

Arlington Family Connection

supporting children age six and under and those who care for them



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www.arlingtonfamilyconnection.org



Christmas: One moment at a time

by Bettina Velona

On the first of November, a mother at my daughter's school proudly announced, "I already bought half my Christmas gifts; I'll just have to wrap them next week." That's after I had just spent two hours at Starbucks listening to Christmas music. As soon as Halloween is over, department stores remind us that we'd better start shopping now or we won't get it all done on time. Every year I wonder what the rush is. I observe people spending a lot of mental energy on Christmas early on and they don't always seem happy. I wonder if our *modus operandi* has become going from one event on the calendar to the next, and what we miss as a result.

I know what I often miss: the peace that comes with living in the moment. I am directed by something outside of me and I don't like it. I don't want that for myself and especially not for my daughter, Nina. I want to preserve and cultivate my five-year-old's natural tendency not to venture far from the *now*. Our modern lifestyle runs so counter to that. Life can be hectic and we're often pulled in many different directions. I don't want to give Nina the impression that our life is constantly run by the clock and the calendar. I try to build enough down time into our life so that we can just cuddle, tell each other stories and play pretend. That's when we can touch the stillness that's inside all of us.

I realize that a lot of "future thinking" is driven by the advertising business. We are in charge of how we react to it; but, it's hard not to get caught up. A few weeks ago I went through my annual temporary Christmas frenzy after Nina's friend said that she'd seen Santa Claus on the street and asked if she had already written a letter to him. Suddenly I felt the future uncontrollably pulling at me. My mind was caught up in thoughts about what I had to do for Christmas. I felt anxious. That night, I was only half there when I read Nina a story, and I didn't like the feeling.

I want to be a good role model for my daughter. Ironically, it was her natural "five-year-old, here-and-now-personality" that saved me this time. "Mom, the autumn air smells so good," she said, which pulled me back into November. The peace returned. We watched as the wind blew leaves

off the trees. We flew our kite. I noticed how tranquil November is. I observed how we had naturally become more quiet and reflective, observing plants dying and talking about the rhythms of the seasons. What joy to feel the cold autumn air and then come home to a warm and cozy house. Now is clearly the place to be!

*I held a moment in my hand,
Brilliant as a star,
Fragile as a flower,
A tiny sliver of one hour.
I dropped it carelessly, Ah!
I didn't know I held opportunity.*

-- Hazel Lee

I'm on my own time again, for now at least. Good and creative decisions come from here. As for Christmas, I'm thinking about it, but it doesn't hijack me anymore. I will start shopping and talking to Nina about Christmas after Thanksgiving. Now, **that** is my pace.

There are many holidays celebrated this time of year. For those who celebrate Christmas and other traditions that include gift-giving, some of us may enjoy buying the presents way ahead of time. Whatever our time frame is, we need to ask ourselves each moment, "Am I still present? Where is the motivation coming from?" What matters is the quality of mind that is associated with our activities. As long as we can stay in the timeless moment, we intuitively know what's best for us and we'll keep our own pace. We can be relaxed and at the same time get everything done. If we don't experience holiday pressure, our kids won't either.

It's up to us how we experience the holiday season -- no matter what the outside commands. Hey, I'm knitting socks for my family this year. So I had to start in November. And I have to admit that I don't mind eating *Trader Joe's* gingerbread cookies two to three months out of the year. I wish you a peaceful holiday season!

Bettina has one daughter and is a freelance writer living in East Arlington. Please send any feedback you have to: jebena69@aol.com.

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“Getting Organized” seminar full, second may be offered

There was lots of interest by AFC members in professional organizer Cristin Lind’s January 19th seminar on how to get organized. There are no more spaces for that evening’s talk, but Cristin has graciously offered to hold a second seminar in late January or early February if there is enough member interest. If you haven’t already received a confirmation from Ruth Schmidt about your spot for the Jan. 19th seminar, please email her at info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org about your interest in a second date and she will get back to you with scheduling information.

For those who may have missed the write-up last month about what Cristin will discuss, here’s a recap:

As a member of the National Association for Professional Organizers, Cristin Lind has learned how to help people decrease stress and increase free time by organizing household routines using sustainable techniques tailored to

each family’s strengths and interests. Her “Organizing for Busy Families” seminar focuses on four key areas of disorganization:

- 1) **Getting dinner on the table:** How to streamline menu planning and grocery shopping and explore alternatives to traditional meal preparation
- 2) **Processing paperwork:** How to best store mail, bills, dates, and ideas by creating a family information hub
- 3) **Getting out on time:** Looking at morning time “bottlenecks” and designing more efficient routines to avoid feeling rushed and being late.
- 4) **Staying connected:** Addressing ways to keep lines of communication open with spouse, family and friends.

