

# Natick Early Childhood Network

...putting Children First

## Connections



www.natickearlychildhood.org

May/June 2010 Volume 10 Issue5

### Special Supports for Special Families

If at any point you have doubts about how your child is progressing in one or more developmental areas, there are steps you can take to get a professional assessment and access the services your child may need. As always, your own pediatrician can answer questions about typical child development milestones and can provide advice on whether and where to seek assistance. But you, as the person who knows your child best, can also request a developmental assessment and seek services—even without a physician's referral. To start, call one of the following resources in our community:

#### For children 0 - 3 yrs. old:

##### **Criterion-Middlesex Early Intervention**

651 Franklin Street, Framingham(508) 620-1442

#### **What happens?**

An assessment team will visit your home to conduct a developmental assessment of your child's progress to date in the following areas of skill: speech & language; gross motor; fine motor; social/emotional; cognitive (problem solving); and self-care.

If your child is found **eligible for services**, you will work with the Early Intervention team to develop an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Therapists will follow the plan to provide services in the family setting—your home—with the goal of supporting your child's development AND delivering education, training and support to empower you and your child's caregivers to incorporate educational and therapeutic strategies into daily routines. Additionally, clients are eligible to participate in a Developmental Enrichment Group with other families either at the Criterion site or here in Natick at the Natick Early Childhood Network.

If your child is found **ineligible for services**, the assessment team may make recommendations about community resources and programs which could assist you in supporting your child's development.

#### **Who pays for the services?**

The Early Intervention program is funded by private health insurance, Mass Health, and the Dept. of Public Health. Families *do* pay an annual participation fee, but a sliding scale provides financial assistance to those who are unable to pay the full fee.

(Continued on page 2)

### A Day in the Life of a Preschooler

May 1, 10 a.m. - 12 noon, Ben-Hem Elementary School

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 and enrichment programs of Natick**. Pick up program information while your children explore. See our activities descriptions for details. **NOTE:** *The Ben-Hem community will be hosting it's annual Yard Sale in the gym at the same time. Your family may find gently used toys, strollers, tide-ons, etc. at cheap prices!* Registration appreciated (508-655-2557); walk-ins welcome!

### Moms' Night Out Fundraiser

Thursday, May 13, 7 p.m.

Nicholas Restaurant



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, socializing and raffles with the moms of NECN and the community. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased in advance at the NECN office or from an event volunteer!

### Family Appreciation Night

Wednesday, June 16, 5:30 - 7:30p.m.

Cole Center

Happy Birthday to US! Natick Early Childhood Network/Natick Family Network is reaching the end of its **10th** program year in our community, and it's time to celebrate our success and ALL of our families—participating since the fall of 2000! If you've EVER been a part of us or have NEVER been a part of us, we invite you to join us for this event.

## Special Supports continued

### For children 3 yrs. to Kindergarten:

**Hand-in-Hand Preschool, Natick Public Schools**  
22 East Evergreen Road, Natick, (508) 647-6583

### **What happens?**

Often, children with a suspected disability access the special education services of the Natick Public Schools at age 3 by progressing through the transition activities which bridge the Early Intervention program (above) to preschool-age services at the Hand-in-Hand Preschool. Transition activities are discussed with each family throughout a child's involvement with Early Intervention, with a formal transition timeline starting at the age of 2 years, 6 months for children who may qualify for a continuation of services under the public schools.

Occasionally, however, parents who have not previously identified a developmental delay become concerned about their child's ability to progress during the preschool years. These families can contact Hand-in-Hand Preschool (located at the Bennett-Hemenway Elementary School) to discuss whether a screening or evaluation for services might be warranted. Evaluations at Hand-in-Hand are for situations when parents suspect that a child might have a *disability* AND observe that he/she is *not making effective progress* in one or more areas. The evaluation is NOT meant to be a general developmental screening to identify a child's strengths and weaknesses. (Every child entering kindergarten at the Natick Public Schools has the opportunity for a more general screening as part of the kindergarten intake activities.)

A Hand-in-Hand preschool evaluation may include one to three visits to the school site for up to an hour each session, depending on how many areas of development will be assessed. A team of professionals is on staff to assess children's skills in the following

developmental areas: speech & language; gross motor; fine motor; social/emotional/ behavior; and cognitive (problem solving).

Following the assessment period, a meeting will be held with the evaluation team to discuss your child's eligibility for services. At the meeting, it may be determined that your child is **eligible for services**. In that case, the team will propose an Individualized Educational Program (IEP), and your child may be assigned to a range of programs from 30 minutes of weekly therapy at his/her neighborhood elementary school (for speech, for example) up to a full-day program at the Hand-in-Hand Integrated Preschool with additional home services in the most severe cases. If your child is found **ineligible for services** (because he/she is *not* deemed to have a disability and *can* make effective progress in learning without services), the team at Hand-in-Hand may make recommendations about activities you can engage in to support the suspected area of deficit and/or recommend that your child be rescreened after a designated period.

### **Who pays for the services?**

When warranted, both assessments and services of the Hand-in-Hand Preschool are funded publicly through the Natick Public Schools. Families do not pay for the services their eligible children receive.

### **Preschool for Community Children at Hand-in-Hand:**

Preschool-aged children who do NOT receive any special education services through Hand-in-Hand are eligible to enroll as community children in the integrated preschool. These children attend the program with the children who are receiving therapies in the classroom setting and serve as role models to their peers. Hand-in-Hand offers programs for both 3- and 4-year-olds with a variety of schedules available. Community preschoolers pay reasonable tuition rates to attend the program.

## Restaurant of the Month

*I Scream! You Scream!*

*We ALL Scream for ice cream!*

Watch your inbox for our SWEET fundraisers

to be announced for May & June.

Restaurant of the Month fundraisers seek to draw families out to gather at local kid-friendly restaurants that agree to support Natick Early Childhood Network with a portion of the day's or evening's proceeds. Often customers participating in each fundraiser must present a special fundraiser flyer or coupon at the time of purchase, which we distribute to families both in our playroom and on our website. Stay tuned for our May/June locations!

**NOT registered to receive our online updates? Go to [natickearlychildhood.org](http://natickearlychildhood.org) to get signed up!**



## May/June Drop-In for Natick Families

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. No registration required, and your child's caregiver is welcome to attend. NOTE: The last Drop-In for this program year will be on June 25.

**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 11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Friday 8:30 - 10:30 am