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Parent Newsletter

Headstart, Early Headstart, Home Based H.S., Expectant Moms Program,

Special Education, Early Intervention, Ezra Medical Center, WIC

November/December 2006 Volume 5 No. 2



Ezra Medical Center

An innovative new program has been inaugurated by YVY's affiliate, Ezra Medical Center. Utilizing a mobile dental van which is fully equipped with state-of-the-art dental equipment, Ezra's pediatric dentists have been visiting all YVY Head Start sites and, with parent consent, have been screening YVY Head Start children for possible dental problems. In this way, Head Start's mandate that all children must have a dental screening within 90 days of entry into the program has been met without inconveniencing parents. Parents have been notified of all screening results.

Ezra's van will return to Head Start sites to service children who need follow up after appointments are made with their parents. Children will thus not have to miss a day of school to go to the dentist. Of course, parents can also choose to take children to their own dentists. This is a pro bono service offered by Ezra Medical Center to help YVY serve its Head Start children better.

Early comprehensive dental care and oral health management are crucial for a child's dental health and can prevent many problems later in life. (See *related Health Matters* column by Ezra's Dental Director on page 7.)

YVY Research Institute Directors Present at Academic Conferences

Dr. Isabelle Barriere and Dr. Garey Ellis, Co-directors of the YVY Multilingual Development and Education Research Institute, disseminated the results of their research at various academic gatherings this fall.

The presentation by Dr. Garey Ellis on *The Prevention of the Increase of Obesity through a Culturally Appropriate Preschool Intervention* in September at the New York Obesity Research Center of St.-Luke Roosevelt, Columbia Hospital was very well received. Possibilities of collaboration between YVY and the Obesity Center were discussed to address a health issue that affects many in the YVY community.

Dr. Isabelle Barriere was invited to give a presentation of her work on *Cross-linguistic*, *Cross-modal and Bilingual Perspectives on Early Morphosyntactic Development: Educational and Clinical Implications* at Tel Aviv and Bar Ilan Universities in October. Her talk included results that emerged from her work with YVY Early Head Start children and parents.

The first results emerging from an NSF-funded project on the nature of children's first word combinations will be presented by Dr. Isabelle Barriere, co-primary investigator on this project and her colleagues, at the Boston University Annual Conference on Language Development in November. This project is a collaboration with Johns Hopkins University.

YVY Research Institute Partners with Hunter College

Dr. Giulia Bencini of the Language Acquisition Research Center at Hunter College directed by Dr. Virginia Valian has been testing children at YVY's Staten Island and Farragut Road sites to support her research, funded by a grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Development, on children's production of complex sentences. Dr. Bencini would like to thank the education

YELED V'YALDA EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER, INC.

571 McDonald Ave. Brooklyn NY 11218 www.yeled.org

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Director, Human Resources Gitty Lichtenstein professionals at YVY for their warm welcome and exceptional support.

Dr. Barriere and Dr. Ellis would like to thank YVY's IT Department for its help in organizing these projects.

YVY Receives Two New York State Department of Health Grants

YVY has received a grant from the NYS Department of Health to implement a Facilitated Enrollment program for New York State health insurance. Facilitators will be available at selected YVY sites in Brooklyn and Staten Island to explain health insurance coverage options and counsel applicants in selecting a health plan. They will also help with the application process. This program, which will provide health insurance information in accessible, familiar venues in many neighborhoods, will help community residents access medical care to which they are entitled.

Another grant from the Department of Health will fund a YVY Eat Well, Play Hard, Healthy Start Initiative. This expanded initiative will build on YVY WIC's award-winning *Healthy Start* program which was designed to further the state's WIC goals of Eat Well, Play Hard. The Program Coordinator will be YVY Director of Health Services and Community Partnerships Dr. Garey Ellis, who has done important research on obesity in children in his capacity as the Codirector of YVY's Research Institute. The initiative will focus on promoting physical activity and encouraging a healthful diet in preschool and elementary school children in targeted communities.

General Mills Grant Helps Promote Healthy Families, Healthy Kids

YVY is implementing the grant it received from General Mills by extending the *Eat Well Play Hard* program initiated by YVY WIC to YVY Head Start sites. As a first step, YVY WIC has already purchased additional pedometers so that YVY Head Start parents can join WIC's *Walking in Company* program.

YVY Head Start WYYY Head Start to Hold Policy Council Elections

Classroom and center elections have been held at all YVY sites. Elections for representatives to sit on YVY's Policy Council, which represents the interests of all YVY parents and works together with the YVY Board on agency governance, are to be held in December. Parents who are interested in the role of parents in Head Start governance will soon be able to watch a web presentation on this topic on YVY's website.

YVY Four-Year-Olds Undergo NRS Testing

Testers have visited all YVY sites to assess the literacy and numeracy skills of all four-year-olds in Head Start.
Children will be tested again at the end of the year to check for progress. By federal mandate, Head Start children are expected to be able to recognize at least ten letters of the alphabet, to have enhanced vocabulary, and to have age-appropriate numeracy skills by the time they transition out of Head Start.
Literacy and numeracy are an important part of the Head Start curriculum in all YVY classrooms, as is social-emotional development.

