

Workshop aims to help new parents strengthen their relationship



Angie Campbell, Upstate Parent 2:34 p.m. EDT September 8, 2016



(Photo: CINDY HOSEA/Staff)

If you're expecting a baby or have a newborn at home, you've probably already equipped your house with the best crib, baby monitors and car seats available. However, studies show there's one area new parents often overlook, and that's their own relationship.

"The relationship between parents is the greatest gift that can be given to a child," said Susannah Baldwin, a licensed adults and couples counselor at Bay Laurel Center for Psychotherapy in Greenville.

Baldwin, who focuses on helping adults and couples experiencing struggles with what she calls the reproductive journey, said studies show that two-thirds of new parents experience a decline in their relationship within three years of having a child, which in turn can have adverse affects on the child's emotional, neurological and intellectual development.

That's why she offers periodic workshops called Bringing Baby Home.

"We talk about the relationship between parents, how to resolve conflict and how to involve dad," she said. "We talk about how babies develop psychologically and emotionally and how they can interact and facilitate through that development."

The next two-day Bringing Baby Home program will be held 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Oct. 1 – 2 at St. Francis Eastside in Greenville. Registration is required, and an early bird discount is \$180 per couple until Sept. 16. Cost is \$220, which includes snacks, workbook and materials.

Baldwin described the program, designed by John and Julie Gottman who wrote "And Baby Makes Three," as a fun, interactive experience that uses videos presentations, anecdotes, props, exercises and discussion.

"It's an evidence-based workshop, so they followed couples to make sure this was something that was holding with the issues they were having," she said. "It's for new and expectant parents, but it's evidence-based to help any parent with a child under the age of 3. I've had some participants who had older children, and they said it was incredibly valuable."

Baldwin also welcomes parents to bring along their newborns under the age of 3 months old to the workshop.

"Each couple has individual space where they have room to talk to each other," she said. "It's a comfortable environment."

Baldwin also offers private sessions, specializing in adults dealing with reproductive issues, including infertility, postpartum depression, anxiety, relationship distress and infant loss. She has advance training in maternal mental health from Postpartum Support International, is a volunteer for the Upstate Birth Network and for Postpartum Support International as a state coordinator.

"I think my training above and beyond grad school is helpful for me in understanding the nuances of what the struggles are," she said. "You can have anxiety at any point in your life, but understanding the nuances of how anxiety affects a pregnant mom and her family is important. The worries tend to be different."

—BRIEFLY—

TicTacCode# offers afterschool opportunities

TicTacCode# is a new afterschool program in Greenville aimed at middle schoolers interested in learning computer coding. Students can start on the ground floor of technology to learn from a community of classmates and mentors. Twelve-week sessions start in September and are held at 123 N. Main St., Greenville. For more details, visit <https://tictaccode.io> (<https://tictaccode.io>).

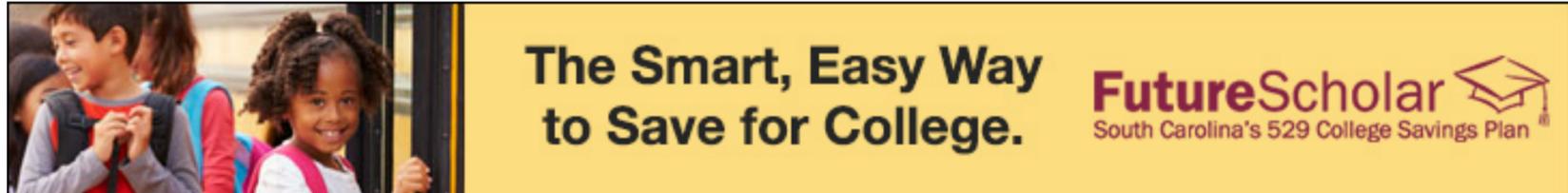
Home School Natural Discovery Day is Sept. 16

Roper Mountain Science Center will host its annual Home School Natural Discovery Day Sept. 16. The event will include a day of instructor-led lessons and demonstrations for individual families, home school associations, and co-ops. More than 40 mini lessons and demonstrations are planned, including a fossil mini-dig, a cow heart dissection, and solar viewing. For details, call 864-355-8900 or visit www.ropermountain.org (<http://www.ropermountain.org>).

Find more at www.upstateparent.com (<http://www.upstateparent.com/>).

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