

# Parenting NEWS & VIEWS

EARLY LEARNING AND  
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## A Sense of Community

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How do we live in our world each day? Do we follow rules for driving and paying bills? Do we understand how money works, where our food comes from, and where to go to get food? How do we know when to celebrate family birthdays or how to be on time? Although we rarely consider these questions, we automatically live according to the rules that were ingrained in us since birth. These are the skills we use and the rules we follow, because we know they keep us safe, bind us together as a community, and help us solve problems.

When children learn these skills and rules, they are learning about history and the social sciences. Children build their knowledge of history and social science by learning about themselves, their

family history, and their community. The *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 3* identifies five learning areas related to history and social sciences: **Self and Society**, **Marketplace**, **Becoming a Preschool Community Member**, **Sense of Time**, and **Sense of Place**.

A **sense of self and society** comes from learning about our own families and exploring various cultures, relationships, social roles, and occupations. Family time, sharing stories, cooking favorite foods, listening to music, practicing traditions, and visiting extended family are all activities that help children learn where they came from and develop a sense of who they are. A child's family is their first community. As they grow and begin to explore the world, *continued on back*



### EXPLORE MUSIC



Children learn about language, math, science, and creativity when they experiment with music. They also build social skills and physical development by dancing and playing music with others. Listening and singing along to music builds language. The beats and rhythms teach children basic math skills like counting and patterning. Through music, children explore the science of sound and use creativity to make new sounds or songs.

Try listening to different music styles or spend time dancing together after dinner. Perhaps you have a friend or family member who can play or teach about an instrument. Giving your child opportunities to explore music supports his learning and allows him to relax and enjoy the time spent with you.



# Play without Plugs



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As the use of technology increases, children spend more time in front of screens. Screen time refers to time spent using a smart phone, tablet, computer, television, or video game. With screens using so much of our time, it is more important than ever to encourage children to find “un-plugged” ways to play. Make screen play the last resort rather than the first choice. Use the following tips to encourage your child to enjoy screen-free play.

**Rediscover Toys:** Gather a couple of empty boxes or plastic totes. Ask your child to help you find all the fun stuff in your house that does not need a plug or batteries (books, crayons, action figures, blocks, etc.) and fill the containers. Each time your child asks to play with a screen, encourage her to select toys from these containers instead.

**Schedule Play:** Plan a family game night to play a board game, card game, charades, or dance to music. Choose a

time to play outside with a ball, a jump rope, or hopscotch. Teach your child games you remember playing from your childhood such as Freeze Tag; Simon Says; Red Rover; Musical Chairs; or Duck, Duck, Goose.

**Play on the Go:** Be prepared to take play with you when you travel or have to wait in lines. Keep a couple of your child’s favorite books or a tablet of blank paper and colored pencils in the car. While driving or standing in lines, play I Spy (“I spy with my little eye, something that is red.” Continue giving clues until your child guesses correctly). Search together for specific car colors, types of cars, license plates, or street signs. If you are going to a restaurant or event, make sure to bring a story book, crayons and coloring book, tiny puzzle, or a small toy such as an action figure or doll.

For more ideas, look for the book: *Unplugged Play* by Bobbi Conner at your local library or bookstore. For more information about children and screen time, look for the book: *Reset Your Child’s Brain* by Dr. Victoria Dunckley.



## S Taco Casserole

### RECIPES

#### Ingredients

- 2 pounds of lean ground turkey
- 1 (15 ounce) can of corn, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15 ounce) can of black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1.5 cups of restaurant-style salsa
- 1/2 large onion (3" in diameter)
- 1 tablespoon of taco seasoning
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup of shredded cheese
- Sour cream (optional)
- Sliced avocado (optional)
- Tortilla chips

#### Directions

Preheat the oven to 375°F. In a large bowl, mix the ground meat, diced onion, and salsa. Add the taco seasoning, salt, and pepper. Spread the mixture into a large casserole dish. Spread the black beans and corn on top. Bake at 375°F for 45 minutes. Use a large spoon to remove any grease that has come to the top. Sprinkle on cheese and place it back in the oven for about 30 more minutes. Take it out of the oven and remove any grease that has come to the top. Serve with tortilla chips and top with sour cream and avocado if desired.