Cristin Lind works out of her home in Somerville. Feel free to contact her with questions at 617-771-2659 or cdlind@yahoo.com

Get involved in AFC!

For more information about AFC, please contact any of the following Steering Committee members. Better still, join us at our next Steering Committee meeting, Tuesday, Jan. 4 at 7:30 pm. Contact anyone listed here for the meeting location. All meetings are open and new AFC members are especially encouraged to attend. We will be planning future events and discussing issues of interest to local families. If you would like to get more involved with AFC, or if you have a special interest you would like to see us pursue, let us hear from you at info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org. Volunteers are needed in all areas, but especially someone able to step into the role of Clerk when Wendy Clarke takes “maternity leave” in January.

Steering Committee Members

Wendy Clarke, Clerk, 781 648-2341
workingmoms@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Karen Donovan, Webmaster, 781 777-1011
webmaster@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Betsy Lawson, Newsletter, 781 646-5812
newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Justine Lynch, Treasurer, 781 648-0006
treasurer@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Debra Reardon, Community Service, 781 643-2081
community@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Ruth Schmidt, Membership, 781 643-2362
membership@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Calendar

Know of an event or group that other AFC members would enjoy hearing about? Send your listing to Calendar Editor Amy Speare at calendar@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org by the 18th of every month for the next newsletter.

Newsletter

Have an idea for an article or essay? New writers and editors are encouraged to contact Newsletter Editor Betsy Lawson. Deadline for articles is the 15th of the month. Send submissions to: newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org.

Weekly e-bulletin

Email Linda Hansen at bulletinboard@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org to publicize last-minute events or connect with other AFC members through the weekly email bulletin.

Editorial policy

The **Arlington Family Connection** (AFC) newsletter is published monthly and is free with membership. Published articles reflect the views of the respective authors and do not necessarily represent the views of AFC. Childcare, healthcare and legal information is provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended as a substitute for medical or professional advice. Always consult your own healthcare provider for any decisions relating to your child’s well being. Copyright remains with the individual author for bylined articles. All other materials are copyright **Arlington Family Connection**, 2004. Permission is granted to reproduce articles for which copyright is held by AFC provided appropriate credit is given and no fee is charged. The AFC newsletter accepts submissions from AFC members on issues relevant to families with children six and under. The editorial board reserves the right to refuse submissions for any reason. Send editorial submissions to: newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org; calendar listings to calendar@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org.

Not too early to learn how food works

by *Melissa Lucius*

Wouldn't it be nice if things that tasted good were the healthiest choices for our bodies? It would make feeding our kids a whole lot easier! But alas, there's not much redeeming nutritional value in chocolate chip cookies or french fries.

As parents, we want our children to be healthy. This includes giving them nutrient-rich foods, and going easy on the empty calories. At our house, we try to keep well stocked with healthy foods, and treats come into the picture only once in a while. On any given day, my kids sit down to flaxseed meal muffins, baked fish, vegetable soup, tofu, or huge bowls of strawberries.

Veronica, my one-year-old, doesn't know why I feed her what I do, she just eats it (or puts it in her hair, in some cases). But Amanda, my four-year-old, is old enough to learn about how food works, knowledge that will serve her all her life.

Our pediatrician told Amanda that there are "grow foods", and there are treats. "Grow foods" help your body grow, and treats taste good. At home, we learned more about these wonderful "grow foods". She knows now that chicken, fish, eggs, and peanut butter have protein, which helps her build muscle so that she can climb the jungle gym and lift heavy things. She knows that milk, yogurt and cheese have calcium, which helps her bones grow strong, so that if she falls down, she won't break her leg so easily. She knows that fruits and vegetables have vitamins, so that she won't catch so many colds, and to make her



skinned knee heal faster. And she knows that cereal, bread and pasta have complex carbohydrates, that give her energy to run and play all day. What our bodies love most is when we give them foods from all these groups, and a variety of them.

Cookies and french fries are not without their merits – they taste great! But they don't do anything good for your body. We drew a picture of Amanda's tummy: a big circle in the middle of her body. If she fills that tummy up with treats, there will be no room for all the good stuff. Sure, a little bit is fine, but we have to save most of the room for the foods that are going to make us feel the best. We all want to feel well and strong and full of energy, and you feel that way when you eat healthy foods (and get enough rest, and enough hugs, etc., etc.).

