Party Committee.

When the warmth of indoors beckons, playgroup is the perfect place to be. This year's Christmas Basket project is off to a great start. Please continue to be generous. The Mom's Christmas Dinner was a great time, with good friends, food and plenty of wine!!! As our first session ends, we would like to remind all those who are thinking they may not be returning in January to let us know as soon as possible, since there is a waiting list.

To all, we wish a very Merry Christmas, Happy Channukah and a very Happy 2003!!! See you in the New Year !

Donna Cameron-Trudel and Jennifer Sampson



In this issue:

Playgroup Parenting; getting kids to eat!
Family Finance
Christmas Toys
Nighttime Parenting
Activities for You and Your Kids
Holiday Survival
Family Health
Date Night Dining
Garage Sales – Be Aware
Dog Bites
Craft Corner
Classified Ads

Getting Your Kids to Brush...

By Janice Parnell-Fasciano

The best tool we've found for brushing teeth is the new spinning toothbrush from Colgate. It's only \$8 and my 4 year old can't wait to use it several times per day.

Want tips for getting your kids interested in brushing their teeth?

1. Pretend you are tickling their teeth with the toothbrush. This works well with brushing their tongue too because that can really tickle.
2. Take turns. First I let my children brush their own teeth and then it is my turn to brush their teeth. After brushing their teeth let them have a turn brushing or "tickling" your teeth.

Playgroup Parenting

Advice from Parent to Parent

Welcome to Playgroup Parenting, a returning newsletter column based on your responses to questions members raise.

“Help! I have 2 questions about feeding my toddler. Firstly, my toddler won't eat anything except Kraft dinner and cookies. Fruit and veggies? Forget it! I've tried lots of different tricks but nothing seems to work unless I want to spend the whole day feeding him breakfast. Secondly, I know I shouldn't say it but Kraft dinner does have the big advantage of being quick and easy to prepare. Assuming I can get my child to eat in the first place, what quick and easy nutritious meals can I prepare and/or keep in the freezer for emergencies?”

Try a healthier brand of Mac and cheese

I can suggest two healthier alternatives to Kraft dinner: President's Choice Organic Noodles and Cheese (\$1.29) and Annie's Macaroni and Cheese (\$1.99) available in health food stores.

Veggie soup is another way to get children to eat veggies. It can either be eaten on its own or used as a sauce for noodles or in a casserole. My recipe is onion and garlic sauteed in veg or olive oil, add 2-4 c. of water and a veg bouillon or two and veggies such as broccoli, potato, carrot, leek. Puree the soup at the end.
- Wendy

It's in the Dip

Use baby carrots for dipping. Just cook them for a couple of minutes in the microwave if your child can't manage food that crunchy. Anything involving dipping always seems to go down well.

Hide 'Em!

My children have built-in vegetable detectors, so I would suggest the following evil strategies—for which you require a blender, and food processor or grater:

- When making spaghetti sauce, fill your blender halfway with tomatoes, and then add carrots and celery and puree. Toss the mixture into the cooked meat and onion mixture. No child can identify a vegetable in this mix!
- Peel and grate zucchini into everything! Works very well in risotto, sauces for chicken a la king etc. Once you've removed the tell-tale green skin, the zucchini is virtually undetectable as its also virtually tasteless! You can use unpeeled zucchini in muffins if you add chocolate ☺ To give your child a sense of control, you can add sizable chunks of other vegetables to whatever you've cooked so they can pick them out. And you never know—they might try it (but don't count on it!)
- Make a very basic guacamole with a bit of lemon and a shake of salt. Maybe it's the shade of green—it doesn't look like a vegetable—but they eat it! Dexter will eat a whole bowl with a single corn chip. Be sure to hand out individual bowls if your children have colds!

-Cheryl Roscoe

Think Slow ... Not Fast

Invest in a slow cooker (crock pot), you throw everything in it in the morning (which takes about 5 mins), switch it on and its ready in time for supper. You can then just cook some pasta or rice and a few veggies and supper is ready. You can make it even easier by putting lots of veggies in whatever you are cooking so you don't need to cook any more.