Source: Adapted from the website  
<http://blog.myfitnesspal.com/one-pot-taco-casserole/> in August 2016.





## Helping Your School Age Child

Children go through many changes once they enter school. There are a variety of new academic expectations, such as being independent, completing homework, doing more computer work, learning through group instruction, sitting for longer periods of time, and spending less time playing outside and socializing.

A child who develops strong social and emotional skills will be more comfortable asking for help, work more easily with others, adjust to new situations with less stress, bounce back from disappointments, resolve conflicts in positive ways, and achieve success with more confidence. You can assist your child as he adapts to these new expectations and environments by continuing to support his social and emotional development.

One way to offer support to your child is to help him identify the emotions he is feeling and make suggestions of positive ways in which he can deal with those emotions. An example of this would be, "I saw you slam your book down on the table. Did you do that because you feel mad?" Wait for a response, and then continue guiding him. "I feel mad sometimes too. Let's take a break and come back to this later." Situations like this one present an opportunity to teach your child the names of emotions, learn what things cause him to feel strong emotions, and help him find a positive approach to deal with how he is feeling.

Your child also needs to build trusting relationships with both adults and other children. To develop a supportive relationship with your child, actively listen to him without making judgments about his thoughts or behavior. Your child needs to know that no matter what he tells you, you will still love him. Plan time with family members who can tell him stories about his family, help him with homework, or share a hobby. This will help your child understand his heritage and recognize his own value.

Encourage him to develop friendships and play games that build his ability to cooperate, negotiate, and develop character. When friends come to visit, suggest they play board games or play together outside. Strong relationships are important because your child will have a team of adults and friends that can offer him help if he comes across challenges in the future.

By supporting your child's social and emotional development, you equip him with the tools needed to build his confidence, communication skills, problem solving skills, and overall well-being, thus preparing him to be more resilient to life changes.





they will hear other languages, try different foods, watch the people in their neighborhood, and see people who look different from themselves. These experiences will expand and enrich their world. We can help children learn that everyone is unique by speaking openly and honestly with them when they ask us questions.

Children learn about the **marketplace** by watching adults at stores and restaurants. During play, children may pretend to be in a store and exchange toys for play money. This gives them experience in understanding that materials can be traded, bought, or loaned. When children pretend to play house or be fire fighters, they are learning about the different jobs they see in their community. Practicing these social roles helps children understand the responsibilities of work and the value of community workers. It can even inspire them to pursue a particular job in the future.

Children become **community members** by participating in decision-making, following rules, being respectful, and resolving conflicts. We can help children develop these skills by encouraging them to help create rules or vote

on decisions, such as what will be cooked for dinner or what game to play. Whenever possible, give children the opportunity to work through conflicts on their own. Step in only when necessary to offer guidance in how they can express their feelings, or to ask them questions that can guide their negotiations. This allows children to work through problems and get along with others.

A **sense of time** includes understanding that events have happened in the past, planning for future events, knowing your personal history, and noticing changes around the world. Children can create a family book, listen to family members' childhood stories, and help plan for trips to develop these skills.

Introduce geography and ecology activities to develop a **sense of place**. Drawing maps, taking care of plants and animals, or picking up trash inspires stewardship. Developing children's interest in history and social sciences prepares them to be active and thoughtful members of society.

*Source: California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume III by the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2012).*

## ABOUT CHS

For 125 years, Children's Home Society of California (CHS) has adapted to the changing needs of children and families. Since 1891, CHS has worked diligently to protect our community's children and strengthen their families through diverse programs and services.

At CHS, we view a child not in isolation, but in the context of each family's health, stability, and resources. We believe that families are fundamentally strong and resilient. The mission of CHS is to reach out to children and families at risk with a range of services to ensure every child the opportunity to develop within a safe, healthy, and secure environment.

Therefore, CHS provides a variety of services to children and families in California and nationwide, working to improve their quality of life by offering vital information, education and resource services, and child care assistance.

CHS also serves as an expert resource for childcare providers, other social service agencies, and government agencies at the local, state, and national level. To learn more about CHS and resources available to you, please visit our website at [www.chs-ca.org](http://www.chs-ca.org).

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