Unique Camp Opportunity

The National Association of the Deaf and Deaf Youth USA are pleased to announce the second World Federation of the Deaf Youth Section Children Camp, set to take place on Margarita Island, in Venezuela, August 1-8, 2010.

The Children’s Camp is an international event with participants from all over the world. National Associations of the Deaf in different countries will select children, between 10-12 years of age to participate in the camp. Children will be accompanied by leaders, between 21-30 years of age, also selected by the National Associations of the Deaf. The Venezuelan Government and organizations are sponsoring this camp, covering all expenses such as meals and accommodations. They are not covering airfare.

The uniqueness of this camp is that children and leaders both will experience cultural exchange, learn international sign, and enjoy different activities and workshops with an emphasis on human rights, diversity, leadership, and Deaf culture.

For more information about the camp visit their website at www.sfdys.org/camp2010.

Maryland Youth Leadership Forum

Applications are now being accepted for the Maryland Youth Leadership Forum (MD-YLF). This innovative and exciting program will provide many activities to help participants develop leadership skills and explore possible career interests. MD-YLF is for all students with all types of disabilities who have demonstrated their leadership potential in their communities and schools. MD-YLF will be held July 20-23, 2010 at Bowie State University, Bowie, MD. There is no cost for students to attend. More information and the application can be found at: http://innow.ehclients.com/hom/youth-leadership-forum/about/

What I Wish for My Child 2010

Volunteers for Medical Engineering, Inc. (VME) has started its annual campaign to help realize the dreams of children with disabilities in Central Maryland. Parents of these children know how hard it can be when they can’t participate in the things other children do. VME recruits engineers to design and develop unique devices or modify exciting equipment to improve the lives of families with children who have disabilities.

Parents of children with disabilities, ages 2 to 21, may submit a wish they have for their child to the VME What I Wish for My Child campaign. VME staff and volunteers select the winners and volunteer engineers design customized solutions to help each winning family. VME volunteers are skilled engineers supported by volunteer physical and occupational therapists, machinists, nurses, carpenters, and engineering students.

Five winning entries will be announced on June 30, 2010. Applications can be submitted at vmesolutions.org or call 410-554-9134. Applications must be received by April 30, 2010.

Over the past 28 years, VME has completed projects such as special wheel chair arm that allows a child to independently transfer from her wheel chair to another chair, a way for a child with CP to ride a bike safely by adding an extended bike brake and many other creative solutions to the everyday things children want to do by themselves.

Happy Spring from The Family Support and Resource Center
Learning Disability or Vision Problem

Don’t assume your child has a behavior issue or learning disability if they are having trouble paying attention or following instructions in class. An eye problem might be the culprit.

About 80% of how children learn is through visual processing of information, so an undetected issue can severely affect that.

Warning signs include:
- Squinting, closing or covering one eye
- Constantly holding books, papers and other materials close to the face.
- Tilting the head to one side
- Rubbing eyes repeatedly all day
- One or both eyes turning in or out
- Constant redness or tearing.

If you notice any of these, make an appointment with an ophthalmologist. Many schools having screening programs, but if you’re not sure if your child’s school does ask. A recent Vision Council Survey found that up to 67% of kids who had vision problems on school screenings aren’t getting the follow-up care they need, possibly because parents weren’t aware of the results. Be sure to get a copy and discuss it with your pediatrician. A school screening is just a first step meant to pick up something that needs further evaluation with an in-depth exam.

Reprinted from Woman’s Day, February 2010, womansday.com

Safety Net

Parents are constantly encouraged to install monitoring software on their kids computers and results from a recent survey from the Rochester Institute of Technology reinforce this. 30% of children in grades 4 to 6 said they are completely unsupervised when they go online. Thanks to Norton money is no excuse, just go to onlinefamily.norton.com and set up an account with names and icons for your children, then download the application to their PC or Mac. You can track internet activities in real time on any Web-connected device. It’s all free, including the peace of mind.


UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 27, 2010
Special Needs Family Support Group
Support group for families that have deaf or hard of hearing children with special needs.
Frederick, MD

APRIL 28, 2010
Cochlear Implant Family Support Group
Understanding the IEP and Accommodations for Children with Cochlear Implants
Columbia, MD

MAY 7, 2010
Early Literacy Conference
Evidenced Based Best Practices for Young Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children in Natural Environments
Frederick, MD

MAY 11, 2010
Cochlear Implant Family Support Group
Student & Parent Social
Frederick, MD

For more information about any of the above workshops or conferences or to register please contact Cheri Dowling at 443-277-8899 (v/text) or partners@msd.edu
Learning About Feelings

Young children are egocentric by nature, they only understand things from their point of view. They spend their early childhood years slowly learning to understand that the thoughts and feelings of other people can be different. You can help your child learn to think about the thoughts and feelings of others.

Talk about your feelings.

During daily routines, use self talk so that your child knows what you're thinking and feeling. "I thought we were going to storytime today, but I see on the calendar that it's next week!" "What should we have for dinner? I'm in the mood for pasta today." "I'm very frustrated, I need to sit down and take a break for a few minutes." It only takes an extra minute, and it helps children understand how adults think solve problems, and manage their feelings.

Talk about your child's feelings.

Your child probably tells you clearly when he is tired, hungry, or frustrated - but does he tell you using words, or have you learned to interpret his behavior? Teach your child to use words to tell you how he is feeling. Start by identifying his feelings for him. "You look frustrated because you're trying to open that jar and you can't. Do you want help?" Later, encourage your child to tell you himself.

Talk about the feelings of others.

When your child hurts someone else it can be embarrassing, and your first reaction may be to get your child to apologize. Don't forget that this is a teachable moment to talk about the other child's feelings, too. For young children, this can be as simple as saying, "She's crying because you pushed her. No pushing, be gentle." For older children, you can involve them more in the conversation. "Why do you think he is crying? Do you think he liked it when you took that toy away from him? What can you do to make him feel better?"

Talk about a character's feelings.

Books are a great way to learn about feelings, since you can talk about the perspectives of different characters. Younger children can identify feelings that are clear in the illustrations - a character smiling or crying. Older children can infer from the story how a character feels even if it's not in the text or illustrations. They can even predict how someone might feel later in the story.

Reprinted from Adventures in ASL!, Series 2, Session 1. Maryland School for the Deaf Family Education and Early Childhood Department

Secondhand Smoke: How to Protect Your Kids

Did you know that when someone lights a cigarette, the smoker inhales only 15% of the smoke. The other 85% becomes secondhand smoke. A child breathing secondhand smoke is exposed to the same cancer-causing chemicals as the smoker. Protecting children from secondhand smoke might seem hard, especially if you or someone close to your child smokes. What can you do? These tips will help you keep your children safe.

Why is secondhand smoke dangerous for children?

- Studies show that a person breathing secondhand smoke is exposed to the same tar, nicotine, cyanide, arsenic, methane, carbon monoxide and other cancer-causing chemicals as the person smoking the cigarette.
- Because their small bodies and lungs aren't completely developed, secondhand smoke can be even more harmful to children.

The health risks are serious!

- Babies whose caregivers or parents smoke are twice as likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.
- Children exposed to secondhand smoke have more asthma attacks, allergies, colds and ear infections.
- Secondhand smoke causes 300,000 cases of pneumonia and bronchitis in children every year.

If you smoke, don’t smoke around your children!

- Set up a place to smoke outside, away from where your children play. Ask other adults who live with you to also smoke outside.
- Don't allow smoking in the car.
- Try to quit. Remember it’s better for your health too!
- If you aren’t ready to quit, explain to your children that you're trying. But until you do, you don’t want them to breathe in your smoke.

Ask visitors not to smoke around your children.

- It isn’t always easy to ask friends, relatives and other visitors not to smoke around your children, but it’s important. Your children’s health is at stake.
- If you’re gentle with your requests, after a while you’ll feel more comfortable and so will the smokers.

