

OCTOBER 2020 Family Badger Buzz



Welcome to our *Parent Newsletter!* Our goal is to keep UW-Madison parents connected and informed with happenings, resources, and parenting tips. Please feel free to reach out to us with any information that you would like to see posted. We are here to support you and your families!

Message from the OCCFR Director

Dear Families,

I hope that you are staying healthy and enjoying the first days of fall.

Whatever the season, children are always ready to play and learn. Your time together gives them a strong start in life, setting them up to succeed and thrive. You are the most important people in your child's life, and they love to play with you. Play is how they explore their world. Your child's brain grows the fastest from birth through age five, which is why your brain- building interactions with your child matter so much.



Positive adult-child interactions with family members and other adults are essential to children's brain development. These shared moments also deepen emotional bonds. Solid brain architecture helps to ensure critical developmental outcomes and life skills for children.

The earliest interactions between a child and his or her caregivers create millions of neural connections in the child's rapidly growing brain: looking; following; talking; taking turns and stretching. These basic interactions promote strong executive functions. One valuable resource to cultivate brain building in children is the website Vroom: <https://www.vroom.org/>. Vroom is a ready-made toolbox developed with input from early childhood experts, including the **Harvard Center on the Developing Child**. This site provides free, science-based tips to give children a great start in life and an even brighter future.

Here are some simple and easy Vroom tips to make the most of your shared moments with your children.

- When it is time for a hug, ask your child if they want a big hug or a little hug and then do what they ask. Then you take a turn and say whether you want a big or little hug. You can add other descriptive words, like a "wiggly hug" or a "quiet hug." The sense of touch is calming and comforting to your child. These hugs not only make your relationship stronger; they also allow you to share new words and concepts with them.

- For your four-year-old junior scientist, as you fill your shopping cart, ask your child: "What is heavier? A box of tissues or bag of potatoes? An orange or box of cereal? A tube of toothpaste or carton of milk?" Invite them to guess. Then let them hold one in each hand to find out. Hands-on experiences like these help your child to observe the world around them by predicting and testing their hypothesis.
- Another fun idea would be to encourage your child to tell you about his or her day, but try it backwards! What did they do before bed—maybe they read a book and before that brushed their teeth? Did they eat dinner or play before that? See how far back in the day they can remember. A backward day invites your child to think flexibly by recalling what just happened versus what happened hours ago.

For more ideas, please visit the [Vroom website!](#)

Have fun creating magical, brain-building moments with your child!

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KEEPING PARENTS IN THE LOOP: CHILD CARE UPDATES & INFORMATION



UW MADISON CHILD CARE SERVICES

OCCFR promotes the academic and professional goals of the University of Wisconsin community through the administration of early education and family support programs. Listed here are the child care centers available to UW-Madison families. If you have questions, please contact the providers directly for additional information about their services.

UW CAMPUS CHILD CARE CENTERS:

Eagle's Wing, UW Child Development Lab & Waisman Early Childhood Program

UW CHILD CARE NETWORK CENTERS:

Bernie's Place, Creative Learning Preschool, Little Chicks Learning Academy, Meeting House Nursery School, Preschool of the Arts & The Playing Field

UW FAMILY CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP:

Family child care providers may serve a wide range of ages (birth through school age) or they may target a specific age group (infant/toddlers or preschool). Providers care for children in their home and can be county certified or state Licensed.

[Child Care Services](#)

TALKING WITH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT RACE & RACISM

Having a conversation about race and racism with kids can be difficult, but it is an important discussion to have with



your young ones. If you are looking for resources to help broach this topic with your children, the University of Washington provides some great websites, webinars and information for parents.

University of Washington Center For Child & Family Well-Being

HOW TO BALANCE FAMILY/WORK/LIFE AND AVOID BURNOUT

The start of the fall semester has come with many new and unforeseen challenges. Finding our way amidst the pandemic while balancing daily life responsibilities can be a tough road.

It's not uncommon that burnout and stress come into play. Here are some resources on tackling family, work, life, school, stress and everything else while most importantly taking care of yourself.



[Finding Work/Life Balance](#)

[Fighting Family Burnout](#)

CCTAP TESTIMONIAL

MBA Mom: How Campus Child Care Helped Pave Way

I was accepted into the Wisconsin School of Business's full-time MBA program while pregnant with our second child. My husband and I were excited about this amazing opportunity for me to pursue a new career path. But we also immediately questioned what we would do for child care for our new infant and our then four-year-old. My husband worked full-time, running his own business, and we knew we would need to come up with a solution so that he could continue earning for the family while I concentrated on my studies.



