



# Children's Trust Fund

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES • PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

## Parenting Education News

### Program Spotlight: LUK Crisis Center, Inc.

By: Tanji Donald

LUK Crisis Center (LUK), a not-for-profit social service agency located in Fitchburg, Massachusetts provides a myriad of community-based prevention, intervention and education services dedicated to improving the lives of youth and their families. With funding from the Children's Trust Fund, LUK has established an innovative partnership with the Fitchburg Evening Alternative High School Principal/Director Michael R. Pelland to offer **Growing Together: My Child, My Self**, a Parenting Education and Support Program (PESP) for pregnant and parenting students enrolled in the high school. These two ten-week parenting series are offered as elective courses at the high school and students receive credits toward their high school diploma.



The **Growing Together: My Child, My Self** PESP series offer ten 2.5 hour sessions filled with information on infant developmental stages, infant safety, candid discussions, and reflective journaling to support all learning styles and enhance participants' learning. Healthy snacks are provided as a way to model for the young parents nutritional options for themselves and their children. Information regarding community re-

sources and services are also provided to support the parents and their children. In addition to parenting classes, LUK is also offering Fitchburg Evening Alternative High School students another elective course focusing on preparing students to enter the workplace. Students participating in the parenting education and support program are encouraged to take advantage of this course.

### Strong Connections

Mr. Pelland, high school principal, feels that the largest challenges within his school are employability and parenting. "My school is very fortunate to have LUK staff providing both of these services to my student body. The LUK staff is well entuned with the students and their programs give the students hope. The CTF funded Parenting Education and Support Program is one of the missing pieces of the puzzle that pregnant and parenting students need and desire. Young parents who are balancing work, school and parenting rely on the staff for resources and support."

**FYI:** Parenting education and support groups are held on Fridays at the Fitchburg Evening Alternative High School from 10:00 a.m. – 12:30. An additional parenting education and support program series will begin in March 2009. For more information contact Maurie Bergeron at (978) 360-2930. For more information on the Fitchburg Evening Alternative High School, please call: (978) 345-3244

This issue of the Parenting Education News includes two articles for parents located on page three and page five.

Feel free to reproduce these articles for your consumers.

### Inside this issue:

Program Spotlight	1
MA Family Literacy Consortium News	2
Tips For New Parents	3
50 New Resources In CTF's Resource Library	4
Winter Safety Tips from our OneToughJob Website	5

## Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium News

By: Elia Marnik, Tanji Donald & Ashley Everette



### MFLC Consortium Members

- Board of Library Commissioners
- Commonwealth Corporation
- Children's Trust Fund
- Dept. of Public Health
- Dept. of Early Education and Care
- Dept. Elementary and Secondary Education
- Dept. of Housing and Community Development
- Dept of Mental Health
- Dept. of Children and Families
- Dept. of Transitional Assistance
- Dept. of Workforce Development
- Dept. of Youth Services
- Boston Children's Museum
- Boston Herald's MA Literacy Foundation
- Even Start Comprehensive Family Literacy Program
- MA Coalition for Adult Education
- MA Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
- System for Adult Education Support (SABES)
- Title I Compensatory Education

"In recognition that...parents are their children's earliest and most continuous teachers...and are critical to the success of education reform," Governor Deval L. Patrick proclaimed November, 2008 as Family Literacy Month. He states that "It is essential that communities, libraries and schools provide families with opportunities for family literacy and reading activities that encourage families to read with their children."

The Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium (MFLC) hosted a special celebration at the Boston Children's Museum on November 9, 2008. As a guest speaker at the event, Mayor Thomas A. Menino, strongly emphasized his goal that every child in Boston be afforded equal opportunity to learn, "each child should be one of the *haves and not the have not's*." He stressed the importance of family literacy in order for all to have the chance to thrive.

Over 400 families participated in family literacy-focused activities sponsored by the Boston Children's Museum, the Boston Herald's MA Literacy Foundation, MA Board of Library Commissioners, Dept. of Public Health-WIC, Jumpstart, Reach Out and Read, Children's Trust Fund, Early Words, Boston Public Library, Mixing in MATH, Countdown to Kindergarten, MA Dept. of Early Education and Care and the MA Dept. Elementary and Secondary Education.

