

# Connections



## From Nanny To Parent

Parent-To-Parent Column

By: Shawnee Miranda (parent of 11 mo old girl)

When I became a mother's helper in my teens I had NO desire to be a mom. I wanted to be a neurosurgeon, I wanted to have a top ivy league education, with fancy pant suites and a bright red sports car. I was helping a mother who just had twin boys; she also had an 11 month old daughter, yep that's right those boys were a surprise. This was a job for me, a way to pay for my many extracurricular activities. But as I watched this mother and the parents of other children over my ten years of helping, babysitting and becoming a full time nanny, I learned that I could take some notes. Every parent always told me "Kids don't come with instruction manuals" Well if they didn't I was going to write my own. It may not be exactly the same for every kid but with the 10+ infants, and 10+ older kids I have been closely involved with I had a pretty good idea.

I wrote down things I saw work and not work. I wrote things I would want to buy and not buy. Food to try and food to skip. I wrote down ideas for parties, photos, and cute keep sakes. I wrote down things I thought I would need to know as a mom for myself, like take time to relax and have time to yourself. So I started this little notebook in my teens and ten years later I am putting it to good use.

I am proud to say I am a mom. This has become my career choice. I love staying home and being with my sweet little girl, who is now 11 months! Most of my notes have helped me be a calm and good mother. Some have helped me be a good wife to a new father. Some notes have helped me with friends and family who also have new ones in their lives. I have used my book and I have used it to help my sister-in-law who was the business woman with her new baby. Without my notes I would have been lost with the problems she was having with her little guy.

What I love most about the choice I made to take notes was the fact that I can give my little girl the best mom possible. No I do not make the 6 figures I wanted, no my car is not fancy (but it is red!). I do not own my home, but I rent a cute little apartment. Some people may not think it is much and many have called me crazy for being a stay at home mom, but I have found happiness in a million little blessings of motherhood.

My journey from being a nanny to being a parent was a fun one. I learned how to love the small joys of watching a child see a caterpillar for the first time. I learned how to laugh at a baby's poop face. I learned that true joy is not found in a store but in your heart. I know it sounds cheesy but think about when you have had true happiness and you will see it was in the laugh of a child. Being a parent is the greatest challenge you will ever have. It will also be the only thing in your life that gives you the greatest reward of your child looking into your eyes and saying "I Love You".

## Natick Early Childhood Network



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### Free Play Opportunities (NO Registration Needed)

\* For children w/an adult caregiver, check the calendar for this session's scheduled times. Please note days we are closed.

**Drop In** (NECN Playroom): a free, safe space away from home to play and meet other Natick families.

**Open Gym** (Cole Center Gym): great for practicing gross motor skills and to "shake your sillies" out.

**Pre-Walkers Drop In** (NECN Playroom): a time set aside specifically for our littlest ones to ensure their safety from bigger kiddos.

**KiddieKraft** (Classroom across from NECN): offers children an opportunity to experiment with art and craft materials.

**MusicMinute** (Cole Center Gym): Join Miss Lindsey for some singing, dancing, and parachute fun during the last half hour of open gym on 1/13, 1/23,

