



Pediatric Development Center

Newsletter
May
2009

We provide occupational therapy evaluation, treatment and consultation for children with developmental delays, autism/Asperger, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, sensory processing disorders, attention, behavioral concerns, handwriting, and other areas of weakness.

Contact us for further information:
125 Presumpscot St. Portland, ME. (207) 699-5531.

Parent Support Group:

We want to support parents in any way we can and would like to have a monthly meeting to discuss your concerns. Please call the office to let us know when would be good for you and we will put together a meeting. 699-5531

Good Resources:

www.howstuffworks.com

www.worldclassmedicine.com

Box Garden for Kids

Turn a wooden fruit crate into a miniature box garden for kids. In the winter, fruit shipped from places like South America often comes in wooden crates. Ask your grocer to save one for you.

What You'll Need:

- Wooden fruit crate
- Newspaper
- Potting soil
- Garden soil or compost
- Water
- Vegetable seeds (leaf lettuce, ball carrots, radishes, and miniature bush tomatoes)

Step 1: Line the wooden crate with four or five layers of newspaper. Fill with a mixture of half potting soil and half garden soil or compost.

Step 2: Water the soil and allow the box to drain.

Step 3: Make two long furrows the length of the box, one near the front, the other right down the middle.

Step 4: Divide the front row in half. In one half sprinkle seeds for miniature carrots. In the other half sprinkle radish seeds. In the middle row, sprinkle leaf lettuce seeds. Plant the seeds thinly.

Step 5: The back half of the box is for your bush tomatoes. Poke a hole about one-half inch deep and drop two or three tomato seeds in it. Cover the seeds.

Step 6: When they sprout wait until they are about two inches tall, then cut away the weaker plants, leaving one strong one.

Step 7: Keep the box outside in a sunny place and water it every day. Thin the plants if they need it.

Step 8: Pull the carrots when they are about one inch across. Cut the lettuce when the leaves are about six to eight inches tall.

Garden of Good Scents

A garden of good scents is full of sweet-smelling plants that delight the nose and the eyes. Here is an enjoyable activity for kids.

Some plants that release scents when touched are Sweet Alyssum, Heliotrope, Nasturtium, Scented Geraniums, Basil, English Violets, Lavender, Pinks, Thyme, Sage, and Oregano.

What You'll Need:

Patch of sunny ground about five feet wide and six feet long

- Shovel
- Trowel
- Bagged compost
- Bagged bark mulch
- Plants
- Hose
- Small sprinkler
- Cardboard
- Safe scissors
- Marker

Step 1: Choose a garden spot and prepare the soil by pulling weeds and digging up soil until it crumbles. Spread a one-inch layer of bagged compost over the soil and mix it in.

Step 2: Then, make two paths by pressing down a one-foot wide strip of soil down the middle of the garden and a second one going across. Cover the paths with bark mulch about two inches deep.

Step 3: Buy your plants or seeds at a garden center. Set the plants out and arrange them the way you wish. Use the labels in the pots to help you decide where to place them. Sow seeds according to the directions on the package.

Step 4: When everything is planted, run a sprinkler about a half an hour. Water deeply twice a week during dry weather and pull out weeds often.

Step 5: When your garden is ready, make a sign that says "Please Touch the Plants!" Then invite friends inside and compare notes on nature's sweet perfumes!

Bicycle Safety Tips for Children

From: worldclassmedicine.com

Helmet Safety...

- Cyclists of all ages should use a helmet that meets ANSI, Snell or ASTM standards and are so labeled.
- Parents should not buy a helmet for the child to "grow into." Choose a helmet that is the right size.
- Directions from the manufacturer should be carefully followed.
- The helmet should fit snugly so it will not move around on the head or come off in a fall. The chin strap should be adjusted to fit snugly. The helmet should be worn horizontally on the head (not tipped back). The front edge should be only one inch above the eyebrows.
- Bicycle helmets are different from helmets used in team sports. Bicycle helmets are "single impact" helmets. Replace your helmet if you have had an accident, or have fallen off your bike and hit your head.

All helmets should be replaced if:

- You see any visible signs of wear and tear inside or outside the helmet.
- Interior pads lose their cushioning effect.
- Your child grows out of the helmet.



Bike Safety

- Buy a bike that is the right size, not one to "grow into." Your child should be able to place the back of his or her feet on the ground while seated.
- If your child's bike has a crossbar, he or she should be able to straddle it with their feet flat on the ground with an inch of clearance.
- If the bike has hand brakes, make sure the child can comfortably grasp the brakes and apply sufficient pressure to stop the bike.
- The bike should be equipped with front and rear reflectors, reflector patches on pedals and wheels, and a bell or horn.
- Obtain any permits or license plates per your town's requirements.

Rules of the Road...

- Ride in the same direction as traffic; stop and look both ways before entering traffic.
- Walk the bike across busy intersections.
- Obey all traffic signals and signs.
- Watch out for cars pulling out of driveways or parked cars entering traffic.
- Use hand signals and look in all directions before turning.
- Avoid swerving suddenly.
- Ride single file on the right side of the road.
- Never ride at dusk or in the dark. If they are unexpectedly out late, your child should be taught to call home for a ride.

- Wear bright, light colored clothing.
- Never wear audio headphones or eat while riding.
- Carry things in a backpack to keep your hands free.
- Don't carry anyone on handlebars or back fender.
- If you are transporting a young child, use a child seat attached to the back of the bike or a trailer. Make sure they have a helmet on as well.



Safety Checks...

- Do a safety check each time they ride.
- See that the wheels, seat and handlebars are secure.
- Check the hand brakes. They should operate smoothly and efficiently.
- Make sure the tires are properly inflated and that the chain is oiled and tight.
- See that there is no dirt clogging smooth operation of the brakes, chain or wheels.
- Check that the bike seat is at the proper height and is comfortable for smooth operation.

Traffic Hand Signals...

- **Right Turn:**
Left arm extended and bent upward from elbow.
- **Left Turn:**
Left arm extended.
- **Stop:**
Left arm extended and bent downward from elbow.