Another quick and popular lunch in our house is baked potatoes. You can do them in the microwave in just a couple of minutes and then add all sorts of fillings eg grated cheese, cottage cheese, tuna, etc.

-Hilary Jones

Issue for the next newsletter: “The Curse of Sibling Rivalry”

“I figured, why ruin your lifestyle for one child. May as well have two. I have a sister, but we're seven years apart—so I was imagining two well-behaved children playing together cooperatively. HA! Okay, I admit they do play well together occasionally, but more often than not they're attacking each other (often it seems for the sheer sport of it). I've heard similar tales of woe, but solutions are few and far between. If you have any tips or tricks for inducing good behaviour, or dealing with bad behaviour, we'd like to know what they are. Drop a line at playgroup or email me at: c.roscoe@sympatico.ca.

Of course, you can continue to send responses to any question at any time—or suggest another question to ask. Just contact a member of the newsletter committee, or send email to: c.roscoe@sympatico.ca.

Family Finance

Cheryl Roscoe

I met with my financial planner recently (who strikes an interesting balance between investment advisor and babysitter) and shamelessly asked if he could field a column for our newsletter. I figured I was probably not the only one lacking time and discipline in this area, and who needs help understanding to financial affairs, so here is article on a topic near and dear to my heart: how to finance my children's education (one will be doctor, the other a car mechanic!). I thought this was especially relevant given the recent discussions about how banks are investing RESP money.

If you are interested in a specific topic, or have questions you can email them to me at: c.roscoe@sympatico.ca and we'll publish Robert's replies in the next newsletter.

RESP's a Primer

Edited by Robert Fretz Investment Advisor
Performa Financial Group, Standard Life

An important tool in saving for your child's education is the **Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP)**. If you have not started saving for your child's education or are not utilizing the benefits of a RESP now may be the time to consider it.

A RESP is an effective way to maximize the money available to your children when they enroll in a full-time, post-secondary program. A RESP realizes the following benefits:

- Investments compound tax-free as long as they remain in your RESP
- **You select investments from a wide range of options**
- Withdrawals are taxed in the hands of the student
- The government contributes up to \$400 through the Canada Education Savings Grant

How does an RESP work?

You can contribute up to \$4,000 per child per year to a RESP. The contribution is not tax deductible, however the investment income is tax sheltered. The Government of Canada provides a Canada Education Savings Grant of 20 per cent of the first \$2,000 you contribute each year with a lifetime maximum of \$7,200. If you can't take advantage of the full grant in a specific year, you can carry it forward to a future year subject to a maximum grant of \$800 in a year. Contribution room accumulates from your child's birth, even if you haven't set up a RESP. Contributions can be made up until the year your child turns 18. When a student takes money out of the RESP to pay for post-secondary schooling, withdrawals are taxed in his or her hands - not yours. Since most students have much lower incomes than their parents do, this "income splitting" should result in significant tax savings.

Some Important Notes

- ✓ Don't withdraw RESP contributions before your child starts a post-secondary program. This triggers partial re-payment and suspension of grant contributions.
- ✓ Annual contributions over \$4,000 are subject to a penalty of 1% per month.
- ✓ You can withdraw your contributions tax-free at any time. However, RESP investment growth can only be withdrawn to pay for full-time, post-secondary education expenses of the named beneficiary. Eligible expenses include tuition, housing, transportation, books, supplies and other costs associated with full-time, post-secondary education.
- ✓ If an RESP is 10 years or older, and the beneficiary has still not enrolled in a post-secondary program by age 21, you can withdraw the income earned from your contributions and transfer up to \$50,000 to your RRSP. However the Education Savings Grants must be paid back and you will face a 20% tax on gains earned above \$50,000.
- ✓ All funds in the RESP must be withdrawn before the end of the plan's 26th year.

A Final Note

Government funding cutbacks to universities and the increasing costs of a post secondary education mean that planning for your child's education is more important than ever. The RESP is a tax effective way to achieve your education savings goals.