The way we manage food with our kids is really one of those areas where we have to tread lightly. Who doesn't have food issues as an adult? So we're trying to equip Amanda with enough knowledge so that she can make her own decisions. At an outdoor festival a few weeks ago, she saw all kinds of treats. She asked if she could have some, and I told her she could make her own decision. She got an Italian ice and didn't ask for any more. Of course there are plenty of other times when all the knowledge goes out the window and she just wants the goodies. It's a process. But the point is, she's learning, and this will serve her for her whole life.

— *Melissa has 2 daughters and is a project manager at a software consulting company. Please send any feedback you have to mrlucius@rcn.com.*

Special needs screenings offered free

The Preschool Team will be screening children suspected of having special needs on the following Tuesdays from 9am-1pm: Jan. 25, March 1. Spring dates will be announced soon.

By law, children ages 3-21 years of age are entitled to special education services through the public schools if they qualify according to federal and state standards. Children 3-5 years of age may have developmental or functional screening if there is a significant concern. (In other words,

screenings are not provided for typical problems such as not being able to pronounce "s", "l", and "r".)

Screenings are informal and take about 30 minutes. Parents sit nearby their child during the testing.

Parents interested in scheduling a screening should contact: Kathleen Fraser, Early Childhood Coordinator, 781-316-3728, email: kfraser@arlington.k12.ma.us.

"Options" available

AFC's 2004 "Childcare and Preschool Options in Arlington" listing of preschools, daycare centers, and other childcare options in Arlington is available for purchase for \$7 members, \$8 non-members. Send a check to:

Arlington Family Connection
PO Box 150
Arlington, MA 02476

Please write "Attn: OPTIONS book" on envelope. Questions: options@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Calendar

Special Events for Families

Zoolights

Through Dec. 30 (closed Dec. 25). 5-9pm. Stone Zoo, 181 North St., Stoneham. See the arctic fox, bald eagles, and reindeer that live in Snowy Owl Creek. Get your picture taken with Santa. Explore Santa's Castle, with dancing fairy tale characters and thousands of lights. Continue on to four exciting rides, including a Ferris wheel and carousel. Photos with Santa available thru Dec. 24 (\$10-\$15). \$4/Adults; \$3/Ages 2-15. Info: 617-438-7459, <http://www.zoonewengland.com>

Holiday Festival of Lights

Dec. 1 – Jan. 2. 4-10pm. Edaville Railroad, 7 Eda Ave., Carver. Walk down the main concourse, decorated with millions of holiday lights, and take a 35-minute train ride that winds its way through forests, past lakes and over cranberry bogs, where animated displays capture the imagination of young and old alike. \$16/Adult; \$14/Ages 3-12. Info: 877-EDAVILLE, <http://www.edaville.org>

Petting Zoo and Weekend Family Fun
Saturdays & Sundays thru Dec. 19. 11am-5pm. Seasons Four, 1265 Mass. Ave., Lexington. Family activities include face painting, balloon expressionist, silhouettes, live music, and Santa and Elmo visits. Info and schedule of events: 781-861-1200, <http://www.seasons-four.com>.

Family Trees: A Celebration of Children's Literature

Through Jan. 2. Concord Museum, 200 Lexington Rd., Concord. Museum-wide exhibit enchants visitors of all ages with 35 trees whimsically decorated with original ornaments inspired by classic and contemporary children's books. Open during Museum hours; \$12.50 adults; \$10 seniors; \$6.50 children (4-18); Members Free. Info: (978) 369-9609, <http://www.concordmuseum.org>.

Seussical the Musical

Dec. 3, 10, 7:30pm; Dec. 4, 5, 11, 12, 2:30pm. Concord Youth Theater, 40 Stowe St., Concord. Watch all of your favorite characters: Horton the Elephant, Gertrude McFuzz, Lazy Mayzie and all of

the Whos of Whoville. These classical colorful tales are told by Jojo, a young boy and "thinker of strange and wonderful things." Ages 4 & up. Tickets \$9 & \$12. Info: 978-371-1482, <http://www.concordyouththeatre.org>

Liz Buchanan Sing-along

Sat. Dec. 4, 11am. Church of Our Saviour, 21 Marathon St., E. Arl. Free children's sing-along with Arlington's own Liz Buchanan at the Holiday Gift Fair. The fair is also a good opportunity to pick up hand-made cards and gifts as well as sale items that support charitable efforts in the U.S. and beyond. Gift fair hours: Sat. 10am-3pm; Sun. 12-3pm.

