

Natick Family Network



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Cole Center
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Natick, MA 01760

www.natickfamilynetwork.org

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR NFN FAMILIES! PLEASE READ...

June 24, 2009

Dear NFN Families:

WHERE'S MY NEWSLETTER?

Certainly many of you have been wondering where your July/August edition of our newsletter *Connections* is. This letter replaces that newsletter. July 1st will begin a new fiscal year for our program, our 10th year serving children and families in Natick, and that milestone will bring with it new opportunities, new responsibilities and new partners. It is likely that NFN will even have a new name in the coming year.

Our program is consolidating with Children First Natick, our “sister grant” under the Department of Early Education & Care and our local lead agency ACCEPT Education Collaborative. The new Coordinated Family & Community Engagement Grant Program will be based in the Natick Family Network space at the Cole Center and will conduct activities which previously took place under two separate programs—NFN and CFN. I will serve as the Program Coordinator with Pam Koskovich continuing to provide program support as our budget allows.

WHAT STAYS THE SAME?

As an NFN family, you can expect a continuation of many of the NFN services you've come to count on. We will continue to offer:

- support groups for new parents;
- parent-facilitated play to learn groups for children of various ages and stages;
- facilitators' trainings for parents who want to volunteer in our programs;*
- monthly play to learn groups for grandparents;
- monthly weekend play to learn groups for working parents and fathers;
- occasional family events that offer fun activities for kids and opportunities for grown-ups to connect with each other;
- parenting workshops that support you in your role as your child's first teacher; and
- drop-in play time & seasonal open gym.

We'll also continue to serve as a resource and referral agency to connect you with all the community programs and services that can support you as a parent or caregiver. Additionally, we will maintain our informational bulletin boards and parent lending library, and we'll publish our bimonthly newsletter beginning again in August.

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WHAT CHANGES?

But our consolidation with Children First Natick will bring changes as well. We will now provide services to Natick families with children from birth through kindergarten. Your family will not “age out” of our program until your last child enters first grade, and we’ll be looking for creative ways to include our “over fours” in our program offerings. We will serve as the gateway to financial assistance for child care and preschool and other programs which might provide financial or other supports to you and your children. Plus, we will work to support the providers of early education and child care in our community by offering them opportunities to:

- engage in a coordinated system of community referrals which support children and families,
- access high-quality professional and program development, and
- share information about their programs with YOU, the families of Natick!

We’ll also be looking at ways we can support children, families and providers alike at times of transition—from home to preschool, from Early Intervention to the Natick Public Preschool, and from local preschools to public and private kindergartens.

BUDGET CUTS; CLOSED FOR THE SUMMER!

Clearly the mission of Natick Family Network has grown, but unfortunately, in these tough fiscal times, our budget has not kept pace with that growth. In fact, the budget presently allocated by the Massachusetts State Legislature for us to run this new consolidated program represents a 34% cut to the initial budget for the NFN program alone for the previous year. Due to the severity of our 2009-2010 budget, NFN will be closed for the months of July and August. (*NOTE: If you are already enrolled in the Monday or Thursday Summer Integrated Playgroups in our playroom from 9:30 – 11:30, those groups WILL continue through the summer months. Keep coming!*) Additionally, it is unlikely that NFN will be able to continue offering many of the Parent/Child Programs in art, music and movement, which have been so popular with our families in previous years. These include *Sensory Explorers*, *Loulou’s Music Together Sample Class*, *Funsmartsong*, and *Jump, Tumble & Sing*. I hope to be able pass these valuable programs off to another venue where you might be able to register for them for fee, so stay posted for more information.

GET YOUR PARENT-TO-PARENT RESOURCE BOOKLET!

During the summer, our 2009-2010 edition of the Parent-to-Parent Community Resource Booklet will be available. You won’t want to miss getting one, as our booklet now contains a section of special coupons that will offer you valuable savings as you and your children try new things together! Since our office will be closed, you can pick up a copy of the booklet at two other locations in the Natick community: in the main office of the Dept. of Recreation & Parks here at the Cole Center and at the Children’s Desk of the Morse Institute Library. If you cannot get to one of those locations, please call me, and I’ll make arrangements for you to receive the booklet.

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IT'S STILL OK TO CALL...

Finally, while our office will technically be closed and we will not be offering a menu of programming during the summer, I do want to stress that I am available to assist you in finding and accessing information or services you might need during our closure. Simply call my office and leave a voicemail, or email me at jdixon@accept.org. I'll get back to you as quickly as I can and work to connect you to the supports that can help. Likewise, if anything in this letter piques your interest and makes you want to become more involved in our new consolidated program, let me know that too. We are in the process of forming a new consolidated Council to oversee the joint NFN/CFN program, and parents and community members of all types will be integral to our building a foundation of collaboration in the community. I would love you have you join us.

In the meantime, enjoy the summer with your children, and look for me at Memorial Beach, the Morse Institute Library, Elm Bank and the Concerts on the Common. I'll be looking forward to seeing you and your family around town!

Sincerely,

Judith A. Dixon
Program Coordinator

*** Parent Facilitators' Training
for parents wishing to volunteer in our programs.
Call to register: 508-655-2557**

Date/Time	Title	Description
Wednesday July 22 OR Thursday August 13 12 noon – 2 pm	Playgroup Facilitators' Training	<i>Held at the Cole Center.</i> Interested in becoming more involved with NFN by facilitating an age- or interest-specific playgroup? Come to this training to get a sense of the general format and expectations. Receive a basic playgroup guide. Get activity ideas! Learn new songs and fingerplays for circle time! Trouble-shoot potentially difficult situations. Mandatory development for all volunteer facilitators. A great resource for community playgroup leaders outside NFN! Light lunch provided. Facilitated by Program Coordinator Judy Dixon.