Robert Fretz
Tel: 514-336-2415 x244
Email: robretz@sympatico.ca

Christmas Toys Help the Grandparents Spoil your Children

Cheryl Roscoe

Once again, 'tis the season, where nothing short of the bubonic plague will stop your children from being spoiled rotten. Well, if you can't beat 'em, help them! Suggest toys that help your children grow and develop new skills. Construction toys, for example, are proven to have numerous hidden benefits for both boys and girls. Playing with a construction toy helps improve dexterity, co-ordination and perseverance, as well as stimulate the imagination and a sense of design. Care must be taken in selecting a set so it will be elaborate enough to present a challenge but not so advanced as to cause frustration.

For the younger child, building sets consist of simple blocks, stacking toys, put-together and take-apart toys, peg-board sets, and primary construction toys. They should be simple in design and the pieces should be large enough for easy manipulation. A completed construction should function as intended. Sets of wooden blocks, often hand-made, and sold locally may include a variety of shapes in related sizes which illustrate the basic principles of proportion and dimension.

If they need really explicit suggestions, the Canadian Toy testing council has some excellent hot picks for this year including:

Tonka Bobble Boys ATV

Ages 4+

An amazing Remote Control All Terrain Vehicle features an appealing driver with a bobbing head. The R/C handset is shaped like the ATV handlebars and twisting the right handlebar moves the vehicle forward and back. Features a unique auto shut-off to save batteries, which is not normally found on most R/C vehicles. All children enjoyed popping wheelies and racing the ATV over a variety of surfaces both indoors and out. Parents loved the fact that the sound can be turned off. Wahoo!

Crayola Window Writer

Ages: 3+

Kids can dress up windows, mirrors, cellophane and metallic wrapping paper with marker designs that go on wet and dry to a smudge proof finish. Packages of bright and pastel colours are available. Removing the marker art takes two or more wipings with plain water or window spray. Children can also put their artwork on clear cellophane to make custom-made wrapping paper for gifts!

Fun Sounds Train

FISHER-PRICE INC.,

Ages 12 mos - 3 yrs

A great hit with children. The train cars ran smoothly when pushed along the track and the realistic bird, train, car and rooster sounds added to the fun. The bright colours and easy-to-hold components provided hours of fun for children on their own or playing together with parents or other children. Youngsters especially loved the little bird that popped out of his house and the merry-go-round with sounds of laughing children. It has the added advantage that it can be connected to other Fisher Price sets to make a charming little village. A wonderful toy that was greatly enjoyed by all!

Theatre Stories

LEGO CANADA INC.,

Ages 3 +

Available at Reve D'Enfant in Pte.-Claire Village. Young actors and playwrights use this 50-piece set, including curtain, sets, characters, costumes, props and sound effects, to create a stage and put on a play. The realistic sound effects added to the excitement (sword fight, magical spell) and suspense (creaky door, witch's cackle). The curtain and sets did not always stay in place, but this did not hinder the enthusiasm of actors as they invented new stories or acted out familiar ones. Younger children needed an older child or adult to help with the story telling and change of sets but kids love it!

Other toys receiving consistent praise include: Groovy girls, Corolle dolls, Brio and Thomas the Tank wooden railway sets. Also consider puzzles, as many skills are exercised by puzzles such as concentration, manual dexterity and the perception of shape, colour, size and form. For young children, make sure colours are bold and bright, and that pieces hold together well. Ravensburger and Galt are both quality brands.

Recommended Children's software includes: Arthur's Kindergarten, Discovery Airport, Little People (for as young as 2!).

Nighttime Parenting: The Long Term Benefits of Sharing Sleep

Janice Parnell Fasciano

Last issue we discussed the basic understanding of what science has learned about sleep in young children, in order to appreciate and understand their sleep patterns and habits. We acknowledged that difficult sleepers can exhaust the whole family, put a strain on their parents' marriage, and contribute to parent burnout. Dr. William Sears, M.D. author of *Nighttime Parenting, How To Get Your Baby and Child To Sleep*, explains how parents who are struggling with their child's sleeping habits need to know some general facts about sleep.

One of the goals of Dr. Sears' book is to help parents and children achieve **sleep harmony**. He believes that if the caller and the receiver can get their communication network working, sleep harmony will result. *Nighttime Parenting* is **not** a "let your baby cry it out" book. It is a "learn how to listen and respond" book.

