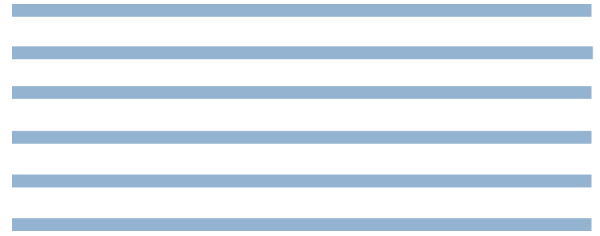


FATHERHOOD NEWSLETTER



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With pumpkins on porches, more leaves on the ground, and football back in the forefront of the calendar we are seeing the change into fall in full swing. Remember to stay healthy this flu season by continuing to engage in hand washing and consider visiting your local health department for an influenza vaccination this October. We at the Oklahoma State Department of Health Maternal and Child Health Service Fatherhood Initiative wish you a wonderful fall!

Please connect with us!

Contact our Fatherhood Initiative Project lead James Craig



A good father is a present one

Change is never easy, especially for expectant fathers. Psychology professor at the University of Witwatersrand and author of *Becoming Man*, Malose Langa, says that fatherhood has many different faces and begins as early as adolescence. **"Becoming a father is stressful for all men** – particularly for a teenage father. If the pregnancy was unplanned, **it can become quite stressful and affect them psychologically,**" he said. Anxieties, emotional difficulties and lifestyle adjustments can cast a shadow on the feelings of euphoria and excitement that come with fatherhood. "Expectant fathers often question themselves on whether they are financially and emotionally ready to have a child. Nevertheless, this stressful period can also become an opportunity for them to grow," he said. Langa advises men who are finding it difficult to adjust to being **new fathers to remember that they are not the first people to experience it and that help is available.** "Becoming a father is anxiety provoking and sometimes plays into their fathers being emotionally unavailable for them. This can affect how they father their child. "Signs to look out for are isolation from friends and family, abnormal dependency on alcohol and cigarettes, aggression and lack of concentration," he said.

Celebrating Black Fatherhood

2Oprah Winfrey Network is now streaming a one-hour special celebrating Black fatherhood called, "OWN Spotlight: They Call Me Dad," on Discovery+. Actors Derek Luke (*The Purge*, *13 Reasons Why*) and Tristan Mack Wilds (*The Wire*, *90210*), Gospel singer-songwriter and senior pastor Marvin Sapp and music mogul Master P are featured and talk about what it means to be a supportive father, the sacrifices it takes to be a good father, how to take accountability for your actions and how to inspire your children. The special follows four Black fathers from diverse backgrounds, as they showcase the joys, fears, and fulfillment that being a dad brings.



Halloween Train at the Oklahoma Railway Museum

Ride a Halloween steam train at a unique holiday celebration at the Oklahoma Railway Museum (3400 NE Grand Blvd Oklahoma City, OK 73111) October 30-31. This two-day event features a 40-minute ride in one of four unique train cars (including a caboose) all pulled by a classic, fully-restored steam locomotive and a costume contest with prizes. The event includes the train ride, costume contest, mini-golf course, and more. Explore the museum on the Halloween Scavenger Hunt. Decked out with Halloween decorations, this train ride also promises a bag of goodies for each trick-or-treater.



New dad tool for your toolbox for October: 3Proper car seat use

1. Why do I need to put my child in a child safety seat? Properly installed car seats and booster seats reduce the chance of death in a motor vehicle crash by 71% for infants under 1 year and 54% for toddlers aged 1-4 years.

2. What is the "best" child safety seat for my child? The one that fits your child, fits your vehicle, and the one that you can install correctly every time.

3. Need help installing a child safety seat? Have your child's car or booster seat checked by one of the many certified child passenger safety technicians available throughout the state. To find a child passenger safety technician, visit www.safercar.gov/parents,

4. How do I choose a child safety seat? Oklahoma's child passenger safety law requires the following:

- All children under age 4 must be properly secured in a car seat with an internal harness.
- Children under age 2 must be properly secured in a rear-facing car seat.
- Children at least age 4 but under age 8 must ride in a child passenger restraint system or booster seat, unless they are taller than 4'9".

5. When can my child use a seat belt? Seat belts are made for persons who are at least 4 feet, 9 inches tall. Your child should ride in a belt-positioning booster until the vehicle seat belt fits correctly (usually around 8 years of age):

- The shoulder belt should lie on the collar bone and across the middle of the chest.
- The lap belt should be snug and lie across the upper thighs/pelvic bones, not across the stomach.
- The child should be able to sit with his/her back against the vehicle seat back with his/her knees bent comfortably over the vehicle seat and his/her feet on the floor.

Gardening with young children helps their development ⁴

Young children can practice locomotor skills, body management skills and object control skills while they move from one place to the other carrying tools, soil and water. They will be moving their bodies using large muscles and using muscles to balance and manage objects too. Fine motor skills such as whole-hand grasping and the pincer grasp (necessary skills for writing) are employed in gardening when children use a trowel or rake and pick up tiny seeds to plant. Further, being outdoors in the fresh air and moving around a lot is a good way to get exercise. Another aspect of physical development is the sensory stimulation that you can experience in a garden.



Need Resources?

Throughout the state you can call 211 or go to <https://www.211oklahoma.org> for help with housing, food, utilities, mental health, transportation, COVID-19 information, or other needs.



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