



Good Beginnings
of the Upper Valley

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND TECHNOLOGY: WHEN TO SAY YES OR NO WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2023 7:00–8:00PM

Dr. Betty Vohr is Good Beginnings' guest presenter for our 17th Annual Dorothy Campion Corcoran Parenting Webinar. Dr. Vohr's webinar will center on the negative effects of excessive screen time for children, beginning at six months of age, and will also include a discussion of up-to-date recommendations for both screen time and exercise, which are often reciprocals of each other. Q & A will follow at 7:45 PM, via the webinar chat. Only Dr. Vohr's camera and microphone will be seen and heard; listeners' video/audio will be off.

Dr. Betty Vohr is a Professor of Pediatrics, Alpert Medical School of Brown University, Providence, RI. She was also the Director of the Neonatal Follow-up Program at Women & Infants Hospital/Alpert Medical School of Brown University in Providence, RI from 1974 to 2021.

After starting the Neonatal Follow-up Program at Women & Infants Hospital in 1974, Dr. Vohr was disturbed to see children in the clinic that she had cared for as a Fellow who were significantly language delayed and were subsequently diagnosed with hearing loss. Dr. Vohr became dedicated to improving the process of early detection and was able to obtain funding in 1989-1991 from Maternal and Child Health and the Department of Education to test and study the feasibility of universal newborn hearing screening. The results demonstrated positive and preventive effects



leading to national recognition and a recommendation for universal newborn hearing screening.

Rhode Island became the first state to successfully implement a statewide universal newborn hearing screening program in 1992 under her direction. Currently more than 97% of newborns in the US are screened for hearing loss at birth in the US.

Dr. Vohr's research focuses on:

- Low-birth weight infants
- Language and behavior outcomes of children with hearing loss
- Enhanced newborn transition home services to decrease ER visits, rehospitalizations and health care costs.
- Healthcare disparities and effects of high-risk neighborhoods.

VISIT [HTTPS://WWW.GBUV.ORG/FALLECTURES](https://www.gbu.org/fallectures) FOR WEBINAR LINK.

Visit [gbuv.org](https://www.gbu.org) for a link to Dr. Betty Vohr's webinar on 10/25.



COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Good Beginnings of the Upper Valley serves any family within an approximate 40-mile radius of our West Lebanon office.



Good Beginnings frequently serves the New Hampshire and Vermont communities listed below. Please contact us if you have questions about our service area.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Canaan	Haverhill	Piermont
Claremont	Lebanon	Plainfield
Cornish	Lyme	Springfield
Croydon	Meriden	Sunapee
Enfield	New London	Warner
Grantham	Newport	Wilmot
Hanover	Orford	W. Lebanon

VERMONT

Barnard	Newbury	Vershire
Bethel	Norwich	W. Fairlee
Bradford	Pomfret	White River Jct.
Corinth	Quechee	Wilder
Fairlee	Sharon	Windsor
Hartford	Strafford	Woodstock
Hartland	Thetford	
Killington	Topsham	



GOOD BEGINNINGS' PROFILES

LIA AND BETH

Lia is a PhD student who was in the hospital giving birth to her first child, daughter Larkin. She learned about Good Beginnings, along with other programs available to new moms, from a social worker visit. After that, she was also told of Good Beginnings free services by her pediatrician; and decided to request a volunteer. Her special request was that she needed someone quickly, as she was going back to her classes, and she would not be able to take advantage of the whole 12 weeks that Good Beginnings offers. She didn't know if that would make it more difficult for her to be paired up.

At Good Beginnings, the process of matching a recipient family and a volunteer takes into consideration several points, according to Program Director Denise Gariepy: geographic community, schedules, and special requests, like allergy concerns in the home. After working through these points, the Program Director sends out emails to volunteers who might fit the request. The volunteer who is available at that time is then matched with the family.

Beth is a new Good Beginnings' volunteer. She recently retired as a pediatric Physical Therapist. While she was working for the State of VT's Early Intervention Program, she often heard Good Beginnings referenced from parents of her patients. This volunteer opportunity stuck with her, and she felt she wanted to do it when she finished working. She took the training classes and waited to see with which family she might be matched.

Along came the contact from Denise telling Beth about Lia's situation. She was more than happy to meet Lia and the match was made. Lia's mom, Larkin's grandma, happened to be visiting when Beth came to her 'meet and greet' and "got her approval". Grandma does not live close by and was satisfied that Lia would be in good hands. Lia and Beth completed eight visits before Lia returned to her classes. As Lia, Beth and Larkin reunited at the Good Beginnings' office for this story, each laughed and smiled as they greeted one another. Beth held Larkin while they chatted. Although Lia was only able to have Beth visit on official volunteer duties for eight weeks, their unofficial visits and relationship will continue much longer. Lia can also continue to utilize other services of Good Beginnings, for any infant items she needs or health and safety information in the months ahead. And, Good Beginnings will keep in touch for the next five years on Larkin's birthdays with a special gift.

