



Passages Press

Playing to Learn

by Kelsey Saucier

A parenting skill that I got interested in and researched is play. While researching this topic I learned a lot of information that I didn't know before. The first would be that toddlers learn almost everything they know from playing. They don't need any special toys; anything will work even if it's just you. Another is that having fun and playing is a way of controlling and relieving stress and creates good memories for the both of you and the child to remember for the rest of their life. Something else I learned was that children learn with their body parts, senses and how to use them for different things all at the same time.

There will be different toys and different ways of playing with a child because of their age but a just beginning toddler is the age group that I chose because my daughter is one year old. At nine months old they can understand cause and effect, which means that they know what happens after doing a certain thing. For example, they can understand that if they push a button on a toy then it will sing, talk, or make noises depending on the toy. A one year old knows how to communicate using gestures, facial expressions, making noises, saying words and

moving their body. They learn how to stand by themselves, walk, run, jump and climb. They use their body parts to explore everything. Children are different when it comes to playing. Some like calm and quiet toys, while others like a lot of action and loud or moving toys. They also change and transition from copying you to using their own ways of doing things or even making things up themselves.

These are things I learned that have to do with you helping them. When a child is getting irritated because what they are trying to do isn't working the way they want it to, then you show them how to do it by taking their hand and doing it with them to show them what to do differently so that it will work. When they finally do it themselves without your help show them excitement and praise them by clapping, saying "yay", laughing and smiling. This will make them want to do it again. They will keep doing it over and over and get the hang of it really quickly. While in this stage they will also learn about colors, shapes, communication, new words, hand-eye coordination, imitation, problem solving, self-confidence and beginning a close relationship. Some good toys for this stage in their life would be things that imitate the real

February 2013

The Community Schools @ Opportunity Farm & Camden • PO Box 555 • Camden ME 04843 • 207.236.3000

P.O. Box 65 • New Gloucester ME 04260 • 207.926.4532 • www.thecommunityschool.org

life and real world things. Problem solving toys teach them how things go together, push/pull toys are great too, but the most important one of all is you.

Out of all the things I learned I tried some new techniques with my daughter Isabella. And they worked very well with her. The first thing I tried was putting a mirror in front of her while talking to her and pointing to the different parts of her body like eyes, nose, mouth, ears, tongue, hands and feet. I also named off the different parts while I pointed to them and showed her that I had the same parts. This worked well with her; she now will point to the different parts making noises and she will point them out, laugh and act like she's talking to herself when she can see her reflection somewhere. She has now got to the point where she will point them out on other people, too.

The second thing I tried with her that worked, too, was playing the "find it" game with her by putting her favorite stuffed animals and toys under her blanket and asking, "Where is it?" I also tried it by putting toys that made noise under the blanket when she was wasn't looking and pushing the button so it would go off and get her attention, so that she would start looking for it. This worked for her, too; she now will take some toys and cover them herself, walk away and come back to uncover them and laugh, clap and make noises like she did with me when I did it with her.

The last thing that I tried with her she loved the most. I got her a ball toy that when she puts the balls in the holes on the top of it, they will drop down to different slants and roll out the bottom to her. I took her hand and showed her where the balls went and she learned to eventually do it herself and now that is her favorite toy. She will also bring the balls to you and make noises as she points to where they go to get you to do it with her. She will do the same as the rest – laugh, chase the ball as it rolls out of the bottom and start over again and again. From this toy she has also taught herself how to roll the ball across the floor.

Out of all these activities I tried with her she has learned to do a lot more and she can do them all herself perfectly fine, but still wants me to do them with her sometimes. They were very successful activities that she does all the time and loves doing them. It seems like she has so much more fun playing with the different things now than she did before. It makes me feel like I'm helping her learn, but also to have fun doing it. I think the most important thing I have learned from this is that it is very important to them that you interact and play with them. It gives you time to have fun, forget about everything else that is going on around you, and it makes you proud of them from what they have learned from you, makes you love being a parent and creates a close and tight bond between you both that no one could ever replace.

Learning to Discipline

by Shayna McKenzie

Discipline is one of the hardest things for me. I did some research and found out a lot. I didn't know much about discipline until I looked it up. I now know that discipline is used for children to stop for a minute and think about what they have done, so they learn what they did was not okay. It is a way for children to understand more of the rights and wrongs.