To a tiny baby, when mother is out of sight she ceases to exist. The baby has not yet developed **object permanence**. If he awakens and mother is not there, he does not yet possess the cognitive ability to realize, "She's just around the corner in another room." Babies usually do not achieve object permanence until some time after the first year. Providing a familiar attachment person during the night helps a baby feel certain that mother has not left.

A newborn has already been sleeping in touch with his mother for nine months. He has grown accustomed to the presence of familiar breathing movements, heartbeat, and warmth. The fact that the baby has been "all of a sudden born" doesn't mean this should change.

Sharing sleep helps babies organize their sleep patterns. The last issue discussed how babies have vulnerable periods for waking up as

they pass from deep or quiet sleep into light or active sleep. These vulnerable periods occur as often as once every hour during the night. Sleeping with a familiar and predictable person smoothes the passage from one sleep state to the next and lessens the baby's anxiety.

Mothers Sleep Better

This may come as a surprise, but Dr. Sears' research suggests that not only does baby sleep better in the family bed, but most parents do also. Certainly mother usually does. Baby is not the only one who is separation sensitive at night. A new mother also experiences anxiety when her baby is not nearby.

Achieving harmony with your baby during the day is an important part of attachment parenting. Sharing sleep allows this harmony to continue. Physical closeness causes mother and baby to share sleep cycles: their internal clocks are synchronized with each other. When baby wakes during a vulnerable period, mother is likely to be in light sleep. She can help the baby settle again without her sleep cycles being seriously disrupted.

When harmony in sleep is not achieved, nighttime parenting becomes a reluctant duty. Being awakened from a state of deep sleep to attend to a hungry and crying baby makes the concept of nighttime parenting unattractive and leads to exhausted mothers, fathers, and babies.

Breastfeeding Is Easier

When mother's and baby's sleep cycles are in harmony, night nursing is less tiring. Mothers find that their sleep lightens and they almost wake up about thirty seconds before their babies awaken for a feeding. By being able to anticipate the feeding, mothers can usually start nursing just as the baby begins to squirm and reach for the nipple. The babies do not fully awaken and drift back into deep sleep right after nursing.



Sharing Sleep Increases Touching

The skin is the largest organ in the human body, and tactile stimulation or the lack of it can have a profound effect on how the baby develops physically, emotionally, and intellectually.

Children Sleep Better

Co-sleeping helps children develop a healthy sleep attitude. They learn to regard sleep as a pleasant time, a time of closeness. They radiate a feeling of rightness because the principles of daytime attachment parenting are carried over into nighttime parenting. Dr. Sears feels that children who sleep alone (especially if they don't want to sleep alone) may grow up regarding sleep as a fearful time, a time of separation.

Read Your Child's Stress Indicators

It is not abnormal or unusual for older children to sleep with their parents, just uncultural. Dr. Sears feels that when a five-year-old comes in and wants to spend the night with his parents, that they should regard that as a stress indicator and open their bedroom to him. He feels that it is common and quite normal for children occasionally to pop into the parents' bedroom for some refueling and nighttime security. Dr. Sears advocates, "Welcome your child into bed or the bedroom and give him the message that we care about you at night just as we care about you during the day".

Dr. Sears quotes psychologists who agree that extending the practice of daytime attachment parenting into

Nighttime Parenting . . .

nighttime parenting has long term effects on the child. One of these effects is on the quality of intimacy. Many psychologists and marriage counselors report that one of the common problems of contemporary teenagers and adults is that they have difficulty forming genuinely close and intimate relationships with another person. Sharing sleep teaches a child to be comfortable being in touch with somebody; it doesn't substitute things for people. They remind us that a childhood need for intimacy that is not filled never completely goes away but reappears in later years.

Why Parents Hesitate

Despite the advantages, some parents hesitate to adopt sharing sleep as part of their parenting style. If you think that sleeping with a baby or child is an unusual custom, perhaps it would help to learn that babies

sleeping with parents is the usual custom in most cultures around the world. Co-sleeping was common in the Western world until the twentieth century when mothers lost confidence in their own instincts and followed the advice of a few influential but misguided experts.

