



# The Essential Link



Family and Community Newsletter

Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Program

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## Let's Read!

### Fingerplays and Action Songs

Rhymes and movements for the hands and fingers, some of which date back almost 2,000 years, are still used in early childhood classrooms, as well as the more modern action songs that involve the whole body.

As children learn fingerplays and action songs, they learn the names of body parts, numbers and shapes. They also learn other concepts and skills, including:

- manual dexterity and muscle control;
- sense of rhythm of speech and music;
- new vocabulary;
- ability to follow directions;
- grasp of order;
- increased attention spans; and
- listening skills.

Fingerplays and action songs are a fun way to learn. They are a great way to pass a few minutes of transition time—while you are waiting in the car, in line at the grocery store, before or after dinner.

Children love repeating familiar rhymes, so come back to the same songs often enough that your child can learn the words of the rhyme and the movements that accompany the words.

Perhaps you remember a fingerplay from your childhood that you can share with your child. Also, if you would like to learn more fingerplays or action songs that are hits with kids of your child's age, ask your child's teacher.

## Math Their Way

### The Shape of Things

Shapes are all around us, in natural objects, architecture, signs, and even in the numerals and letters we use. Shape knowledge underlies geometry, algebra, and other domains of higher mathematics.

This complex knowledge begins with the very simple foundation of recognizing simple shapes—circles, squares, triangles, ovals, rectangles, and diamonds. Children can begin to notice these shapes in the world around them, and you can help them to do so.

As you walk or drive along together, point out shapes you see in signs, rooftops, and windows. Involve your child in shape-spotting games. Ask your child questions like, "Who can find the first triangle? How many shapes can we find in that building? Can you find two oval letters on that billboard?" You'll find that your child enjoys getting "in shape!"

The following are some "shape books" for young children:

- Shapes, Shapes, Shapes by Tana Hoban
- Mouse Shapes by Ellen Stoll Walsh
- Leaf Man by Lois Ehlert
- Hockey Shapes by Christopher Jordan
- Round is a Mooncake: A Book of Shapes by Roseanne Thong and Grace Lin

## FYI.....

### The Art of Books

You don't have to go to art galleries to appreciate beautiful artwork. Watercolor, oil painting, pen and ink, collage, and other forms of artwork can be found in quality children's literature. Teachers and caregivers often choose books not only for the wonderful stories they tell, but also for their wonderful artwork.

A trip to the library or bookstore offers the opportunity to compare the styles of different illustrators. Eric Carle, Tomie de Paola, and Ezra Jack Keats all have distinct artistic styles that even very young children can learn to recognize with very little adult assistance.

Children enjoy experimenting with the art materials used by illustrators they know. One of their favorite artists, Stephen Gammell, illustrator of Monster Mama, Old Henry, and Song and Dance Man, uses watercolor and chalk to create splashes of color across the page.

Check out these books from the library and offer watercolors and chalk to your child. Create Gammell-like pictures together.

Remember to celebrate your child's artwork as well. Praise him/her for each creative piece and find a "special" place in your home to exhibit it.

Extending literature in this way expands a child's horizons in many ways. But more than that, it's just plain family fun!



## Large Motor Development

Running, jumping, climbing, skipping, hopping, throwing, and balancing come naturally to young children, but kids need plenty of opportunities to practice them. These large motor activities are an important part of your child's day both at home and at school. With daily large-motor experiences, children practice fundamental movement skills that help them develop good self-esteem and physical competence.

A developmentally appropriate movement curriculum facilitates basic movement skills and physical fitness, such as those named above. Children get the chance to run, jump, skip, walk on balance beams, and throw and kick balls. As with all developing skills, motor skills must be practiced to improve.

At school, you might see children moving like snakes, cars, bears, dinosaurs, and frogs. You can encourage these same activities at home. Music gets children moving as well!

We want children to be physically fit because it's important to their health. We also know that they learn better when they are healthy and in good physical condition.

## 10 Little (Big) Ways to Appreciate the Little (Big) Things in Parenting

Oftentimes we're moving so quickly that we miss out on the little (big) moments, lessons, and miracles that happen through our children. Let this list inspire you to slow down and savor the little things that make parenting so grand.

1. Get up extra early and watch the sun rise together.
2. Let them help you prepare a meal.
3. Ask them what they would like to do today that would cost little or no money. Then do it!
4. Tell a joke and listen—really listen—to your child's laughter.
5. Ask your child to tell you a joke and listen to your heart smile.
6. Let your environment spark your creativity.
7. Start a collection or turn a collection into something wonderful.
8. Write each other Hope Letters about things you hope to accomplish.
9. Give back, together. Do some volunteer work.
10. Tell your child you love him often, and show him you love him through your actions every day.



### What's happening?

Fall River/Somerset/Westport

### Halloween Party

Friday, October 31, 2014

5:00 to 7:00 PM

Ages 2 to 14 years

Greater Fall River Re-Creation

72 Bank Street, Fall River, MA

Games, Trick-or-Treat-Candy,

Face Painting, Free Pizza, Photos and Resource Tables!

For more information,  
Please call 508-679-0922

Or

Contact [www.gffrec.org](http://www.gffrec.org)