**Japanese Chat & Play** (NECN Playroom): an informal playtime for Japanese speakers.

## NECN March/April 2012 Adult-Child Programs (Registration Required)

<p>Mondays; 9:30-11a March 12– April 23 NO CLASS April 16 <b>Registration Required!</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Hindi Playgroup</b> (children birth-PreK with an adult)</p>	<p><b>Held in the Cole Center NECN Playroom.</b> This 5-session playgroup is for caregivers with their children who speak Hindi and are interested in connecting with other Hindi speakers in Natick. Enjoy free play, crafts, circle time with story and songs and gross motor play! <u>Please bring a nut-free snack from home.</u></p>
<p>Mondays; 11:30-1p March 12– April 23 NO CLASS April 16 <b>Registration Required!</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wonderful Ones</b> (children 12-24mo with an adult)</p>	<p><b>Held in the Cole Center NECN Playroom.</b> Enjoy this 6-session playgroup opportunity just for “ones” with a grown-up! Playgroup elements will include: free play, circle time with songs and fingerplays, multi-sensory activities and time to <u>enjoy a lunch brought from home (no peanut/nut products, please).</u></p>
<p>Tuesdays; 11:30-1p March 13– April 24 NO CLASS April 17 <b>Registration Required!</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Jeepers Creepers</b> (children 6-12mo with an adult)</p>	<p><b>Held in the Cole Center NECN Playroom.</b> A playgroup opportunity just for pre-walkers with a parent! Come explore the playroom in this 6-session group as your baby is growing more and more independent and interactive. Enjoy parent chats, quiet observation and stimulating activities for your little one. <u>Bring a lunch from home—no peanut/nut products, please.</u></p>
<p>Wednesdays; 9:30-11a March 14– April 25 NO CLASS April 18 <b>Registration Required!</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Terrific Twos</b> (children 24-36mo with an adult)</p>	<p><b>Held in the Cole Center NECN Playroom.</b> Enjoy this 6-session playgroup opportunity just for “twos” with a grown-up! This is a great opportunity to connect with others and to discuss the terrible and terrific twos with those who really understand. Playgroup elements will include: free play, circle time with songs and fingerplays, multi-sensory activities and time to enjoy a <u>snack brought from home- no peanut/nut products, please.</u></p>
<p>Thursdays; 9:30-11:30a April 5– June 28 NO CLASS April 19 <b>Registration Required!</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>In Collaboration with Criterion Middlesex Early Intervention</i> <b>Integrated Playgroup</b> (children 18-30 mo with an adult)</p>	<p><b>Held in the Cole Center NECN Playroom.</b> This 13-session group offers a play experience for 6 early intervention clients and 3 community children with their parents or caregivers. Each session includes free play, snack, circle time and other directed activities to promote fine and gross motor skills, language, and socialization. Children learn social skills like sharing and turn-taking, and enhance their ability to handle transitions.</p>
<p>Thursdays; 4-5:30p March 15– April 26 NO CLASS April 19 <b>Registration Required!</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Multi-Age Mania</b> (children birth-Kindergarten with an adult)</p>	<p><b>Held in the Cole Center NECN Playroom.</b> This 6-session play-to-learn group will have all the usual components of our groups (free play, craft, snack, circle time and some gross motor play). We hope the later time makes it possible for some of our working parents to enjoy a time set aside for play with their children, and to accommodate siblings, but the group is open to any Natick family! <u>Please bring a snack from home (no peanut/nut products please).</u></p>
<p>Fridays; 10-11:30a April 13-27 <b>Registration Required!</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mandarin Chat &amp; Play</b> (children birth-PreK with an adult)</p>	<p><b>Held in the Cole Center NECN Playroom.</b> This 3- week playgroup includes free play, craft, snack-time, and a circle time facilitated in Mandarin! This is a great group for bi-lingual families! Please do your best to sign in at the door in English with family's name and child's name. Enjoy time to enjoy a <u>nut-free snack brought from home.</u></p>
<p>Saturday; 10:30-12p March 17 &amp; April 14 <b>Registration Required!</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>In Collaboration with Morse Institute Library.. .</i> <b>Tots &amp; Tales</b> (children 2-6yrs old with an adult)</p>	<p><b>Held at the Morse Institute Library in the Lebowitz Meeting Hall.</b> A wonderful way to share books with your toddler or preschooler! Participants engage in play, story, songs and creative craft activities centered on a book theme. Then, they receive a free copy of the featured book at each of the sessions to connect the experience at home!</p>

