

Parenting our young ones

By *KATE ROSS*

Prospective parents often think it will be love at first sight when a baby is born. In fact, it may take until an infant is able to focus longingly on an adult, sometime around two months, before that feeling of 'I'm in love.' Until then, it's getting used to waking every two to four hours throughout the night and day to feed a new helpless being. It's changing diapers. It's gently rocking the new infant to help her get to sleep.

Being a parent is a difficult task. As a parent we must be on at all times. It doesn't matter if you're feeling sick - in fact children seem to know that - sort of like a sixth sense. They also know when parents are on the phone - they're going to bug us - count on it! Sometimes their best irritating stuff comes out when you have that all-important call for a new job offer.

Children don't mean to bother us - they just want attention. And children need and deserve our full attention throughout the day. But they also need to learn that we have things to do, too. We need to leave their side in order to take a shower or take out the garbage. It's ok. We'll come back.

As a parent, it's very rewarding to spend time with your children every day. It's actually fun to play with them! Children love when we get silly. They love to be tickled. They love to giggle. And so should we! Laughter is excellent medicine . . . a well-known fact.

Turn off the television, the video games, and the Wii. Sit on the floor next to your child. Play with what your son is playing with. Add a car to the train he's made. Put an animal on the train and say, "go for a

ride. Bye-bye!" Give the baby doll a bottle then ask your daughter to give her a kiss. Cover the baby with a blanket and say, "night-night."

Smile and show your child you are proud of the accomplishments he makes every day. She is growing and developing skills right in front of your eyes - sometimes hourly! Lickety-split and she'll be asking for the keys to the car. In the blink of an eye, he'll be applying for his first job. Don't let these important years speed by. We often look back in regret at not spending enough time with our children.

It is from the comfort of early relationships with others that children gain confidence and competence. From this confidence, they learn to take risks; Risks to sit up alone, say a first word, and take the first step. These major milestones in early development occur within the first one to two years of life - an extremely prolific time for learning.

Our children are the citizens of tomorrow. With a solid early background filled with love and encouragement, safety and curiosity, time spent together enjoying each other - our children will become stable, confident and competent adults.

Northeast Kingdom Learning Services, NEKLS, in both its Family Infant and Toddler (FITP) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs, offers parent trainings and workshops along with a variety of support activities. If interested, please call FITP at 802-748-6609, 802-766-9244 or ABE at 802-748-5624, 802-334-2839.