Explain just how dangerous it can be!

- People often don’t realize how dangerous secondhand smoke is for children.
- Try saying, “My child’s asthma and allergies are really affected by smoke.” or “The smoke is very bad for my child’s health.” or “We’re concerned that if we smoke in front of the kids, they will think that it’s cool and do the same thing.”

Protect your children away from home too!

- Make sure your child’s daycare is smoke-free.
- If you or your children visit friends or relatives who smoke, ask them not to smoke around your kids. Or invite them to your home instead.
- Avoid public places where people smoke.
- Choose family activities where your children won’t be exposed to smoke.
Summer Science Camp for Middle School Girls With Hearing Loss

Deaf and hard-of-hearing girls who are entering 7th, 8th, or 9th grade in September and who are interested in science, technology, engineering, and math can attend TechGirlz, a summer camp from August 1 - 7, 2010, at the Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, NY.

TechGirlz is designed to help girls learn about and consider jobs and careers in science and technology. Campers will learn through hands-on activities such as building their own computer to take home, discovering the secrets of roller coaster design and becoming a commander on a simulated mission to Mars. They will also receive their own lab coats, meet other girls with similar interests and enjoy social activities.

Camp learning activities are presented in English and in Sign Language, are certified by the New York State Department of Health and incorporate National Science Education standards. The cost is $650 (scholarships may be available) and includes tuition, housing in a residence hall on campus, meals and snacks for the week. Parents are invited to opening and closing activities. For more information or an application, visit www.rit.edu/NTID/TechGirlzNR or call 585-475-7695. Registration deadline is May 31, 2010.

“Talent Have Me!” ASL Talent Contest

The Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness (SERID) is hosting an American Sign Language only talent competition. The contest is open to anyone in the US and requires all performances to be solely in ASL. They are looking for amateur performers with original material. Performances can be poetry, drama, storytelling, interpreting music, comedy or anything that entertains. All interested performers can upload a video of their act to http://www.youtube.com/talenthaveme (be sure to submit videos through the groups link). Video’s will be accepted through August 31, 2010. The top three acts will be invited to Louisville, KY, the site of the SERID 2010 Conference. The top three acts will perform in front of a live audience.

More information can be found at http://www.serid.org

Early Literacy Conference:
Evidenced Based Best Practices for Young Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children in Natural Environments

May 7, 2010 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Maryland School for the Deaf, Frederick Campus
400 South Carroll Street, Frederick MD 21701

Keynote Presentations:
Early Literacy: A Blueprint for Academic Achievement
Richard L. Jeffries, Jr., Training Specialist, Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center

Growing Readers and Writers … Idea for Parents of Young Children
Marcia Virts, M.Ed., Associate Professor, McDaniel College

For more information or to register contact Carrie Shortt at 410-480-4540 or at carrie.shortt@msd.edu
Lunch and interpreters will be provided

Chores That Teach

Responsibility, respect, and independence all come with learning a chore. You can also sprinkle in some math, language, and science with these fun twists.

LAUNDRY. Play matching games with the socks to help strengthen your little one’s sorting skills. Chat about colors, (red, blue, green) and patterns (plaid, striped, polka-dotted) while you fold and stack.

CLEARING THE TABLE. Milk, juice, or water messes are an opportunity for experiments in the science of absorbency. Depending on the urgency of the mess, try using a paper towel, a napkin, and a rag to see which does the best job soak up the liquid.

DISHWASHING. Practice subtraction as your child moves the plates from the sink to the drying rack. Filling the bowls and mugs into the cupboard sharpens spatial reasoning and logic skills.

TOY PICKUP. Encourage your child to count his stuffed animals as he tosses them into the toy bin. Stacking, organizing, or arranging board games or books by shape and size, this also improves spatial reasoning and sorting skills.

WATERING PLANTS. Tending to the household greenery is a lesson in environmental science and biology. Kids learn how plants eat and drink and what it takes to keep one alive.