Playing Alone:
How Unstructured Play Improves Children’s Health

Playing Together:
Building Strong Children and Families with Play

Play Time is the Time for Exercise!

No Limits: Fighting Spring Time Allergies and Asthma

BCDI is Promoting Healthy Nutrition Practices: On the Ground in Atlanta, GA

Between the Covers:
Literature with a Cultural Flavor!

What’s In Season for Spring?

Spring 2012 Recipe:
Broccoli & Cheese Casserole
We share the
SAME DREAMS.

As a community, it’s our job to support the dream of education for all.
State Farm encourages you to keep this dream alive.
Child Health Talk is sponsored by State Farm

LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR  STATE FARM IS THERE.®

Providing Insurance and Financial Services
Play has recently been receiving some long-overdue attention. Newspapers and magazines—not to mention schools and parents—are all talking about the benefits of play, the consequences of its removal from classrooms, and how parents and communities can work to actively restore play for their children.

Research about play highlights its role in supporting cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development. Play also strengthens creativity and academic achievement, and relieves the symptoms of attention deficit disorder, anxiety, depression, and potentially debilitating health conditions like obesity and diabetes, among other major benefits.

With a clearer understanding of the importance of play to children’s healthy development, parents and caregivers are expressing a renewed interest in preserving children’s opportunities to play. In Houston, Texas, Sarah Brown has championed advocacy efforts to increase her children’s recess from 15 minutes a day to at least 30; Molly Luna of Mountlake Terrace, Washington worked to secure a $50,000 grant to build a safe playground for the children in her community to play; and Liza Sullivan of Winnetka, Ill took up the KaBOOM! “Park a Day Challenge,” taking her children to 50 different parks over the course of their summer vacation. These examples are both inspiring and indicative of positive parental involvement in children’s play. The reality is, however, that they remain the exceptions rather than the rule.

The unfortunate truth is that many of us, as parents, have taken the leap from trying to protect our kids to trying to control their play and their activities. For every family that has turned its basement into a creative play space or encourages its kids to play outdoors independently, there are countless people who consider play something that they must organize for their children. I frequently encounter parents who are adamant that they encourage their kids to play. “They’re on the soccer team,” I hear. Or “they have tons of video games.”

continued on page 4
NBCDI MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Become a NBCDI Member today for as little as $35 and help give every child a chance! NBCDI members include people who share a commitment to the positive development of children and youth, regardless of race, religion, gender, or creed. NBCDI memberships can be obtained by contacting NBCDI. Visit our website at www.nbcdi.org for more membership information and to learn about the programs of NBCDI.

Become part of the NBCDI family and help us to improve and protect the lives of our children.

As a member of the America’s Charities federation, NBCDI is eligible to receive your charitable contribution from the Combined Federal Campaign (#11574) or state and local employee campaigns.

NBCDI is a member of Children1st

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Child Health Talk is produced by the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI).

A subscription to NBCDI’s newsletter will comprise four issues of Child Health Talk. Send your request to: Child Health Talk, 1313 L Street, NW, Suite 110, Washington, DC 20005. Subscriptions: $8.00 per year

The photographs used in NBCDI’s publications are intended to highlight the beauty and diversity of children in a variety of settings. Unless specifically noted otherwise, the photographs come from NBCDI’s library of stock photos, and the children do not represent the topic discussed in the text.

While a level of playfulness comes from team sports and certain electronic media, they are also heavily influenced by adult concepts and rules. Organized sports are often touted as promoting social skills and physical and mental health. Video games are said to sharpen hand-eye coordination along with critical thinking skills. Yet these are all things that would occur naturally if children were left alone to play and explore on their own.

Play, by definition, is something that is freely chosen, child directed, and intrinsically motivated. That means children are only truly at play when they have selected what activity to pursue and how they would like to engage in it. Many adults, both consciously and unconsciously, try to turn every waking moment of the day into a learning activity where they shepherd and guide their children.

If a child is digging in the dirt and an adult interjects and begins talking about how seeds grow and develop, and the opportunity for that child to focus on her current activity is lost. She may have been engaged in discovering the consistency of the soil, how it is made of pebbles, sand, and bits of matter. Or perhaps she may have just wanted to know what dirt tastes like! Children may not always have the vocabulary to express what they are doing, but it doesn’t diminish the importance of the experience. The trick is to find a balance – talking and interacting with your child is also incredibly important to their development; but so is the time when they can explore and learn on their own.

Children will always need support from caring adults, but we must challenge ourselves to remember that sometimes support means giving them room to be kids. Perhaps it’s time we took a cue from our children, slowed down, and appreciated the merits of play for play’s sake. I am addressing you as advocates of children’s healthy development and—as parents, family members, and concerned citizens. We must not only advocate for others to do right by our children but make sure we are taking the steps to practice what we preach. So as 2012 kicks into high gear, we should all resolve to take a little time out of our busy lives to play spontaneously. I promise it will be worth it!

