

DCF Credentialing Chronicle

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Survival Guide for the first 90 days of SY 2013-2014.

Prepared for kids, parents and caregivers.

By: Maria Petit-Homme

August 29: Day 1. 7:38 am and I am parked in front of the school. My daughter is staring at a huge building and says, "I'm scared Mommy". (Sigh! Who wouldn't be? New school and in 7th grade!) "Well, there's always a beginning – always a first day – I remember my first day at work. I knew where I should go first but I didn't know what to expect. Just stay calm and focus." I said to my daughter. "Can you walk me to the front door?" she asked. And so we walked hand in hand towards the door...One teacher greeted her and asked her what her homeroom number was and she replied '111'. The teacher pointed to her where the entrance door is for 7th graders. And that was it – she let go of my hand and said "Bye Mommy!"

If you are a parent, Congratulations! You have survived Day1! Here are some tips for you to survive the next 89 days!

1. **Breakfast is considered the most important meal of the day.** Why? It revs up metabolism, keeps them in good mood and will give them enough energy to get through at least until lunch time!
2. **Open House and PTA meetings.** Connect with their teachers, as you well know your child will seldom talk and keep you updated! Listen to what the teachers say about your child and keep an open mind – take note of strengths and weaknesses. Maintain an open line of communication whether in person or via email. And do not be afraid of PTA meetings – keep yourself abreast of what's happening - look at it as a prelude to paper work which you will most likely not get from your child.
3. **What's for lunch?** Know how the school's cafeteria works. Do they have a POS system? Cash only? Do you know what's on the lunch menu? If you do not agree with what's going to be served, then plan a lunch menu for the week for your child. This will help you get organized and be stress free.
4. **Extracurricular/afterschool activities.** Go for quality, not for quantity. Your child will benefit more from activities that are fun, teaches new skills, reinforces social development and offers homework assistance. Ask the school if they offer late busses or find out more about carpooling.
5. **Be there for your child no matter how busy you are.** Give them all your time – it's not going to be that much because you know very well that they will be asking for their own time!

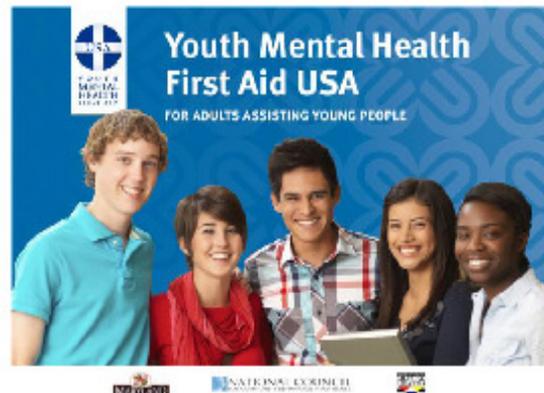
Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

Youth Mental Health First Aid is a NEW 8 hour certification course designed for adults who regularly interact with adolescents, that focuses on helping youth ages 12-18 who may be who may be experiencing mental health distress or are in a crisis.

Who should take Mental Health First Aid training?

- School personnel, nurses and educators; front end staff;
- First-responders, fire, police;
- Youth Serving Agency Staff
- Healthcare Professional
- Parents and Families
- Juvenile Justice and other Professionals
- Faith Community

FIRST PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO WORK WITH YOUTH IN THE MERIDEN AND WALLINGFORD COMMUNITIES.



Youth Mental Health First Aiders learn the following:

- The prevalence of mental illnesses in the U.S among adolescents.
- The potential warning signs of the most common mental health disorders
- A 5 step action plan to assist an individual in crisis
- Resources available to help someone with a mental health problem

Dates: October 17th and October 18th 2013

Time: 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

(Attendance **both** days required to receive certification)

Location: American Heart Association, 5 Brookside Drive, Wallingford CT 06492

A light lunch will be provided to participants

Training provided by instructors: Cate Bourke-Rushford and Marlene McGann-SCSAC

**To register contact: Paula Snedeker at Rushford, 883 Paddock Ave
Meriden, CT 06450 phone 203-630-5229 or paula.snedeker@hhchealth.org**

This training is offered free with funding and sponsorship from:





You're invited to a public forum and open discussion on

Youth Mental Health

- Who:** Parents and grandparents, teachers and other school employees, coaches, caregivers, clergy, public safety officers, social workers, parole officers - anyone who works with and cares about children, adolescents and young adults.
- What:** A dialog with mental health experts on topics affecting today's youth, including anxiety and depression, eating disorders, self-injury and alcohol and drug abuse.
- Where:** Riverfront Community Center
300 Welles Street, Glastonbury
- When:** Wednesday, October 23, 2013
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM
- Why:** To reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues and to improve the public's understanding of the importance of early intervention and treatment.