I learned many different ways of discipline like: time outs, redirection, sitting down and talking with the child, and taking away toys or items. I have tried time outs and redirection. They have worked really well so far. I have been ignoring the crying and after two minutes I go over to her and talk to her about what she did wrong. My daughter has been doing really well with it. It has worked better than I thought it would have. Thank god.

When disciplining a two year old, you have to stay consistent. When you use time outs with a two year old, you sit them down for two minutes and then you let them know what they have done wrong and let them know

February 2013

The Community Schools @ Opportunity Farm & Camden • PO Box 555 • Camden ME 04843 • 207.236.3000
P.O. Box 65 • New Gloucester ME 04260 • 207.926.4532 • www.thecommunityschool.org

what is okay and what isn't okay. For a two year old to understand your rules you have to go over it with them. You must get to their level and talk to them. Two-year-old children like to be independent and learn new things on their own. With a two year old you cannot punish them for everything they do. Once you tell them something they have done wrong and they don't listen you have to be very consistent with them. Consistency is one of the most effective tools of discipline.

Loving Care

by Autumn Larrondo

My son's name is Donald Jay Meklin. Donald and I love to laugh together. He loves being tickled and loves being held. Sometimes I bring Donald in my room just to play or I hold a mirror up because he loves to watch himself.



Bonding is having a very good connection and relationship with someone. I feel really good about my connection and relationship with Donald. It used to be just me and him all day, every day. Here, it is less stressful because other people are around to help if I need it. It's nice to have support but being alone with him forced me to learn how to take care of him and how to become a

mother. I liked learning about him and what his different cries meant.

To bond with Donald I will spend time with just him. He falls asleep with me in my room. I like just having me and him time. I take care of him and feed him. He sits with me on the couch and we watch SpongeBob. Some activities I do with him are reading to him, playing peek-a-boo, rocking him, and just hanging out. I feel these activities are all ways that I bond with Donald. If Donald and I weren't bonded there wouldn't be as much love and as much of a connection as there is right now. Now if he cries, I feel sad, especially if I don't know why he is crying. If we weren't bonded, it wouldn't affect me as much. It would just be another baby crying. One way I can continue to bond with Donald is by holding him when I feed him. I can continue to play with him and make him laugh in order to keep our bond strong. As he gets older I will play different things with him and we'll talk together and have conversations. I really want to be able to teach him stuff.

Donald has changed my life in many ways. My life has been so much happier and more exciting, ever since Donald was born. Before Donald was born, I never had anything to be excited for when I woke up, but now I look forward to waking up and being able to spend the whole day with my baby. Our bond is the first bond that I feel I have had with any other person or thing. I'm looking forward to the years ahead with Donald and how our bond will continue to grow.

Breastfeeding

by Kaila Gagnon

Although breastfeeding is controversial to many people, the scientific research all leads to what's best for the infant. Every new mother should try to breastfeed because it is less expensive, it creates a strong bond between the mother and the baby, and the health benefits are outstanding.

An average baby eats 9,125 ounces of milk/formula during their first year of life. The

February 2013

The Community Schools @ Opportunity Farm & Camden • PO Box 555 • Camden ME 04843 • 207.236.3000
P.O. Box 65 • New Gloucester ME 04260 • 207.926.4532 • www.thecommunityschool.org

average cost of formula per ounce is 19 cents. In the first year, an infant drinks on an average 9,125 ounces. This multiplied by 19 cents is \$1,733.75 per year. Breast milk costs \$0. Not only is breastfeeding inexpensive, but it is also highly convenient. A new mother doesn't have to get up in the night and prepare bottles or have to wash them. Who wouldn't want to save almost \$2,000 a year?

Researchers at the Child Study Center at Yale University performed functional MRIs (fMRIs) on nine breastfeeding moms and eight formula feeders about a month after their babies were born. Participants listened to clips of their own baby and an unknown child crying, as researchers analyzed which areas of their brains lit up. Breastfeeding mothers registered greater activity in the relevant brain regions than formula-feeding moms, although all mothers' brains reacted more in response to their own infant's cries than to an unknown's (Time Magazine, 2011). They said even though this was a small study, it was the first study that records brain activity in relationship to breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding releases the hormone, oxytocin that helps mother and baby create an emotional bond. When oxytocin is released, it creates a feeling of happiness. If the mother is happy and bonding, then the baby is going to sense that. Breastfed babies lie close to their mother's skin and feel comfort from the body contact. There have been many studies that show humans thrive on physical touch. Babies don't develop as well without physical loving touch.