Danielle Marshall is the Director of Community Engagement Programs at KaBOOM! where she oversees programs that provide support and resources for communities to increase children’s access to play through advocacy, education, and community building. For more information about KaBOOM! contact Danielle Marshall at dmarshall@kaboom.org or visit KaBOOM! online at www.kaboom.org.
“PLAY! It's that simple.” This quote, coupled with a picture of a playing dog, has been circulating on Facebook recently. It caught my eye because for a long time I have studied the value of play and how important it is in families.

In this age of instantaneous information and numerous activities that keep families busy, one of the things that can get lost is good old fashioned play. No matter their culture, race, or country, children throughout the world play if they’re given the chance. It’s one of the few things in life you can count on!

For years I worked with children with serious medical problems, and I was amazed at how many of them played, even when quite ill! For many years, there was a tendency to view play as something trivial, something you did only after all the homework or chores were done. While homework and learning responsibility and contributing to the family by doing chores are very important, we have learned that play is every bit as important as these more serious undertakings.

If you were raised with the idea, “grow up and get serious” (as many of us were), you might wonder why play is now viewed as a key part of healthy child development. Over the past few decades, lots of people have been studying the importance of play, and the research is pretty clear: kids who don’t have regular opportunities to play often have some problems with (a) their social relationships, (b) their ability to organize information, (c) their impulse control, and (d) their ability to control their emotions. Studies of animal and human play have shown that play actually helps build more connections in the brain. One neuroscientist named Jaak Panksepp has referred to play as “brain fertilizer.”

Today we know that play helps children learn about the world, express themselves, figure out how things work, develop their physical skills, develop their mental and intellectual abilities, release their creativity, and strengthen their social skills and bonds.

Your next question might be, “Well, play is all well and good, but that's a child thing — what does it mean for me as a parent?” Parents are the most important people in their children's lives. Family bonds are incredibly important for children's current development as well as for their future success. Playing within your family can make your family stronger while helping your child's social and emotional development. There are several ways of accomplishing the type of parent-child play that can benefit your child, you as the parent, and your entire family.

• First, try to find some time to play with each of your children individually. This need not be for a long time, but dedicated one-to-one play with each of your children on a regular basis, even if it's just 20 minutes a week, can do wonders for your relationship. For children under 11 or 12 years old, sitting down on the floor with your child, surrounded by some toys, is a good way to start. If you don't have many toys, even safe household objects like plastic margarine tubs, the

continued on page 6
cardboard tubes inside paper towels, or socks made into puppets with a face drawn with a magic marker can make great toys. Then, simply allow your child to decide what to play with. Try to keep your decisions out of it for that little period of time. As your child plays, you give them all your attention, and you can even comment about how they are playing: “You’re really having fun rolling those marbles through the tube… You’ve got the mom and dad dolls driving around in the car… You think it’s funny that the dinosaur is eating up the other one!” Try to avoid giving advice or suggestions — just watch, listen, and try to see the world through your child’s point of view. Their play is their main way of expressing themselves, so if we step back and just watch with interest, we can learn a lot about them. If your child asks you to play a pretend role, then do it! Make faces or voices to go along with your character. If you have some pieces of fabric or old clothes, they can make great costumes. Playing characters can seem silly to us as adults, but kids love it when their parents do this! Set limits if the play becomes unsafe. With older children, the special play times may not be with toys, but finding some easygoing fun activity to share, again even for a few minutes, can be very valuable. Playing catch without getting too competitive or listening to some of your teens’ favorite music and asking them to help you understand it like they do can be useful for staying in touch with their lives.

• Second, find ways to play as a whole family. This might be as simple as watching a comedy together and then joking around about it. It might be a fun family night where you take turns performing for each other — silly songs, crazy skits, or letting the kids teach you some new dance moves. Don’t be shy about letting your children teach you things. It helps them feel useful and connected with you. Every family is unique, and each person’s humor is different, so this often involves finding ways to just “fool around” together in a way that everyone has fun. Families who play together tend to stay together!

• Third, if your child has some continuing difficulties with behavior, emotions, or social relationships, one option for helping them cope better is called play therapy. Play therapy is a special form of intervention that helps kids work through their problems. Play is considered the “language” of the therapy, and play therapists (who are usually also licensed counselors or mental health professionals) know how to use play to help children adapt to various situations better. One form of play therapy that is especially useful for families is called Filial Therapy. That comes from the Latin word meaning parent-child. In Filial Therapy, parents learn how to conduct special therapeutic-type play sessions with their own children (a bit different from everyday play) in order to help the situation get better. Filial Therapy is a way of empowering parents to make changes in a positive direction within their own families. The therapist is a partner with the parent to figure out what will help their child best. So when problems just don’t go away, these are sometimes options that can be helpful.

There are some great books available now for parents about children’s play. One is called Playful Parenting by Lawrence Cohen. Another is The Power of Play by David Elkind. For those who have not played in a while, the idea of playing with your children might feel rather strange. There are so many benefits for your children and your family, though, that it’s worth trying it out. Find little ways to build play and humor into your lives and notice the difference it can make. When relationships become stronger through play, many of the behavior problems seem to disappear! Life can be tough. There are stresses on families that are overwhelming sometimes. Balancing out the difficulties with some lightness and fun can provide the energy and support needed to get through almost anything. As Mark Twain once said, “Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand.” I think he had a point there. 