RSVP by October 21 to Veronica Parsloe at 203.630.5392
or veronica.parsloe@hhchealth.org



Tough Topics?



Here are 10 helpful tips in talking with children about any difficult topic:

1. Start early.
2. Initiate conversations with your child.
3. ...Even about sex and sexuality.
4. Create an open environment.
5. Communicate your own values.
6. Listen to your child.
7. Try to be honest.
8. Be patient.
9. Use everyday opportunities to talk.
10. Talk about it again. And, again.

From *Talking with Kids About Tough Issues*, www.childrennow.org



Offers practical, concrete tips and techniques for talking easily and openly with young children ages 8 to 12 about some very tough issues, like sex, violence, drugs and alcohol.

The Importance of Schedule and Routine

By Moises Roman
UCLA Early Care & Education Department

A schedule is the planning of a day by time, activity, etc. Children understand it as a routine; it is the way in which they learn what will or will not happen next. Schedules are made by adults (child care providers), while routines are the physical execution of the schedule that children, over a period of time, get used to.

Schedules and routines are important for children because they need to know what's coming next. If the schedule is consistent, children learn the pattern. Once a pattern is set children can infer, for instance, that lunch comes after music time. This way, there aren't too many unknowns.

Schedules help build trust between child care providers and children. Young children begin to understand that adults will take care of their needs on a regular basis.

When children have too many unknowns, anxiety builds up and they start showing emotional reactions to the inconsistency. For instance, they may cry or become irritable and take it out on other people. If they don't have regular routines it starts showing in different ways.

Let's say that a child is used to having lunch at 11:30 am every day. And for some reason, lunch is late and the child doesn't get to eat until 1:00 pm. You may see the child crying and being irritable. You can try to talk to them, but they will no longer enjoy the things that they normally do. Breaking a schedule throws a child completely off. It's especially important for child care providers to maintain consistent schedules when caring for young children.

Parents should continue the consistency of the weekday schedules and routines when kids are at home. Parents will find that if the schedules are unpredictable on the weekends and evenings, children will exhibit inappropriate behavior.

Parents these days are extremely busy. But I recommend that they are consistent with two things – meals and naps. If these two areas are kept in schedule, their level of anxiety will drop; children will not be tired or hungry, two things that can be a great challenge for parents and children.

Other strategies to keep in mind are to have snacks with you at all times so that if you know meal time is coming and you can't eat exactly at 11:30, you can give your child a snack to diffuse the situation.

The best thing that a child care provider can do to bring kids back to a routine is to resume their own consistent schedules. This is especially important for kids after a three-day weekend or an extended family vacation because the kids are completely off their normal routine.



- Consistency gives kids security.
- Schedules helps build trust between kids & child care providers.
- Inconsistency creates emotional anxiety.
- Allow for flexibility within the day
- Parents should be consistent when children are at home.



For more resources please visit:

www.aplaceofourown.org

October is National Bullying Prevention Month

“The culture of bullying won’t end until people across the country take action and show kids that they care,” says Julie Hertzog, director of PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center. “National Bullying Prevention Month is a great opportunity to do that. This is a very real and painful issue that kids are facing but they don’t have to face it alone. Bullying can be prevented if we all work together to change the culture.”

If you think your child is being bullied

Many children are too embarrassed or are afraid to tell an adult about bullying. They may think that involving an adult will only make the problem worse. Help prepare children by teaching them socialization skills, modeling friendly behavior, and telling them that you will always be there for them. Mention that if something bothers them, they can also talk with a school counselor.

Be familiar with signs of bullying, such as frequent headaches, stomachaches, or not wanting to go to school. Also, ask your child questions, such as whom he or she eats with at lunch or plays with at recess. If you sense something is wrong, trust your instincts.

There are many ways you can help your child deal with bullying.