Numerous studies from around the world have shown that stomach viruses, lower respiratory illnesses, ear infections, and meningitis occur less often in breastfed babies and are less severe when they do happen. Exclusive breastfeeding (meaning no solid food, formula, or water) for at least six months seems to offer the most protection (BabyCenter, 2013). Breast milk has immunoglobulin A, which is in large amounts of colostrum, which is full of vitamins and minerals that protect against many diseases.

February 2013

The Community Schools @ Opportunity Farm & Camden • PO Box 555 • Camden ME 04843 • 207.236.3000
P.O. Box 65 • New Gloucester ME 04260 • 207.926.4532 • www.thecommunityschool.org

Breastfeeding is extremely beneficial to mother and baby. Not only are there so many physical benefits, there are also many emotional benefits as well. Best of all the financial aspect is great.

Abortion: The Way I See It

by Emma Luscombe

I personally think that one of the biggest issues in this country at this point in time is the abortion law. My opinion is that NO child, under any circumstance should be allowed to have its life ended. To me, it is murder. If a newborn baby was killed by its mother after birth it would be considered a crime. In my opinion, the same should happen for abortion.

I believe that part of the reason why the economy is so bad right now is because we are killing the next generation. If we had more people spending money on actual products that are meant to be bought to keep the economy up, instead of people spending thousands of dollars on having someone kill their child, the economy would be better off.

I understand in the situation of getting pregnant unwillingly you would not want to keep the child, but there are millions of couples in this world that are not able to conceive a child of their own and would love to have a little baby that they can raise. I can say from being a young single mom that, having unprotected sex and getting pregnant is not the smartest idea, BUT it can be done. There are resources through the government that help people in that situation. There are always other options; it should never have to resort to ending your child's life. Whether or not you believe it is actually a baby or just a blob of skin tissue, one day it will be a little baby that will need love and attention. For every abortion there is a huge loss in this world, because no matter what the circumstance, a child is the biggest blessing you can ever receive.

I think that I would get some negative responses because of the way that I feel, but I

also think that I would get some supportive and positive responses. It is a very touchy subject for most people and I would expect to have a variety of different opinions. But this is a very opinionated topic, so I don't know if there will ever be a 100%, factual answer to fix this huge issue.

Abuse vs Discipline

by Josh Garner

When I was younger, I had to grow up with an abusive stepdad who not only beat my mother, but abused my brother and me. I would try to avoid being beaten. I would try to stay on his good side which we soon found out didn't work. It did not matter what we did, we got hit for no reason. If we were at the dinner table and my brother or I dropped food on the table or floor, my step dad would slap the back of our heads so hard, our faces would land in the bowl or plate of food. Then we would have to sit at the table until we finished our food or that's where we slept.

Charlie, my stepfather, tried to raise us as he was raised. For instance, if someone at school was messing with us, he always told us to find a teacher and get the bully in trouble instead of my brother and I getting in trouble but he didn't understand if we told on the bully, they would get us after school or on the bus or even in the bathroom. Who could we tell if there was nobody there? Then if we told on the bully, we got hurt and if we didn't and we fought back, we got beat at home as well. My stepfather was a bully himself, so this was advice he should have used for his own behavior. We couldn't win for losing. It didn't matter what my brother and I did, we always got beat. We got hit so much we tried to prepare ourselves to be hit, but it seemed every time we got hit, it felt harder than the hit before. My mother got beaten for different reasons such as, standing up for my brother and me, or when my stepfather got home from work and he expected the house to be done, if it wasn't, he would hit my mom. No matter

what, my brother and I had to deal with physical abuse for a long time. If we weren't getting abused at home from our stepdad, we were getting abused at school by all the bullies.

I am going to do the complete opposite of how I was brought up when raising Logan. I am not going to spank my son. I don't believe in it. I read a book that was an example of how parents discipline their children in a way that they feel is appropriate, but sometimes it is not. A parent could be hitting their child's bottom, saying it is because they love the child, but it is not teaching the child right or wrong. It is actually teaching them abuse.