INVESTMENT COSTS TO CARRY, BIRTH & CARE FOR A BABY

PREGNANCY, DELIVERY AND CARE OF AN INFANT
REQUIRE A
PRECIOUS INVESTMENT

PRE-NATAL CARE

Midwives, doctors' visits, nutrition, health concerns, maternity clothes all cost resources: time, money and attention



LABOR & DELIVERY

Average cost range from \$19,000-\$23,000, c-sections costs rise to \$23,000-\$58,000



DIAPERS, WIPES, WASH & STUFF

Average yearly costs for disposable diapers, wipes \$1390; or \$500 extra for electricity for cloth diapers. And another \$700/yr on miscellaneous



SLEEP & CARE

Early mornings, late nights and average child care costs of \$26,000 annually, along with strollers, car seats and cribs require a large investment. But these investments



A CHILD YOU LOVE MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE, AND INFINITE RETURNS ON YOUR INVESTMENT



CONSIDER BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

Volunteering is flexible: weekdays, weekends, mornings, evenings or afternoons, and only 2-3 hours per week and usually provides 12 visits per family. If you're interested in volunteering, contact: Denise Gariepy at info@gbuv.org or visit gbuv.org for more information.



**VOLUNTEER
WITH GOOD
BEGINNINGS**
gbuv.org

THANK YOU

FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR FAMILIES

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Bishop's Charitable Assistance Fund
The Jack & Dorothy Byrne Foundation
Claremont Savings Bank
Jane B Cook '92 Fund
Couch Family Foundation
Donley Foundation
Geokon
Granite Value Capital
Greenspan Foundation
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& Trix Officer*
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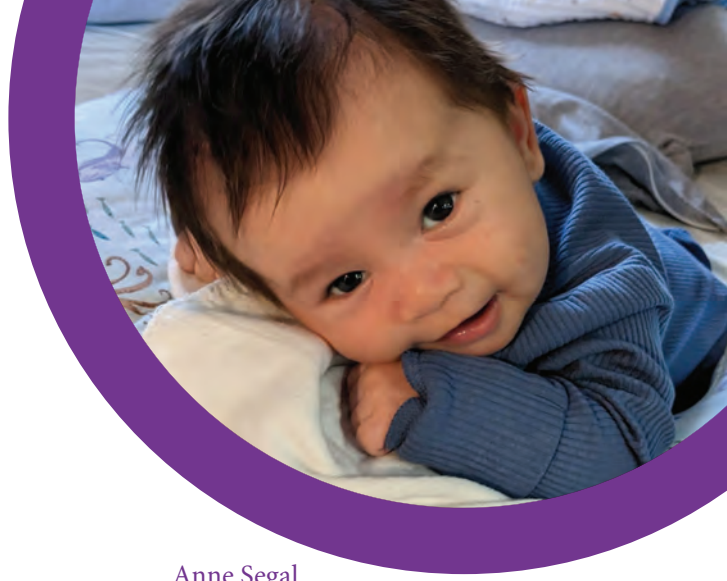
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Emily & Errik Anderson
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Jennifer & Adam Blue
In honor/memory of Josie Queneau
Ginger & Greg Boitnott
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In honor/memory of Sandra Andsley

CULTIVATING STRONG KIDS

The early years of life are the most wonderfully frustrating gift to new parents. If you are a first-time parent, you are bringing home the “cutest little kiddo” in the whole wide world, which is blanketed by learning to cope with parenting and new tasks, while operating on little sleep. If that is you today, pause and give yourself grace! Newborns do not come with manuals. At the core of all your new baby smells, bouncy chairs and baby swaddle blankets is an inner-voice wondering, “Am I doing this right?” It’s a loaded question that is packed with uncertainty and sometimes fear that I am going to “mess up my child.” It’s normal, but it packs a heartfelt punch.

As a Social Worker and a mom of a 3-year-old boy, I realize the importance of this consideration. All parents want to know that their child is well adjusted, ready for the world and has all they need to be a strong successful person. In my work as a Social Worker, I hear the word resiliency used to describe children who are being given age-appropriate skills to help children thrive and grow up to be well-adjusted and able to cope with life’s demands.

According to the Harvard Center for the Developing Child, the single most common factor for children who develop resilience is at least **one stable and committed** relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult. All the research points to well-adjusted strong children having a safe and attached connection to at least one of their long-term caregivers. Take a deep breath first time parent—You are a gift to your baby!

