



# PARENT newsletter

VOLUME 11 // ISSUE 5 // MAY - JUNE 2013



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- EXPECTANT MOMS' PROGRAM
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- HEALTHY FAMILIES
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## Yeled V'Yalda ACS Sites to Become Part of Federal Grant

Yeled V'Yalda opened its first Head Start classroom in 1981 as a delegate agency of New York City's Agency for Child Development (ACD). Subsequently, the Agency for Children's Services (the successor agency to ACD) granted YVY additional classrooms in different venues. In later years, YVY was successful in its application to add classrooms and sites as a direct Federal grantee. At present, YVY's 18 Head Start sites include both Federal and ACS classrooms.

for all its sites and classrooms. All proposals had to document plans to provide the highest quality services and education to low-income children and families and were subject to an extensive evaluation and review process. YVY is proud to be one of the agencies to be chosen for an award. YVY will now be accountable directly to ACF for all its sites.

This September will begin a new chapter in YVY's history. As part of a designation renewal process instituted by ACF, the Federal funding source for Head Start, YVY submitted an application to become a direct Federal grantee

At this juncture, YVY would like to express its appreciation to ACS for many years of fruitful guidance and collaboration. The partnership between YVY and ACS was always conducted with open communication and mutual respect. We wish our friends at ACS, a New York City Supergrantee, many successful years providing services to children and families.

### YvY Director of Policy and Research for Education is Recipient of Prestigious National Science Foundation Grant

Dr. Isabelle Barriere, Director of YVY's Research Institute, has been awarded a three-year grant by the NSF to expand her work on the acquisition of different languages. The research will be conducted in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University and Paris5/ CNRS, with parallel projects funded separately in research sites in Mexico and France. In addition to funding undergraduate and graduate research assistants' work, the grant will be used for equipment for the YVY Research Institute where much of the New

*(Continued on page 4)*



**We learn to brush our teeth.** A class visit by Dr. Meryl Hersh of Ezra Medical Center's mobile dental van also inspired some three-year olds to voluntarily stop using pacifiers!

# YvY Silver Lake I and II, Staten Island



**YVY Silver Lake I Head Start Celebrates Earth Day.** Mr. Luis, SLI custodian, constructed four boxes to hold the flowers, plants, and shrubs Mr. John's class and their parents planted in an Earth Day Literacy Event. The class also read books related to Earth Day and engaged in art, music and movement activities.



**Spring Walk** Ms. Hilda and Ms. Aleja, with the help of Mr. Andre and Ms. Lillian, took two three-year-old SLII classes on a neighborhood walk to explore plants, trees, sounds and animals.

## YVY Silver Lake Parent Activities.

Parents in an **Abriendo Puertas** Workshop learning about their child's brain connections. (left)

**Aprons Plus.** In a three-part parent activity, parents first design aprons, then prepare a meal with their child, and then make a scrapbook together. (right)



**Fathers Event** SLI and II fathers had a special guest at their monthly meeting. Here they pose with Willie Alfonso, chaplain of the New York Yankee, Brooklyn Nets, New York Giants and Staten Island Yankees.



**Matzah Baking** Children at YVY Farragut Road knead and poke holes in their own matzah . They later get to taste their own creations.

**YVY Parent Meetings cover a broad gamut of topics.**

1. Devora Weinreb, LCSW, speaks to parents on *Keeping Our Children Safe* as part of YVY's outreach to prevent child abuse.
2. *Help Your Child Succeed in School*, a topic close to every parent's heart.
3. A baking class attracted almost eighty parents.
4. Crafts are always fun, especially when new skills can be used at home. *Wrapping Gifts* workshop.