Activities included games, puppet making, story telling, and face painting. The Boston Children's Museum also offered other activities specifically focused on family literacy.

Families were also given books, reading logs, book marks, and math games to continue their engagement of literacy at home.

The MFLC is a statewide initiative dedicated to forging effective partnerships among state agencies, community organizations, and

other interested groups to expand and strengthen family literacy and family support (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/familylit/mflc>).

The MFLC members are working to increase the importance of family literacy by disseminating information, increasing public awareness, and building local and statewide collaborations.

Family literacy programs provide opportunities to improve the parenting and life skills of adults. These programs provide support, information and resources to reinforce learning at home so that parents become more responsive to their children.

### **Literacy Research**

A recent *Kids Count* study shows that 12% of Massachusetts children live in poverty and 82,000 live in extreme poverty. Children in 114,000 families have a parent who can't read to them. Children in another 264,000 families have parents who can read at a basic level but have difficulty helping their children with homework. Furthermore, more than two million Massachusetts adults lack the skills and abilities expected of a high school graduate. These statistics speak to the great need for literacy and support services for at risk families. "Poor school achievement and dropping out before completing school are commonplace among children of illiterate parents" (REACH Education Foundation, 2003).

Research from REACH Educational Foundation tells states that the family offers the most effective system for fostering and sustaining the children's health and overall well-being. "Without family involvement, family literacy interventions are unlikely to be successful, and what few changes are achieved are likely to disappear once the intervention is discontinued." Family literacy programs address the needs of both parents and children by breaking the cycle of inter-generational illiteracy.



## Top Ten Tips for New Parents

From WarmLines Parent/Teacher Resources



First-time parents are surprised to find that the addition of one (or more) exquisite, small, and helpless person can make them feel joyful and competent one moment, and small and helpless themselves the next. It is not unusual to see fatigue, fear, and self-doubt co-exist with pride, unsurpassed love, and hope.

For over thirty years, *WarmLines staff and New Parents Groups Facilitators* has provided support for first-time moms and dads. Their experience shows that parenthood is the great equalizer; all new parents, regardless of circumstance, share a remarkably similar journey. The following Top Ten Tips, time-tested by WarmLines, have helped thousands of parents begin that journey successfully.

**1. Expect stress.** Becoming a parent is a major life transition. All transitions, no matter how eagerly anticipated, are accompanied by some degree of stress. And despite our best preparations, we may have to adjust our plans as we go along.

**2. Join a new parents group.** It doesn't have to be specific to your life situation. Single moms, adoptive parents, new dads, two-mom families, parents of multiples, traditional couples...all first-time parents experience the same basic joys and concerns. You'll make new friends and find non-judgmental support. And the old saying is true: a shared happiness is doubled and a shared worry is cut in half.

**3. Accept help.** Don't try to be supermom or dad. Neighbors, relatives, friends, and/or co-workers are often delighted to help, if you let them know what you need. Just having an hour to sleep, shower, or take a walk while someone you trust cares for your infant can give you a much-needed lift.

**4. Believe in yourself.** You DO know what's best for your baby. Sort through the mountains of advice you'll receive from friends, relatives, strangers, doctors, magazines, and parenting blogs. Try out new ideas that sound good to you. Toss the rest.

**5. Forgive yourself.** You're going to make mistakes. We all do. Nobody has all the answers, and even the "experts" often disagree about "what's best for baby."

**6. Lower your expectations of yourself.** Remember that you have a "new baby" depending on you for every need. Let go of any guilt caused by unfinished chores. It is important to take time for yourself and spend time with your family.

**7. Ask questions.** No matter how much we know about children and about our pre-baby selves, we all have to learn how to be parents. Be open to surprises; you may find yourself changing some of your pre-conceived notions about parenthood!

**8. Remember who you used to be.** Some new parents feel they shouldn't miss their former "carefree" selves. It's normal to mourn the past, even when the present is full. Ask your pre-baby friends to stay in touch and be patient while you adjust to your new life. When the time is right, return to some of your former hobbies and activities. In the meantime, celebrate the new, evolving you.

**9. If you have a partner, remember that that relationship and that person is evolving, too.** Try to spend some meaningful time together. Respect each other's parenting style. Talk about your hopes and fears. Babies benefit from different types of loving interactions.