Rise VanFleet, Ph.D. is a child/family psychologist and registered play therapist-supervisor and author of numerous books and dvds on play therapy and Filial Therapy (parent-child play). She has trained thousands of professionals worldwide on the use of play-based approaches to strengthen families. Dr. VanFleet can be reached through her websites, www.play-therapy.com and www.playfulpooch.org
What a great way to introduce a fun and educational way to promote exercise at an early age with the use of *Jacob's ABC's of Exercise*!

*Jacob's ABC's of Exercise* is important in helping to fight early childhood obesity in our youth. This book is a wonderful tool to allow parent and child interaction using the combination of the letters and various activities. These exercises can be done indoors or outdoors.

Here is an exercise that you can do together. Remember, safety is very important so progress gradually with all activities and drink plenty of water!

**Fitness Scrabble**

**STEP ONE:** Pick a leader to start the game
**STEP TWO:** The leader thinks of a word to spell out using the exercises.
**STEP THREE:** The leader begins by doing the exercise of the first letter of the word and the group follows. This is done with each letter of the word until someone either guesses the word before it is finished being spelled out or until the entire word is spelled.

"The first person to guess the word takes over as the new leader.

**Here is an example!**

**J** is for **Jumping Jacks**
This is an aerobic exercise increases energy level. Start with hands at your side with your feet flat on the floor. Then swing both of your arms out and up, at the same time swinging both feet out with a little hop off the floor. Repeat 10 times. Try to work up to 20 or more.

**A** is for **Arm Circles**
Arm circles help build strong muscles in the shoulders. Start with your arms straight out, then make a circle motion going forward. Stop! Then go backwards with your arms straight out in a circular motion. *Do 10 forward and 10 backward circles.*

**C** is for **Curl Ups**
Curl ups strengthen stomach muscles (core). Lie flat on the floor with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, holding your arms straight up. Then reach up and forward towards your knees and return back down on your back. *Repeat 10 times. Try to work up to 20 or more.*

**O** is for **One Leg Stance**
This is a balance exercise. Stand on your left foot with your arm out to the side and hold. Then stand on your right foot with your arms out and hold. *Repeat 5 times on each side and hold for 10 seconds. Try to work up to 15 second holds.*

**B** is for **Bending Forward**
This exercise strengthens the muscles in the lower back. Start in a standing position, then bend forward as far as you can go. Then return to a standing position.*Repeat 10 times up and down. Try to work up to 20 or more.*

If you enjoyed these exercises, there are many more in *Jacob's ABC's of Exercise.*

To place an order visit: www.createspace.com/3668643 or www.Amazon.com. For questions contact: bulsby.duncan@gmail.com
No Limits: FIGHTING SPRING TIME ALLERGIES AND ASTHMA

Vincent Iannelli, M.D.

Many parents understand that allergies and asthma go together. For one thing, they can have the same triggers, like dust mites, being around pets, or high pollen counts in the air.

And many kids have to live with both allergies and asthma.

Taking control of your child’s asthma is especially important for African Americans, who in addition to slightly higher rates of asthma, have much higher rates of hospitalizations for asthma attacks and missed days from school.

Understanding Allergy and Asthma Control

Living with allergies and asthma brings up an important idea.

How well is your child living with his allergies and asthma?

Is he sick a lot, missing school and not able to play sports or go outside because he is always coughing?

Does he frequently wake up at night coughing or have to use his asthma rescue medication (usually albuterol or Xopenex) three or more times a week?

Those are all signs of a child with poorly controlled asthma, but on the bright side, you can and should expect more for your child. Most kids with allergies and asthma should be able to do all of the things that every other child can do. He may just need to take one or more medicines every day to help him control his allergy and asthma symptoms.

Take Control of Your Child’s Allergies and Asthma

How do you take control of your child’s allergies and asthma?

In addition to seeing your child’s pediatrician or other health care provider for help, some simple things every parent can try include:

• Putting a zippered dust mite allergy proof cover around your child’s mattress and pillowcases, since dust mites are a common year-round trigger for allergies and asthma.

• Using roach traps and other things to safely control cockroaches, as they are another common allergy and asthma trigger. Also be careful to clean up crumbs and to not leave food out, which might attract roaches.

• Definitely not smoking inside your home or car and trying to get help to quit smoking all together. Remember that being exposed to smoke, even if you smoke outside, can make asthma worse.

• Getting and following an Asthma Action Plan from your child’s doctor so that you know which medications he should take every day to control his asthma and what to do if he has an asthma attack. This should include knowing how to use his asthma inhalers and a peak flow meter.
• Signing up for an Asthma Education Program at a local Children's Hospital or your child's school to help you learn more about allergies and asthma.

It can also help to learn and avoid other things that might trigger your child's allergies or asthma. Depending on your child, this might be someone's pet cat, mold, changes in the weather, or days when outdoor air pollution is really bad.