Dependency

How often have you heard, "But the baby will get to enjoy it; he'll become so dependent that he'll never want to leave your bed?" Yes, of course, the

baby will enjoy it. Is there anything in the parent-child contract that says your baby shouldn't enjoy where he sleeps? Sleeping with your child does not encourage dependency, it responds to a need and teaches your child about trust. Parents can easily achieve the parenting goal of independence by creating secure environments and feelings of rightness. Involuntarily, children's independence will develop naturally.

"But when will he leave our bed?"

Dr. Sears suggests, in the important relationship with your children, throw away the clock and the calendar. The main issue is not when your child leaves your bed, but how he leaves. He says that in his general experience, most children who are welcomed into the family bed in early infancy voluntarily leave around the second or third year. They may return periodically in times of stress or high need. But he reminds us that a need that is filled does go away.

Overlaying and SIDS

Some mothers are afraid that they might rollover on the baby and smother him. Experts on Sudden

Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) no longer list overlaying as one of the causes. Mothers are so physically and mentally aware of their baby's presence even while sleeping that it is extremely unlikely they would overlay their baby.

The Effects on Self-Esteem and Discipline

Sleeping with your child definitely has benefits for self-esteem and discipline. Sending the message to the child, "You are a special person; we care about you at night just as we care about you during the day", carries over into the discipline of the child. One of the hallmarks of a disciplined child is a feeling of rightness. A child who feels right is more likely to act right.

Sleeping with your child adds another dimension to the time you spend in sleep. The concept of the family bed allows so many "I care" messages to come through to your child, and you convey these messages without even saying a word.

Among some of the other issues Dr. Sears covers in his book are: bed-wetting, sleepwalking, night terrors, nighttime thumb-sucking, and his theory on the curtailment of promiscuity in teenage years from the long-term effects of early childhood co-sleeping.

Children grow up to be happy and secure if they learn from birth that the people they love the most of all, their parents, can be depended on, are confident and secure about moving out into the world on their own. Needs that have been met and satisfied are not still begging for resolution.

Activities for You and Your Kids -- Chia-Heads

Janice Parnell Fasciano

Remember those Chia-heads that are advertised around this time of year? You and your kids can create your own Chia-like people and have them before the holidays! Just take a few styrofoam cups and decorate the fronts with silly faces. Fill with soil, and then sprinkle with some grass seed which can be found at your local garden store. Keep the soil moist, and within a couple of weeks you should be able to see the "hair" sprouting!



Holiday Survival: Alcohol and Women

Cheryl Roscoe

Ignorance would be bliss here. Even though we know moderate alcohol consumption is good for us, "Moderate" means no more than one drink per day for women and two drinks for men. HEY!! That's not fair!

Apparently women should drink less even if they are on the large size (like me) because women have more body fat and less water than men do. Alcohol is more soluble in water than in fat, so for a given amount of alcohol intake, the blood alcohol concentration in women will be higher. In addition, the stomach enzyme that breaks down alcohol in the body is less active in women than in men.

FYI, A standard drink should contain no more than 1/2 to 1/3 an ounce of absolute alcohol, that is, equivalent to any of the following.

1 bottle (12 oz.) of beer at 5% alcohol
4 oz. of wine at 12.5% alcohol
1 shot (1 1/2 oz.) of 80-proof liquor (rum, whisky, gin, etc.)
1 1/4 oz. of distilled spirits (brandy, cognac, etc.)

The good news is, if you pace yourself, you can drink at 2-3 glasses of wine without feeling any ill effects the next day.

Family Health Christmas Day in the ER...

Jill Sockett, BScN

At 4:00 PM last Christmas, fifteen minutes before we were about to walk out the door for a family dinner party, my eldest son began to seize. He had what is known as a febrile seizure. As his temperature rose, for a period of about two minutes (the longest two minutes of my life), he lost consciousness and his 4 limbs began to flap and shake about. Luckily for us, my husband had just arrived home from work and he knew what to do. Would you?