Waldorf School Holiday Fair

Sat. Dec. 4, 10am-4pm. Waldorf School, 739 Mass. Ave., Lexington. 50 exhibitors will display handcrafted wares. The Angel Rm. will be open exclusively to young children with musicians, a traditional Mummings Play, and a Marionette show. Kids can make a number of holiday crafts in the Children's Craft Rm. \$5/Adult; \$3/Child and senior citizens; \$13 max. per family. Info: 781-863-1062, <http://www.thewaldorfschool.org>

Visit with Santa at Verrill Farm

Sat. Dec. 4, 3-5pm. 11 Wheeler Rd. & Rte. 117, Concord. Take your own pictures with Santa, share holiday treats and hear live music with the family. Info: 978-369-4494, <http://www.verrillfarm.com>

SteveSongs Concert

Sat. Dec. 4, 4pm. The Newtowne School Fundraiser Event. First Church, 11 Garden St., Cambridge. \$6/Person; \$20/family of 4 or more; Free/Under 2. Info: 860-643-0940, <http://www.stevesongs.com>

Regent Theatre SUNDAY evening Family Fun Concert

Sun. Dec. 5, 7pm. Regent Theater, 7 Medford St., Arl. Featuring Roger Day, Parent's Choice Award-winning performer/singer. \$6/Child; \$8/Adult. 781-646-4849. <http://www.regenttheatre.com>

Having Fun With Fossils & Dinosaurs

Sat. Dec. 11, 11am-12pm. Robbins Library. Ages 4-10. Find out more about this fascinating subject. Space is limited. Tickets will be given out beginning Thurs. Dec. 9. A Russell Fund Program. Info: 781-316-3234.

Ciclismo Classico "Jingle Ride"

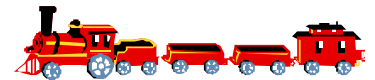
Sun. Dec. 12, 11am. Leisurely 10 or 20-mile bicycle Christmas costume parade to Harvard Square or Quincy Market and back. Led by Santa and his eight reindeer, cyclists dress festively (bright colors, bells and lights), sing Christmas carols, and hand out candy canes to kids. All ages and abilities welcome! Free, suggested donation \$15/rider will support the Mass Red Ribbon Ride (for HIV/AIDS). Registration/info: 781-646-3377 or info@ciclismoclassico.com.

Multicultural Holiday Magic Workshop

Sat. Dec. 18, 10am-12pm. Robbins Library. Ages 4-12. Learn how to make your own magic show with tricks. Plus holiday songs and dances. Sign up begins Dec. 6. A Russell Fund Program. Info: 781-316-3234.

Model Railroad Trains Exhibit

Sat. & Sun. Dec. 18-19, all day. National Heritage Museum, 33 Marrett Rd., Rt. 2A, Lexington. Free. Info & hours: 781-861-6559, <http://www.monh.org>



Sing-a-long Wizard of Oz

Dec. 26 – 30, 6 shows only. Regent Theatre, 7 Medford St., Arl. Interactive film experience for all ages, with song subtitles and a lively master of ceremonies. \$15/Adult; \$12/Child and Senior citizens; \$10 ea./Groups of 10 or more. Info: 781-646-4849, <http://www.regenttheatre.com>, <http://singalongoz.com/>

Mask Making Workshops

Wed. Dec. 29, 10am & 2pm. Robbins Library. Ages 4 & up. We will make an easy star mask and a more difficult bear mask. Younger children will need help with the bear. Sign up begins Dec. 15. Info: 781-316-3234.

Boston First Night Celebration

Fri. Dec. 31 – Sun. Jan. 2. Highlights include over 250 performances at 40 venues around downtown. Notable events include the Family Festival at the Hynes Conv. Ctr., ice sculptures, Mardi-Gras style Grand Procession, and Family Fireworks Celebration on the Common. \$15/Button; Free/Under 4. Info: 617-542-1399, <http://www.firstnight.org>

Sing-alongs

Mondays

5pm. Finagle a Bagel, 91 Middlesex Tpke., Burlington. Ed Morgan performs a selection of fun original and classic children's songs. Free. Info: 781-273-6500, <http://www.finagleabagel.com>

Tuesday, Dec. 14

10am. Robbins Library, Arl. For infants and toddlers. Space is limited. Tickets available at 9am. A Russell Fund Program. Free. Info: 781-316-3198.