I can set an example for my son in a way that if I start to lose my cool, I could go for a walk, so that way he doesn't get the wrong impression. Also, when I don't have control of my temper, Ashley and I could go for a walk and talk; that way I'd have a chance to calm down. I also need to make sure that I treat Ashley well, so my son grows up learning how to do the right thing. If my son is ever in the wrong, to punish him I will never put my hands on my child. Instead, I will discipline by sitting him down and seeing if he knows what he did wrong and how he could change for the next time.

Words Will Always Hurt You

by Dakota Powers

Abuse or neglect is harmful to anyone or anything. There are several forms of abuse, each with harmful consequences. If you know someone who is being abused or neglected or you're being abused or neglected yourself, it is important to understand and take action.

One form of abuse is verbal abuse. I would describe verbal abuse as a person using words and body language to inappropriately criticize another person. Verbal abuse often involves putdowns and name-calling intended to make the victim feel they are not worthy of love or respect and that there is nothing good about them. If the victim speaks up against

February 2013

The Community Schools @ Opportunity Farm & Camden • PO Box 555 • Camden ME 04843 • 207.236.3000
P.O. Box 65 • New Gloucester ME 04260 • 207.926.4532 • www.thecommunityschool.org

these statements, they are often told that they are not being abused, that it is "all in their head." Verbal abuse is dangerous because it is often not easily recognized as abuse, and therefore, it can go on for a long time, causing severe damage to a victim's self-esteem. Damaged victims may not take advantage of opportunities that would enrich their lives because they come to believe they are not worthy of those opportunities.

Verbal abuse creates emotional pain and mental grief. It is a lie told to you or about you. Generally, verbal abuse is telling people what they are, what they think, their intent, and so forth. The best way to deal with a verbally abusive relationship, whether you are the target of verbal abuse or the perpetrator, is to find out everything you can about verbally abusive relationships and their tendencies. Usually one person is blaming, accusing, even name calling, and the other is defending and explaining. Most people targeted by verbal abuse explain why what they've just heard is not true or not okay. They explain themselves because they believe the perpetrator is rational and can hear them and the relationship will then get better. Then they usually hear more verbal abuse - for instance, "You're too sensitive." At that point they don't usually realize that they have just been defined and verbally abused again. Since the target of verbal abuse is often blamed, ignored, or yelled at, s/he may have difficulty recognizing just what is going on in the relationship.

I think that addressing verbal abuse is a lot more complicated than addressing other forms of abuse because many people can't recognize that the pain from verbal or emotional abuse is just as bad as that of physical or any other kind of abuse. That may lead victims of verbal abuse to believe that they really are just overreacting and not address the issue at all.

If you or someone you know is being verbally abused I think that the best way to handle it would be to speak with them personally about the issue. Showing them that someone recognizes what has been

happening to them may help them to believe the problem themselves. Go over verbal abuse with them. Explain what it is, the facts and the outcomes of it. If this doesn't work, they may be in denial and the best way to handle it may be speaking to someone else in their life about it - someone who may be able to get them help. You could also try to seek them professional help yourself. These are the steps that I would take in the situation that someone I knew was being verbally abused. Verbal abuse is serious and can be permanently damaging to a person's self-esteem and can therefore affect them for the rest of their life. That is why it should be treated just as any other form of abuse.

CANDY

by Niomi Johnson

Candy is what I take and eat that is bitter-so-sweet, it makes you see the world in a different perspective. The only problem is I see it in a different perspective.

It makes you feel so real and experience new things; you feel a rush, energy relaxation – they are ever so sweet.

They have many different colors that you can try; make sure you don't take them dry.

But along with candy comes a monster and that is what I had to say, this monster I am scared of, eating human beings' emotions up, not having a care in the world.

Along with candy there is a zombie as well, walking dead in repeat, with no heartbeat, doing the same things over and over in the same order. Walking stiff and slow, not sure where to go.

Candy is sweet; it makes you see reality, but is it worth being a monster or zombie? Not sure if the candy still wants me.

I got the monster below my feet, choking him. I can't breathe - is the monster some part of me?

Life with Candy is like a vampire, sucking the life out of me, making me bleed until I'm weak. The zombie tearing at my flesh, walking with no

February 2013

The Community Schools @ Opportunity Farm & Camden • PO Box 555 • Camden ME 04843 • 207.236.3000
P.O. Box 65 • New Gloucester ME 04260 • 207.926.4532 • www.thecommunityschool.org

sleep; I can't reach for the gun; it's too far away from me.