<p>Saturday; 10:30-12p March 3 &amp; April 7</p> <p><b>Registration Required!</b></p>	<p><i>In Collaboration with Morse Institute Library.. .</i></p> <p><b>Me &amp; My Dad</b> (children birth-PreK with father/male caregiver)</p>	<p><b>Held at the Morse Institute Library in the Lebowitz Meeting Hall.</b> Fathers and children are invited to enjoy this special time set aside just for them. Come to enjoy free play, crafts, stories, musical circle time and morning snack with other Natick dads and kids. New and returning participants are always welcome to register!</p>
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## NECN March/April 2012 Parent Workshops (Registration Required)

<p>Tuesday, March 13 7:00- 8:30p</p> <p><b>Registration Required!</b></p>	<p><b>Talking About Touching</b>  (childcare available upon request)</p>	<p><b>Held at the Cole Center.</b> One-third of all sexual abuse cases involve children under the age of 5 years. Between 80 and 90% of abusers are known, loved and trusted by their victims. (Committee for Children) How can we protect young children against such staggering numbers? Don't miss this workshop designed to help you protect your child from sexual abuse. Program will include a video entitled What Do I Say Now? and a discussion about teaching personal safety rules and touching safety for young children. You will leave with a basic vocabulary to use with your children throughout their growing years. <i>Facilitated by: Judy Dixon, M.Ed &amp; T.A.T Trainer.</i></p>
<p>Tuesday, March 27 7:00-8:30p</p> <p><b>Registration Required!</b></p>	<p><i>In Collaboration with Mama-Born Doula Services...</i></p> <p><b>Doula! The Ultimate Birth Companion</b>  (childcare available upon request)</p>	<p><b>Held at The Cole Center.</b> Doula! The Ultimate Birth Companion is a 65 minute, intimate and emotionally charged documentary about doulas and their part in pregnancy, birth and the first few weeks. Through close-up documentary footage of three doula-supported births, Doula! captures the non-medical but highly practical and emotional support given to the mother before, during and after childbirth. This unique look into a doula supported birth is captured through two intimately filmed home water births and accompanied by a video diary shot by the parents of a home birth that ends in a hospital caesarean section. After the video, take the opportunity to chat with local Doulas about their services!</p>
<p>Tuesday, April 3 7:00-9:00p</p> <p><b>Registration Required!</b></p>	<p><i>In Collaboration with Natick Together for Youth &amp; Natick Anti-Bullying Coalition...</i></p> <p><b>Fostering Resilience in Your Family: A Community Discussion</b>  (childcare available upon request)</p>	<p><b>Held at The Cole Center.</b> Parents of children and youth 0-14yrs old are invited to join us for a World Café style event in which you will have the opportunity to talk with many other parents about how to foster resilience in your family. Resilience is a protective factor for many situations a parent, child, or family might have to face: divorce, transitions, financial instability, bullying, substance abuse, etc... A resilient individual more often can see the positives in adverse situations. Come to this event to gather information about resources available to you in the community and to find out what other parents are doing to raise resilient kids!</p>
<p>Monday, April 23 7:00- 8:30p</p> <p><b>Registration Required!</b></p>	<p><b>Wigglers, Waddlers, &amp; Warriors</b>  (childcare available upon request)</p>	<p><b>Held at the Cole Center.</b> The term motor skills refers to the planned movements we do to accomplish tasks. Gross motor, which is the use of our larger muscles, includes the abilities to sit, balance, crawl, walk, run and jump. Fine motor, which is the use of our smaller muscles, leads to self-feeding, manipulating toys, scribbling, and eventually writing. Both are important areas where young children make huge strides in their early years. This workshop will provide an overview of typical motor development in children from birth through age 4. It will educate and empower parents and caregivers on age-appropriate skills for every stage and provide tools to help children achieve their next milestone. <i>Facilitated by Jill Vetstein, Social Worker (LICSW) and Developmental Specialist.</i></p>

## Volunteer Opportunities

**Playgroup Facilitators:** a 6-week, once a week commitment to run a playgroup with your child(ren) in the NECN playroom– training is provided! This is a great opportunity to meet other parents and provide a service to your community.