Thursdays, Dec. 2, 9

10am. Fox Library, Arl. For pre-school children of all ages. A Russell Fund Program. Free. Info: 781-316-3198.

Second & fourth Friday of the month.

Sing-along with Diane Taraz. 10-10:30am, Calvary United Methodist Church, 300 Mass Ave, Arlington. \$1. Info: 781-648-3719, <http://www.dianetaraz.com>

Saturdays

11am. Stellabella Toys, 1360 Cambridge St., Inman Sq., Cambridge. Join local musicians to sing songs and play games. All ages. Free. Info: 617-491-6290.

Storytimes

Note: Storytimes at Robbins and Fox Libraries will resume in January.

UPDATE! National Heritage Museum

Thurs. Dec. 9, 10:30am. 33 Marrett Rd., Rt. 2A, Lexington. We will read *The Baby's Catalogue* and *The Catalog*, in which three lonely mountains find happiness through mail-order, then paste together our own fantasy toy catalogs. Ages 4 & under. \$3/child. Info: 781-861-6559, <http://www.monh.org>

Barnes & Noble Storytimes

98 Middlesex Tpke., Burlington. Pre-schoolers - Tuesdays at 10:30am Pajamarama - Fridays at 7pm. Info: 781-273-3871.

Barefoot Books

Fri. & Sat. 10:30am, ages 2 & up. Sun. 2pm, ages 5 & up. 1771 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. A fun hour of age-appropriate stories. Coloring and refreshments too! Free. Info: 617-349-1610.

Harvard Coop

11am every Tues. & Sat. 1400 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. Preschool story hour with snack or craft on the Lower Level. Free. Info: 617-499-2000.

Henry Bear's Park

Thursdays, 11am at Arl. & Cambridge locations. Ages 3-6. Free. 685 Mass. Ave., Arl. Info: 781-646-9400. 361 Huron Ave., Cambridge. Info: 617-547-8424.

Pottery Barn

Daily, times vary. Check store for details (there should be a time posted out front). Free. Pottery Barn, Burlington Mall, Burlington. Info: 781-221-5833.

Other Arlington Fun Stuff

UPDATE! Public Skating

Sun. Dec. 5, 2-4pm, *Mother-son skate* Open through Apr. 15. Veteran's Memorial Sports Ctr., 422 Summer St., Arl. \$5/ adult, \$2.50/child, discount punch ticket also available. Skate rentals or sharpening: \$3/pair. Fridays: 11am-1pm, 2:30-4:45pm, 7-9pm. Sundays: 9:30-11:30am, 2-4 pm. Info: 781-316-3880.



UPDATE! Toddlers and Twos

Note: No program Dec. 20-31. Wed. & Fri., 9:30-11am. Gibbs Gym. Indoor gym time for ages 15mo. - 3yrs. with parent, sponsored by the Arl. Rec. Dept. Drop-in for \$5/visit or \$45/10 classes (punch card available at the Rec. Dept. at 422 Summer St.). Info: 781-316-3880.

Arlington Boys & Girls Club

60 Pond Ln., Arl. The Boys & Girls Club offers a variety of programs for children ages 6 mo. & up from swimming to tumbling and more. The club is open for free family swims most Fri. evenings for members and their immediate family. \$20/annual child membership, plus fee for ea. program. Info: 781-648-1617, <http://www.abgclub.org>

Arlington Rec. Dept. Programs

Each season, the Arl. Rec. Dept. offers a number of programs for small children, including indoor gym playtime, arts & crafts, gymnastics, sports, and yoga. *Tip:*

get on their mailing list since many programs fill up quickly! 422 Summer St., Arl. Info: 781-316-3880, http://www.town.arlington.ma.us/Public_Documents/ArlingtonMA_Recreation

Fidelity House

25 Medford St., Arl. Fidelity House offers many programs for young children, including a tot playgroup (drop-in or class), pre-school sports, and gymnastics. No membership required for children up through Kindergarten. Fees may apply for each class. Info: 781-648-2005, <http://users.rcn.com/fidelityhouse/default.htm>

Parent and Tot Connection

Fridays, 9:30-11am. Arl. Boys & Girls Club, 60 Pond Ln., Arl. Drop-in playgroup for toddlers and pre-schoolers with caregiver. Age-appropriate play activities, crafts, stories and music. Free, supported by a grant to Community Partnerships for Children. Info: 781-648-1617.