Talk about the situation. Although often reluctant at first, many children who are bullied will open up if they are in the right environment. A good place to start these discussions is in the car or other place where you have little eye-to-eye contact. Listen calmly and thoughtfully. Don’t promise that you won’t tell anyone. Rather, admit that you may need to become involved but you will do your very best not to make problems worse.

Practice role-playing at home. Encourage your child to react calmly and confidently to taunting. Help your child understand that responding with physical aggression or insults usually will make the problem worse. For example, have your child practice saying “Leave me alone” and then walking away.

Teach your child behaviors that show confidence rather than shyness and vulnerability. Children can learn to look people in the eye and speak up when they talk. Assure your child that confident behavior can be learned. Help build your child’s self-esteem by suggesting that he or she meet others through different activities. Having friends and interests can boost a child’s confidence and make him or her less likely to be bullied.

Encourage your child to think about the qualities that make a good friend.

Suggest that your child join activities that are supervised by an adult. Bullying is less likely to occur near adults.

Helpful sites for adults, teens and kids:

<http://www.pacerkidsagainstabullying.org/#/home>

<http://www.pacerteensagainstabullying.org/#/home>

<http://www.cdc.gov/bam>

<http://www.webmd.com/parenting>



Learn about Connecticut's new anti-bullying law

On July 13, 2011, Governor Dannel Malloy signed into law Public Act 11-232, An Act Concerning the Strengthening of School Bullying laws. This legislation takes comprehensive steps to ensure every child’s right to learn in Connecticut public schools without fear of teasing, humiliation, or assault.

To view the law prepared by the Commission, please visit:

<http://www.cga.ct.gov/coc/bullying.htm>



Some of the many students who turned out for the November 2010 anti-bullying forum organized by the Commission, the Governor’s Prevention Partnership, and the Connecticut Department of Education.

Bully Beware!

Bullies aren’t all big and muscle-y. Bullies come in all shapes and sizes — and it’s not like you can tell who they are by what they look like. You can only tell a bully by their actions — they make themselves feel powerful by threatening, embarrassing, or hurting others. If you have ever been around a bully or been picked on by a bully, you know how hurtful they can be. But, there are things you can do to stay out of a bully’s way. Make friends, stand up for yourself and don’t be afraid to tell an adult if you’re being bullied. Find out more ways to stay out of a bully’s way... <http://www.cdc.gov/bam/life/bully.html>



GUIDELINES YOU SHOULD HAVE IN MIND WHEN TALKING TO AN ADULT ABOUT THE PROBLEM:

- WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU & WHAT YOU DID.
- WHO BULLIED YOU AND WHO SAW IT.
- WHERE AND HOW OFTEN IT HAPPENED.
- WRITE EVERYTHING DOWN IN A JOURNAL.



School Bus Safety Tips

- Be aware of moving traffic.
- Leave plenty of time to get to the bus stop. Don't rush.
- Pay attention to your surroundings; listening to your music player or playing handheld video games may lead to distractions and potential injury.
- Don't wear a hood as it makes it more difficult to hear and see traffic.
- Stay at a safe distance from the street and don't play around while waiting for the bus.
- Stay 10 giant steps away from the outside of the bus while the bus is pulling up so the driver can see you.
- Wait for the bus to stop completely before you move towards it to get on or before you stand up to get off.
- Hold the handrail going up and down the stairwell so you don't trip.
- Find a seat and sit down as soon as you're on the bus.
- Be courteous and respectful to your driver. Listen to directions.
- Don't put your head, arms, papers or anything out the window.
- Wait to cross the street until the driver lets you know it's OK.
- Stay away from the bus wheels at all times – the driver cannot see you.
- If your parent meets you at the bus stop, make sure he or she waits on the same side of the street where you will be dropped off so you won't have to cross the street.

A reminder from

It's Your Lunch. You've Gotta...

Get Involved Help out with your lunch. Work out a menu for the week so you can choose different foods that you like and are still good for you. When your parents go to the grocery store, ask them to get the stuff you need. To keep things simple, try snack-size packs. Or, get big packages of your favorite foods, repack enough for each day in baggies, and then grab them when it's time to throw lunch together. If mornings get hectic, try packing your lunch the night before. (Just make sure you keep the cold stuff in the fridge until it's time to go.)

