

Little Folks News – December 2011 & January 2012

“My head is full of children”. I frequently wear a t-shirt that has a stylized picture of a woman’s face and her hair is made up of figures of children sprouting out from and encircling her head. This logo is printed beneath her portrait. This is my life. My head is always “full of children” even when I’m not proclaiming it to the world with my shirt. But lately, I’ve been thinking a great deal about a specific group of children – babies. The South Carolina Department of Education has been introducing a new infant/toddler curriculum. They’ve also recently published “South Carolina Infant/Toddler Guidelines”. A lot of workshops have been offered to early childhood professionals so that they can familiarize themselves with the content of these publications and thus become even more effective teachers and caregivers. As I attend these workshops, I’m always amazed at the number of people who don’t realize the importance of the relationship between infants and their caregivers.

We all learn by what we experience. This is especially important with regard to babies. Their experiences in the first three years of life are critical to the way that they will view the world for the rest of their lives. If a baby cries and no one comes to reassure them, they eventually don’t even bother to cry. What they learn is, “When I need you, you don’t come.” When you hold, comfort, and care for a child they feel your love and learn that they can trust you. These babies feel secure knowing that they are not alone in the world. Being able to trust and love others is necessary to sustain relationships. The ability to trust is what sustains communities and personal relationships. It allows us to successfully be a part of a neighborhood, family and places of employment. Even more crucially, the ability to trust is the foundation for faith development. To put it simply, if you’ve learned that you can’t count on and trust the people that you see every day, why should you trust or believe in someone that you can’t see? On the other hand, if children receive love, attention, and comfort from the people that they see each day, they become confident that they are lovable individuals. This makes it much easier to believe that someone that they can’t see also loves them.

So, what does this have to do with a Christmas newsletter? I’ve been thinking about our celebration at Christmas of the birth of baby Jesus. It is so easy to get caught up in the excitement and drama of the Christmas story – the shepherds, angels, kings, and camels. During this holiday season, while attending these infant/toddler workshops, I realized that to Mary and Joseph, Jesus was a baby- with the same joys, fears, and physical needs as all babies. He was loved, cared for, and protected by proud parents. Each time we interact with our babies, we should be demonstrating God’s love to *all* of His children. It is our sacred responsibility to treat our babies and children with the same love and care that Jesus received from the day he was born.

We love because God first loved us.

Little Folks will be CLOSED December 19-30 for Christmas vacation. We will also be CLOSED January 13 & 16.

Happy Holidays!

Sally