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Tips and Tools for Parents

1. **Top Ten Pre-K Questions to Help Parents Choose Quality Preschool** “Finding a preschool that fits parents needs, budgets, and schedules can be challenging, and parents need to know what to look for to ensure their child is receiving top-quality instruction and care. The National Institute for Early Education Research has compiled these questions to help parents: <http://www.childdevelopmentmedia.com/blog/educational-methods/what-parents-should-know-about-quality-preschool.html>
2. **The Right Backpack for your Child** “Children can avoid muscle strains and posture problems if they buy the right backpacks and carry them correctly,” according to this Great Schools article about school backpacks: <http://www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/showarticle/256?cpn=20080729my1>

3. **Sleep: The Secret Weapon for School Success** “Lack of sleep is a national epidemic for today’s children, and the consequences are serious,” including behavior problems, trouble in school, and negative effects on health. Read more in this article from Great Schools: <http://www.greatschools.net/cgi-bin/showarticle/1145?cpn=20080730bts2>
4. **“Kindergarten: Small Child, Big Decision”** This article from the Colorado Springs Gazette sheds some light on a confusing topic: when to start children in kindergarten. Read it at: http://www.gazette.com/articles/kindergarten_38456_article.html/school_kids.html

Parent Involvement—Family and Community Partnerships

5. The **July Issue of Harvard’s Family Involvement Network of Educators** which focuses on the role of technology in family involvement can be found at: <http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/fine-family-involvement-network-of-educators/fine-newsletter-archive/july-fine-newsletter-the-role-of-technology-in-family-involvement>. One article examines the research on using e-mail and websites to increase communication between families and schools <http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/publications-resources/tapping-into-technology-the-role-of-the-internet-in-family-school-communication>
6. **The Benefits of Parent Involvement in Education** New research from the University of New Hampshire shows once again that student performance increases with parent involvement. But the study also notes that the benefit to schools of increased parent involvement is about \$1000 per student, and that as schools increase their resources, parents may decrease their involvement. Read more from “Science Daily” at: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/05/080527123852.htm>
7. A **Web Conference for Schools’ Action Teams for Partnerships** held in January 2008 is archived on the website of the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS). Leaders of the conference review the NNPS model and assist schools in writing better partnership action plans. Another conference will be held in January 2009. Find the archived conference at: http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/Professional_Development/NNPS_RFT.htm (Scroll down to “Web Conferences,” then “Web Conference Archive--You may Attend,” and follow instructions.)
8. **Connecting Families, Schools, and Community Resources** “Schools can be more than vibrant places for learning, they can also be year-round hubs that connect families and communities to resources and services. This brief [from the National Human Services Assembly] looks at schools that doing just that and outlines what it would take to make school-linked services available in a greater number of communities.” <http://www.nassembly.org/fspc/practice/documents/Brief2.pdf>

Tips and Tools for Professionals

9. **The Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development** This free encyclopedia includes “33 topics related to the psychosocial development of the child, from conception to the age of five, and presents the most up-to-date scientific knowledge. <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/en-ca/home.html>
10. **Eyes on Bullying Toolkit** offers “a variety of tools that can help you look at and understand bullying in a new way, reexamine your own knowledge and beliefs about bullying, and shape

the beliefs and behaviors of the children in your care.” Find it at:

<http://www.eyesonbullying.org/>

11. **Developmental Screening and Assessment Instruments** is a comprehensive list of screening and assessment tools compiled by the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center. It includes assessments for young children ages birth to five with an emphasis on social-emotional development. Find it at:
<http://www.nectac.org/~pdfs/pubs/screening.pdf>
12. The **Focus on Fathers Curriculum** includes 12 facilitated group meeting plans on the following topics: “child development, choosing child care, connecting with your child, discipline, healthy relationships for me and my child, helping your child deal with feelings, parenting apart, places to go, reading with your child, self-esteem, siblings and friends, and ways to play...The information can be used outside of the group meeting format, such as in newsletters, personal visits and other activities.” The curriculum is available free at:
<http://www.parentsasteachers.org/site/pp.asp?c=ekIRLcMZJxE&b=4134049>

Training

13. **Together We Empower: A Collaborative Approach to Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and Survivor Services** is being held September 9-11 in Helena by the Montana Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. This conference will address trauma as the integrating factor of mental health, substance abuse and domestic and sexual violence services. Trauma can happen when a person experiences or witnesses domestic violence, sexual assault or other devastating experiences. Attendees will learn about collaborative best practices for trauma-informed care. Register at: <http://www.mcadsv.com/>
14. **The Center for Inclusive Child Care** works to ensure that all children are included in early care settings. They offer free information modules and self-study courses on a variety of topics, such as hyperactivity, bullying, biting, etc. Access these training opportunities at: <http://inclusivechildcare.org/>
15. **Taking Action for Children: Early Interventions to Prevent Abuse and Prepare for School Success** This audio-forum from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago addressed these questions: “...What about school-success initiatives that...support newborns, toddlers, and their parents? What can be achieved when educators, abuse-prevention experts, parents, government officials, businesses, philanthropies, and community groups collaborate?” Access the recording at: <http://www.about.chapinhall.org/conferences/urban/conference.html>

Funding Possibilities

16. **Montana Chapter March of Dimes** will award a total of \$10,000 in 2009 for projects that address unmet maternal and child health needs. Three projects will probably be funded with grants ranging from \$1000 to \$3000 each. The deadline for applications is October 31. Find the guidelines and application at:
http://www.marchofdimes.com/files/2009_NEW_grant_App.doc
17. The **Charles Lafitte Foundation** awards grants to 501c3 organizations throughout the United States. They have four program areas: education, children’s advocacy, medical issues and research, and the arts. Find out more at: <http://www.charleslafitte.org/thefoundation.html>
18. **Lowe’s Charitable and Educational Foundation** Lowe’s provides grants to 501c3 organizations in communities in which their stores are located. They support public education and community improvement projects. More information is provided at:

<http://www.lowes.com/lkn?action=frameSet&url=apps.bridgetree.com/funding/default.asp>

19. **GuideStar Exchange** Nonprofits that have an IRS letter of determination and conduct an annual audit may be listed for free on the GuideStar Exchange, an online information database benefiting charities and grantmakers. Find out more at: <http://www.guidestar.org/npo/index.jsp?source=dnresources>
20. **Five Minute Facelift for your Website** Here are five tips from the Network for Good to get more online donors: <http://hosted.vresp.com:80/208639/61bd4940d2/120001264/a34001242d/>
21. **New Online Database of Large Corporate Contributions** This database, provided by NonProfit Times and NOZASEARCH, can be searched by name of business, location or cause. Access it at: <http://www.nptgrantsearch.com/>