

# APRIL IS Month of the

*Celebrate Children*



# Young Child®

Each April, Michigan's communities celebrate the Month of the Young Child®. MOYC 2011 focuses our attention on children's development.

Early Years Are Learning Years™...Make Them Count!

## 2011 MOYC Focus Weeks

April 1 – 9	Social-Emotional Development
April 10 – 16	Cognitive Development
April 17 – 23	Language and Literacy
April 24 – 30	Physical Development

## Help celebrate the Month of the Young Child!

For information, contact:  
(517) 351-4183 or (800) 336-6424  
MOYC@MiAEYC.org  
www.MiAEYC.org

## Special Events

### Purple Ribbon Campaign

Displaying a purple ribbon shows you care about young children and are aware of their needs. Place a purple ribbon on your lapel, on your car or in your window; place one on your briefcase, handbag or door. Ask your child to wear a purple ribbon too!

### Board Book Campaign

MiAEYC collects new children's board books for Reach Out and Read Michigan. The books are given to children at pediatric visits. To donate books, contact your local AEYC chapter or call MiAEYC. Visit [www.reachoutandreadmich.org](http://www.reachoutandreadmich.org) for information about the Reach Out and Read Michigan coalition.

Various days in April

### Child Care Job Shadow Day

A job shadow day allows community leaders to "work" in child care centers or with home providers. This allows them to see the complexities and the skills involved in the child care profession.

Various days in April

### Kite Day

All who work with and care about young children are encouraged to sponsor a Kite Day at their homes, centers, schools or in their communities. Contact MiAEYC for information.

# Month of the Young Child® 2011

## Early Years Are Learning Years™...Make Them Count!

Children's early years are the foundation for growth and development. Children are constantly developing and learning. What they are learning depends on their physical health, social-emotional health, relationships, and daily interactions and experiences. The MOYC 2011 Focus Weeks highlight children's development.

### Week 1 Social-Emotional Development

April 1–9

Social-emotional development strongly influences interpersonal relations, behavior and learning. The early childhood years are a critical period for the development of self-esteem and social skills. Early interactions and how we relate and respond, directly affect the way the brain is 'wired'; children learn in the context of important relationships. Children with a healthy sense of self-esteem feel that the important adults in their lives love them, accept them, and would go out of their way to ensure their safety and well-being.

- Responding lovingly – smiling, holding, cuddling – helps build trusting relationships.
- Talk with and listen to children with genuine interest and respect.
- Focus on the positive; thank children for sharing, helping, cooperating.
- Set reasonable limits children can learn and depend on.

### Week 2 Cognitive Development

April 10–16

Brain development research affirms what parents and teachers have known for years, 1) good prenatal care, 2) warm and loving attachments between young children and adults, and 3) positive stimulation from the time of birth makes a difference in children's development for a lifetime. Early experiences contribute significantly to the structure of the brain. The quality, quantity and consistency of stimulation determines how the brain connects and functions; this is true for cognitive and emotional development, and the effect is lifelong.

- 95% of information received comes to us through vision, touch and hearing.
- Positive feelings trigger the release of endorphins, which enhance the functioning of brain connections.
- The brain needs to be properly hydrated in order to be alert; only water provides proper hydration. Check with your physician for appropriate water intake for children under two.
- Offer information to young children in small doses and increase the amount as they show understanding.

### Week 3 Language and Literacy

April 17–23

Communication is the vehicle for intellectual development, exchanging information, sharing feelings, and developing strong emotional bonds. Talking with children encouragingly about the things they are doing, thinking, and feeling enhances children's language development and helps build confidence and independence. Reading aloud with children is an essential component to language development and is one of the most important activities for preparing them to succeed as readers.

- Make time to read with your child each and every day.
- Read it again, and again, and again – children delight in the familiar and knowing what comes next.
- Talk to and with your child so they can learn about the sounds, rhythms and purpose of language.
- Talk about everyday print, read signs and point out letters and words so children learn the importance of written communication.

### Week 4 Physical Development

April 24–30

Proper nutrition and rest, opportunities to explore in safe, supportive environments, sound health practices, and nurturing, responsive relationships help ensure children's physical development. Children vary in their physical abilities at different ages; different parts of the body grow at different rates. Children need to move and be active in many different ways to reach their full physical development.

- Healthy babies should sleep on their backs.
- Well-balanced meals support growth and development.
- Exercise and fresh air enhance well-being.
- Safe, secure environments support exploration which helps develop muscles and motor skills.

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