

# Congregations & Early Childhood

*From the Early Childhood Faith Initiative, a collaboration between Durham's Partnership for Children & End Poverty Durham*

Seventh Edition

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## **CONTENTS**

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**Section 1** ...Faith Coordinator News: February 22 Lunch & Learn

**Section 2:**...Resources & Materials: Father Involvement

**Section 3** ...Quotes

**Section 4** ...Sharing Ideas: Ministry to Babies & Toddlers

**Additional Information**

## **SECTION 1: FAITH COORDINATOR NEWS**

### **UPCOMING TRAINING:**

**RSVP today** for the Feb. 22 training on 'Early Development of Young Children' at [winniewmorgan@juno.com](mailto:winniewmorgan@juno.com). It's free and will be fun to network with other faith educators.

Other dates: Mar 22 (communications) & May 10 (autistic children) from 11:30 am - 1 pm at Duke Memorial United Methodist Church. Share the dates with faith educators & children/family ministers.

**Don't miss this free opportunity to network & learn!**

**Please consider a donation to our \$25,000 challenge grant as you make contributions personally and from outreach budgets.** For questions about donations, please contact Ted Whiteside at [ted@dpfc.net](mailto:ted@dpfc.net) or 919-403-6960 or send donations to Attn: Durham's Partnership for Children, 1201 S. Briggs Ave, Suite 210, Durham, NC 27703 with a note on the check: Child Poverty Faith Initiative.

Contact Winnie Morgan for questions or to speak to your congregation at [winniewmorgan@juno.com](mailto:winniewmorgan@juno.com).

## **SECTION 2: RESOURCES & MATERIALS**

In February we seem to think more about love. Loving and bonding with babies have a life time impact. "Research has shown that a mother lovingly gazing into her infant's eyes triggers reactions in baby's brain that not only feel good, but actually stimulate growth." (Babytalk.com, May 2010, "Bond, Baby, Bond" p.66) Research even back in the 50's taught us that mother/baby bonding is critical for healthy social and emotional development. Read more about father/mother bonding by going to [www.babytalk.com](http://www.babytalk.com) and share it with the parents in your congregation. For the full article, you can also go to the Partnership's Web site.

<http://dpfc.net/Admin/Uploads/Photos/Documents/Bonding%20with%20your%20baby.pdf>

Don't forget to use the handout: ***Faith in our Future: Congregations and Children Birth to Five*** (<http://dpfc.net/EarlyChildhoodFaithInitiative.aspx>). Available in both English and Spanish.

## SECTION 3: QUOTES

*\*Who takes the child by the hand, takes the mother by the heart.* **Danish Proverb**

*\*Give a little love to a child, and you get a great deal back.* **John Ruskin**

*\*Children need love, especially when they do not deserve it.* **Harold Hulbert**

*\*The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.* **T.M. Hesburg**

## SECTION 4: SHARING IDEAS

### Ministry to Babies and Toddlers

Babies are built for learning. Every sensation -- touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound -- electrifies the infant brain and helps it establish sensory connections that'll last a lifetime. Because babies build a sense of trust with caregivers as their needs are met, it's vital to respond to their needs in a loving and consistent manner. When adults interact lovingly with babies, their sense of self-worth grows. Babies develop trust in the people who meet their physical needs. You can surround an infant with a sense of acceptance, security, and love with the experiences you provide for babies in your nursery. Babies feel God's love as it flows from you.

You can support infants and toddlers' spiritual growth using these tips.

- Read to little ones about God or your creator. Simple faith stories for toddlers such as board books about creation, animals, and family are great choices.
- Talk often about God or your creator.
- Tell children constantly that God/your creator loves them.
- Use teachable moments to highlight spiritual truths.
- As children learn to talk, help instill words of your faith such as *God, your creator's name, pray* in their vocabulary.
- Include infants and toddlers in spiritual activities such as worship and prayer.
- Know that infants and toddlers really do learn at church.
- Invite little ones to special worship occasions that are geared to them.
- Encourage parents to have their youngest children present during prayer times at home.
- Pray with infants and toddlers. Explain that prayer is talking to God or your creator.
- Make prayer a part of the routine in your classroom.
- Remember that children discover God from infancy.

In your ministry, don't miss the chance to talk with intentional conversations, read with involvement of the child, and sing to and with the child to boost their brain connections.

**Adapted material from Joyce Meyers, Ph.D. *Early Childhood Education***

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[www.dpfc.net/EarlyChildhoodFaithInitiative.aspx](http://www.dpfc.net/EarlyChildhoodFaithInitiative.aspx); [www.endpovertydurham.org](http://www.endpovertydurham.org);

[www.heckmanequation.org](http://www.heckmanequation.org); [www.developingchild.harvard.edu](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu),

*Better Brains for Babies* (<http://www.fcs.uga.edu/ext/bbb/factSheets.php>)

To **unsubscribe** or for **more information**, contact Winnie Morgan at [winniewmorgan@juno.com](mailto:winniewmorgan@juno.com).

We would appreciate your feedback on this newsletter and ideas to be shared with others on birth to five and their parents in congregations. Please forward this newsletter to appropriate persons on your staff or submit their e-mail.