



Fitness & Fun in the Sun!

Submitted by Michele Buran, Physical Activity Specialist

Its summer time and that means fun in the sun! Aim for 60 minutes a day of active play with your family this summer. The beautiful outdoor surroundings of Butte County provide a wonderful environment for children to have fun and explore while building the foundation to a healthy, active lifestyle.

The health benefits of physical activity are tremendous. Prevent conditions like diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure which are beginning to be seen in children. Regular physical activity is proven to reduce the risk of developing such conditions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that one in three children born in the year 2000 are likely to develop Type 2 diabetes. Don't let your child be a statistic!

Physical Activity benefits more than your child's health, it also enhances learning. Current research confirms that the physical activity of young children is

an important component of early brain development and learning. The California Department of Education recently announced a link between physical activity and test scores. Children who were physically active on a most days of the week achieved higher scores. Even as early as infancy, you can provide an environment that grooms an active child.

You can take the 60 minutes/day challenge by making it a point to include active play into your family's daily routine. Here are some fun activities you can try with your young children:

Infants

- Provide tummy time- although it is recommended that you never place babies to sleep on their bellies, it is recommended to give them time on their bellies while awake. Spread toys just outside their reach so they can

stretch and scoot for items. Lay on the floor in front of your child. Babies can't help but try to lift their heads to look at you, which enhances their back and neck strength.

- Encourage movement- limit your baby's time in infant seats, swings, and strollers. If children spend too much time confined, they won't have the opportunity to explore their world through movement. When babies are on their backs, place mobiles or hanging objects within fingertips reach, encouraging them to bat at the toys.
- Walk the talk- be a good role model and exercise with your child. Lift and lower your baby, dance with your baby or take your baby for a walk.



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The Esplanade House

Submitted by Gloria Rodgers, Program Operations Director

"In November my mom moved into the Esplanade House. I was happy to hear that my mom was in a program that helped her. I also was happy to hear that I got to move into The Esplanade House. It is fun here because if you are good, you get movie tickets. I like the Esplanade House so much. You get to do creative things."
Selena G.

Prior to coming to The Esplanade House, many of the families lived under conditions less than adequate in terms of being able to provide for their basic needs. The negative effects of living a counter-productive lifestyle (in many instances a direct correlation to their homeless condition) are manifested in individual problems and poor family functioning.

In order to assist our families embrace new concepts that lead to healthy

outcomes, we rely on multiple service providers to fulfill various components of each family's Action Plan. Parents receive the support they need to become better parents and more productive self sufficient citizens. This is also the case with children's programs and daycare. The blended funding streams of Butte County Children's and Families Commission, Head Start, Early Head Start, Cal-Works and The Esplanade House Children's Services Program, help each child receive appropriate services according to their unique set of circumstances and needs. Thanks to BCCFC – Prop 10, we are able to meet our student-teacher ratio as well as provide needed equipment and supplies for our Child Development Center. Parents are excited to learn the importance of being involved in the educational process of their children as well as to learn about other

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The new Commission website:
www.buttecounty.net/bccfc

The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six.

-Maria Montessori

The Behavioral Health Strong Start Program

Submitted by Holly Pearson, Public Health Nurse for the Strong Start Program

The Behavioral Health Strong Start program serves Butte County children ages 0-5 who have emotional and behavioral needs. The program is a collaborative program and encompasses many specialists in the community. One of those specialists is Public Health Nurse Holly Pearson, who often works with high-risk families that have multiple challenges and with foster families or adoptive families. She recently shared with the Commission a story about her experiences working with a foster-adopt child named "Sam" and his foster family. Sam is a blond haired, blue-eyed 2 year old child with a beautiful smile.

Sam was born positive for drugs and likely for alcohol as well. He was severely neglected by his birth mother and was removed from the home at 10 months of age. He was placed in two other foster homes prior to his placement with his current fos-

ter-adopt parents. Sam was diagnosed with Reactive Attachment Disorder. Sam would often seek out his foster father, rather than his foster mother. He exhibited poor eye contact with his foster mother and became easily overwhelmed when touched or held. Sam had severe tantrums at mealtime, likely due to his history of inadequate nutrition and neglect.

For Sam's treatment, Holly utilized theraplay techniques to increase feelings of closeness and trust between the child and caregiver. These techniques create a safe environment for the child and provide nurturing and simple activities to enhance the relationship between the child and the caregiver or parent. During Sam's treatment, the foster parents utilized these techniques in the home on a regular basis. Sam also received early

intervention services through Far Northern Regional Center to improve his developmental skills.

After 8 months of regular treatment, Sam goes to his foster-adopt parents for comfort on a regular basis. Sam has a positive response to touch and allows his caregivers to hold him. He has begun to demonstrate spontaneous affection toward them by giving them hugs and kisses. Sam's tantrums at mealtime have decreased and now he is able to share a treat with his foster mom without becoming agitated. He has developed a trusting relationship with his foster-adoptive parents that he never had experienced previously!

For more information on the Strong Start Program, please contact Renee Campbell at (530) 879-3858.

Please join us in welcoming our new Program Manager, Jill Blake!
Welcome aboard, Jill!

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If they see active play as part of your lifestyle it will likely become part of theirs.

