

RITES of Passage

BIRTHS

Margaret Cavanaugh

Julia and Pat Cavanaugh of Farmington Hills announce the birth of their daughter, Margaret Joelle Cavanaugh, on Aug. 23 at Sinai Hospital.

Grandparents are Eleanor and Don Block of Farmington Hills and Mary Jo and Jack Cavanaugh of Rochester Hills.



Gucciarlo-Semplonius

Renee Semplonius and Steren Gucciarlo were married Nov. 20 at Forest Hills Presbyterian Church in Grand Rapids.

The bride is the daughter of Sylvia and the late Randy Semplonius of Grand Rapids. She graduated from Michigan State University and Cooley Law School. She is the assistant prosecuting attorney for Oakland County.

The groom is the son of Anthony and Virginia Gucciarlo of Bloomfield Hills. He is a graduate of Brother Rice High School and Hillsdale College. He is a sales representative for Better Business Forms.



The couple honeymooned in the Caribbean. They are living in Birmingham.

Garvellink-Schenfeld

Deborah Lynn Schenfeld and Todd Kendall Garvellink were married Sept. 9 at the Davenport Club in New Rochelle, N.Y.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bertram Schenfeld of Forest Hills, N.Y. She is a graduate of Columbia University and Boston University Law School. She is an attorney with the firm of Goldstein & Greenlaw in Kew Gardens, N.Y.

The groom is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Roger Garvellink, formerly of Birmingham. He is a graduate of Groves High School, Michigan State University and Boston University Law School. He is an attorney with the law firm of Well,



Gothal and Mangos in New York City.

A reception was held at the Davenport Club. The newlyweds honeymooned in Aruba and they are making their home in Manhattan.

Steven Zacharias

Helene and Steven Zacharias of Rochester Hills announce the birth of their son, Steven James, on Sept. 6.

Grandparents are Helene and James Parry of Rochester Hills and Joann and Joseph Zacharias of Shelby Township.

Great-grandparents are Helene Keppler of New York, Helen Karasinski of Sterling Heights and Florence Parry of New York.



Dean Bertelson

Kevin and Marilyn Bertelson of Rochester announce the birth of their son, Dean Henry Brown, on July 16 at Crittenton Hospital in Rochester.

He has two brothers, Dane and Dustin. Grandparents are Theresa Bertelson of Grosse Pointe Woods and the late Jack Bertelson, and the late Ernest and Veronica Brown.



Teaching children should start early

ALL ABOUT FAMILIES Alice R. McCarthy, who prepares this column, has asked June Oberlander, author and national speaker in parenting, to be guest columnist for this reader's question.

ALICE MCCARTHY Q. I understand there are optimal times for learning, especially for young children. How can I help my child be ready for kindergarten? She is 2. A.B.D., Rochester

Research confirms that learning begins at birth. Babies are born with billions of brain cells, many more than they have at age 3 and nearly twice as many as they have as adults. Early stimulation is crucial for the development of skills involving vision, listening, sensory functions, and large and fine motor development. It is also important in the areas of problem-solving, language, creativity, science and life skills. These are the building blocks of learning.

Understanding the building blocks of learning and implementing them at the proper time with a nurturing "slow and steady" pace is the key to unlocking the mystery of learning.

The brain is like a computer. It organizes and stores information. Nature acts like a sculptor throughout childhood, chiseling away the excessive cells and synapses so the brain can function more efficiently in adulthood. Stimulating a child properly is simple, but it requires both quality and quantity time.

Parents are the first and most important teachers of young children. Nevertheless, many parents are busy and don't allow adequate time to interact with their children. They miss out on the joy and personal rewards of implementing the building blocks. These building blocks set the stage for the organization of early learning, which is the foundation for a child's positive self-esteem and success in school. Timing is very important!

Strengthening a parent's role in early learning is very important. It would be helpful if all parents were required to take a course in early child development and were given a resource guide on developmental activities. Parents could then teach basic readiness skills that are necessary for a child to achieve success in school. Our

mobile society of today and families with both parents working are of concern to teachers. Many parents have moved away from their family of origin where they might find support and help with their parenting.

Expensive toys are not the answer. Parents can nurture a child's progress with love, patience, consistency and repetition, using materials found at home that are free, and yet effective. This concept is found in "Slow and Steady, Get Me Ready," a book I wrote with weekly learning activities presented in the proper order and at the optimum time.

I'm a former kindergarten teacher, mother of two, and grandmother of six. The ideas were compiled for my daughter and include the building blocks of learning activities from birth to age 5. This approach gently guides a parent from birth until the child is ready for kindergarten.

June Oberlander spent 22 years teaching kindergarten in both private and public schools in Fairfax County, Va., where she saw many children beginning school who were deficient in basic readiness skills. She drew on her teaching experience and upon her retirement wrote "Slow and Steady, Get Me Ready" (Bio-Alpha Inc., P.O. Box 7190, Fairfax Station, VA 22018, \$19.95 including shipping).

This 344-page preschool resource book, initially written to guide her children in working with her six grandchildren, is meant to serve as a tool for all parents to use in cultivating the developing capabilities of their children.

In 1992, the author created a video, which describes developmental activities in "Slow and Steady, Get Me Ready" and shows children and parents doing simple activities.

In 1994, all Mrs. Oberlander's products were translated into Spanish, and "Slow and Steady, Get Me Ready" won the seal of approval from the National Parenting Center. Oberlander lectures nationally.

All About Families runs every other week in The Observer & Eclectic Newspapers. Birmingham resident Alice R. McCarthy, Ph.D., is a nationally known parent educator, writer and editor. She is the mother of five children and grandmother to six young children. To leave a message for McCarthy, write a message to McCarthy, call (313) 963-8047, mailbox 1894, or write her at The Eclectic Newspapers, 805 S. Maple, Birmingham 48009.

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