



December 2010

A Newsletter for "Welcome Baby" and "Parents as Teachers" Families

## The Importance of a Healthy Home Environment

When we think of the word home, usually we think of a safe place where we can return after a long day at school or work to relax and be with our family and friends. However, we do not realize that this place can also be a source of discomfort and even sickness if not properly cared for.



Statistics have shown that those who live in clean, healthy homes are less at risk for chronic diseases. The Center for Disease Control states, "Housing conditions can significantly affect public health. Childhood lead poisoning, injuries, respiratory

diseases such as asthma, and quality of life issues have been linked to the more than 6 million substandard housing units nationwide. Residents of these units are also at increased risk for fire, electrical injuries, falls, rodent bites, and other illnesses and injuries." (a)

A clean home environment will not only improve the quality of your life but the duration of it as well. "Since 1900, life expectancy in the United States has increased by approximately 40 years. Only seven of those years can be attributed to improvements in disease care while the rest are the result of improved prevention efforts (such as immunizations) and improved environmental conditions, including sanitation and water. The link between the nation's health and the environment is unmistakable." (b)

### 5 Easy Tips to a Healthier Home Environment

#### 1. Remove shoes before entering your home

Consider the average day spent walking on city streets, into public restrooms, in parks where animals may have been present and the amount of dirt and bacteria that is likely to be trapped in the grooves on the soles of your shoes. Along with all that dirt and bacteria there are also typically chemical particles, pesticides, lead dust and allergens. Wearing these shoes into your home will transfer all of that yucky stuff to the fibers of your carpets and rugs and onto your other flooring.

Babies spend a lot of time crawling around on the floors and even toddlers and preschoolers often spend a good part of the day playing on the floor. Young children typically have more sensitive immune systems so banning shoes from your home can be a contributor to reducing the number of sick days your children have. It is also better for our children's well being not to expose them to lead or pesticides. (c)



#### 2. Get rid of extra toys and clutter

Clutter can hurt a person both physically and mentally. Clutter can also lead to dust accumulation, and make cleaning a room seem overwhelming. Here are some suggestion on how you can de-clutter your homes. Not only will this save you time by having less to clean it will also cause less stress in your home.

#### Here are some tips for de cluttering your home by Peter Walsh (d)

- Tackle messes one room at a time.
- When you buy something new, practice the "in-out rule:" For every one new item, get rid of an old one.
- Create intimacy in the master bedroom. Remember that improvements in one room can spread to the rest of the house.
- Make cleaning up fun for your kids.
- Create a vision for the room you're cleaning.
- Teach your kids how to sort.
- Use a hanger system to determine which clothes you wear most. (put all you clothes facing one way)
- Ask yourself if you really need something. If you hesitate, you don't.



#### 3. Vacuuming

Proper vacuuming is the easiest and most effective way to keep your carpet clean and can also affect the air you breathe. On carpet, use slow, repetitive front-to-back motions in an overlapping sequence.

- Don't ignore corners and crevices
- Empty out the bag when it is half way or 2/3 full



How often should I vacuum:

- Vacuum daily in high-traffic or pet areas.
- Vacuum twice weekly in medium-traffic areas.
- Vacuum weekly in light-traffic areas, using attachments at carpet edges (e)

- Increase ventilation
- Leave the bathroom fan running a minimum of thirty minutes after each bath or shower.
- Detergent and water are easily accessible ways to kill mold

**Additional Resources:**

- [www.utch.gov](http://www.utch.gov)
- [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