Art Beat Weekend Workshops

Every Sat. Drop-in from 3-6pm. to do a different themed craft each week. Ages 4 & up, prices \$10 & up. 212-A Mass Ave., Arl. Info: 781-646-2200, <http://www.artbeatonline.com>

Capitol Theater Movies for caregivers with babies.

Mondays, new movie chosen weekly starting between 1-2pm, \$4.50/ adult. Nursing, bottle feeding, fussing, and changing diapers is strongly encouraged and never frowned upon! 204 Mass Ave., Arl. Info: 781-648-6022. To join the email list send an email to BabyFriendlyMovies-subscribe@yahoogroups.com; for more info visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BabyFriendlyMovies>; for this week's movie visit <http://www.somervilletheatreonline.com>

Puddlestompers Playgroup

Mondays, 10:30am-12:30pm. Drop-in pre-school playgroup has moved inside for the winter. Meets in the Fox Library Community Rm. Arl. (\$1/family donation requested). Occasional fieldtrips, meets outside at local playgrounds in warm weather. To join the group's email list, contact 781-641-0944 or JulieLucy@comcast.net

Beyond Arlington

UPDATE! Belmont KidSpace

2nd & 4th Sundays 2-5pm. Mon. & Thurs. 1-5pm, Fri. 5-8pm, Sat 9am-12pm. Payson Park Church, 365 Belmont St., Belmont. This indoor playspace is available for ages 5 & under. \$45 season pass (thru May) or \$3/family per day. Info: 617-484-7703, <http://www.belmontkidspace.org>

UPDATE! SHIPAHOOY

Sat. Morning Theatre
10:30am, Concord Youth Theatre, 40 Stow St., Concord. Concord Youth Theatre actors will inspire you with their new and improved versions of familiar children's stories, complete with ample opportunities for audience participation. Dec. 4 – 3 Billy Goats Gruff
Dec. 11 – Beauty & the Beast
Ages 3 & up. \$5. Info: 978-371-1482, <http://www.concordyouththeatre.org>

Bedford Family Connection Playroom

Mon. – Fri. 9:30-11:30am. First Parish Church, 75 The Great Rd., Bedford. The playroom offers a warm, informal atmosphere where children can play together while parents and caregivers supervise and chat. Members: \$.50/child per day; non-members: \$2/child per day. Info: 781-275-5231, <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/rlcww/index.htm>

Babes in the Woods

Middlesex Fells every Tues., 10-11:30am. Strolls and hikes through the park. Free. Info: 781-396-8994, <http://www.fells.org/babes.html>

Kids Playground

15 Normac Rd, Woburn. Indoor playground with open play space, tubes & tunnels, mini golf, interactive village and more. Open 7 days a week. Info: 781-935-2300, <http://www.kidsplayground.com>

Michaels Imagination Saturdays

Saturdays, 10am-12pm. Michaels Arts & Crafts Store, 34 Cambridge St., Burlington. Different craft each week. Ages 5-10. \$2/child. Info: 781-229-7592, <http://www.michaels.com>

Pre-school movies

Tuesdays, 10:30am. Cary Mem. Library, 1874 Mass. Ave., Lexington. Movies for pre-schoolers, ages 2-6 in the Cary Library Mtg. Rm. Info: 781-862-6288, <http://www.caryllibrary.org>

Puppet Showplace Theatre

Sat. & Sun. 1 & 3pm shows.
Wed. & Thurs. 10:30am shows.
32 Station St., Brookline. Recommended for age 3 & up. Age appropriateness varies per show. Call for performance schedule. \$7/members, \$8.50/non-members. Info: 617-731-6400, <http://www.puppetshowplace.org>

Rattle at the Brattle, baby-friendly film series. Wednesday afternoons 1-3pm, 40 Brattle St., Harvard Sq., Cambridge. Free. Film schedule only available at box office or by joining the email list. 617-876-6837. For more info or to join the list: parents@brattlefilm.org

Toys R Us Fun Day

Saturdays. Each week features a new fun activity for kids! Ages 3 & up. Free. Info: 800-869-7787, <http://www3.toysrus.com/our/tru/prom/funday/> for a calendar of events and the store nearest you.

