

Family Life

P R O J E C T



FALL 2008



It's Back-to-School Time!

We hope that this newsletter finds you and your family happy and healthy. As your little ones get ready to make the transition from preschool into kindergarten we've included some information you might find helpful. As always, thank you for your continued participation in our study. We look forward to seeing you soon! If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us toll free at **1-800-727-9384**. Also, if you change your address or phone number, PLEASE LET US KNOW!

STUDY UPDATE

Dear Families,

Thank you for your continued help with the Family Life Project. We have loved coming into your home and watching your children grow over the past five years!

As you know, we are interested in how families from different walks of life adjust to the birth of a new child and go on to meet the demands of raising a family. We also want to learn more about children's early development and their transition into school. This study is funded by a grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, which is why we are able to provide compensation for visits!

We continue to make great progress with our project. We are close to finishing our 48-month visits and have started our 5-year-old visits with our families. A home visitor will call to schedule your family's next home visit about 2-3 weeks before your child's 5th birthday.

Also, this spring, we will visit all of the children at their preschool or kindergarten.

Our home visitors constantly tell us how much they enjoy working with your family and how fun your children are. We know how busy parents are, and we very much appreciate your willingness to spend some of your time with us. We learn so much from our visits with you that help us understand families and how they want to raise their children and enrich their family life. We look forward to seeing you again soon!

Best Regards,

Mark Greenberg, PhD

What have we found?

Our home visitors are regularly asked what we have found so far on the project. As you know, we ask A LOT of questions when we visit your homes. Currently the data center is VERY busy organizing and sorting through the information that we collect.

Of the 527 families in Pennsylvania that participated in the project when their child was about 2-months old, 460 (87%) of those families continued to participate in the project during the home visits conducted when their child was about 3 years old.

Family Activities Helping Children Learn

At the 35-month home visit, we asked families about different types of activities they participated in with their study child. We found that Pennsylvania families are very active in promoting children's learning in a number of different ways. As shown in the chart below, over 70% of families in Pennsylvania participate with their child in a variety of learning activities *at least* 2-3 times per week, including learning names of objects, singing songs, learning to write letters and words, learning alphabet sounds, and learning numbers. *(Continued on next page)*

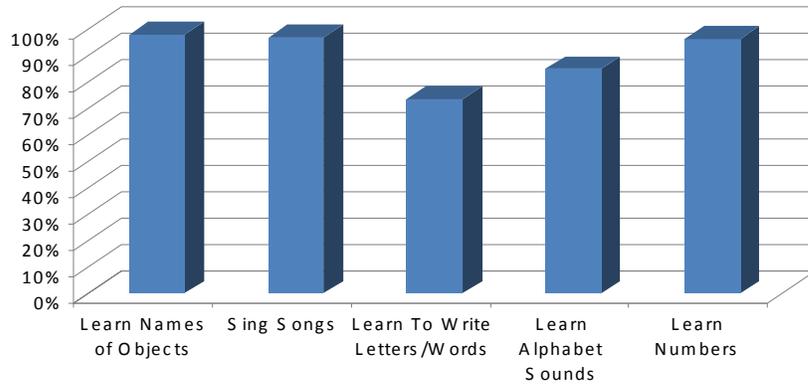
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(What have we found continued)

What Learning Activities Do FLP Families Do with Their Children?

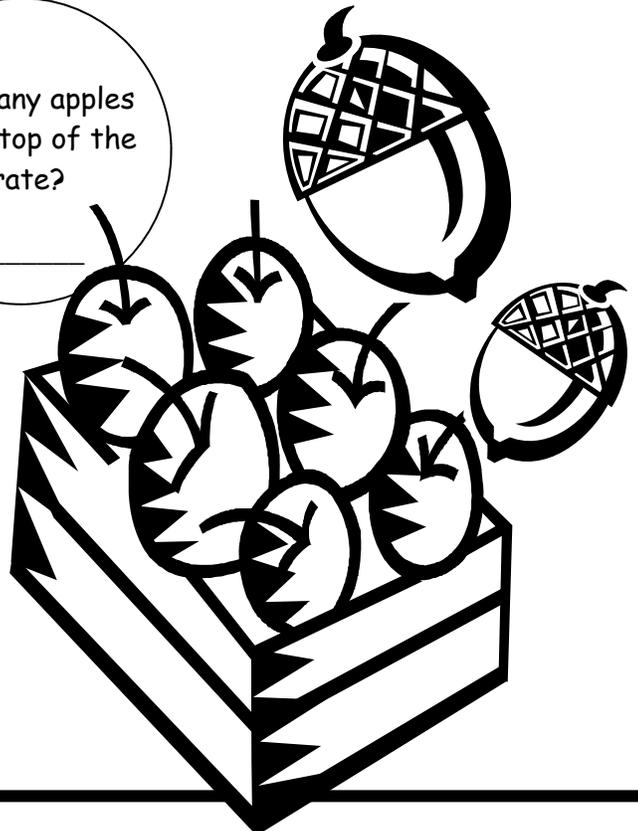
Frequent Family Learning Activities
(2 + Times Per Week)



Fall Activities and Coloring Section



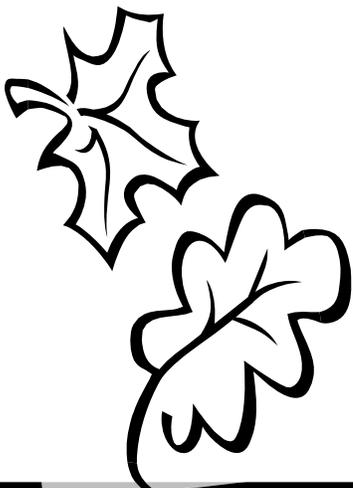
How many apples
are on top of the
crate?