**10. Enjoy your baby.** While a night spent with a colicky infant can seem endless, the childhood years actually pass very quickly. Every time your child achieves another exciting milestone, it means he/she has taken one more tentative yet eager step away from babyhood and you have taken one more step toward becoming a confident, experienced parent. Relax. Breathe. Enjoy.

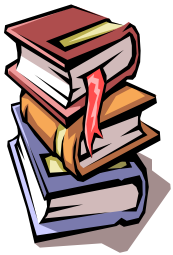


**WarmLines Parent/Teacher Resources** ([warmlines.org](http://warmlines.org)), a subsidiary of the **Massachusetts School of Professional Psychiatry** ([mspp.edu](http://mspp.edu)), offers resources and support for parents and educators of young children.

WarmLines staff writer **Carolyn Curtis-Mahoney**, author of the children's book *I Took the Moon for a Walk*, organized this tip list.

## **New Resources in the Children’s Trust Fund (CTF) Resource Library!**

The Children’s Trust Fund Resource Library has over 300 holdings available to loan. We recently acquired new DVDs, books and parenting games as well as new curricula including ***Nurturing Programs, The Incredible Years*** and ***Parents Forever***. The new DVDS are based on the latest research in early child development focusing on children ages birth to six years old. Our materials exemplify best parenting practices. CTF’s goal is to provide family support programs with resources that strengthen their work with families. Please find below a summary of some of our latest purchases available for loans.



### **How Boys and Girls Differ**

#### **The First Six Years**

##### ***Brief Description:***

*How Boys and Girls Differ The First Six Years* is a 21 minute video. The video focuses on the real differences between how boys and girls develop and a framework on the importance of recognizing developmental differences. The Video Teaching Guide includes discussion questions, a quiz, and tips for raising gender neutral children for facilitators to use with participants. There is also a brief breakdown of developmental tasks related to natural abilities, social abilities, behavior & personality and physical attributes as well as a bibliography. The DVD is produced by the Learning Seed.

### **The Not-So Terrible Twos**

#### **The Third Year of Life**

##### ***Brief Description:***

*The Not-so Terrible Twos: The Third Year of Life* is a 22 minute video that focuses on the learning which takes place during the two to three year developmental phase. The video highlights the importance of why two year olds need to explore and to be curious. This exploration helps them in learning about how their bodies, minds, emotions and how the world works. The Video Teaching Guide includes discussion questions, a quiz, and a bibliography. The DVD is produced by the Learning Seed.

### **When Your Kids Push Your Buttons: And What You Can Do About It**

##### ***Brief Description:***

*When Your Kids Push Your Buttons: And What You Can Do About It* by Bonnie Harris is a comprehensive book focusing on how to defuse parenting “road rage,” ending the action-and-reaction cycle between parents and children. This book offers parents tools and techniques on how to appropriately address provoking behaviors when children misbehave. Parents can learn how to gain control of their emotions by viewing situations differently, reacting calmly and effectively, in order to meet their children’s needs.

#### **Visit!**

To schedule a library visit to preview new or existing materials give us a call. Contact information is located on last page of this newsletter. Library hours are Monday thru Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

## Fun Without the Frostbite - Wintertime Outdoor Safety Tips

### Winter Wonderland

Children spend a lot of time outside during the winter months. Whether your child is waiting for the bus or building a snowman, be careful when sending him outside.

Cold temperatures can be especially harsh on children. Here are safety tips and winter sport alerts on how to keep your child warm, dry, and healthy this winter.

### Safety tips for outdoor fun

**Bundle them up.** Whether your child is going out to play or waiting for the bus, the cold can really get to her. Children should be dressed in several thin layers of clothing to keep them dry and warm. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends dressing children in one more layer of clothing than you yourself would wear. Make sure you send your child out with a hat that covers her ears (50% of body heat is lost through the head), and wearing waterproof boots with enough room to wiggle her toes. If your child is going outside to play and might get wet, avoid dressing her in cotton clothing, as cotton does not absorb moisture or dry as easily as other materials. Make sure your child comes inside periodically to change wet accessories, such as gloves, hats, and socks, and send her to school, a friend's house, or ski lessons with extras of these. If it is a sunny day and she will be spending time outdoors, apply sunscreen. The sun, especially when it reflects off snow, can still cause sunburn in the winter.