Springtime Allergy and Asthma Triggers
Asthma often gets a lot worse in the winter, when cold air outside and cold and flu germs can be a trigger. On the other hand, springtime is often a time when your child's allergies can get worse.

Unfortunately, if your child's allergies are acting up, that will likely get his asthma symptoms flaring too.

That makes it important to try and avoid common springtime allergy and triggers, such as:
• Tree pollens – which are highest in the early morning
• Grasses – which are highest in the afternoon

If your child is allergic to these springtime allergy triggers, it might help if your child avoids going outside when the pollen counts are very high, changes his clothes as soon as he gets home, and takes a quick shower to wash off the pollen.

Get Ready for Spring
One of the most helpful things that can help your child avoid springtime allergy symptoms can be to start taking his allergy medicines a few weeks before springtime allergy season.

This might include an over-the-counter antihistamine, like Allegra, Claritin, or Zyrtec. These are often taken alone or with a prescription steroid nose spray, like Flonase or Nasonex. Singular is another commonly prescribed medicine, as it can help prevent both allergy and asthma symptoms.

Before spring arrives, a visit to your pediatrician can help to make sure your child's asthma and allergies are under good control and that you have refills of all his medicines. If they aren’t, this might be a good time to consider a change in medicines. Allergy testing, if it has never been done, might also be a good idea to help you figure out exactly what your child's allergy and asthma triggers are.

Asthma Resources
• Allergy and Asthma Network, Mothers of Asthmatics: http://www.aanma.org/
• National Heart and Blood Institute: http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/lung/asthma/phy_astr.htm
• Prevent Asthma Attacks: http://www.noattacks.org/
• healthychildren: http://www.healthychildren.org

Vincent Iannelli, M.D., is a board certified pediatrician and Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics and is the author of The Everything Father's First Year Book, which is now in its updated, second edition. He also provides advice about asthma, allergies, and other health and parenting topics at pediatrics.about.com.
The Black Child Development Institute (BCDI) – Atlanta Affiliate is proud to combat the prevailing issue of early childhood obesity as they serve as a host site for the National BCDI Campaign – Promoting Healthy Nutrition Practices.

The National Black Child Development Institute, with support from the Walmart Foundation, has developed an education campaign designed to encourage healthy nutrition practices specifically among Black families with young children. Through this program, NBCDI has been able to strengthen and support existing nutrition campaigns; heightening the visibility and effectiveness of these programs in Black communities; and pilot in-depth healthy eating strategies in multiple states.

BCDI-Atlanta has been working “On the Ground” with the Partnership for Community Action (PCA) Head Start/Early Head Start Program to train early childhood educators (ECE) on fun ways to get children moving and learning about healthy eating. PCA is a nonprofit organization that believes in equality for all, and provides resources to low-income families to aid them in the journey to becoming self-sufficient. PCA’s Head Start/Early Head Start program provides early childhood development services in 15 DeKalb and Rockdale centers for children from birth to 5. PCA also provides emergency services to individuals and families in crisis.

On January 3, 2012, twenty PCA Head Start teachers received training and resources to implement a fantastic curriculum integrating...
multi-cultural music and physical activities while promoting healthy nutrition practices. These teachers have successfully demonstrated their capacity to implement these engaging strategies to get kids moving early! The children of these classrooms can be heard singing and moving while requesting their favorite songs according to their Center Manager. This approach to nutrition and physical education has served as an enhancement to the overall programmatic strategies of this Early Learning Center and can be found embedded in lesson plans; they’re also now being introduced throughout the organization as a pivotal support system for children.

On February 25, 2012 a Parent Forum event was held at a local recreation center to engage and inform the community of the intentional healthy practices that are being promoted as a result of this partnership. This community event is designed for teachers, parents, and kids to receive valuable health related information and participate in interactive cooking demonstrations. Additionally, there was an opportunity for everyone to demonstrate their physical moves as a way of keeping everyone moving while learning about healthy practices. Local partners include the DeKalb County Community Connection, Grow Kids, Inc., Alpha Kappa Alpha, Sorority Incorporated, and Young Chefs. This day-long event was open to parents of PCA with a welcome extended to the greater community to participate.

In continuing in this work, BCDI Atlanta will have another parent engagement activity in April which will involve parent workshops and a cook-off where parents have the opportunity to demonstrate samples of healthy cooking for their children. BCDI Atlanta is helping in the fight to combat child obesity and to provide educational resources for Black children and families.

For more information about Partnership for Community Action, please visit www.pcaction.org

BCDI Atlanta is helping in the fight to combat child obesity and to provide educational resources for Black children and families.
Once again a number of recently published books by *African American authors and illustrators are available for the NBCDI audience. For those of you who were unable to attend the workshop during the Nashville conference the BTC Team is providing that bibliography in this issue of CHT. There are many great selections for readers and listeners of all ages. Enjoy and share!

