

MPCRC Member Newsletter

Caring every day, building stronger families



Important Dates to

Remember:

MEADOWVALE CLOSURE—

MARCH 31, 2015

SHIRLEY GUROWKA BURSARY

APPLICATION DEADLINE—

APRIL 30, 2015

AGM—JUNE 23, 2015

MILESTONES

What is a milestone? Long ago they were markers to indicate a distance travelled on a journey. Over time they have evolved to refer to an event or action that marks a significant change.

In terms of child development a milestone refers to a typical developmental achievement at a typical age. Experts in child development categorize milestones into four main groups—physical, cognitive or mental, social-emotional and communication, each with their own subset of categories.

As a parent, and most often as a parent of a new baby, milestones are the way we measure how our little one is growing and developing. When our children are very young we think about milestones in terms of rolling over, sitting up, clapping their hands or saying their first word. Unlike markers on the road, which are exact, developmental milestones have ranges of when they are typically achieved. Take walking for example; first steps generally happen around 9-12 months with some babies tottering along earlier and some later. In fact it is not uncommon for a baby to start walking when they are 16-18 months old, six to nine months after the milestone range. However, ask any parent

of more than one child and they will tell you about the wide age range their own kids had in achieving milestones.

It is easy as a parent to worry about our little ones—we only want what is best for them, and when they aren't hitting a milestone when the book says they should we worry even more. But babies don't come with road maps and they don't read the parenting books. Babies and children go through an incredible array of changes in order to achieve a new skill and often the mastery of one skill depends on the mastery of many others. If you are concerned about your child's development talk to your doctor and remember that your child's growth and development is a journey—sometimes they arrive at milestones at a different time or from a different route than most others but they are no less amazing for it.



PARENTING MILESTONES

With our children we often applaud or celebrate their firsts—their first steps, their first tooth, learning to ride a bike, and those are big deals. But what about our own parenting milestones? As important as milestones are to measuring your child's growth and development, parenting firsts also measure your growth and development as a parent.

What about the first time your baby peed on you? Or the first time you had to change a messy diaper- in public- with no wipes? These badges of honour/rites of passage/benchmarks happen to all of us but they aren't in the parenting books. The first time they happen they test us, but any time after that we know we can handle it!

There are other milestones that you can only really appreciate when you become a parent. Sleeping through the night (you, not the baby), going to the bathroom alone, or drinking a still hot tea. Sometimes parenting firsts aren't even really about being a parent, sometimes they are about carving out some alone time to recapture your pre-kids self.

Parenting firsts don't look the same for everyone, just like our kids firsts. But don't forget to take a moment to recognize those moments—they are just as special; they are the markers in your parenting journey.

What are your milestones?



Meadowvale Closing

After 24 years of delivering family resource programs to families in the Meadowvale Town Centre (the last 12 under the Ontario Early Years Centre program) we have come to the unfortunate decision to close this location. It has been our pleasure to be part of so many families' lives at this location over the years however, MPCRC can no longer continue to offer the same amount of programming as we have done for so long.

Without any increase to our Ontario Early Years Centre funding since we began this project 12 years ago we have reached a point where we can no longer afford to operate all the sites that we have been.

We have been fortunate to secure free space with our partner and neighbour at the

Meadowvale Branch Library and we will be offering children's programming there which has begun already. Our Postpartum Mood Disorder Support Group will relocate to our Brittany Glen location as will our Saturday French program. We continue to search for free space within the Meadowvale community and will keep you posted.

We truly appreciate the support that we have received from the parenting community since we announced our closure. Many have taken the time to write to us and to politicians to share why the centre has been such an important part of their lives including this exert from one letter;

"Being a first time Mom has been the most rewarding and yet the hardest job yet in my life. Meadowvale has been the most incredible resource available to my family providing my daughter with a safe, warm welcoming environment to learn important

life skills, build her confidence and interact with other children. It is also a place for Mommy to share experiences, get advice and give and receive support from other families and staff there."

The positive affirmation of the work that we do has been shared with our staff, funders and key politicians. If you would like to connect with these families who are sharing their experiences, please drop in to the centre and check out the community resource book.

We all recognize the importance of the early years and it is our hope that we may continue to provide early learning services for families and children for many more years to come. While the closing of this centre is a sad time for us all, we look forward to new partnerships, maintaining existing relationships with families and building new ones with new families as we bring our services to satellite locations in the Meadowvale area.



