

# Natick Early Childhood Network

...putting Children First

# Connections



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## Can Young Children Learn to Share?

Whether your child plays alongside other toddlers in the NECN playroom or attends a preschool program full-time, he/she will be somewhere along the continuum of learning to share -- a process that truly lasts throughout childhood. Here are some tips to support this social development in young children:

**Plan ahead.** If a playgroup is meeting at your house or your child is having a friend come over to play for awhile, talk about sharing ahead of time. Acknowledge that your child probably has some very special items that she really isn't ready to share. That is ok. Suggest that she choose 5 of her most special things to put away ahead of time, so she won't feel anxious during the playdate. Then talk to her about allowing her friends to enjoy what's left. Remind her that a big part of the fun of playing at someone else's house is playing with toys that are different from those at home.

**Be present and be enthusiastic!** Teaching children to share is hard work. It cannot be accomplished from afar while you are engaged in adult conversation. Occasionally get down on the floor and facilitate the sharing: "Now it's time for Jacob to use the hammer. Jacob, you may hammer on the pegs until they are pushed through....Wow, Jacob! You did a great job. Now it's time for Ella to have a turn. Pass the hammer to Ella, and let's watch while she takes a turn...Jacob and Ella, you are doing such a great job taking turns. You really know how to share."

FOR MORE TIPS ATTEND OUR APRIL 15 Parent Workshop on Social Development!

**Debrief** After a playdate or outing, talk about the parts of the afternoon that went really well. *Praise your child* for allowing someone else to use his/her things. Also talk about what didn't go as well. Give observations, but do not label your child or criticize her. "Ella, I noticed it was hard for you to let Jacob play with your puppies. I think he was really interested in playing puppy store with you, but he was sad when you didn't let him touch the puppies. I wonder what we could do next time." Let your child know that a natural consequence of repeatedly not sharing is that other children may not want to play at her house. They may be less likely to share their toys as well.

### Lead by example.

Let your child see you share your things with others. Use the word "share" even when it might seem a little forced in an adult setting. "Ella, I am sharing my book with Sally. She wants to read it too." "Jacob, Daddy has two of his favorite cookies left. He will share one with you, so you can both enjoy them." Also, make a point of asking your child for permission before you use or rearrange his/her things. You are modeling respect for others' property in a most personal way. "May we move this Lego building you made to the table, so I don't bump it with the vacuum cleaner?" "May I use the fat markers from your art bin to make my yard sale sign?" Children will learn that their feelings of ownership are natural and that sharing is a normal part of human relationship.

## Last Chance! February 28 Limited Space Still Available for Walk Into The Book Family Event!



Join us promptly at 2 p.m. on Sunday, February 28, for a shared story in the lower lobby of the Morse Institute Library...then watch as we open the "cover" and Walk Into The Book to engage in a wide variety of activities related to the text! There will be: music; crafts; counting activities; games; sensory experiences; a healthy snack and more. What's the book? Sshhhh! It's a secret! Call to register: 508-655-2557.

## Join Us! A Day in the Life of a Preschooler, Saturday, May 1

Ever wonder what goes on at preschool? Whether you have a current preschooler or a toddler who will soon be trying out his/her first educational program away from you, come sample the many styles of early learning at this collaborative family event with activities facilitated by the preschool educators of Natick. Pick up program information while your children explore. Activities will celebrate the best practices in early education. Call to register: 508-655-2557.

## Restaurant of the Month Fundraiser Continues!

March 11: UNO Chicago Grill

April 14: Fresh City

Escape the house, get out for a meal, meet up with other NECN families for an informal get-together, and **support NECN with a portion of your restaurant purchase!** Clip the "coupons" that you'll find on our March and April calendar pages OR visit [www.natickearlychildhood.org](http://www.natickearlychildhood.org) and click on "Support NECN". A coupon must be presented in order for your purchase to qualify for the fundraiser.

**March/April  
Drop-In & Open Gym  
for Natick Families  
NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED!  
CAREGIVERS WELCOME.**

Drop-In provides the opportunity to come with your child for free play in the NECN Playroom at the Cole Center and to meet other Natick families with young children.

**Pre-Walkers Drop-In:** *(Just for children birth - pre-walkers)*

Monday 12 noon - 2 pm

**Me & My Dad Drop-In:** *(Just for dads with children birth - PreK)*

Thursday 12 noon - 2 pm

**General Drop-In:** *(Children birth - PreK)*

Wednesday 11 am - 1 pm

Friday 11 am - 1 pm

**Open Gym Hours**

A drop-in opportunity for unstructured physical play inside the Cole Center Gym; **for competent walkers!**

Wednesdays 8:30 - 10:30 am

Fridays 8:30 - 10:30 am

**LAST Open Gym** of the 2009/2010 season will take place on **Friday, April 30**. After that date, we encourage you to connect with friends at one of MetroWest's many parks and playgrounds!

**FREE Transportation Available**

No family should miss out on the support, information or fun of NECN activities because they lack transportation. We have a budget to provide transportation via Natick Cab for families who would like to join in our groups, classes or events. Please let the office know if you require this service when you are requesting registration for any of our programs: 508-655-2557.

**Your Caregiver is Welcome Here!**

We seek to support all kinds of families, and that includes working families whose children may have a nanny or other informal caregiver during the day. Your care provider is welcome to register for and attend almost all of our parent/child activities. Just let us know who will be accompanying your child when you register for our programs.

**FREE Child Care for Parent Programs**

We provide FREE on-site child care for almost all of our evening workshops and support program for parents. This means that your child can enjoy supervised play (with 2 screened adults) in a nearby playroom while you attend a program designed to support you in your role as parent. Please let us reserve a spot for your child when you register!

**Save the Date!  
Thursday, May 13  
Second Annual  
Moms' Night Out Fundraiser**

If you attended last year's event, we're sure you'll be back! This year, join us at Nicholas Restaurant, Natick, on Thursday, May 13, at 7 p.m. for an evening of appetizers and socializing with the moms of NECN. More details and ticket sales to follow in April. Be sure to subscribe to our email updates at [natickearlychildhood.org](http://natickearlychildhood.org) to stay informed!

**Autism Awareness Film features  
an NECN Family!**

***Eliza, My Songbird***

Sunday, March 28, 3:00 - 5:00 pm

at the Lebowitz Meeting Hall, Morse Institute Library  
Please join us for a special film premiere of a locally-made documentary on a family facing autism. Learn what autism is, what it can look like, how it is diagnosed, and what YOU, as a parent, friend, or educator, can do to help make autism less mysterious. Learn how to promote earlier diagnosis, and to help us de-stigmatize what can be a very challenging life for those with autism and their families. To attend, please email Aimee Mury at [a\\_mury@yahoo.com](mailto:a_mury@yahoo.com). The program will include the film, a discussion, and light refreshments.

**Natick SEPAC**

**(Special Education Parent Advisory Council)**

***Managing (and Resolving) Challenging Behaviors in Children and Teens with Dr. Ross Greene***

Tuesday, March 9, 7:00 - 8:30 pm

Wilson Middle School, Natick

Please join Natick SEPAC for a presentation by Dr. Ross Greene of the Harvard Medical School Dept. of Psychiatry. Green is the author of: *The Explosive Child* and *Lost at School: Why Our Kids with Behavioral Challenges are Falling Through the Cracks and How We Can Help Them* and has developed a model for identifying and managing the specific behavior problems or skill deficits that are the root of most challenging behaviors. Admission is free and all are welcome; RSVP at the Natick SEPAC website [www.naticksepac.org](http://www.naticksepac.org).