**Ages Birth–3**


*Evans, Kristine, illustrator *Javaka Steptoe, (2011), *What’s Special About Me, Mama?,* Hyperion Books for Children. Steptoe’s collage images conveys the love between a mother talking with her young son seeking answers about what makes him special. An excellent read aloud that wraps love in vivid colors for the young listener and reader. Ages 3-6

**Ages 4–8**

Baicker, Karen, illustrator * Ken Wilson-Max, (2010), *I Can Do It Tool*, Chronicle Book. A young girl declares her independence when she observes others doing things. While her efforts are not always perfect, that does not stop her. The child-like artwork and repeated declaration “I can do it too,” invites young children to join in. Ages 4-8

*Ransome, James, (2011), *New Red Bike*, Holiday House. Tom likes zooming throughout the neighborhood showing off his new bike, then all of sudden his bike is gone. What really happened? Ages 4-8

Celenza, Anna Harwell, illustrator *Don Tate, (2011), *Duke Ellington’s Nutcracker Suite*, Charlesbridge Pub Inc. The legendary Nutcracker Suite is transformed into jazz melodies as only Duke Ellington and his collaborator Billy Strayhorn could do. This story is told for today’s audiences and a CD of the music is included with the book. Ages 4-8
Williams, Karen Lynn, illustrator *Floyd Cooper, (2011), A Beach Tail, Boyd Mills Press. Gregory’s curiosity, along with drawing in the beach sand, leads him to explore the seaside sites as he makes a very long tail for his sand lion. Then he must use the drawing of the tail to find his way back to his dad who had cautioned him not to wander away. Ages 4-8

*Lachance, illustrator *Brian Pinkney, (2010), Little Diva, Feiwel & Friends. Born to the stage, young “Diva-in-Training” Nena dreams of the day she will take her place in the theater. She spends the day backstage helping out, practicing and watching her Broadway star mother perform. Pinkney’s illustrations bring movement alive with lines and colors that reflect a child’s dream of her own moment on stage. Ages 4-8

*Watkins, Angela Farris, illustrator *Eric Velasquez, (2011), My Uncle Martin’s Words for America, Harry N. Abrams. The life of Martin Luther King is told by Dr. King’s niece, Dr. Angela Watkins. Young readers have an opportunity to learn the impact King’s life had on the civil rights movement. The significant words of brotherhood, peace, and non-violence are captured by powerful images of this time in history. Ages 4-8

*Danticat, Edwidge, illustrator Alix Deliois, (2010), Eight Days: A Story of Haiti, Orchard Books. Seven year-old Junior shares his story about being buried alive for eight days after the earthquake in Haiti. His friend, Oscar, trapped with him beneath the rubble was not so fortunate. He did not survive. The illustrations tell Junior’s story as he reflects on the memories of people and things that gave him strength to hold on. Ages 4-8

*Crews, Nina, (2010), Sky-High Guy, Holt, Henry & Company, Inc. This companion to Crew’s Below, continues the adventures of two brothers and their action figure friend, Guy, who needs rescuing from a skydiving mishap. Ages 4-7

*Evans, Shane W., (2011), Underground: Finding the Light to Freedom, Roaring Brook Press. Evans’ carefully selected words and stunning illustrations convey a simplistic but powerful story about the Underground Railroad and freedom. Ages 4-8

Harvey, Jeanne Walker, illustrator *Elizabeth Zunon, (2011), My Hands Sing the Blues – Romare Bearden’s Childhood Journey, Marshall Cavendish Children. The world of this famous artist is depicted in his early years as he and his parents prepare to move from the Jim Crow south to a new life in New York City. Unsure of what is to come, he tearfully says goodbye to great-grandma and great-grandpa and boards the train. He marvels at the countryside and the places and things he sees along the way that later becomes part of his inspiring artwork. Ages 4-8

*Johnson, Angela, illustrator Steve M Fisher, (2011), Lottie Paris Lives Here, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers. Lottie is a sassy little girl who loves to dress-up, play on the slide, eat cookies instead of vegetables and behave like a kid with loads of imagination. Her papa does not have to worry about her getting bored! Ages 4-8

Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan, illustrators *Leo & Diane Dillon, (2011), The Secret River, Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Originally written in 1947, this award-winning story was not published until 1955. This mix of reality and fantasy is wonderfully illustrated with a modern twist. Calpurnia encounters an owl, bear, and a panther on her journey in the backcountry of Florida as she tries to help her family in need. Ages 4-8

Watson, Renee, illustrator *Shadra Strickland, (2010), A Place Where Hurricanes Happen, Random House. The lives of four friends are described before, during and after Hurricane Katrina turned their worlds upside down. Ages 4-8

Shapiro, Jane, illustrator *Vanessa Newton, (2011), Magic Trash, Charlesbridge Publisher. Transforming junk into art is what Tyree Guyton, an urban environmental artist is known for in his Detroit community and around the world. This picture book biography of Guyton starts in his childhood in the 1950s continuing into adulthood where his love of art and the environment led to the creation of the Heidelberg Project an interactive sculpture park in the heart of a local neighborhood. Ages 4-8