So I eat the candy; suddenly I'm fine and alive, but what is the true reality? The zombie eating at my face that I try and hide. The zombie eating my heart that doesn't beat, my brain that doesn't think, my lungs that I can't use to breathe, my lips that I can't use to speak, my eyes, so that I can't see what is in front of me. For I am the zombie who had the candy, falling flesh hangs like my feelings, like eating me apart. Candy...

This Window

by Niomi Johnson

He asked me why I was looking out the window; I never spoke.

He said it's only black out there, and I thought, if you could know what is seen through my eyes.

Behind this window is a person who looks out waiting for the window to open.

Behind this window is pain, is tears, is lies.

I lie to myself about a lot of things: that I'm happy, that I'm fine, that I'm okay. When you see my smile or laugh, is it me just laughing at myself? I question this constantly. My weakness, my insincerity, my thoughts. Is being me a joke? I guess that it is a good enough reason to laugh.

So sitting in the dark with spiders and dirt is where I lay, where my state of mind is all the time. I have seen rain pour down and I can relate to my poor face. The snow piles up like emotions, creeping up slowly, turning cold.

Relationships? Are like a spider crawling down from a web, eating the fly's insides. Am I the fly? Rabbits eating their children - are they my parents?

Where to go I am not sure of. I am a schizophrenic when it comes to life. Who is to say they are someone when they just imagine they are.

Cigarettes help me cope; it's just like life burning away at your fingertips, but it burns slow, and you can't breathe, kind of like after you are done smoking, with life you are done.

Am I a luna moth? All they do is live to breed and make more. Is that life? Or do they know how bad of a world we "live" in is? Because they don't live long enough to find out.

Looking out this window makes a lot of sense for once. I'm just waiting to smash a rock through and let light in to be happy, but it's too bad every time I feel like smashing it, it's always nighttime...

The Value of Volunteering

Dakota Sprague:

Volunteering at the Lost and Found consignment store was a great experience. Lost and Found is located in Union. Regina, the owner, takes in clothes, vintage collectables, furniture, baby toys, and items that people no longer want and re-sells them to people who want to buy. When a person buys an item credit goes towards the person who originally brought it in.

I got to work with some great people who were down to earth and funny. Pricing was hard because you do not want to make an item too expensive or too cheap. Other than pricing it was easy. I went through a lot of clothes that consignors brought in and I priced them and put them away.

Another great thing about volunteering there was I got to meet a lot of new people which was great! I am always a shy person so putting me in an environment where I have to be outgoing made me come out of my shell a little bit.

Emma Luscombe:

I volunteered with the school at a food pantry. We cleaned the food and separated it and made meals and organized. It was really an awesome experience, it gave the girls and I a chance to step out of our day-to-day life and gave us a chance to make a difference and really help some people that are less fortunate. It really put into perspective how blessed we are and I think a lot of the girls needed to realize that, as did I. I loved doing it and would love to be a part of something like that again. You always leave with a smile on your face, because you know that you have put a smile of someone else.

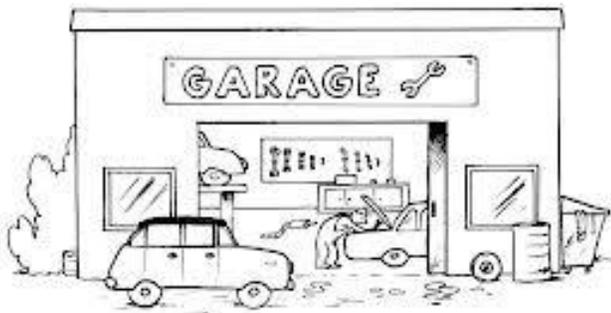
February 2013

The Community Schools @ Opportunity Farm & Camden • PO Box 555 • Camden ME 04843 • 207.236.3000
P.O. Box 65 • New Gloucester ME 04260 • 207.926.4532 • www.thecommunityschool.org

Becoming a Mechanic

by Daylon Danforth

The kinds of careers I like are mechanic work, carpentry, and woodworking. The career I chose to research was mechanic work. The education you need for doing mechanic work is a G.E.D or a high school diploma; you can take extra training but it is your choice; it is not required. You can gain experience to work at dealers, private companies and more. In order to be a mechanic you have to take a 40-50 question test every 5 years and you also earn a certificate. If you are a certified mechanic you could make 40-50 dollars an hour. I know this because my father owned a private garage and my grandfather worked at Chrysler as a mechanic for 14 years and was one of Maine's top 10 mechanics. I talked to them and that's how I found most of my information. If I was a mechanic I would be an engine and drive train mechanic, spending my time rebuilding engines, changing the oil, tune-ups, replacing drive gears, and more.