Toddlers and Preschoolers

- Ball play- practice throwing, catching, kicking, rolling, and striking balls. Beach balls are an excellent toy for exploring tots.
- Parachute Fun- you don't need a store bought parachute to get the laughs and giggles rolling. Simply use a sheet or a towel and shake, shake, shake. Try throwing and catching a beach ball with your parachute.
- Dance- all you need is some fun music to get in the groove and start dancing. While you're dancing, ask your child if they can hop on one foot, jump high, jump low, clap

overhead, or clap down low. Play freeze dance by pausing the music and freezing like a statue until you start the music again.

- Streamers and scarves- simply give your child a small section of a birthday streamer and let them run and be creative. Use the streamer like a paint brush and draw imaginary shapes and scenes. Let your child work on his or her tossing and catching skills by tossing a scarf and catching it in their hands or on various body parts.
- Take a trip to the park- children have an opportunity to run, climb, crawl, swing, and slide. The more confident children feel about their bodies, the more likely they are to be active throughout the years.
- Water play- with the high temperatures of the north state, one can always count on water as a means of entertainment and activity. Give a child a hose and let them go. Paint shapes of all sizes with a paint brush and water

and practice jumping in and out. Turn the sprinklers on for refreshing entertainment.

OPT for Fit Kids, a program funded by the Butte County Children and Families Commission, aims to decrease the incidence of childhood obesity. Staffed by Registered Dietitians, Nutrition Educators, and Exercise Physiologists, OPT for Fit Kids provides free individual and small group nutrition and physical activity services for Butte County families and providers of children ages 0-5. If you would like more information, please call (530) 345-0678 or visit the website at www.optforfitkids.org.



Tips for Happy, Healthy Smiles

Submitted by Aimee Myles, Health Education Specialist

Taking care of your child's teeth should begin before your baby is born. Your dental health affects your baby. When you become pregnant it is recommended you visit a dentist early in your pregnancy to identify and treat existing dental problems. If you have periodontal (gum) disease your baby might be born too early or at a low birth weight.

- Parents can pass the germs that cause tooth decay from their mouth to their child's mouth. Don't put anything in your baby's mouth if it has been in your mouth. Don't share spoons, cups, toothbrushes, etc.
- Be a good role model by brushing and flossing your teeth and gums daily with a fluoride toothpaste. By lowering the level of germs in your mouth, you can help your children have healthy teeth.
- Eat smart for healthy teeth. Your child's baby teeth are already forming in the womb, so get plenty of calcium. Rinse your mouth with water after meals and snacking.
- Select snacks low in sugar: cheese, low fat milk, dried meat stick, salad, nuts, plain yogurt, vegetables and popcorn.
- Chew xylitol gum or mints to help reduce the number of bacteria in your mouth and help prevent the spread of bacteria.

After your baby is born, it is important to learn how to keep your child's teeth healthy. Healthy teeth are key to a healthy childhood. Children need healthy teeth for chewing, speaking clearly, holding space for permanent teeth, self-esteem and looking good. Butte County Children and Families Commission recognizes the importance of oral health and encourages parents and caregivers to help take care of a child's smile by promoting good eating habits and dental care from the start.

- Check your baby's teeth. "Lift the baby's lip" to check for spots or stains on the teeth. Healthy teeth should be all one color.
- Clean your baby's teeth and gums with a clean, soft cloth or a baby's toothbrush at least once a day. Children need help cleaning their teeth until about 6-8 years of age and can do it thoroughly by themselves.
- Prevent baby bottle tooth decay.

Don't put your baby to bed with a bottle at night or naptime. If you do put your baby to bed with a bottle, fill it only with water. At 6 months of age, begin to teach your child to drink from a cup instead of a bottle.

- Give your child milk and water instead of soda or juice. Milk contains calcium that makes their teeth and bones strong. After 6 months of age, one small serving of juice a day is enough.
- Take your child to the dentist by age one. Children should have regular dental check-ups every 6-12 mos.
- Use toothpaste with fluoride in it. Ask your dentist or doctor about fluoride products such as fluoride drops or varnish that may benefit your child's teeth.
- Give your child healthy snacks such as apples, bananas, or carrots instead of sugary (candy) or starchy (chips, crackers) foods. Limit the number of times (frequency) your child snacks each day.



News and Events

- Don't forget about those great parenting classes being offered through Butte Community Employment Center! They're free of charge! For more information, call Liz Griffin at (530) 538-7755.
- If you care for young children, don't miss *A Place of Our Own*,

weekdays at 1 PM on KIXE TV. Hosted by Debi Gutierrez, this show provides information and resources you need to support your role as a child's first teacher. Visit them on the web at www.aplaceofourown.org.

Butte County Library Literacy Services is offering free reading classes to

the public. If you know someone who struggles with reading, this is a great opportunity. They are also looking for volunteer tutors! For more information on the program or to become a volunteer, please call (530) 538-7198.

- The Commission has a new website address: www.buttecounty.net/bccfc.

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support services that are available such as: *Safe At Home, Immunization Registry, Kits for Parents, Strong Starts, Parents as Teachers and Tobacco Free Environment.*

Currently there are a record number of single parent households headed by

men at The Esplanade House. Since January 2005, six (6) fathers have enrolled in the program. Three of the fathers have children between the ages of 0 and 5. It's great that these fathers have access to the support and services being offered. As Brian Garner states, "*the program enables me to learn how to be-*

come the parent that my child deserves."

There are presently 19 children between the ages of 0 to 5 at The Esplanade House. Thanks to the Butte County Children's and Families Commission for helping make it possible for our children and families to reach their goals!



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