Winterpark at the Waldorf School

Fridays, 9:30-11am. Waldorf School, 739 Mass. Ave., Lexington. Drop-in. Come and meet other families, prepare a snack together, and enjoy a weekly closing circle. A Waldorf-trained early childhood teacher leads the morning. Suggested donation of \$5-10. The first Fri. of each month is Baby Winterpark, for children under 1. All other Fri. are for children under 3. Info: 781-863-1062, <http://www.thewaldorfschool.org>

Local Attractions

Children's Discovery Museum

177 Main St., Acton. A Victorian house with rooms, corridors, and closets creatively transformed into ten hands-on exhibit areas. Check their calendar for many special programs. \$8/Person; Free/Under 1. Info: 978-264-4200, <http://www.discoverymuseums.org>

Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary

208 South Great Rd, Lincoln. Explore the fields and forest and visit the farmyard. Weekly programs for kids. Members free, \$6/Non-member adult, \$4/Non-member ages 3-12. Info: 781-259-2200, http://www.massaudubon.org/Nature_Connection/Sanctuaries/Drumlin_Farm

Ecotarium

222 Harrington Way, Worcester. Nurture young children's curiosity and wonder with hands-on exploration of real things. Monthly family preschool programs. Members free, \$8/Non-member adult, \$6/Non-member ages 3-18. Explorer Express Train ride, \$2.50/person. Info: 508-929-2700, <http://www.ecotarium.org>

Habitat Wildlife Sanctuary

10 Juniper Rd, Belmont. Trails wind through forests, across meadows, around 2 ponds, and wetlands. Also fun programs for kids. Members free, \$4/Non-member adult, \$3/Non-member child. Info: 617-489-5050, www.massaudubon.org/Nature_Connection/Sanctuaries/Habitat



Harvard Museum of Natural History

26 Oxford St, Cambridge. Sat. programs for kids age preschool to 1st grade. \$7.50/Adult, \$5/Ages 3-18. Note: Free to the public 3-5pm Weds. from Sep. –May. Info: 617-495-3045, <http://www.hmn.harvard.edu>

The Stone Zoo

149 Pond St., Stoneham. Small local zoo, minutes from Arlington, with a petting barnyard, playground, and lots of animal exhibits. Great for young children! \$7/Adult, \$4.50/Ages 2-15. Info: 617-541-5466, <http://www.zoonewengland.com>

Take a Walk at Gore Place

52 Gore St., Waltham. This program provides young visitors and accompanying adults with a seasonal activities backpack designed to help them explore the open spaces and hidden places on the 45-acre estate. Visitors will explore the brook, visit farm animals, and, using binoculars, a magnifying glass and seasonal activities provided in the backpack, learn to identify trees and discover interesting facts about the animals that make Gore Place their home. Materials are designed for children 3-9 years old; ring the bell at the Mansion to rent your backpack for \$5 and begin your exploration. Hours: Mon-Fri 11am-3pm. Free parking. Info: 781-894-2798, <http://www.goreplace.org>



AFC Membership/Renewal Form



New Member Renewal Date:

Name(s):

Address, Zip:

E-mails:

Phone:

Please list your children:

Name Gender Date of Birth

Please circle all that apply:

I am a: Parent Child Care Provider Educator
Grandparent Health Care Provider Other

I am: Employed full-time Stay at home parent
Employed part-time Other

Newsletter delivery preferences:

US Mail Email Both

School District (circle for geographic location):

Bishop Brackett Dallin Hardy
Peirce Stratton Thompson Out of town

Areas of Interest:

Events/Parties New Parent Outreach Seminars
Newsletter Outings with kids Web site
Playgroups Outings without kids Other

Membership Dues *All memberships renew in September*

One-year membership \$20 (joining July-January)
 Mid-year discounted membership \$10 (joining Feb-June)
 Send a gift membership (\$10 or \$20) to the following:

Please make check payable to **Arlington Family Connection** and mail with this form to:

Arlington Family Connection
PO Box 150
Arlington, MA 02476

For information or questions, contact Ruth Schmidt at (781) 643-2362 or membership@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Benefits

Kans for Kids

Sat. Dec. 4, 10am-1pm. Gibbs School on Tufts St., Arl. Donate clean returnable bottles and cans to benefit Arl. Rec. Youth Activities. Info: 781-316-3880.

UPDATE! PTO Thrift Shop for the Arl.

Public Schools. *Note: there is a temporary moratorium on donations through Dec. The shop will be open on Sat. Dec. 4, 12:30-6pm, and every Tues. 9:30am-1:30pm & Wed. 4-8pm.* Basement of the Fox Library at 175 Mass. Ave., E. Arl. Gently-used clothing for all ages, toys, books, housewares and more. Volunteers needed during store hours and for donation processing. Info: 781 483-3433, <http://www.ptothriftshop.com>

Groups

Arlington Fathers' Group

Tuesdays 7:30-9pm. Sponsored by Parents Helping Parents. Free support group for fathers who are feeling isolated, overwhelmed, or concerned about their anger toward their children. For location & information, call 800-882-1250.