I worked with my dad on a lady's car a couple of years ago. We had to replace the head gaskets. To do that we had to take the side panels off the car, take off the top of the motor, remove all the old gaskets and replace them with new ones, also had to put the motor back together, seal it, torch it. Then pressure test the motor, fill it back up with fluids, and test drive it. What I liked about it was that I learned

new things from my dad, I also liked that I had a chance to do what I have always wanted to do, and I think I found what my life career could be. The things I didn't like about it was it was cold out because it was in the middle of the winter so I was cold and all the tools were cold. In the end I found out that I love doing it.

A Passage Proposal

by Erika Bishop

I will be job shadowing at the Sweetser crisis unit in Belfast. I'm driven towards this because of my personal experience and the belief that I can make a difference. On three occasions I will be on the unit for four hours to observe and take note of techniques, methods, and to take in the program as a whole. I will take notes about what I observe and learn and will present that in a Powerpoint to the Passage team. Around the beginning of April I will also be reading about this field to get a broader understanding of training and thoughts on behavioral problems and their causes, how to cope, and the most effective therapy techniques.

I think success in this project for me will be to walk away with a better understanding of the ins and outs of the crisis unit and the program they follow. I hope to also reach a new level of confidence in my ability to work at the Belfast crisis unit. Failure in this project I think would be to walk away learning nothing and blindly continuing to pursue this with my own thoughts and beliefs instead of facts.

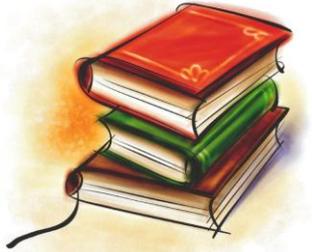
Emotionally, I feel like I'm conquering a fear during this whole process, from job shadowing to presenting to the team - it's all out of my comfort zone. Each step I complete in this process of graduation brings a feeling of overwhelming fear mixed with a sense of independence. These steps are important because I will be feeling these things for the rest of my life. I feel it's important that I finally prove to myself that I can do this. I can push through the fear and find the happiness and independence I long for.

February 2013

The Community Schools @ Opportunity Farm & Camden • PO Box 555 • Camden ME 04843 • 207.236.3000
P.O. Box 65 • New Gloucester ME 04260 • 207.926.4532 • www.thecommunityschool.org

My Passage will feel completed for me when I can walk into my presentation knowing I learned all I could and conquered all the fears that went with this project. I feel even if my presentation doesn't go as well as planned I will still feel successful. For me it's about what I learn and overcome and where I'm going after this.

Book Corner



The Pregnancy Project

written by Gaby Rodriguez
reviewed by Kaila Gagnon

The Pregnancy Project by Gaby Rodriguez is an excellent book for anyone to read, not just teen mothers. It has an awesome point about stereotyping. In this book Gaby fakes a pregnancy her senior year in high school for a project. She was told her entire life by everyone around her she would be just like her mother and sisters and she would become a teen mom.

I feel I can connect to this book because I am a teen mother. I became a statistic the second I found out I was pregnant at 16. I was criticized and people talked, a lot, but I tried not to let it bother me. It's still hard to have people say your life is over no matter if you still graduate high school and go to college. It doesn't matter what type of person you were before, your life is supposedly ruined because you became pregnant. It was nice to read a book that I could really relate to.

This book made me really open my eyes to stereotypes and how people can judge when they don't know the full story. I could really relate to what Gaby was going through, except for the fact that she really wasn't pregnant. She still got to experience all the

criticism about pregnancy, but not actually experience the pregnancy. I would most definitely recommend this book to anyone, not just a teenage girl. It is a real eye opener.