Perdomo, Willie, illustrator *Bryan Collier, (2010), Clemente! Holt, Henry & Company, Inc. Little Clemente is named after the Puerto Rico legendary baseball player, Roberto Clemente. His father is president to Clemente’s fan club and has shared his knowledge with his son. His mother reminds him of other great qualities off the baseball field. Collier’s collage illustrations convey the child’s pride related to carrying the name of a champion. Age 4-8

Orgill, Roxane, illustrator *Sean Qualls, (2010), Skit-Scat Raggedy Cat - Ella Fitzgerald, Candlewick Press. Talented and determined singer and songwriter Ella Fitzgerald overcomes poverty and homelessness to make it big in the world of music. Ages 5-9

*Ransome, Lisa Cline & *James E. Ransome, (2011), Before There Was Mozart: The Story of Joseph Boulogne Chevalier de Saint-George, During the 18th Century, Joseph became an amazing violinist and composer. The son of a white plantation owner and a black slave, he moved to Paris from the West Indies and in spite of racial discrimination he prevailed in his quest to become the “most accomplished man in Europe.” His story is now available for today’s youngsters. Ages: 5-9

continued on page 14
Between the Covers, continued from page 13


*Myers, Walter Dean, illustrator Lee Harper, (2011), Looking for the Easy Life, HarperCollins. Life on Monkey Island was just fine, that is until Oswego Peter convinces his four monkey friends to join him on an adventure to the “Easy Life” which might not be the easiest place to find. Despite a warning from the Chief Monkey, the group starts out on this quest. Myers’ characterization and Harper’s bold, vivid drawings combines to make this an enjoyable read. Ages 6-9

Collerton Johnson, Jen, illustrator *Sonia Lynn Sadler, (2010), Seeds of Change: Planting a Path to Peace, Lee & Low. Young Kenyan, Wangari, was curious about nature and grew up to protect that (and those) she loved. Sadler’s illustrations capture the beauty of the land. Wangari Maathal, an environmentalist and women’s rights activist, was the first African woman to win a Nobel Peace Prize. Ages 6-11

*Hudson, Cheryl & Wade, (2011), My Holy Bible for African American Children, KJV, Zondervan. This King James Version of the Bible contains colorful illustrations from 32 African American artists, spirituals and information that connect scriptures to a child’s life. Ages 7-10.

LaFaye, A., illustrator *Keith D. Shepherd, (2011), Walking Home to Rosie Lee, Cinco Puntos Press. The Enslavement is over and the Supremes is in. D’Onofrio Rae is the only one of her friends who will attend an all white school. Attending the school comes with a price that impacts her family on many levels, leading her to wonder if desegregating the school is worth the price being paid. Ages 8-14

Sherman, Pat, illustrator *Floyd Cooper, (2010), Ben and the Emancipation Proclamation, Erdmans. Ben’s father taught him the alphabet before he was sold; now Ben put the letters together to make words. He read about Abraham Lincoln and the war that would free the slaves, but they were all put in prison before the Union soldiers came. A guard was bribed to purchase a newspaper, which was handed to Ben, and he began to read the words to the others... “Emancipation Proclamation.” Cooper’s oil illustrations convey the emotions on the faces of men, women and children who sought to read, write and be free. Ages 8-12

*Weatherford, Carole Boston, illustrator Tim Ladwig, (2010), The Beatitudes: From Slavery to Civil Rights, Eerdmans. This is an excellent combination of scripture and African American history. The Beatitudes are featured as a scrolled backdrop for historical events from the Enslavement to the election of the first African American president. The spirituality of these events is interwoven with lyrical prose. Ages 8-12

De la Pena, illustrator *Kadir Nelson, (2011), A Nation’s Hope: The Story of Boxing Legend Joe, Dial. Joe Louis well known to previous generations is brilliantly introduced to today’s youth with a focus on the historic fight at Yankee Stadium between Louis and Schmeling. Ages 9 & up

*Nelson, Kadir, (2011), Heart & Soul: The Story of America and African Americans, Balzer & Bray. Kadir’s artwork and words simpistically weave together complex stories of hope, inspiration, injustices of racism, and bigotry from colonial times through the civil rights movement. Powerful! Ages 9 & up

*Grimes, Nikki, (2011), Planet Middle School, Bloomsbury USA Children. Once again Grimes crafts an adolescent story that captures those beginning connections of puppy love/like between girls and boys. Ages 9-12

*Ramsey, Calvin Alexander, illustrator *Floyd Cooper, (2011), Ruth and the Green Book, Lerner Publishing Group. The family trip from Chicago to Alabama was not much fun for Ruth. They were turned away from restrooms and hotels because of their skin color. The journey became enjoyable when they were told about a gas station that sold a book that featured businesses that welcomed African American travelers. Ages 8-12

*Pinkney, Andrea Davis, (2011), Dear America: With the Might of Angels, The Diary of Dawnie Rae Johnson, Scholastic, Inc. It is 1954 and the Supreme Court has ruled that schools are to be desegregated. Twelve year-old Dawnie Rae is the only one of her friends who will attend an all white school. Attending the school comes with a price that impacts her family on many levels, leading her to wonder if desegregating the school is worth the price being paid. Ages 8-14