Belmont Food Allergy & Asthma Support Group

A group of parents from the area who meet monthly to discuss and advocate for

the issues that arise when you have children living with food allergies and asthma. Info: Theresa Normile, Tnormile@foodallergyfacts.com or 617-489-6668.

Grandparents' Support Group

Second Tues. of the month, 12-1:30pm. For grandparents who are primary caretakers of their grandchildren. Free, sponsored by the Town of Arl. Info: 781-316-3410.

La Leche League

La Leche League is an international, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization dedicated to providing education, support, and encouragement to women who want to breastfeed. Arl. meetings at Fox Library, 175 Mass. Ave. at 7:30pm on the 1st Tues. of each month Free. Info: Heather (781) 648-2988, <http://home.comcast.net/~jrsladkey/lll/index.html> Neighboring towns also have leagues with monthly meetings. Visit: <http://www.llusa.org/MARIVT/Massachusetts.html>

New Mothers' Drop-in Group

Fridays, 10-11:30am, Calvary United Methodist Church, 300 Mass Ave., Arl. Free, nonsectarian, facilitated group. All new parents are welcome with their babies. Sponsored by Jewish Family & Children's Services. Info: 617-558-1278.

UPDATE! New Mothers'

Drop-in Group

Note: no meetings in Dec., will resume in Jan. Every other Tues., 9:30-10:30am, Henry Bear's Park, 685 Mass Ave., Arl. Free, informal drop-in group for new mothers with infants. Info: 781-646-9400.

New Mothers' Group

Tuesdays, 10-11:30am, Beth Israel Deaconess & Children's Hospital Medical Care Ctr., 482 Bedford St., Lexington. Free, group meets for eight weeks. To register or for more info, call Kristin Hicks at 617-667-2229.

Nursing Mothers' Group

Wednesdays at 1:30pm. Baldwin Park I, 12 Alfred St., Woburn. Drop-in. All breastfeeding mothers, babies (and grandmothers) welcome. Meet other breastfeeding moms and have your breastfeeding questions answered by a certified lactation consultant. \$2 donation suggested. Info: 781-756-4788, <http://www.winhosp.org>

Older First-time Moms' Group

Third Wed. of every month, 7-8:30pm. Social and support discussion group for first-time moms in their late 30's & 40's in the Boston area. Free. \$1 donation suggested. Info: 781-674-2029.

Arlington Family Connection
PO Box 150
Arlington, MA 02476

Save the Dates!

Wednesday, Dec. 1

Transitioning to Kindergarten

7-9pm. Bishop School, 25 Columbia Rd., Arl. For parents of preschool-age children. A frank discussion regarding the issues families face as their children enter kindergarten. Representatives from the Arl. Public Schools and the Early Childhood Community will present strategies to assist parents in supporting their child's transition as well as general information about the kindergarten programs in the Arl. Free, donations accepted. Info: 781-316-3570, cbouvier@town.arlington.ma.us

Thursday, Dec. 2

AFC Book Club

Meets first Thurs. of every month. For more info contact Gail Zyla at gail@zyla.com. This month's book is *A Bend in the River* by V.S. Naipaul.

Saturday, Dec. 4

Working Moms Group

Meets the first Sat. of the month 10:30am-12pm, for a casual discussion forum. Arl. Senior Ctr., 27 Maple St. There will be occasional additional social outings. For questions or to join the mailing list, please contact Wendy at 781-648-2341 or workingmoms@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org

Saturday, Dec. 11

Ben Rudnick & Friends Holiday Show

10:30am. Regent Theater, 7 Medford St., Arl. \$5/child & senior, \$7/adult. Info: 781-646-4849, <http://www.regenttheatre.com>

Friday, Dec. 31

Arlington Celebrates 2005

Join a town-wide celebration for the youth of Arl. \$5 fee allows you to join in one or all of the events. Purchase buttons at the Arl. Rec. Dept, Boys & Girls Club or Fidelity House. Info: 781-316-3880. Scheduled activities:
9:30-11:30am, Skating; Sports Center
1-2:30pm, Swim/games; Boys & Girls Club
2:45-3:45pm, Musical Celebration;
Fidelity House

Tuesday, Jan. 4

AFC Steering Committee Meeting

7:30 pm. Open to all members. For the meeting location, contact Ruth Schmidt at info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org or call 781-643-2362. Hope to see you there!

Happy holidays from AFC!