MPCRC would like to proudly thank RAMA Gaming for their continued financial support of our agency. Our participation in charitable bingo sessions in Mississauga, in partnership with RAMA Gaming, helps us to enrich the lives of children and their families.



LINKS TO HELPFUL SITES AND RESOURCES

Nipissing District Developmental Screen

The Nipissing District Developmental Screen (NDDS), is an innovative developmental screening tool for infants and children up to 6 years of age, to be completed by a parent or health/child care professional. Early identification is the first step in early intervention.

<http://www.ndds.ca>

Infant and Child Development

Services Peel

Infant and Child Development Services Peel (ICDSP) provides services and resources to families with children who are at risk of, or have a delay in their development.

<http://www.icdspeel.ca>

Caring for Kids

Caring for Kids provides parents with information about their child's and teen's health and well being. It is developed by the Canadian Paediatric Society.

<http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/>

PROGRAM SURVEY RESULTS

We recently conducted a survey of three of our children's programs. These surveys are conducted on a regular basis and are used to measure our areas of success and areas of growth. The three programs that were surveyed this past quarter include Infant Mother Goose, Toddler Time and Preschool Time. The Infant Mother Goose program is offered 14 different times a week across our agency and the Toddler Time and Preschool Time programs are offered 7 different times a week each across the agency. The results from the surveys along with the client comments and feedback help us to assess our program goals, determine what can be improved and in consultation with management make any necessary changes. Comments such as the following have helped us to know what changes you would like to see "Love the craft time – new ideas and great materials. At times (the children) are not interested in circle/song time; the program needs to adapt to attention spans."

We appreciate the time that each client takes to complete our surveys, the information that is gathered from them is very important to us. In the coming months we will surveying three more of our children's programs, however if at any time you would like to provide feedback about any of our programs or services please speak with a staff or email us at

info@mpcrc.ca.

Fundraising Updates

Throughout the year our agency hosts a variety of small, centre based fundraising events. Most recently we had our annual All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Day Fundraiser. Ticket sales and donations on the day generated over \$1000. Events such as these help us to raise not only much needed and appreciated dollars for our centres and programs but also to raise the awareness of our agency's charitable status.

Walking into our centres and programs, it can be easy to forget that we are a not-for-profit, charitable organization. However for over thirty years now we have been operating as a charity; providing programs and services to children and their families in Peel. In fact we just celebrated our

30th anniversary in November with a gala event—the Power of Play. This event saw, clients, staff, funders, partners and community members come together to celebrate and support the work that we have done, and the work that we continue to do. This fun filled night included dinner, dancing, games and a silent auction all put together by a dedicated team of staff and volunteers. We are overwhelmed by the generosity of those that joined us in celebration and are pleased to say that \$16, 671.93 was raised to support pregnant women and youth, new parents, infants, children, mothers, fathers and caregivers. If you believe in the work that we do and would like to support our agency please speak with a staff or contact us at info@mpcrc.ca. Tax receipts will be issued for direct donations over \$20.

Volunteer with us!

Mississauga Parent-Child Resource Centres is currently seeking passionate and caring professionals to join their volunteer Board of Directors. Specifically the Board is seeking Board members or associates with experience in Fund Development or Finance. A time commitment of 5-8 hours a month is needed for Board of Directors members and 3 hours /month for associates to prepare for and attend monthly meetings.

For more information about our agency please go to www.mpcrc.ca.

If you are interested in applying, please send a resume with a cover letter to:

MPCRCBoardRecruitment@gmail.ca

Mama...Dada...

From the earliest gurgles, babbles and coos and long past their first words, children are constantly developing their speech and language skills. When you first see your baby and you look into their eyes you are communicating together. Knowing the difference between a cry of hunger and a tired cry means you understand their language. Singing, reading and playing together all support the development of your child's speech and language no matter what language it is in. Your baby's first words will likely begin around one year of age with simple words like 'dada' or 'baba'. Over time they will build their vocabulary and communication skills. A great way to support their language development is to bring them to your closest centre. There they will be immersed in opportunities to observe, interact and communicate with others.

For more information about your child's speech and language development go to <http://www.erinoakkids.ca/Services/Services/Speech-and-Language-Therapy.aspx> and click on resources. There you will find the handy guide "Look What I Can Do!"