Febrile seizures are fairly common and occur in about 3-4% of all children, usually between 3 months and 5 years of age. They occur more often in boys than in girls and more often in families with a prior history. The fever usually exceeds 39 °C and the seizure tends to occur during the temperature rise, rather than after a prolonged elevation. For this reason, febrile seizures are hard to prevent. Parents are often unaware that their child is febrile until after the seizure has occurred. In our case, I had given my son a dose of children's Tylenol about 15 minutes before the seizure occurred. Yet for children who have febrile seizures, administration of Tylenol or other antipyretic medications will not necessarily prevent the seizure from occurring.

What to Do in the Event of a Seizure:

1. Try to remain as calm as possible.
2. Place the child on his back, on a safe, flat surface such as a floor or couch where he cannot harm himself. Remove any dangerous objects around him.
3. DO NOT restrain his movements during the seizure.
4. DO NOT put anything in his mouth during the seizure. Do not worry – the child cannot "swallow his tongue".
5. If saliva or secretions begin to pool in his mouth, or he begins to gag, turn him on his side to facilitate their drainage. Loosen any tight clothing, especially around the neck area.
6. If possible, time the seizure event and observe what is happening (are all of his limbs moving back and forth, are his eyes rolling, are his muscles rigid, ect). Febrile seizures do not normally last longer than 10 minutes.
7. After the seizure, the child may remain somewhat sleepy, make funny whining noises, and/or exhibit jerky movements of the limbs. This is normal and may last up to an hour. Make him as comfortable as possible by removing any warm clothes and covering him with a light blanket. Avoid shivering.
8. Take his temperature (by a route other than by mouth). Give medication for fever by mouth only when he is awake enough not to choke on it. Alternately, Tylenol is available in a rectal suppository format. A lukewarm washcloth to the forehead or back of the neck may also be applied. However, the compress or water must NOT be cold enough to induce shivering (the process of shivering involves the production of heat and will only serve to increase the child's temperature).
9. The child should be evaluated by a doctor so that the cause of the fever can be determined and to assess whether there could be a cause for the seizure other than fever.

About 30-40% of children who have had a febrile seizure will one day have another. However, most children do outgrow this tendency by five years of age. In closing, let me remind you that febrile seizures are a rare occurrence. In fact, most fevers are of viral origin, are of relatively brief duration and have limited consequences. In addition, fever probably plays a role in enhancing the development of immunity and in aiding recovery from infection. If nothing else, it surely slows the little critters down and allows them (and us) some much needed rest.

Here's wishing you a happy and health holiday season. I plan on eating twice as much this year for the dinner I missed out on last year...



Date Night Dining

Cheryl Roscoe

When the cold weather descends, I instinctively seek comfort food and parking. I don't want Jamie to have to go too far to get (and warm up) the car! There seems to be quite a selection on comfort-

food Italian restaurants on the West Island—including some new selections—so we tried a couple and have been pleasantly surprised.

Mundo Trattoria et Mercatino

18425 Antoine-Faucon, Pierrefonds 842-1211

We hit the jackpot here. Mundo advertises itself as a "trattoria"—the Italian equivalent of a French Bistro—and exceeded all expectations. I admit, I tend to lower my expectations a notch or two for West Island dining, but this place is really, really good. It offers a genuine trattoria menu, which means heavy on fresh, seasonal ingredients cooked with gusto. Like any self-respecting restaurant of this ilk, the menu changes frequently (weekly in this case) and everything is made in-house (including the desserts). Featured the evening we were there was a fabulous and robust seafood soup. It was a thick, lively tomato and seafood broth loaded with chunks of fresh tuna, shrimp and mussels, and a nice crunchy garlic crouton. Slurp. Outstanding among the main courses was the veal chop. It was truly exceptional. They brag that they only serve the best milk-fed veal and it must be true. This chop, served with a rich demi-glace that complemented the meat to perfection was truly to die for. If that wasn't enough, the canoli is homemade. Very nice it was too (I have a weakness for canoli). Service was friendly and knowledgeable—when the headwaiter raves about something, pay attention. He knows what he's talking about. He also knows his wine. REALLY knows his wine. You have to be careful here, as wine prices range from very reasonable to not even remotely cheap. They also have special imports and selections not offered on the wine list. The night we were there we opted for a fairly pricey bottle of wine, as I had won \$80.00 in a fifty-fifty draw at work for

Centraide, and it was every bit as wonderful as he said it was. Depending on what you order, you can spend from about \$80 - \$160 on dinner for two, including wine and taxes. I suggest you reserve at least a day ahead. My shameless groveling got us in at the time I wanted—but only just. Even though it's located in deepest, darkest Pierrefonds where you would not expect to find a restaurant, people are finding it.

