

cribnotes

A Place Parents Trust CENTERING PARENTS' VOICES IN CARING FOR THEIR CHILD

Who do you trust to care for your child overnight? As a parent, you need help when you're exhausted, but leaving your kid with someone else can also be quite difficult. How do you know they'll take good care of your child? Will they respect your approach to parenting?

The first step

Jen brought her daughter to the Nursery "after having her home with me every day, every night, hour, minute, second" for the first two-and-a-half years since she was born. "You can only imagine what my anxiety was like when I brought her here for her first visit," she said.

After her first visit, Jen continued to partner with the Nursery because the "staff made me feel SO comfortable and at ease leaving her with them."

And two years later, the Nursery "has been the only other place besides our home that my daughter has slept overnight in her four years of life."

That is how much I truly trust everyone at the Nursery to work with and be with my daughter."

So how do parents move from anxiety and fear to confidence and partnership? Trust is a key factor.

Relief

When the phone rings at the Nursery, the parent on the other end of the line is about to experience something that can be rare to find – "There's no judgment," says Carla Craig, Family Services Manager. "That gives them relief. We only care about how we can help."

Walking through the front door, families are greeted with the same sincere energy they experienced during their first phone call. "The way we welcome a child in and talk to them matters," Carla says. "Bending down, saying 'I'm glad to meet you.' It helps make the mom comfortable and lets her know we are going to take good care of her child."

Parents are the experts

No one knows a child better than their parent. Conversations with parents about their child are critical to giving children the best possible care while they're staying at the Nursery. It's important to create a safe space where parents can think through how they would like us to care for their child even though they are balancing other pressing needs.

Parents can provide knowledge and insight that prepares staff to give children individualized care. Through a guided conversation, parents share things like:

- What works best to help their child when they're upset
- Any concerns they may have about their child's behaviors or development
- What helps their child learn new things

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Building Trust

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Centering parents' voices

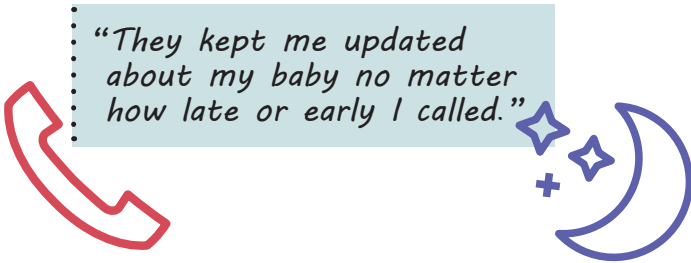
Parents also set goals for their child, ranging from health and hygiene goals like being able to feed themselves, to communication goals like being able to follow simple directions or ask for help, to social-emotional development goals like learning ways to calm down when upset. "The staff is really good about listening and taking in whatever a parent says," Carla explains.

For example, at bedtime, we know if it's okay or not to rock the child to sleep or if we should help the child try to get to sleep on their own. The shared goals help staff keep parents' wishes top of mind the entire time we are caring for their children.

Checking in

While their child is at the Nursery, parents can call as often as desired to see how their child is doing. "We tell them, 'You can't call too much,'" Carla says. Checking in with staff helped Deidre feel connected: "I was able to call and get an update on how my children's day was," she said.

"They kept me updated about my baby no matter how late or early I called."



Catching up + Celebrating children

When picking up their child, parents get to hear all the details of their child's stay – what they ate, activities they enjoyed, the books we read and songs we sang, how they slept, and things staff noticed that the child's parent may be proud to learn.

These conversations also lead to helpful tips parents can apply at home. Recently, Aya was surprised to hear that her child had eaten, and enjoyed, cottage cheese at the Nursery – something they wouldn't eat at home. She asked how we served it. "We put fruit in it," was the reply. She was happy to go home with a new healthy food option for her child.

Talking with parents about positive behaviors and any advances their child has made is always fun. "Doing this gives mom the confidence to know that we are supporting her and her goals," Carla says.

Camille, whose son recently stayed at the Nursery, shared that "being able to talk to staff members about my son's developmental milestones" was something that mattered and was helpful to her.

Welcoming parents with genuine care, sharing ideas that worked well with their child, and being available 24/7 are just a few of the ways we build trusting relationships. These details (and dozens more) add up, creating a spirit of trust between the Nursery staff, and parents and children.

Thank you

for giving moms like Jen, Deidre, & Aya a special space they trust to help care for their children.

PARENTING TIP: HELPING YOUR CHILD TO OPEN UP

Parents want to know about their kids and what they're feeling, but it can be difficult to get them to open up. Here are a few ways you can make your child feel safe enough to share their feelings, good or bad.

- **Specifics:** Asking "how was your day?" can be overwhelming. Try narrowing the questions to make them more specific: "What did you have for lunch?" "Who did you play with at recess?"
- **Open ended questions:** Instead of "Did you have fun in gym class?", try "What happened in gym class today?". Saying "tell me more" is another good way to open up communication.
- **Empathy vs. Solutions:** Pay attention to whether your child wants you to simply listen or if they want help solving a problem. You can even ask them that very question: "Do you just want me to listen or do you want my thoughts?"
- **Show:** Be open yourself and share your own feelings. Teach your children by modeling the behavior you want to see.