*Patrick, Denise Lewis, illustrators Kristine Komack & Cindy Salans Roseenheim, (2011), Meet Cécile, American Girl. Mardi Gras is an exciting time in New Orleans. Young Cécile is looking forward to being the belle of the Children’s Ball, but she was not expecting the adventure she had with her friend, Marie Grace. The book includes an historical look at the free people of color in New Orleans. Ages 9-12
down the settlement—a haven for freed blacks and escaped
slaves. Maria learns a different lesson about freedom when
she tries to help a friend and fights to save her home. This
is a historical story about New York City’s Central Park.
Ages 9-12

*Booth, Coe, (2011), *Bronxwood. PUSH/Scholastic. In this sequel to the book Tyrell, things have changed with Tyrell’s younger brother in foster care and his mom not really helping the situation. His father is out of jail and Tyrell is trying to adjust to the roles changing. He realizes things are headed in the wrong
direction, but what can he do to stop it? Young Adults

*Flowers, Arthur, illustrator Manu Chitrakar
(2010), *I See the Promised Land: A Life of
Martin Luther King, Jr., Tara Books. A combina-
tion of King’s quotes and other factual information about his life and global involvement in
the civil rights movement amid vivid images makes this an excellent graphic book for older
adolescents. It is a wonderful blend of collabora-
tive storytelling and scroll painting. Young Adults

*Fisher, Antwone, (2011), *A Boy should know
How to Tie a Tie and other Lessons for Succeeding in
Life, Touchstone. Inspirational stories that offer
practical knowledge of personal style, hygiene,
and basic daily habits. Fisher teaches components
of self-improvement and the importance of a posi-
tive self-identity. Young Adults

*Jones, Traci L., (2010), *Standing Against the
Wind, Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Patrice life
was filled with challenges, leaving her south-
ern grandmother to live with an aunt in
Chicago was only the beginning. Her mother
is in jail and her father is absent. Things
might be worse if Monty, a gang leader, did
not protect her. All this could be history if
Patrice wins a scholarship to a private boarding school in
Mississippi. Young Adult

*Hunter, Travis, (2010), *Two the Hard Way,
Dafina Books. Seventeen year-old Romeo
has adjusted to life with his Nana after his
brother’s incarceration. Things were going
well at school where he was the star quarter-
back, deciding where to take a scholarship
when his brother returns home and their
long time absentee mother is back in the
picture. Young Adult

*Michener, Tara, (2011), *No Longer Besties
and other Assorted teenage drama. Author
House. Seventeen year-old Madisyn had a
good life, or so it seemed. Her life turned for
the worse when her former best friend became
her brutal tormentor. Coping with the bullying
and her father’s new life with another woman
complete with a teenage daughter was not
enough. How could she end up accused of
being the bully? Young Adult

continued on page 16
All Ages

*Greenfield, Eloise, illustrator *Jan Spivey Gilchrist, (2010), *The Great Migration – Journey to the North*, Amistad/HarperCollins. This moving collection of poems takes the readers through the stages of the great migration from the uprooting of families to the start of their new lives up north. The poet herself writes from a personal perspective as she paints poetic pictures of the challenges African Americans faced during this period in U.S. history. All ages

*McKissack, Patricia C., illustrators*
*Leo and Diane Dillon, (2011), Never Forgotten, Schwartz & Wade*. The magnificent woodcut-style paintings along with the narrative reveal how the elements of Earth, Fire, Water, and Wind watch over infant Musafa when he is abducted into slavery and taken across the ocean to North Carolina. Musafa knows even when offered freedom by his owner, that he has always been as free as the wind. All ages

*Russell, Tiffany, illustrator Russell Scarborough, (2011), A Song for Miles*, Echo House Publishing. [This is an electronic book available as a Kindle Edition.] His daddy loved music and young Miles was a keen observer. Through this magical memorable story Miles learns so many life lessons from his daddy’s knowledge of music. The lyrics and beats of ‘Wake Up Everybody!’ by Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes speaks to us as to how we treat our planet. It is Marvin Gaye’s ‘Mercy, Mercy Me’ that helps to teach Miles to respect all people – big and little. Stephanie Mill’s ‘Home’ radiates the warmth of home. After listening to ‘Keep Your Head Up to the Sky’ by Earth Wind and Fire, Miles hears his daddy say, “This means that you can do anything you set your mind to do.” So many more other legendary singers: Stevie Wonder, Curtis Mayfield, Al Green, Nina Simone, and Donny Hathaway provide the songs. The author and illustrator have orchestrated a wonderful love story about a father and child that can be kept on the computer, Kindle, or cell phone. All ages

Golio, Gary, illustrator *Javaka Steptoe, (2010), Jimi Sounds Like a Rainbow – A Story of the Young Jimi Hendrix*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Story of the innovative musician growing up in Seattle, Washington yearning for his own guitar. His goal was to be able to paint pictures with sounds. All ages

THE BTC TEAM:
Dr. Toni S. Walters – Professor at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan
Dr. Vivian G. Johnson – Associate Professor at Marygrove College in Detroit, Michigan
Dr. Jonella A. Mongo – Education Consultant & Adjunct Faculty Member at Oakland University.