Here are three ways to be intentional about the connection with your small child:

1 Establish stability in your child by meeting your baby’s basic needs and by instilling your family values. In the first years of life, your baby needs to know that YOU are someone they can trust to respond to their basic human needs and their emotional needs. You will respond to their cries. You will seek to resolve their needs in real time. You will include things in their life that are of value to you and your core family. Doing this creates emotional safety. There is power in finding stable, consistent response to our needs.

2 Help your baby establish his/her voice in the world.

Language is a beautiful gift and language development is an important part of child development. From babbling to first words, we are supporting baby’s ability to communicate, think, and learn. As a parent, you are there to introduce your child to unfamiliar words/new words, framing ways for children to connect with others, and helping them learn to navigate relationships with words. Lastly, learning



early words establishes your child’s ability to read in the coming early years. So practically, read lots of books, sing songs, and incorporate body and sign language. Encourage your baby when you hear them say words.

3 Lastly, demonstrate healthy coping and regulation.

Parenting tests coping skills and emotional regulation in the best of us! It can be challenging, but worth the effort to demonstrate to your child non-harmful words and strategies to use when frustrated. Children need to see faces, kind words, and empathic responses to pain and others’ needs. It can be as simple as saying, “I am sorry you are upset; I get upset too! When I am upset sometimes, I sit in a quiet space. Can I sit in your quiet place with you?” In two sentences, you acknowledge a feeling, provide alternative skills, and show empathy.”

If you find emotional regulation difficult to manage in your home, seek support. Many families work with family interventionists, or behavior therapists to consider new ways to cope and express feelings or contact family care centers or parent child centers for parenting tips.

Building strong babies is hard work, but together we can do it. Give your baby the gift of you!

IT'S OK TO NOT BE OK



This is an abridged version of the article “Early screening and education can prevent maternal mental health illness” published in the Concord Monitor and written by Sruthi Gopalakrishnan on May 13, 2023. To read the full article visit: <https://www.concordmonitor.com/Maternal-Mental-Health-50874972>

Alison Palmer thought she had motherhood figured out after her first pregnancy. Even with 27 years of experience in the field of women’s health, Palmer found herself in uncharted territory, trying to navigate the wild and unpredictable world of caring for a newborn while struggling with her own mental health.

After her pregnancy a decade ago, Palmer knew she was struggling but refused to acknowledge it. Her husband knew little about her mental health challenges until six months into her postpartum journey, when she had a major mental health crisis during the day while he was working at home. Concerned for her well-being, he urged her to reach out for help.

“I think there was just such a catharsis, a relief in just admitting that I was struggling and being able to say it out loud to a professional,” Palmer said.

The World Health Organization reports that nearly 20% of women will develop a mental health condition during pregnancy or within the first year after giving birth. These conditions may manifest as depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorders and various other forms of mental illness that affect maternal health.

As a medical assistant and maternal mental health advocate in pediatrics at Dartmouth Hitchcock Clinics, Heather Martin has witnessed the devastating impact of maternal mental illness firsthand. Her sister struggled with postpartum psychosis, and despite being prescribed medication, Martin lost her sister to suicide within three weeks of her niece being born.

She drafted a proclamation to recognize May 3 as Mental Health Awareness Day in New Hampshire, which was officially signed by Gov. Chris Sununu this month. Martin says, “This not only spreads awareness but helps break the stigma and makes it OK for our moms to speak up and ask for help.”

“I think moms and women are often held to a high standard without the support,” said Palmer. “There’s so much pressure to be it all and do it all.”

New Hampshire has received an F grade compared to other states in its efforts to address maternal mental health, according to a recent report by the Policy Center for Maternal Mental Health. The state’s rating was primarily affected by a shortage of healthcare providers in relation to patients and a lack of adequate mental health screening.

“It’s OK to not be OK,” Martin assures women who don’t feel good during pregnancy or motherhood. “With help and support, you will be well.”

National Maternal Mental Health Hotline: Call or text 833-943-5746 for confidential support before, during, and after pregnancy.

More support lines are listed in the full article.

NATIONAL MATERNAL MENTAL HEALTH HOTLINE:

Call or text **833-943-5746** for confidential support before, during, and after pregnancy.



“I think there was just such a catharsis, a relief in just admitting that I was struggling and being able to say it out loud to a professional.”

—Alison Palmer



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**WED, OCT 25TH
7 PM ZOOM WEBINAR
Q&A AT 7:45 PM**

**17TH ANNUAL DOROTHY CAMPION
CORCORAN PARENTING LECTURE**



OUR 2023 DOROTHY
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FALL WEBINAR WILL
FEATURE DR. BETTY VOHR



**Good Beginnings
of the Upper Valley**

Helping local families with new babies since 1986