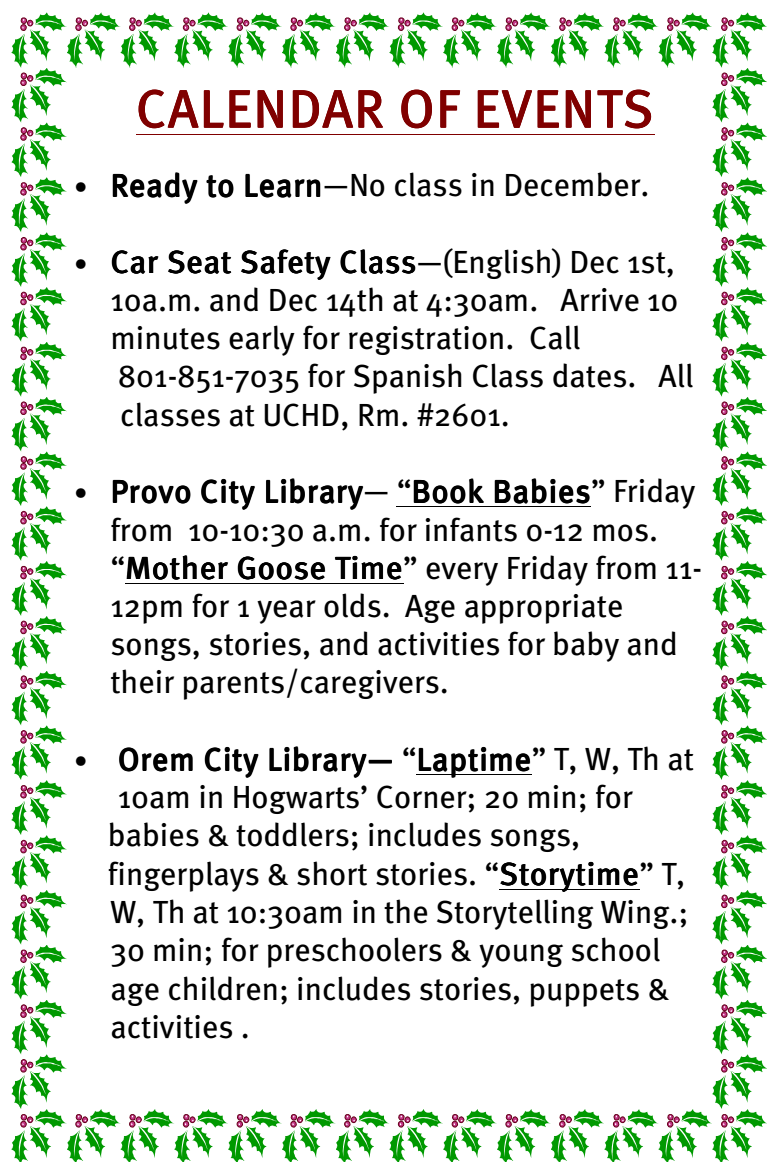
**4. Dust**

Dust can accumulate very easily, especially onto carpet and upholstered furniture. Where it is not easily seen, it is important to vacuum carpet and upholstered furniture regularly. On hardwood surfaces and counters use a damp rag so that you are not spreading the dust into the air or onto the floor. Another important place to clean is your air filters. These should be changed every three months. Dust mites reside easily in mattresses and bedding, which is why it is important to wash and change bedding often.



**References:**

- <http://www.cdc.gov/nech/lead/healthyhome.htm>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/about.htm>
- <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/1984>
- <http://www.oprah.com/home/Peter-Walshs-10-Tips-to-De-Clutter-Your-Home>
- <http://www.goodhousekeeping.com/product-testing/reviews-tests/appliances-electronics/vacuum-cleaner-faqs-1101>



**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- **Ready to Learn**—No class in December.
- **Car Seat Safety Class**—(English) Dec 1st, 10a.m. and Dec 14th at 4:30am. Arrive 10 minutes early for registration. Call 801-851-7035 for Spanish Class dates. All classes at UCHD, Rm. #2601.
- **Provo City Library**— **“Book Babies”** Friday from 10-10:30 a.m. for infants 0-12 mos. **“Mother Goose Time”** every Friday from 11-12pm for 1 year olds. Age appropriate songs, stories, and activities for baby and their parents/caregivers.
- **Orem City Library**— **“Laptime”** T, W, Th at 10am in Hogwarts’ Corner; 20 min; for babies & toddlers; includes songs, fingerplays & short stories. **“Storytime”** T, W, Th at 10:30am in the Storytelling Wing.; 30 min; for preschoolers & young school age children; includes stories, puppets & activities .

**5. Mold /Mildew**

Mold is most commonly found in

- Dark damp places.
- Inside Walls
- Attics
- Basements
- Under floorboards and carpet



A common mold found in the home.

Mold can lead to severe respiratory problems especially for young Children

- Asthma
- Bronchitis
- Memory Loss

**Ways to Prevent Mold Growth**

- Check under sinks and areas where there is water regularly for leaks and moisture
- Pay attention to window frames and sills where moisture can collect