**Kiddie Kraft Drop In:** NECN needs parents/adults to create or find craft projects for children 12mo-PreK and prep materials for the drop in time. Materials can be provided by NECN.

**Tag Sale Organizers/Helpers:** NECN is planning a Tag Sale fundraiser at the end of April and needs your help to plan/organize before the event as well as people to help run and organize the day of the sale and take any left over items to The Salvation Army.

### Local Children's/Family Opportunities

<p><i>MetroWest Mothers &amp; More</i> <a href="http://www.metrowestmothersandmore.org">www.metrowestmothersandmore.org</a></p>	<p><b>Discussion Meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every 2nd Monday and Last Wednesday of the Month</li> <li>• 7:30-9p at Whitney Place</li> </ul> <p><b>Kids Activities &amp; Mom's Nights Out</b></p>
<p><i>Parents Helping Parents</i> 800-632-8188 <a href="http://www.parentshelpingparents.org">www.parentshelpingparents.org</a></p>	<p><b>FREE Parent Support Groups</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mondays 6- 7:30p in Framingham; childcare available</li> </ul>
<p><i>Destination Maternity</i> 104 Worcester St, Natick 508-653-1605 <a href="http://www.destinationmaternity.com">www.destinationmaternity.com</a></p>	<p><b>FREE and FOR FEE Mommy and Baby Classes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WeeHands w/Courtney (baby &amp; toddler sign language)</li> <li>• Itsy Bitsy Yoga</li> </ul>
<p><i>Natick Cooperative Playgroup</i> First Baptist Church, 13 Common Street, Natick <a href="http://www.natickcooperativeplaygroup.com">www.natickcooperativeplaygroup.com</a></p>	<p><b>Parent/Child Playgroups:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M, T, Th, F 9:30-11:30a</li> </ul>
<p><i>Barnes &amp; Noble</i> 1 Worcester Rd, Framingham 508-628-5567 <a href="http://www.barnesandnoble.com">www.barnesandnoble.com</a></p>	<p><b>FREE Story Times</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 2 @ 7p; Dr. Seuss Stories</li> <li>• March 13 @ 10:30a; Cookie Stories</li> <li>• March 16 @ 7p &amp; March 17 @ 11a; Meet Corduroy!</li> <li>• March 9, 23, 30 @ 7p; Pajamarama</li> <li>• Check website for April dates.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Morse Institute Library</i> 14 E. Central Street, Natick 508-647-6520 <a href="http://www.morseinstitute.org">www.morseinstitute.org</a></p>	<p><b>FREE Learn English Classes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginners/Intermediate Thursdays 6:30-8p</li> <li>• Intermediate Fridays 10:30a-12p</li> </ul> <p><b>FREE Story, Craft, Music &amp; Film Times for 0-10 yrs</b></p>
<p><i>GymFit</i> 148 E. Central Street, Natick 508-651-3838 <a href="http://www.gymfit.us">www.gymfit.us</a></p>	<p><b>Open Gym (1-8yrs):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$6 per child/ \$1 for members; 1 hr</li> <li>• Wed- 11:15a, Thurs- 11:15a, Fri 10:30a,</li> <li>• Saturdays March 3 &amp; April 1- 1:15p</li> </ul>
<p><i>The Center for Arts, Natick (TCAN)</i> 14 Summer Street, Natick 508-647-0097 <a href="http://www.natickart.org">www.natickart.org</a></p>	<p><b>Family Performances (\$10 adult/ \$8 child)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bill Harley &amp; Keither Munslow: Anything Could Happen; Sunday, March 18 @ 2p</li> <li>• Detectives, Dancing &amp; Sweet Melodies Saturday, March 31 @ 2p</li> <li>• Mister G Saturday, April 21 @ 11a</li> </ul>
<p><i>Bacon Free Library</i> 58 Eliot Street, Natick 508-653-6730 <a href="http://www.baconfreelibrary.org">www.baconfreelibrary.org</a></p>	<p><b>FREE Story Times</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wednesdays &amp; Fridays 10a</li> </ul>