Farfalla

187A Hymus (Zellers Mall) 426-2514

Seeking a dinner and movie combination, we thought (in the name of adventure) we'd try Farfalla. It's been around forever, and I'm somewhat suspicious of Italian restaurants that have been around forever. Often the food, although well prepared, is simply too predictable and has that made-for-North American audiences quality about it. However, I was pleasantly surprised. It's a comfortable restaurant that offers a pleasant décor and ambiance. The menu was a pleasant surprise. They offer a fairly expensive table-d'hôte, ranging from about \$15.00 - \$30.00 for a three-course meal, and some of the selections were quite interesting. I opted for a carpaccio to start, which I always enjoy, and we both chose pasta dishes. I was pleased to discover some more inventive combinations featuring wild mushrooms (loove mushrooms)—without the ubiquitous cream. My pasta was tossed with a mixture of sautéed mushrooms, spinach, sun dried tomatoes and toasted pine nuts. It was very good, and not too rich—given the size of the portions, this was a good thing. We were served by a rather opinionated waiter who was not shy about suggesting an alternate choice to our selection. This was okay, because he knew his wines, and his suggestion was a couple of dollars cheaper than what we'd picked. Overall, it was a good experience. I'd choose Mundo as a first choice, but I would feel comfortable taking the family and the out-laws to Farfalla and knowing that everyone would enjoy themselves. Expect to pay \$70-\$120 for dinner for two, again, depending on your selections.

Garage Sales - Be Aware

Janice Parnell Fasciano

Every year, garage sales are held in towns and cities across Canada. People often shop for bargains at these sales; however, these bargains could be dangerous. According to Health Canada - Product Safety, everyone holding a garage sale is legally responsible for ensuring that products sold, whether new or used, are safe and meet safety standards. It is important to only sell items that are in good condition. Damaged articles should be discarded. The Hazardous Products Act is administered by Health Canada. It has safety requirements for certain consumer products, many of which are intended for use by children. Under Canadian law you cannot import, sell or even give away products that do not meet the requirements of the Hazardous Products Act. The following is a partial list of products that must meet safety requirements under the Hazardous Products Act: BABY GATES - CAR SEATS - CHILDREN'S SLEEPWEAR - CRIBS - PROTECTIVE SPORTS EQUIPMENT - PLAYPENS - STROLLERS - TOYS/LAWN DARTS - BICYCLE AND ROLLERBLADING HELMETS. BE CAREFUL WHEN PLANNING YOUR GARAGE SALE! For more information contact Health Canada, Product Safety at: <http://www.hs-sc.gc.ca/psb> or contact the Regional Office at: Montreal (514) 283-5488

Dog Bites

Hilary Jones

There is no doubt that dogs can make wonderful pets for children. They can act as a best friend and a way to learn about caring for others and taking responsibility for something. However, unfortunately, not all dogs are good with people and children in particular are very vulnerable to dog bites. In fact, according to the new Dogs and Kids website run by National Companion Animal Coalition and the Canada Safety Council (www.dogsandkids.ca), children under 10 are the most likely members of society to be bitten. As well as disfigurement, a dog bite can also leave a child with long term emotional trauma. The Humane Society of Canada's dog bite prevention website (www.humanesociety.com/dogbite.asp or Tel: 1-800-641-KIND), also points out that children are most likely to be bitten on the head and neck because of their size.

We are probably all very careful with our children around stray dogs but statistics show that most bites are in fact inflicted by dogs known to their victim, either their own, a neighbour's or a friend's (or one of those people who comes up to you in the park and says "my dog is ever so good with children".....).