# YELED V'YALDA

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## May 2013

### ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Free off-peak membership at YVY Fitness Center for YVY parents

#### Aerobics

99 Heyward Street • Sundays and Thursdays

#### Parenting Workshops

99 Heyward Street • Wednesday May 1, 29

#### Expectant Mom's Program

#### Aerobics and Childbirth Education

#### Parenting Skills for Postpartum Moms

1257 38 Street • Sundays  
99 Heyward Street • Mondays

#### Fitness for Men

99 Heyward Street • Wednesdays

#### Daddy Time

99 Heyward Street • Fridays  
1326 38 Street • Fridays

#### YVY WIC

1312 38 Street

**Mommy and Me** • Mondays

**Nutrition Class** • Tuesdays

### SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

99 Heyward Street

#### Brooklyn Bridge Park Trip

Tuesday, May 21

#### Floral Presentations

1257 38 Street Wednesday May 6

1257 38 Steet

#### Self Care

Wednesday, May 22

### STATEN ISLAND

#### ONGOING ACTIVITIES

**Parent Committee** • Wednesday May 22

**Abriendo Puertas** • Wednesday May 22

**Fathers' Group** • Thursday May 23

**Home-Based Socialization** • Fridays

### SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

**Family Culture Day** • Thursday May 2

**Fathers' Breakfast** • Wednesday May 29

#### Professional Training

#### The Critical Thinking Triangle

Sunday May 6

#### Health Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday May 22

### YvY Director of Policy and Research (Continued from page 1)

York-based research will be conducted. The NSF was pleased that cutting-edge research was taking place in a community-based organization. Dr. Barriere wishes to thank all the parents of YVY children who have been participating in the projects of the Institute and YVY staff for constant support of the Institute's work.

Dr. Barriere was the conference organizer/convener for the third annual Student Research Conference held under the auspices of the Ph.D. program in Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences at the CUNY Graduate Center. One of the presenters was Yvette Faour, whose child attended YVY Head Start at Farragut Road, where she volunteered in the classroom and in the YVY Research Institute (see photo).

On May 9, Dr. Barriere will be honored by the Jewish Foundation for the Education of

Women for her mentorship of a Brooklyn College Speech and Linguistics Major who completed her research internship at the YVY Institute by contributing to the project on emergent literacy skills in Hebrew/English speaking preschoolers.



Dr. Barriere poses with her students at the CUNY conference

### For more information on any of Yeled V'Yalda's services, please call the following numbers:

Headstart.....	718.686.3700 *3
Special Education.....	718.686.3700 *1
Early Intervention.....	718.686.3700 *2
Fitness Center.....	718.686.3700 *7
Early Headstart.....	718.514.8600 *1
ABA Program.....	718.514.8600 *3
Project REACH.....	718.514.8600
Ezra Medical Center.....	718.686.7600
WIC Program.....	718.686.3799
Facilitated Enrollment.....	718.686.2189
Healthy Families.....	718.686.2132

### YELED V'YALDA STATEN ISLAND:

Silver Lake Headstart I	
10 Gregg Place.....	718.815.4488
Silver Lake Headstart II	
20 Park Hill Circle.....	718.720.0090

### YELED V'YALDA SUPPORT LINES:

All calls are confidential.

#### Yeled v'Yalda 311

for comments/concerns 718.686.3700 \*311

# PARENT magazine

VOLUME 11 // ISSUE 5 // MAY - JUNE 2013

## THINGS THAT GO **BUMP** IN THE NIGHT

# Childhood Fears

BY ESTHER BRODT, LCSW

**O**f the many challenges in parenting preschool age children, fears and anxiety are some of the most common ones. But knowing you're in good company may not be enough to get you through what can be a very physically and emotionally exhausting time. The good news is that fears are usually just a passing phase. Most fears will pass on their own with little or no intervention. They are a normal part of a child's social emotional development.

As children grow and learn about the world they become exposed to scary stories, concepts and real life experiences. Yet they do not have, the cognitive abilities to process these ideas, they do not have the perspective to understand how dangerous something is, or how

likely it is that the fearful thing will happen to them. They feel vulnerable and unsafe. They don't have the tools that adults have to say, "This is not something that is likely to happen to me. I can put it aside, I can cope, and I can go on with my life."