**Hold off hypothermia.** If your child is playing outside, make sure he comes inside periodically to warm up, and set a limit on the amount of time he can be outside. Hypothermia is when a child's body temperature falls below normal. It often occurs when children play outside in extremely cold weather for extended periods of time or without proper clothing. Symptoms of hypothermia include shivering, tiredness, clumsiness, and slurred speech. If you think your child might have hypothermia, change him into warm clothes, wrap him in blankets, and call your doctor.

**Prevent frostbite.** Frostbite occurs when skin, especially on fingers, toes, ears, and noses, becomes frozen, pale, gray, or blistered and burns or feels numb. If you think your child has frostbite, place the affected parts in warm (not hot) water, or apply warm water to them with a washcloth. Do not rub the frozen areas. Warm your child up with dry clothes and blankets, and give him a warm drink. Call your doctor with any concerns.

### Winter Sports Alerts

- **Skating.** Both children and adults should only skate in approved areas. Look for signs saying it is safe to skate before getting on the ice. Public indoor or outdoor rinks, even if they are crowded, are preferable to private lakes and ponds. Children should always be supervised while on the ice, and should follow any rules, such as skating in a certain direction. Make sure your child wears skates that fit well and are comfortable to avoid injuries and falls.
- **Skiing/snowboarding.** Children should take lessons from a qualified instructor before participating in these winter sports. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under seven years of age refrain from snowboarding. Make sure your child wears a helmet and has equipment that fits him properly and is not loose or broken. Children should only ski or snowboard on hills consistent with their abilities, and only in places where conditions are not icy. Adults should wear helmets too.
- **Sledding.** Children should be supervised while sledding, and should sled feet first or sitting up to prevent head injuries. Although sledding is fun, free, and is usually not far from home, it is dangerous if certain precautions are not taken. Children should not sled near main roads, and sledding surfaces should be clear of all obstructions, such as fences. Beware of icy spots under the snow.
- **Snow play.** While it is fun and creative to make snow forts in snow banks and engage in snowball fights, children should play in a safe area where they can be seen by drivers and supervised by an adult. Snow forts and snow tunnels can collapse and suffocate children, and snowballs can be hard and icy and cause injuries. Do not stop your child from enjoying wintertime fun. However, talk to her about having fun in the snow while being safe.



To view other parenting education articles and resources please visit [OneToughJob.Org](http://OneToughJob.Org) !

## Information About the Children's Trust Fund

The Massachusetts Children's Trust Fund leads statewide efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect by supporting parents and strengthening families. As an umbrella organization, CTF funds, evaluates, and promotes the work of over 100 agencies that serve parents. Supported by private, state and federal funding, the Children's Trust Fund invests in Massachusetts' most precious resource – children and their families.



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[info@mctf.state.ma.us](mailto:info@mctf.state.ma.us)

*(Resource Library Continued)*

### Suggested Steps for Borrowing Materials

- Visit our website at [www.mctf.org](http://www.mctf.org) and preview the library listing. (We have updated our library listing to include a table of contents, categories and page numbers to simplify your search).
- Schedule a library visit with the Library Manager, Tanji Donald by telephone or send an email to [tdonald@state.ma.us](mailto:tdonald@state.ma.us).

### Loan Policy

- Materials can be checked out for up to 30 days.
- Organizations may borrow up to six (6) resources per visit up to four weeks.
- Borrowers located 50 miles or more from the Boston location may have the resources mailed with the understanding that the borrowing agency is responsible for returning the materials to the library.

### Library Locations

#### Boston

The Children's Trust Fund  
55 Court Street, 4th Floor  
Boston, MA 02108  
617 -727- 8957 ext 8744

Go to [www.mctf.org](http://www.mctf.org) to view library holdings

#### Western Massachusetts

Western Massachusetts Center for Healthy  
Communities  
489 Whitney Avenue  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
Contact: Miriam Jusino  
1- 800- 850 – 3880

Go to [www.westernmasshealthycommunities.org](http://www.westernmasshealthycommunities.org)  
to view library holdings.