Why do dogs bite? According to veterinarians, dogs who bite are often unruly as they have not been taught appropriate behaviour for our society. Just like children, they may be jealous, afraid, threatened or very possessive which can lead them to lash out even if normally they are safe and reliable companions. They can also bite by accident when over excited or playing. Whilst owners clearly have a responsibility to ensure their dog has been properly trained, we, as parents, can help reduce the likelihood of our children being bitten by teaching them how to approach and retreat from dogs and to recognize danger signs and situations to avoid.

Both the Humane Society and the Dogs and Kids websites offer lots of advice and tips for dog bite prevention. If you have older children, the HSC site in particular is worth looking at as the tips are written specifically for children. Here are some of the key points from the sites:

- Never leave an infant or a small child alone with a dog, even if it is a trusted family pet. Many children have been injured this way.
- Teach children to act kindly and gently around dogs and to treat them with respect.
- Approach dogs quietly and in a way that will not surprise them. Give them plenty of opportunity to see and smell you as you get near them. Dogs do not see that well so rely heavily on their sense of smell and hearing to warn them someone is approaching.
- Do not try to pet dogs that are tied up, sleeping, eating, behind fences, in vehicles, or in small spaces.
- Do not try to grab food, bones or toys. Dogs can be as territorial about their favourite toy as a toddler!!
- Do not chase or tease dogs.
- When petting or playing with a dog, do not rub along their sides or pull their tails even in fun.
- Teach children never to approach or pet strange dogs even if they are with their owner and the owner says it is OK. Owners do not always know how their dog will react if your child does something unpredictable.
- When they are old enough, teach your child how to react if they are unfortunate enough to encounter a stray dog when there are no adults around:
- Do not stare at the dog as dogs see this as aggressive behaviour
- Do not turn your back on the dog and attempt to run, it will always run faster than you
- Walk slowly backwards or sideways keeping the dog in view and talking quietly to the dog. If possible, walk into someone's yard or into somewhere where the dog won't be able to get at you.
- Be extra vigilant around mother dogs with young.
- If your child is having a snack and a dog approaches and tries to grab it, throw the snack as far as you can behind the dog. Don't try to stop them taking the snack as the dog will likely jump up and try to snatch it.
- Remember most dogs never bite. Enjoy their companionship in a safe and responsible way.



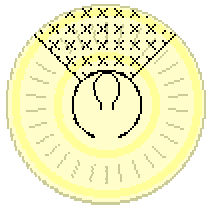
Craft Corner - Paper Plate Angel

Cheryl Roscoe

Here is a simple craft that delivers really great results (we tried it!)

Supplies needed:

- a paper plate
- pencil
- scissors
- tape or stapler
- crayons, paint, markers and whatever you'd like to stick on for decoration



- Draw a pattern like this on the underside of a paper plate.
- Cut along the lines, discarding the dark section.
- Decorate the angel—use whatever you've got on hand; try wool for hair, feathers on the wings (and stickers anywhere!).



Overlap the edges of the angel's skirt slightly and tape or staple it into place.

Classified Ads

Host a fun filled KITCHEN SHOW & get lots of free kitchen tools!

Learn about easy, quick ways to prepare nutritious, appetizing meals using top-notch kitchen tools and simple recipes! You chose a delicious recipe and I will create it during the recipe demonstration. The quality products make great Christmas gifts. See product line at: www.pamperedchef.com & contact JANIE LADD (514) 630-5958 to book a show or discuss this home based business opportunity!

Birthday Party rentals! Having a party or special event? Rent a little play center for your preschooler. Great for their imagination – coordination & fun! Appropriate for indoors or outdoors. Rentals range from \$15.00 to \$25.00. Choose from **A Bob the Builder scoop play vehicle, a Fire Engine, A Fire Station** (which can transform into a **Train**), **Target Toss games, Ball Tent** & more! ALADDIN Party Accessories 630-6305.

RESERVE YOUR SPACE HERE! –Are you sure you don't have anything you'd like to sell? Looking for something to buy? Would you like to advertise your home business? Let us know!! Contact Cheryl Roscoe or Lisa Fisher

New! Read about "What to do in and Montreal" on our website: www.cppg.net