## Community Resources

<p>Child Care Resource Center, Inc. www.ccrinc.org 617-547-1063</p>	<p>Assistance in locating local childcare, linkage to state financial assistance for childcare.</p>
<p>Criterion-Middlesex Early Intervention www.criterionchild.com/ei_mid.html 508-620-1442</p>	<p>Development evaluations, therapies, and playgroups.</p>
<p>Natick Public Schools www.natickps.org 508-647-6500</p>	<p>Serves children with special needs beginning at age 3 and provides transitional support for incoming kindergarteners.</p>
<p>Natick Family Child Care Association http://natickfamilychildcare.vpweb.com</p>	<p>Network of family childcare providers, information about availability.</p>
<p>Mass 2-1-1 www.mass211.org Dial 2-1-1 on Touchtone phone</p>	<p>Free access to health and human services, information and referral.</p>
<p>A Place to Turn www.aplacetoturn-natick.org 508-655-8868</p>	<p>Provides emergency food and clothing.</p>
<p>Natick Service Council www.natickservicecouncil.org 508-655-1791</p>	<p>Services include: food pantry, thrift shop, eviction prevention, utility aid, crisis counseling, dental and mental health programs, and career development.</p>
<p>Natick Human Services Department http://natickma.gov/Public_Documents/NatickMA_Human/index 508-647-6519</p>	<p>Information and referral, support accessing services, crisis intervention, family counseling, and emergency financial assistance.</p>
<p>Natick SEPAC www.natickps.org/Districtinfo/sepac/main.cfm NatickSepac@gmail.com</p>	<p>Special Education Parent Advisory Committee- dedicated to providing information, recommendations and friendships to families in Natick looking for some connections.</p>
<p>South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) www.smoc.org 508-620-2645</p>	<p>Services include: childcare/Head Start, housing assistance, counseling, resource and referral, shelters, among other supportive services.</p>
<p>Natick Anti-Bullying Coalition www.natickparents.org</p>	<p>Offers a forum where parents can talk to one another about issues facing our children like bullying and cyberbullying. Provides supporting programs in all our Natick Schools, such as the Peer Leadership Program, that empower our children and promote resiliency and social competency.</p>
<p>MetroWest Interfaith Hospitality Network</p>	<p>A cooperative, interfaith partnership offering hope to homeless Families with children: through safe transitional shelter, meals, and supportive case management as they seek permanent housing.</p>
<p>Jewish Family Services of MetroWest www.jfsmw.org 508-875-3100</p>	<p>Focus on adoption, parent education, youth education, and community support. Offer mentors and tutors to elementary school students, and support new moms.</p>
<p>Natick Together For Youth (NTY)</p>	<p>A non-profit coalition comprised of parents, community members and various Natick organizations which strives to improve the health and safety of our towns youth.</p>

### NECN Tag Sale Fundraiser!

We all know how quickly kids grow out of toys, clothing, and furniture, so why pay full price!?

Shop for gently used items at great prices! All proceeds go to NECN!

Not looking to buy? Donate your gently used items for the sale!

Drop off items Friday between 1-5p or bring them the day of between 9-10a!

**Saturday, April 28; 10a-2p @ The Cole Center**

# Provider Support

## How Can NECN Help You?

NECN is funded through a Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grant from the Department of Early Education and Care. As part of our grant, we help provide linkages to professional development opportunities for early education and care providers in Natick.

NECN can offer providers referrals to mental health consultants and other services that may be needed at your location.

As part of the QRIS, licensed early education and care providers are required to meet standards involving community engagement. NECN has multiple volunteer opportunities for providers throughout the year. This results in a mutually beneficial relationship as your organization provides support to us, we help you meet QRIS requirements as well as provide an opportunity to inform the community about your center or family child care.