Leaf Rubbings

Help your child learn colors and counting skills by collecting fall leaves of different sizes and shapes.

Place leaves under white paper.
Use colored crayons to color
over area of leaf.



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Getting Ready for the Big Day!

With many of the children in our study starting preschool or kindergarten this fall, we know that many parents are wondering what you can do to make this important transition smooth for your child. Here are some tips on how to prepare your child for his or her first day of school.

Talk About It: Talk about preschool/kindergarten with your child. Show them that you are excited about all that the children will be learning. Ask your child how he/she is feeling about going into preschool/kindergarten. The goal is to help him/her look forward to the big day and talk about any fears your child might have.

Take a Token from Home: Ask if your child wants to take something from home to school with him/her on the first day of school (for example, a doll, blanket square, or favorite sticker). By having something familiar at school, your child may feel more secure in an unfamiliar environment.

Help your Child Get Oriented: On the first day of class, spend a few minutes in your child's new classroom. You can introduce your child to the teacher and other students. Also, you can help your child find the bathroom, the lunch area, and their cubby.

Say Goodbye: Make the goodbye cheerful and brief. Some children enjoy making up a special good-bye with you, like giving a secret wave from the window. Remind your child that you will be back to pick them up.

For more information, visit the source for this article at:
<http://school.familyeducation.com/kindergarten/anxiety/51261.html>

What to Expect at the 5-year visit...

It's hard to believe, but many of our study children are turning five! You know what that means don't you? You'll be hearing from us.

A few of you have already participated in the five year visit and from the feedback we've received, it sounds like it's the most enjoyable visit yet. Our home visitors have reported that parents and children alike really seem to love this visit because it truly focuses on Parent-Child interaction. It sounds like it's a very smooth visit and that the children and parents really enjoy the one-on-one time they get together.

Most of you have not yet experienced the five year old visit, so we'd like to take a minute and tell you a little more about it.

The visit lasts about two and a half to three hours. Your family will receive a \$60 gift card. With secondary caregiver participation, you'll also receive an additional \$25 gift card. As always, your child will receive a gift.

The visit includes:

- child growth measurements
- flip book games
- picture book activity
- lots of questions for parents/guardians, as always!
- block-building activity and Slap Jack card game for child and primary caregiver
- Legos, Hot Hands and Thumb Wrestling for child and secondary caregiver
- photos of children's faces activity and lock box activity for child

We hope you're looking forward to this fun visit as much as we are! We'll be in touch!

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Who Are We?

Okay, it's time to have some fun with a little riddle:

Question: We do a lot of traveling. We ask a lot of questions. And, when we show up at your door, you're worried that we might be moving in for a week with all the luggage we're carrying. Who are we?

Answer: Yep, you guessed it! We're your Home Visitors.



Top Row (left to right): Amy Adams, Brandy Harpster, Angela Hall, Gwen Creamer
Bottom Row (left to right): Cathy Jantzer, Chris Carney, Maureen Ittig, Katie France

While we promise never to impose by staying for a week, we do enjoy the few hours at a time we get to spend with you and your family, especially your little one who has been participating in our study for quite some time now.

In the past 4 plus years, we've learned a lot about you and your child. We sincerely appreciate your willingness to share so much about your family. It's been fun learning about you, so we thought you might be interested in reading a little more about us. Here it goes....*(continued next page)*

Introducing the Home Visitors...

Amy holds a Bachelor's Degree in teaching (Elementary and Special Education). She taught junior high learning support for 4 years. She is also certified as a Yoga Ed. Instructor for grades K-8. She has a live-in-partner and together they have a 7 year old son and a 5 year old daughter. She enjoys reading, walking and yoga.

Ang holds an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education and is currently working on her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. She is married and has five children. She enjoys spending time at the lake with her family and it's a treat if she can read something other than a textbook for school!

Brandy holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Penn State University and a Master's in Education-School Counseling from Liberty University. She recently got married on October 13, 2007. She teaches two classes (elementary and adolescent level) at Assembly of God Church. She walks daily. She and her husband are active members of a volleyball team. Her favorite vacation spot is Aruba, though she and her husband are planning a trip to Las Vegas for next year.

Cathy has worked on the Family Life Project since it began. She holds a Master's Equivalent from the Washington Montessori Institute and two degrees from Penn State: a Bachelor's Degree in Human Development and an Associate's in Letters, Arts, and Sciences. She and her husband have two teenagers – one in high school and one in college. Her community activities include 4-H, Global Connections, and ushering at the Penn State theatres.

Chris holds a Bachelor's Degree in Agricultural Economics/Rural Sociology. She has her Teacher's Certification and has taught for 7 years in the areas of Agriculture, Biology and General Science. She is married and has a 19 month old daughter. Her family enjoys Penn State football, Steeler football and Pittsburgh Penguins ice hockey. They also have a beef cattle farm.

Gwen attended Penn State University and majored in Elementary Education with a minor in Human Development and Family Studies. She taught at Head Start for 3 years. Her hobbies are cooking, biking and shopping.

Katie holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from SUNY Geneseo in New York. She is currently studying for a Master's Degree in counseling at Penn State and for her nutrition license. She is married. She loves to travel, loves movies and enjoys spending time with her husband.

Maureen holds her PhD in Human Development and Family Studies and serves as the Project Director. She recently moved to Pennsylvania, from Wisconsin, to work with the Family Life Project and has been enjoying getting to know the families and the area.

We've Moved!

The Family Life Project recently moved to a new home within Pennsylvania State University.
All the phone numbers moved with us but our offices can now be found at:
S-126 South Henderson, University Park, 16802

**Has your contact information changed?
Please remember to call us at
1-800-727-9384
with any changes to your address or phone number
so that you don't miss your next visit.
We look forward to seeing you again!**

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