The MBA program is an intense, two-year program, and I was one of a handful of MBA students with small children at home. Rigorous coursework is paired with time-consuming and competitive internship and full-time job searches during both years of the program. With no extended family in Madison to help with the kids, I had to find a way to keep up with my classmates, maximize learning as a career-switcher, and focus on finding employment with a top company.

We quickly learned about the Child Care Tuition Assistance Program (CCTAP) offered by the Office of Child Care and Family Resources (OCCFR) at UW-Madison. We inquired and applied right away, recognizing that proceeding with the MBA would be dependent on finding support on the child care front.

We received generous support from both CCTAP and the CCAMPIS federal grant program. Because of this child care tuition assistance, I was able to successfully

complete my MBA. In addition to allowing me the time and energy to focus on my new career path, the programs also enabled us to enroll both our four-year-old son and our infant daughter in one of UW's high-quality preschools. Our children were well cared for by excellent teachers, and the OCCFR staff were always warm, supportive and helpful. Pursuing the MBA at UW was one of the best decisions I've ever made, and we will always cherish our time as part of the UW-Madison family. I could not have done this without the incredibly generous support of the OCCFR.

Mary Roberts

MBA 2020 | Wisconsin School of Business



UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

Throughout the month of October:

- *Dr. Laura Froyen 1:1 virtual sessions
- *We are still accepting fall semester CCTAP applications



LET'S HAVE SOME FUN: ACTIVITIES, CRAFTS & THINGS TO DO

TIME TO ENJOY FALL WEATHER

Take in the fall season and make the outdoors your go-to location for arts and crafts. Here are some activities to keep your kids engaged and connected with nature. Explore their creative side by going outside and let Mother Nature be their guide!

Colorful Leaf Prints

101 Fun Fall Activities For Kids

Outdoor Arts & Crafts for Kids

CHEF'S CORNER

(Family-friendly cooking with Marcia Castro)

Chicken & Tomato No-Boil Pasta Bake

Let's talk roasted chicken. It's one of the easiest dishes to make at home, but with so many grocers selling them already prepared, save yourself some time and with little effort, you can turn the chicken into several meals. I usually buy two at a time and serve one for dinner with rice or potatoes and veggies. With the other one, I take all the meat off the bones right away while the chicken is warm, then toss the bones in a pot with some carrots, celery and onion to make a quick chicken stock. After the stock has lightly simmered for an hour or two, strain and cool down. It freezes well and can be used for quick soups at a later time.

This recipe intrigued me because it takes little time to prep, most ingredients are in my pantry, and even the pasta cooks entirely in the oven. Give it a try!



Ingredients

8 ounces dried rigatoni pasta
2 cups chopped cooked chicken breast (about 8 ounces; omit to make vegetarian)
4 large cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes
2 teaspoons kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 cups shredded cheese, such as mozzarella or a mix of mozzarella and provolone
1/2 cup shredded Parmesan cheese
2 cups whole milk*

For the cheesy basil topping:

1/2 cup dried breadcrumbs, such as panko
1/2 cup shredded Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup loosely packed chopped fresh herbs, such as basil, thyme, and sage
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup olive oil

Instructions

1. Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat to 400°F. Lightly coat a broiler-safe 3-quart casserole dish, Dutch oven, or 9x13-inch baking dish with olive oil; set aside.
2. Place the pasta, chicken, garlic, tomatoes and their juices, salt, and a healthy quantity of black pepper in a large bowl and stir to combine. (If the tomatoes you are using have no salt in them, add an additional 1/2 teaspoon salt.) Stir in the shredded cheese and Parmesan. Transfer to the prepared baking dish or pot and spread into an even layer. Pour the milk over the top.
3. Cover the dish or pot tightly with a lid or a double layer of aluminum foil. Bake until the pasta is tender, about 50 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare the herb topping. In a small food processor or chopper, whiz the breadcrumbs, cheese, herbs, salt, and a few grinds of black pepper. Slowly drizzle in the olive oil, blending until the texture resembles wet sand.
4. Remove the dish from the oven and turn the oven up to broil. Slowly remove the lid (or foil) from the casserole dish. Be careful, as steam will billow out. Spread the herbed breadcrumbs over the bubbling pasta. Broil uncovered until the topping is toasted and crispy on top, about 5 minutes.
5. Let cool for about 10 minutes before serving

* Milk: The more fat in your milk, the thicker and more luxurious this dish will be. Lower fat milk will produce a soupier, thinner sauce.

Recipe compliments of The Kitchn.

CELEBRATING HALLOWEEN DURING COVID19

This year, Halloween and other holiday traditions will look a little different. If you and your family celebrate Halloween, here are some tips to keep you safe, along with a list of scary haunted houses ... to explore at your own risk!
Enjoy the season and be safe!



[Halloween Tips](#)

[Haunted Wisconsin](#)



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**OCCFR
Website**