What is fear? What is going on in our brains and bodies when we experience fear? Fear is a basic emotion that is programmed into the nervous system and works like an instinct. It is an essential protective emotion which quickly alerts us to danger and keeps us safe. When we sense danger, the brain sends signals to activate the fear system. This causes physical responses such as faster heartbeat and breathing and increased blood pressure. The

*(Continued on page 6)*



### Childhood Fears (Continued from page 5)

blood is pumped throughout the body to ready it for action. Sweat is released to keep the body cool, as a response to the increased energy flowing through the body. This physiological response is known as a "fight or flight" reaction. Our brain makes a quick, unconscious decision to fight the danger or run away from the danger. The body remains in this state until the brain senses that the danger has passed. This physical reaction and the sense of fear can vary in intensity, from mild to strong, and can also vary in duration.

Sometimes the fear response is triggered by something unexpected, such as a loud noise that is not actually dangerous. In this case, the system will get the "all clear" and turn off the response quickly. This happens because the fear response is so quick, it happens automatically. Within a few seconds, the brain processes the information and sees that the noise is just from a fallen book or a car backfire.

When we talk about having fears, however, it's not just about feeling frightened in the moment; it's an ongoing feeling of danger and a desire to avoid a specific situation or object. There are things we should fear, such as jumping into deep water if we can't swim or walking alone at night in an unsafe neighborhood. Some healthy fears can be overcome, by learning how to swim, for example, or learning to strike a match safely. A person who is afraid of flying can learn to get through a flight calmly. A child who is afraid of the dentist can learn to be able to get his teeth checked and cavities filled without needing to be restrained.

When we fear a situation we tend to avoid it, but that does not help us overcome it. Avoiding things we fear only intensifies the fear, reinforcing the feeling that the feared circumstance or object is dangerous and can't be handled. We can overcome a fear by learning about it and slowly getting

used to the experience of it, by facing it with help and support.

Fears in childhood are a normal reaction to all the new and unfamiliar things children are exposed to as they grow up. They feel vulnerable and do not yet have the tools to handle their feelings. Typical childhood fears include fear of the dark or of being alone; fear of strangers, thunderstorms, fires, robbers, clowns, dogs, or going to school. Most children can slowly conquer and outgrow their fears. It is the parents' job to first validate the fear and then help the child gain perspective and coping skills to process the fear and be able to function. Yet, parents must also help their children maintain a healthy sense of fear of things that are truly dangerous.

So how do we do this without making children too afraid? Validating a fear means to let the child know that you understand that their fear is real and scary to them. For example, a child is afraid of fire. He becomes tense when he hears a siren. He has a hard time falling asleep at night because he's worried that his house could have a fire. Rather than, "Don't worry, we won't have a fire," you say: "Fire is dangerous and scary. That's why we take precautions and follow fire safety rules. Our family does this so that we will be safe from fires." Then review the precautions and rules, such as having a smoke alarm and fire extinguisher, and "stop, drop and roll."

We can't promise that the feared event won't happen, but we can help the child incorporate our healthy adult worldview that while bad things do happen, they do not happen all the time, and we have practical things we can do to keep these things from happening. Often, frequent calm, reassuring repetition of these ideas can help children naturally outgrow their fear. For example, "We wouldn't want to have a robber. We keep ourselves safe by locking the door and asking who it before we open it. Most houses will never have a robber"

Help the child find words to verbalize the fear. Just giving voice to the fear helps to make it seem less scary than when it is floating around in our heads. We should not deny that the feared thing is scary to the child by saying, "Don't worry, it's nothing to be afraid of," or, "It's not scary." To the child, the fear is present and real. We try to moderate the fear and lend our presence as a protective factor. We should project our confidence in our ability to care for them and protect them. "Daddy and Mommy know how to keep you safe." Give children examples relevant to their fear. For example, for a child afraid of being left alone, "We don't leave you alone in the house or in a store. But we do let you be alone in your room because you are safe there. Our windows and doors are locked, and we don't let any strangers in." Let them know that their teachers and school staff know how to keep them safe, too. "Your school is a safe place. Your teacher knows how to keep children safe."

You can develop symbolic protective rituals that help children feel a sense of control and power over their fear. For example, if a child is afraid of the dark, you can have a "checking the room" ritual, in which you look under the beds, behind the curtains, in closets, and then pronounce the room "sleep ready." A "brave snack," can be eaten, or a certain garment like a bow, cap or sweatshirt can be designated as magically protective and worn as needed. Parents can use their faith to help children fight their fears. Remind them of protective prayers and rituals they can use when they feel afraid.