READING CORNER:

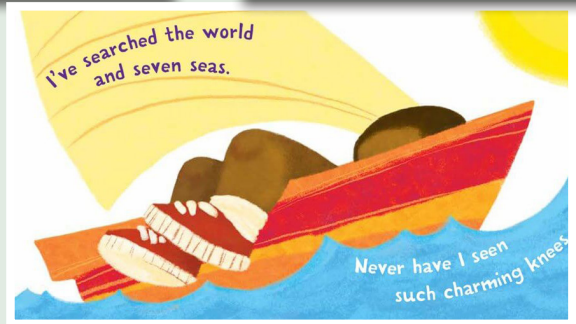
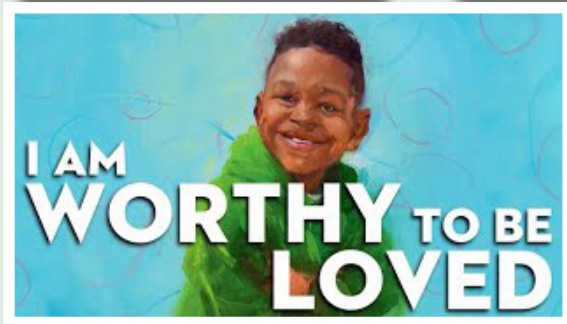
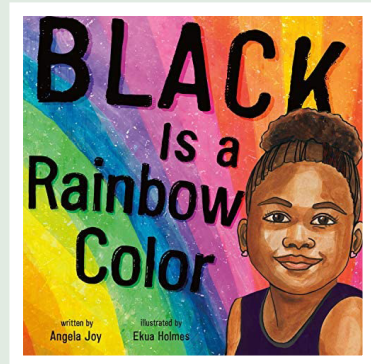
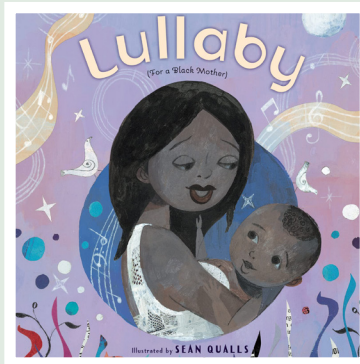
A quiet (non-screen time) activity

Our world seems to revolve around screens – phones, laptops, tablets, TVs. Kids spend a lot of time on screens, too, whether for online classes, homework or entertainment. A recent CNN story says that since the pandemic began, adolescents reported that they spent nearly eight hours a day in front of a screen, double their pre-pandemic estimates of nearly four hours per day. When kids or parents are stressed or overwhelmed, screen time can be a great distraction. Another option to consider: turning to a quiet, non-screen activity to settle things down.

We love to read books that reflect authors and content from various backgrounds and that let kids see themselves on the page. February is Black History Month, and while we read these books all year, it's a good time to showcase some of our favorite children's books by Black authors. Here are a few books by Black authors recommended by the Nursery's Children's Services team:

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- ***Saturday*** by Oge Mora
- ***Whose Knees Are These*** by Jabari Asim
- ***Hair Love*** by Matthew A. Cherry
- ***Lullaby*** by Langston Hughes
- ***I Am Every Good Thing*** by Derrick Barnes
- ***Black is a Rainbow Color*** by Angela Joy



CELEBRATING BLACK VOICES

Sometimes you don't have time to sit down and read with your kids. And, while screen time isn't ideal, here's a great compromise: the 2020 Netflix series *Celebrating Black Voices* – twelve five-minute episodes where celebrity readers share children's books by Black authors. The goal? To spark kid-friendly conversations about empathy, equality, self-love and antiracism.

How You Helped 182 Family Members

Our Holiday Helper program provides holiday gift cards to families in need. In December 2021, 182 family members received holiday gifts from this amazing community. Special thanks to all of you who donated gift cards or made donations toward the Holiday Helper program! You put smiles on many kids' faces this past holiday season!

Let's Get Cooking!

WELCOMING VOLUNTEERS BACK TO THE KITCHEN

Oh how we've missed your smiling faces around the Nursery! With extra precautions in place to keep everyone safe, we're thrilled to welcome volunteers back to the Nursery for meal times. Groups of two can come make a meal and a snack for the kids staying at the Nursery.

Please visit CrisisNursery.org/CFK or contact Keith (kjohnson@crisisnursery.org), Food Services Coordinator to learn more or sign up for a shift.



CRAFT CORNER

AN EASY, HEALTHY SNACK: GRAHAM CRACKER SMILE

Here's a fun snack idea that we do with the kids at the Nursery around Valentine's Day ... but you can do it any day of the year.

Ingredients:

- Graham Crackers
- Peanut Butter
- Strawberries (cored and thinly sliced)
- Chocolate chips

Instructions:

1. Break your graham crackers in half
2. Spread peanut butter on top of each cracker
3. Place two strawberry slices on cracker like eyes
4. Use chocolate chips to make a smile



Enjoy!

*From The Simple Parent: <https://thesimpleparent.com/easy-valentine-snacks-graham-cracker-smile/>

SCRAP PAPER RAINBOW

Here's a fun and easy craft for all ages, from the online blog No Time for Flashcards.

Materials:

- Any type of paper you can glue/tape the scrap paper onto: posterboard, wrapping paper, grocery bags taped together
- Glue or double-sided tape
- Scrap paper or construction paper in different colors



Directions:

1. Draw a BIG rainbow
2. Tear the scrap paper into small pieces (Kids love this part!)
3. Decide on the color for each arch and start gluing or taping the colored paper in the arches
4. Don't expect to finish it all at once! You can roll it up and pull it out to continue as desired until it's done – a long-term project is good for kids.
5. When it's complete, hang it up and see how proud your kids are