Push

written by Sapphire
reviewed by Molly Bechand

I connected to Precious as I was raped, not by my father or mother, but by a man who was old enough to be my grandfather, and I had a baby by him. Precious's life is a little like mine. I grew up with no parents and everyone doubted me and called me retarded and said I would never make it in life. Well, after thirteen years, I'm getting my diploma, have my own apartment and dreams, just like Precious. She is getting her GED and her own place. She has kind of the same supports as me - professional help, not family help.

The book made me cry at parts, because it is sad that a 12 year old was raped by her father and had a mentally challenged kid. I don't get why the state and welfare didn't get involved; that's just so sad. I thought it was great she still continued her life even though she was infected with HIV and wanted to get her other child. I definitely would recommend this book to other people.

A Child Called It

by Dave Pelzer
reviewed by Kiera Satele

A Child Called It is based on a true story. It's all about a boy named Dave whose mother abused him physically and emotionally. This boy went through a lot. The abuse led him to being forced to eat his own puke, soap, and ammonia, to being burned, starved and fearing his own mother. It's sad that someone fears their own mother, the person they're supposed to love the most. His mother was a bad alcoholic. Poor Dave would sneak frozen dinners, hiding in the garage to eat things the family threw away. His mother treated his

February 2013

The Community Schools @ Opportunity Farm & Camden • PO Box 555 • Camden ME 04843 • 207.236.3000
P.O. Box 65 • New Gloucester ME 04260 • 207.926.4532 • www.thecommunityschool.org

brothers differently, better than she treated her Dave. She called Dave "it". Dave got into foster care at the age of 12 and obviously lived through this abuse. He later joined the U.S Air Force.

It helped me understand that my life isn't nearly as bad as other people's lives. I need to stop complaining about my life and thinking my life is so hard when I really have it easy compared to some people. While some people are sleeping outside and are homeless, having to eat out of trash cans and holding signs up for money, I'm at home in my warm cozy bed with home cooked meals and don't have to worry about where I'm going to sleep and what I'm going to eat. When I'm mad and upset I say, "I hate my life," but there's people out there that have worse lives than I do and they have all the right in the world to hate their lives. I see homeless people outside and it makes me feel so selfish when I act like my life is the worst. I'm thankful and blessed for the life I have.

This book made me teary-eyed. It could give someone bad dreams. It made me so sad that someone feared their mother as much as Dave did. No child should fear his mother, his mother is supposed to be his hero, his favorite person, the person he loves the most, a person he always wants in his life and has a special bond with. It made me think, how could any mother treat her child that way? I could never in my life treat my child in any type of way his mother did. My son comes first in my life, his needs come before my own; I've changed my life around completely for my son. Every time I lay my eyes on my son I fall deeper in love with him. I'm completely dumbfounded why Dave's mother hates him so much. It just makes me sad and I feel so bad for him. No child deserves to feel like their mother hates them.

I would recommend this book, to certain people - people who are mature enough. I would also recommend the book to someone who's been in, or is currently in, the same situation as Dave was. And I'd like others to read it in order to realize that there are people

out in the world that have it harder than they do.

Stop pretending

by Sonya Sones

reviewed by Ashley Bartlett

Stop pretending is a good book and written in an interesting style - a day-by-day poetry journal. It's about this girl's sister who was fine, then went crazy and went to a psych ward. The youngest sister looked up to the older sister until she went crazy. The younger sister didn't know what to think. She was so embarrassed to tell her friends that her sister was sick. This part in the book was sad. I couldn't imagine having a sister and going through what the young girl did with her sister.

"When I used to wake up frightened in the middle of the night, sister would come and sit on the edge of my bed until I fell back to sleep. Now no one is there in the middle of the night; no one for her night or day and she doesn't know I'm there. Nothing I do or say makes one bit of difference."

At the end of the book everything starts to look up. The older sister remembers the youngest sister and they have a normal conversation like they used to.

I think that by reading this book, if somebody didn't understand mental illness they would definitely get a good idea on how it affects others that are close to them and get a better understanding of mental illness.

Poem by Dakota Powers

in response to The Red Necklace by Sally Gardner, an historical novel about a gypsy boy during the French Revolution

True that magic can't be enough to save
someone who's strange,

Sad that the strangeness of that mind can't fix
the ones deranged,

If caring for that stranger's life could somehow
change a mind,

Then maybe I could stop the deranged and
somehow make things right.