When a child hears about a scary thing that recently occurred, we can reassure the child that the event happened far away or is very unlikely to happen again, for example, an earthquake or war in another country, or a kidnapping in the neighborhood. Again, this is a good time to review safety rules as a way of preventing these things from happening to us. When a child is afraid

of something he learned in school, we can say, "Pharaoh was a bad king. He died a long time ago. Those things happened a long, long time ago, even long before Mommy was a baby, and they can't happen again."

Some children are more sensitive to fears than others and may have a harder time overcoming them. This may be a result of their personality, their genes, or situations they've experienced. When children fail to overcome fears beyond the expected age of about six to eight, it might be a sign that the child has a tendency towards anxiety. Their fears may develop into phobias, intense fear reactions to a particular thing or situation out of proportion to the actual danger.

If a fear or phobia persists and is interfering with the child's ability to function at home or in school, or the child has multiple phobias and fears that persist past the normal age range, the help of a licensed mental health professional should be sought. The good news is that treatment for fears and phobias is usually short term. It involves, in addition to working with the child, helping the parent become comfortable with the techniques the therapist uses which help the child acquire the tools he or she needs to overcome these challenges.

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*Esther Brodt, LCSW, is a Mental Health Consultant for Yeled V'Yalda Head Start. This article is part of a recorded presentation given by Ms. Brodt for YVY Head Start and Early Head Start parents. The full presentation also includes tips for dealing with older children's phobias.*

*More than 50 parents listened to the recorded presentation. Mrs. Nechama Morgenstern, who entered the raffle after listening to the presentation, won a gift certificate to Funthinks for an educational toy.*

*The last teleconference of the year, to be available shortly, will discuss Taming Temper Tantrums.*

**We can overcome a fear by learning about it, slowly getting used to the experience, and facing it with help and support.**





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## **Health Alert! Measles Outbreak in Borough Park**

As of mid April, there were ten confirmed cases of measles in Borough Park in patients ranging in age from 10 months to 23 years. One patient is an expectant mother who is currently hospitalized. None of these measles sufferers was immunized.

Measles begins with an increasing fever, then coughing, runny nose, redness of the eyes, and finally, a rash breaks out. The rash usually starts on the head and then spreads to the rest of the body. Fever can persist, reaching extremely high temperatures, rash can last for up to a week, and coughing can last about ten days.

Measles ranges from a pretty uncomfortable disease to a very serious one. Measles complications can include diarrhea, ear infections, pneumonia, seizures, brain and nervous system infections, hospitalization and even death. For every 1,000 children who get measles in a developed country like the United States, one to three of them dies, despite the best treatment. Even recently, from 2001 through 2010, an average of one

out of every four people in the United States who got measles had to be hospitalized. Many of these serious cases were among children.

People exposed to measles who have not been vaccinated almost always get measles. Measles is one of the most contagious diseases known. Measles is a virus that mainly spreads by direct contact with airborne respiratory droplets. For example, if someone who is contagious coughs or sneezes near someone who is susceptible, the susceptible person is very likely to get measles. You can catch measles just by being in a room where a person with measles has been – even if the person is gone!

An individual is able to transmit measles from four days prior to and four days after rash onset. Symptoms usually appear in ten to 12 days, although they may occur as early as seven or as late as 18 days.

Most people are protected from the measles virus by vaccination. However, infants who have not yet been vaccinated – the

first MMR vaccine is generally given at 12 months – are susceptible, and cases in young infants tend to be more severe. Cases in expectant women also tend to be severe, as measles in these cases may result in miscarriage and premature labor.

The NYC Health Department urges anyone who notices measles-like symptoms in a family member to call their doctor immediately. Since measures can be taken to mitigate the effect of the disease if it is caught in a timely manner, anyone who knows he or she has been exposed to measles should also call a doctor right away. If you are not sure you and your family members are up to date with vaccination, you should also call your health care provider immediately.

Vaccination is the best prevention against measles. Communities with many unvaccinated people put themselves and others at risk.

*Based on materials from cdc.gov, and health.ny.gov and the NYC*