Get Creative Plain sandwich? One word: BORING. To jazz up your lunch, use different kinds of breads, like whole-grain pita pockets, tortilla wraps, raisin bread, or English muffins. Make kabobs with cut-up fruits and vegetables and bring along yogurt or salad dressing as a dip. Toss in a salad with some chicken on top. Pack dry cereal or granola to mix into yogurt, or snack on pretzels or trail mix.

Use ChooseMyPlate



MyPlate illustrates the five food groups that are the building blocks for a healthy diet using a familiar image—a place setting for a meal. Before you eat, think about what goes on your plate or in your cup or bowl.

- Here's a lunch formula for the power and energy you need to make it through the day:
- ✓ Half a plate should be fruits and vegetables (like carrot sticks, celery, or apples)
 - ✓ A container of milk or yogurt, or some cheese (switch to fat-free or low fat (1%) milk)
 - ✓ Make half of your grains whole grains. Some whole-grain bread for a sandwich, cereal mix, or pasta (like spaghetti)
 - ✓ Some meat (like ham or chicken), tuna fish, hard-boiled eggs, beans (like a bean burrito), or nuts/trail mix
 - ✓ A little bit of dessert (like pudding or graham crackers) — YUM!

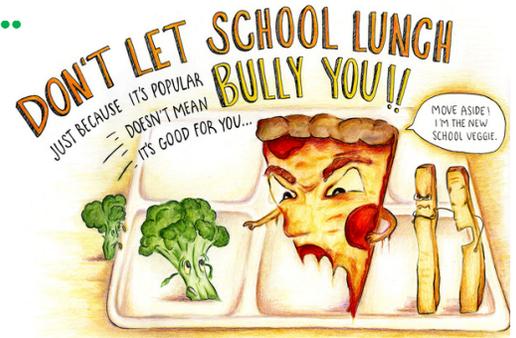
It's not as tough as it sounds. A turkey and cheese wrap with lettuce and tomato, plus an apple or banana, and some milk, would cover all this. Lunch doesn't have to be hard or boring. Take charge! Pack yourself stuff that makes you love lunchtime, and gives you energy to make it through school, practice, homework—all the way until dinner!

Fuel up for Fun

Whether you hit the court, the field, the track, the rink, or your back yard to get some physical activity, you'll need some fuel to keep you going!

Here are some great snacks to munch on to keep your body movin' and your stomach silent:

- Fresh veggies like carrots and celery sticks
- Snack-sized boxes of raisins
- Pretzels
- Low-fat yogurt
- Crackers — try graham crackers, animal crackers, or saltines
- Bagels
- Fig bars
- Fruit juice boxes (make sure you choose 100% pure fruit juice, or for an added boost, try orange juice with added calcium)
- Small packages of trail mix
- Fresh fruits such as bananas, oranges, grapes (try freezing your grapes for a new taste sensation!), and berries



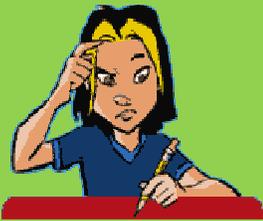
Tips

Choose low-fat or non-fat foods whenever you can — like low-fat yogurt, cheese, or milk!

Adapted from:
<http://www.cdc.gov/bam>

BAM!
 Body and Mind

Cool Rules



AVOID

Don't let your anger or other angry people control you.

NEVER

Use your body or voice to hurt others.

GET

Away from the situation so your feelings don't overwhelm you.

EVALUATE

Your choices. Think before you react.

RESPONSIBILITY

Remember, you are responsible for your own choices. No one can make you angry, you allow yourself to become angry. And you can choose not to get angry too.

Learn about the anger chain and how to break it by reading BAM's "Cool Rules."

You have a bright, new school year ahead of you, ready once again to help prepare you for your future. Now is the perfect time for you to start off on the right foot, and get organized. Here are a few tips to help you manage your time, avoid clutter, set goals, and stay on an organized path to success.



GOALS. Set realistic goals at the beginning of the school year. Write these goals down on index cards and keep them in a highly visible place where you can see them every day. Writing down your goals makes them more concrete, and motivates you to keep working towards them.



PREPARE YOUR WARDROBE. Before you go to bed each night, choose, iron and lay out your clothes for the next day. This way, you'll be all set to dress and go in the morning.



GET YOUR BEAUTY SLEEP. Get a good night's rest. This will ensure you are alert and ready to learn the following day.