## Directors Collaborative

The Directors Collaborative is a group of early education and care providers from Framingham and Natick. Our meetings give providers an opportunity to network, share ideas, and resources, as well as gather information about licensure. Meeting locations alternate from Framingham and Natick and are supported by Early Childhood Alliance of Framingham and Natick Early Childhood Network.

Tuesday, March 6; 9-10a  
The King Administration Bldg  
454 Water Street, Framingham

Tuesday, April 3; 9-10a  
The Cole Center  
179 Boden Lane, Natick

## NECN Council

The NECN Council is a group of community organizations, parents, childcare providers, and others dedicated to supporting Natick families. The purpose of the council is to address perceived challenges in accessibility and availability of services through collaboration and measure NECN's progress in meeting objectives. Together we can weave a network of quality opportunities for families in Natick!

Wednesday, March 21; 7:30-9p  
The Cole Center, 179 Boden Lane, Natick

## Professional Qualifications Registry Information

All educators must be registered on EEC's Professional Qualifications Registry (PQ Registry) before they can enroll in any professional trainings or college courses. This includes educators in licensed AND license-exempt programs. Your official PQ Registry number is required on all application forms. To find out more about the PQ Registry, talk to your Director or supervisor, or go to:  
<https://www.eec.state.ma.us/PQRegistry/> .

For EEC's Statewide Training Calendar Visit:  
[www.eec.state.ma.us/ProfessionalDevelopment/WebFindTrainings.aspx](http://www.eec.state.ma.us/ProfessionalDevelopment/WebFindTrainings.aspx)

## Local Professional Development Opportunities

**From COMPASS for Kids**  
**[www.parentingresourceassociates.org](http://www.parentingresourceassociates.org)**

*Sensory Integration and Activities*  
Saturday, March 17; 9:00-12:30p  
Whitney Place, 3 Vision Drive, Natick  
\$25 Fee

*Infant-Toddler Language and Literacy*  
Thursday, April 12; 7:00-9:00p  
Whitney Place, 3 Vision Drive, Natick  
\$25 Fee

*Singing, Dancing, and Making Music*  
Monday, March 19; 7:00-9:00p  
The Cottage Children's Center, 197 Union St, Marlborough  
\$25 Fee

*Working with Families of Diverse Backgrounds (2 Part)*  
Wednesdays, April 4 & 11; 7:00-9:00p  
The Cottage Children's Center, 197 Union St, Marlborough  
\$25 Fee

**From CCRC, Inc**  
**[www.cccrcinc.org](http://www.cccrcinc.org)**  
**For More Info Contact: Linda Zicko, 617-547-1063 x237**

*Planting Seeds of Science in Early Childhood Education*  
Saturday, March 3; 9:30-3:30p  
Curious Kids of Hudson, 2 Coolidge Street, Hudson  
\$25 subsidies, \$50 no subsidies

*Family Child Care Accreditation*  
Thursdays, March 8, 22 & April 5, 26; 6:30-9:30p  
CCRC, Inc, 130 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge  
\$40 subsidies, \$80 no subsidies

*Supervision for Directors*  
Thursdays, March 29 & April 5, 1-3:30p  
Massbay Community College, 50 Oakland St, Wellesley  
\$25 subsidies, \$50 no subsidies

*Growing Up Wild: Exploring Nature w/Young Children*  
Saturday, April 14; 9:30-4:00p  
Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge,  
73 Weir Hill Rd, Sudbury  
\$35 subsidies, \$60 no subsidies

**From The Early Childhood Professionals Association**  
**[www.tecpa.org](http://www.tecpa.org)**  
**508-655-3813**

*Positive Behavioral Supports for Young Children*  
Thursday, March 22; 6:30-8:30p  
Morse Institute Library, 14 E. Central St, Natick  
\$25 Fee

*Speech and Language Development in Young Children & Red Flags for Support*  
Wednesday, April 25; 6:30-8:30  
Morse Institute Library, 14 E. Central St, Natick  
\$25 Fee