A NOTE TO AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS
We encourage authors and publishers to send advance review copies and newly released books for children to: Dr. Vivian Johnson, Marygrove College, Detroit, Michigan 48221
The Between the Covers team will review them for consideration in future columns.
Here are some of the fruits and vegetables that will be in season this spring. Farmers’ markets may just be starting up in your community, so check them out or head to your local grocery or corner store. Set yourself a challenge to try at least one new fruit or vegetable on this list – we bet you’ll find something you didn’t know your family would love!

Don’t forget to let your child help prepare the food for your family – they can mix, stir and measure, which helps build their skills in math. You can also talk with them while you’re getting dinner ready – that helps build their literacy skills. This way, you’ll be feeding their minds and their bodies!

Happy healthy eating!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aprils</th>
<th>Apricots come into season towards the end of the spring. They make a tasty sweet snack.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asparagus</td>
<td>Did you know that if we left asparagus alone, the stalks would grow 4-6 feet tall? Instead, we harvest stems while they’re young, and steam, roast or eat ‘em raw.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beets</td>
<td>The first spring beets, with greens still attached, are very tender and can be eaten sliced and drizzled with olive oil, or turned into chips, grilled, or roasted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>True baby carrots are available in spring and early summer. Eat them raw as they make a great snack!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherries</td>
<td>Sweet cherries are available starting in late spring. These beautiful fruits are the perfect snack – just make sure to watch out for the pits!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapefruit</td>
<td>Grapefruit is at its best in spring. Cut it in half and top it with honey or sugar for a simple, healthy and tasty breakfast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green onions/ Scallions</td>
<td>Try them chopped up on a baked potato! Green onions are cultivated year-round in temperate climates and come into harvest in the spring in warmer areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemons</td>
<td>Lemons are at their juicy best from winter into early summer. They are high in antioxidants and its juice brings great taste when added to just about anything!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas &amp; Pea Greens</td>
<td>Enjoy them raw, steamed with some melted butter, with salads or in a soup. Tender pea greens – peas on vines – are also delicious steamed or sautéed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radishes</td>
<td>Radishes are at their sweet, crunchy best in the spring! Try them on a salad or by themselves and dip in salad dressing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberries</td>
<td>Strawberries are the first fruit to ripen in spring and early summer. They’re great by themselves or added to salads and desserts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SPRING 2012 RECIPE

Broccoli and Cheese Casserole

This dish is a delicious way for your family to get vitamins and nutrients and it also has 3 major food groups all in one dish! Be sure to take your children with you to the local grocery store to pick out the ingredients. Once home, make sure to include the entire family in the preparation.

INGREDIENTS:

½ tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil,
1 cup uncooked rice
Salt and black pepper to taste
2 ½ cups small broccoli florets
1 (15-ounce) can of regular or ready-to-eat (not condensed) cream of mushroom soup
1 cup finely shredded cheddar cheese, divided

INSTRUCTIONS:

Grease a 7- x 11-inch baking dish with olive oil set aside.

Place 1 ½ cups water in a small pot and add rice and salt and bring to a boil. Cover pot, reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until water is absorbed and rice is almost tender, about 15 minutes. Set pot aside off of the heat for 5 minutes, then uncover, fluff with a fork and set aside.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Place 3 tablespoons of water and ½ tablespoon oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add broccoli and cook for 3 to 4 minutes. Add cooked rice, then stir in soup, ½ cup of the cheese, salt and pepper.

Transfer rice mixture to baking dish and sprinkle remaining ½ cup cheese evenly over the top. Bake until golden brown and bubbly, about 30 minutes.

Send your favorite Summer recipe to moreinfo@nbcdi.org and we’ll publish one winner in the next issue of Child Health Talk!
How to become a MEMBER

- Contact the National Office toll free at (800) 556-2234 or at (202) 833-2220.
- Apply online by visiting NBCDI at www.nbcdii.org

Let's continue to work together to improve and advance the quality of life for Black children and their families through advocacy and education.

National Black Child Development Institute

NBCDI is nurturing the natural curiosity, excitement and genius in children

- Love to Read encourages parents, as their child's first teacher, to instill the love of reading at birth.
- Entering the College Zone provides middle school students with the tools they will need for college...NOW.
- The Parent Empowerment Program strengthens parents' knowledge of child development while raising their confidence in themselves and their parenting skills.
- Healthy Practices Project is an education campaign designed to encourage healthy nutrition practices specifically among African American families with young children.

Designate #11574 on your CFC Pledge Card

NBCDI is a member of Children's First - America's Charities

Committed to improve and enhance the quality of life for Black children and their families.
Fulfilling the Promise:

Our Children Deserve the Best

SAVE THE DATE!

National Black Child Development Institute, Inc.

42ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 6 - 9, 2012

Marriott Harbor Beach Resort and Spa
Fort Lauderdale, Florida