

Discover and Grow

A newsletter for Naugatuck's early childhood community

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Visit us on the Web www.naugatuckdiscovery.org

A Naugatuck Discovery "How to"

Bottle up feelings for art and stress-ercise



Monique Rossi remembers the day "stress bottles" made their debut at Salem Community Child Care Center.

Several years ago, the program's head teacher found the idea in a book called "Mudworks."

The stress bottle formulas were simple and fun to make in small, easy to find clear plastic water bottles. In addition to bottles, the project requires only water, vegetable oil, corn syrup, food coloring, glitter and super glue.

"The children made bottles with all different consistencies of liquids and their favorite colors," Rossi said.

Teachers used super glue to permanently fix the caps onto each bottle to make them child-safe.

"When the children were done, teachers showed them how the bottles work," she said.

Teachers demonstrated that when a

child feels angry, he can use the "angry" bottle to vigorously shake out frustration. Shaking fills the bottle with frothy bubbles.

The floating glitter and colored water in the "day dream" bottle can help a youngster escape into his imagination.

The Salem teachers put the bottles in the center's quiet area and were pleasantly surprised by how children used them.

Rossi remembers directing one child to the area to calm down after he became upset. The boy took the angry bottle on his own and shook it for a while. After a few minutes, the boy calmly returned to her announcing "I'm all done."

Young children seem to enjoy the bottles the most, particularly children ages 3 to 7, Rossi said.

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Ages and stages helps chart development

Every few months, Alyssa Hunter sets aside 20 minutes to actively think about and her son's development.

"For me, it is very important," said Hunter, who is expecting her second child.

Hunter is one of hundreds of parents statewide participating in the Ages and Stages Child Monitoring Program.

Ages and Stages is a free mail-in program to help parents recognize

if their children are meeting important developmental milestones.

Ages and Stages is part of Help Me Grow. It is available in Spanish and English.

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Discover all we can do together

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May/June 2007

Naugatuck Discovery announces a new collaboration with the Whittemore Library. Discovery will begin helping the library host All Welcome Storytime for Toddlers every Friday at 10:30 a.m. in the Children's Department beginning June 8.

May Meeting

Naugatuck Discovery meets 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 23 at Family Services of Greater Waterbury Naugatuck office 16 Hillside Avenue.

Join us!



Naugatuck Youth and Family Services

By Jane Lobdell, Executive Director

Naugatuck has the third oldest youth service bureau in Connecticut. It began in July 1970 as a rap group for teenagers. Years later, the agency added counseling and summer recreation programs.

I joined the agency in November 1993. The bureau's board asked me to assess the community's needs and to take Youth Services where it needed to go. At the time, we offered clinical treatment to about 1,600 people. As participation in our recreation programs dwindled, Youth Services surveyed other community agencies and redirected its focus to answer the community's growing and dramatic need for youth and family therapy.

As a result, Naugatuck Youth and Family Services, as it is known today, is the community's mental health agency. We have grown steadily and continue to treat over 6,700 Naugatuck's residents each year.

We offer individual, family, couple's and group therapies. We also offer therapy for alcohol and substance use, abuse prevention for elementary and middle school children, and an anti-bullying program for the very young. We have parenting workshops, including traditional and informal programs for parents who are reunifying with their families after prison release.

One of our most popular programs is "From Boys to Men," a program co-facilitated by two male therapists. The program is for young boys ages 9 to 11 who do not have appropriate male role models at home. Our therapists leave lasting impressions on these young boys and greatly help many single mothers seeking positive role models for their sons.

Naugatuck Youth and Family Services is at 13 Scott St. (203) 720-5673

Stress bottles project *continued from p. 1*

Rossi recommends making new bottles every month or two to keep them fresh. She also recommends talking to children about how to use them.

"It is a solo thing," she said. "It's just between you and the bottle."

"Mudworks: Creative Clay, Dough and Modeling Experiences," is written by Mary Anne F. Kohl., 1989

Materials:

- Clear plastic water bottles & caps, empty, labels removed
- White corn syrup
- Glitter
- Dish soap
- Food coloring
- Vegetable oil
- Super glue



Quiet Bottle: Add 1/2 cup corn syrup & several drops food color. Super glue the cap to seal bottle. Move bottle side to side and peace out!

Relax Bottle: Fill bottle 2/3 with water; add drops of food color & finish filling with vegetable oil. Super glue the cap to seal the bottle. Shake, roll & relax.

Angry Bottle: Add 1 cup water, food coloring & squirt of dish soap. Super glue the cap on. Shake out your frustration!

Dream Bottle: Add several tablespoons glitter, 2 drops food color & top off with water. Glue on the cap and turn the bottle side to side. Imagine!

Ages & Stages *continued*

Hunter enrolled in Ages and Stages when her son was 8 months old.

Every few months, she receives a questionnaire about development expectations for her son's age. He is now 2 1/2 years old.

Sometimes the questions are easy and require no extra work, she said. Sometimes, they require her to do a directed activity with her son, such as stacking blocks and counting how many he can do alone.

A few weeks after mailing her responses, Hunter gets a letter telling her whether her son appears to meet important benchmarks. She also receives information about things to do to help practice new and anticipated developmental skills.

"Knowing the different skills a child should be achieving at different ages is important to me," said Hunter.

Ages and Stages serves children ages 4 months to 60 months (or 5 years). If important benchmarks are not being met, the program will contact parents for additional evaluation.

Hunter also appreciates the opportunity to share her son's ASQ results with her pediatrician. Parents may opt not to share information.

Hunter will continue taking advantage of the Ages and Stages program. She also recommends it to families she works with at Family Services of Greater Waterbury's Naugatuck office.

For more information on Child Development support services, call the Help Me Grow Child Development Infoline at (800) 505-7000.