DON'T RUSH. Wake up early enough for school to arrive well ahead of time. If you need 30 minutes to get up, shower and dress, pad that time by waking up at least 45 minutes prior to your departure. To ensure you don't turn off your alarm clock and go back to sleep, place your clock at the far end of your room. This way, you actually have to get out of bed to turn it off, and you're most likely to stay up.

MAKE TO DO LISTS. Always spend a minimum of 15 minutes per day, preparing your To Do list for tomorrow. In doing so, you will know exactly what tasks you have to accomplish the next day.



WRITE IT DOWN. When you learn of an upcoming test, event, or anything you must prepare for or attend, immediately jot it in your planner. Don't wait for later, or you may forget about it.

EFFECTIVE STUDY AREA. Designate a quiet, well-lit area for studying. Don't study in front of the television, or in an area of your home where you're bound to be distracted. Hang a Do Not Disturb sign on your door. If you can't find a quiet spot at home, go to the library. In addition, you should study while sitting at a table or desk. Avoid studying in a very comfortable chair or a bed, which may cause you to feel drowsy.



BREAK UP YOUR STUDY TIME. Determine how many study hours you need, and schedule study time in your planner. For example, if you need six hours of time to study for a test, you may break that time up into six sessions, of one hour each. Choose the six days, and make a Study Time notation in your calendar.

SCHEDULE CONSISTENT STUDY TIMES. Set aside time every day for study, and make it consistent. For example, set your study time for each afternoon from 4:00pm to 6:00pm. Whatever you do, avoid last minute studying and cramming.

USE A STUDENT PLANNER. Use a good student planner or organizer. The ones that have pocket folders, dividers and planning calendars are ideal.

USE ONE CALENDAR. Use one calendar to plan all of your school and personal activities, rather than two or more. When you use more than one, you run the risk of scheduling conflicts and missed appointments.

COLOR-CODE. You may consider color-coding similar activities on your calendar. For example, highlight all upcoming tests in yellow, study time in green and recreational activities in pink.



Do your homework for your most difficult subjects first.

Then, everything else will be a breeze, and therefore, more enjoyable.

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**As an approved DCF
Provider you are
required to notify
ABH immediately if
there is a change in
your Provider Status.**



213 Court St.,
Middletown CT, 06457
Phone 860.638.5309
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www.abhct.com

Credentialed Provider Meeting

If you are a currently approved DCF Provider, register online to attend the next credentialed provider meeting!



REGISTER ONLINE!

<http://www.ct.gov/dcf/iCal/calendar.asp>

December 20

Casey Life Skills Training – Now ONLINE!

Casey Life Skills (CLS) is a free tool that assesses the behaviors and competencies youth need to achieve their long term goals. It aims to set youth on their way toward developing healthy, productive lives.

CLS is designed to be used in a collaborative conversation between an educator, mentor, case worker, or other service provider and any youth between the ages of 14 and 21. It is appropriate for all youth regardless of whether they are in foster care, live with their biological parents, or reside in a group home.



Learn more about Casey Life Skills

http://lifeskills.casey.org/clsa_learn_provider

DCF Mandated Reporter Training: REQUIRED

DCF will provide Mandated Reporter Training for any provider in the state.

Mandated reporters are required to report or cause a report to be made when, in the ordinary course of their employment or profession, they have reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, neglected or is placed in imminent risk of serious harm. (Connecticut General Statutes §17a-101a)



Mandated Reporter Training Online - Once completed, the certificate of completion is to be stored in the staff's personnel file.

DCF is happy to announce that Mandated Reporter Training is now available **ONLINE** for school employees and community providers. Please use the link in the section below that corresponds to your agency, organization, or facility to register for and view the video.

Please click on the link below to register and access the training videos:

http://www.dir.ct.gov/dcf/TA/MRT_video_form.aspx

Learn **What Mandated Reporters Need to Know**: <http://www.ct.gov/dcf/cwp/view.asp?a=2556&Q=314384>

For more information please visit: <http://www.ct.gov/dcf/cwp/view.asp?a=3483&Q=413540>

DCF Provider Academy

The Department of Children and Families is pleased to offer classes and trainings as a means of supporting the work of its provider partners in our collaborative efforts to protect children, improve child and family well-being, and support and preserve families.

Courses are offered **free-of-charge** to families and contracted providers and range from half-day, to full-day to multiple day offerings. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.ct.gov/dcf/iCal/calendar.asp>