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Early Childhood News

From Dubuque County Early Childhood - a nonprofit that builds collaboration around the needs of families with young children.

Shared Vision: "All Children in Dubuque County are Healthy and Successful."

April 2016
www.dcearlychild.org

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April is Month of the Young Child!

This month, Dubuque County Early Childhood (DCEC) is celebrating Month of the Young Child. We want to help the community recognize the importance of young children and of coming together to support them.

Everyone has a role in helping all children reach their full potential. Take some time to support early childhood initiatives, thank the child care providers who care for our children, and advocate for public policies that benefit families.

For more info on local activities for Month of the Young Child, read on in this e-newsletter or call DCEC at 588-1620.



Upcoming Meetings



Early Care and Education Committee - April 11, 1:00 p.m., Keystone AEA

Long-Range Planning Committee - April 14, 11:00 a.m., Archdiocese Pastoral Center

Executive/Finance Committee - April 20, 9:00 a.m., Keystone AEA

Advocacy/Public Awareness Committee - April 25, 1:00 p.m., Keystone AEA

Dubuque County Early Childhood Board - April 26, 12:00 p.m., Keystone AEA

NOTE: Meetings are subject to change. To obtain meeting agendas, minutes, or location/directions - contact DCEC at (563) 588-1620, sedward24@aol.com. All meetings are open to the public and are held at locations reasonably accessible to the public. Submit questions or requests for special accommodations to (563) 588-1620.

Activities Planned for Month of the Young Child

To honor April as "Month of the Young Child," Dubuque County Early Childhood (DCEC) will host a variety of community activities based on the theme of "family stories."

Activities are open to the public and emphasize the importance of supporting families during children's early years. Month of the Young Child is a nationwide celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

- **Children's Drawing Contest** - Running through April 30,



children age zero-kindergarten can enter by drawing a picture of their family reading. Entry forms will go out through schools and child care locations or can be requested by calling the number below. Prize packages will include toys, books, craft activities, and more awarded in five different age categories.

- **Family Connections Magazine** - In partnership with Radio Dubuque/Total Image Marketing, DCEC will release its annual *Family Connections* magazine with over 15 articles from local experts on raising healthy and successful young children. Sponsored by local businesses, copies are free and will be distributed to through schools and child care locations. To request copies, contact DCEC.
- **Early Reading Book Drive** - DCEC is accepting donations of new children's books to be distributed to child care providers (homes and centers) that serve children in need and that host guest adult readers at their locations. DCEC also welcomes area businesses to make donations. Drop off books at DCEC's office, 2310 Chaney Road (inside Keystone AEA building, 1st floor).
- **Guest Reading Sessions** - DCEC invites child care providers to host guest reading sessions with time for adults to visit and read to children in care. Children will enjoy hearing these role models read aloud while child care staff have a short break. For any site that holds a reading session, DCEC will give a bag filled with new children's books.

Over 5,000 children participate annually in these activities. For more information, contact DCEC at (563) 588-1620 or sedward24@aol.com. Dubuque County Early Childhood promotes healthy and successful children in Dubuque County. For more information, visit www.dcearlychild.org.

Opportunity to Grow a Wading Pool Garden

Local families and child care providers - check this out and share this opportunity!

WHAT CAN YOU GROW?



You can grow any vegetable you choose. The Community Gardening Project will provide you with the tools to get started including the seeds, soil and pool to grow food to feed your family and share with others.



Favorites are Peas, Beans, Onions, Tomatoes, Peppers, Lettuce, Spinach, Potatoes, Garlic, Leeks, Cabbage, Radishes, Turnips, Kale, Eggplant, Basil and Oregano.

Funding and support for this project generously provided by
St. Luke's United Methodist Church
Matthew 25 of Iowa
United Methodist Church
Dubuque County ISU Extension/
Master Gardeners



One of the City of Dubuque's Sustainable Projects



Interested in your own Wading Pool Garden or want to learn more?

Please contact:
Jerelyn O'Connor
 (563) 589-4326
 (if unavailable, leave message)
jocannon@cityofdubuque.org
 (put GARDEN in subject line)

<http://dbqcommunitygardens.com/>

Community Gardening Project

Grow Your Own Wading Pool Garden



Save Money By Growing Your Own Food

Gardening Can Grow Children's Brains and More

Gardening can be a great tool to encourage healthy eating. In addition, it can positively affect children's brain and body. To garden, families don't need a lot of outdoor space. They can grow some vegetables in a few plastic containers and soil or plant in the yard.

How gardening can affect children's brains:

- As you make your garden and as it grows, discuss with your child different concepts, such as "how does the plant drink water" and "why is the sun important to plants?"



- The other benefit is the vitamins and minerals from those veggies are essential for brain development. Children may be more open to tasting a food they grew.

How gardening can affect children in other physical ways:

- Kids love to get their hands and feet in the dirt. While this is fun for them, research suggests exposing children to germs may offer them more protection from allergies and asthma later in life.
- Moving the soil, carrying the veggies, digging dirt... all promote healthy and active play and help develop gross motor skills.

How gardening can affect children's emotional growth:

- Planting seeds and watching them grow into vegetables gives kids a sense of purpose and responsibility. Making sure they get water and sun fosters mindfulness.
- Gardening is a time for family connections. It allows team building and promotes communication skills.
- The self-esteem a child can get from growing and then eating vegetables that they grew is priceless.

Adapted courtesy of Iowa Family Support Network Newsletter with source material from www.pbs.org.

For More Info

Dubuque County Early Childhood (formerly Empowerment), 2310 Chaney Road,
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