All Head Start students have also received vision and hearing screenings. These non-invasive screenings, done with state-of-the art equipment, have in the past detected vision or hearing problems which are easily remediated if caught early. Parents have received notice of results of all screenings. YVY Head Start performs these screenings as an extra service to its children and families.

YYV Early Head Start EHS Caregivers and Home Visitors Receive Training

All YVY EHS caregivers have been trained in a new assessment tool designed to measure progress in toddlers and two-year olds. Home visitors have begun to implement the *Partners for a Healthy Baby* curriculum which they were trained to work with before the summer. Home visitors are very pleased

at the way the new curriculum helps guide their session with the children they visit. All EHS sites welcome new staff that started with them in September.

Parent Workshops Resume in Williamsburg

After the summer hiatus, We Care EHS in Williamsburg has begun its popular parent workshop series. Fitness for Men has resumed and takes place every Thursday evening. Aerobics for Moms is being held on Monday mornings. Workshops on parenting and Responding to Stress were held in October. All YVY Williamsburg parents are invited to participate in these workshops which take place at 99 Heyward Street.

YVY WIC TY YVY WIC Streamlines Check Pick Up

YVY is pleased that it has been able to fill, and even exceed, the increased caseload it was granted for the 2007 fiscal year. Additional staff has been hired to accommodate new participants, and some staff has been reallocated for increased efficiency.

Two new computers which have been acquired by the YVY WIC program with the approval of the New York State Department of Health have now allowed YVY WIC to streamline the check pick-up process for its participants. A check pick-up station staffed by WIC nutritionists has been set up in the WIC lobby where participants pick up their checks by appointment. Certification appointments are now handled separately.

Applications for Food Stamps Facilitated by YVY WIC

For the past several months, YVY WIC has been hosting Jennifer Yip of the Food Change program. Ms. Yip is available one day a month in the YVY WIC waiting area to answer questions about the food stamp program and facilitate the enrollment process for those eligible.



FAMILY time

FALL 2004



A GUIDE TO NYC ARTS AND CULTURE EVENTS FOR FAMILIES

Rena and Chaim Plotkin of YVY Head Start at 667 Eastern Parkway were featured on the cover of the fall brochure of YVY Head Start partner *Cool Culture*.

YVY Special Education

YVY School Begins Operation

YVY's new special school opened this past September at 150 Chester Avenue, on the corner of 36th Street and Church Avenue in Brooklyn. The school, which was opened under YVY auspices in response to community requests, services elementary school age children on the PDD (pervasive developmental disorder) spectrum utilizing the ABA approach. Currently, two classrooms are in operation

School Director Bluma Bar-Horin has chosen a very able, experienced staff. Teachers, assistants, and therapists are all dedicated to their calling -- maximizing the potential of their students with the aim of eventually mainstreaming them wherever possible. The YVY School is unusual in that even its assistant teachers are highly credentialed: all assistant teachers have BA degrees, and their professionalism is evident to any visitor. The airy classrooms are large enough so that every student has a spot to call his or her own, and the classrooms buzz with activity and instruction. The YVY School is committed to keeping abreast of the latest research in order to best service its children so they can lead happy, productive lives. For information on the YVY School, please call (718)851-0123.

YVY Therapy Center Opens in Williamsburg

YVY's new Therapy Center opened this September in Williamsburg and is busy servicing clients. Cheerful, well-equipped play rooms have been set up for children requiring ABA services, and private therapy rooms for speech therapy and counseling are being utilized. Clients requiring physical therapy and occupational therapy are being serviced using the most up-to-date equipment. Community sensitivities are taken into account, and all therapists are bilingual. The newly-renovated Therapy Center, centrally located at 191 Rodney Street, is easily accessible to Williamsburg residents. The friendly staff is willing and eager to help and can be reached at (718)388-4040.

Professional Development ***

YVY is pleased to be offering its speech and occupational therapists the opportunity to specialize in feeding therapy. A comprehensive training course which will include lectures, online video workshops, and hands-on supervision, under the guidance of Sharon Golden, MA, CC, SLP, has begun this fall. YVY is subsidizing the substantial cost of this program for its therapists, who are only being charged a nominal fee, in order to be able to provide this needed service to the community. Twenty-five percent of children have some form of feeding disorder; in the developmentally delayed population, the number is as high as 80%.

YELED V' YALDA IN STATEN ISLAND

Silver Lake Head Starts Initiate New Spanish Language Literacy Program

Research has shown that those who speak, read, and write one language well can more easily learn a new language than those whose native language skills are weak. In order to help Spanishspeaking parents who wish to be involved in their children's acquisition of English literacy, Silver Lake Head Start has inaugurated an exciting new basic adult education program. This program will help native Spanish speakers improve their reading, writing, and speaking skills in Spanish. Knowing how to read and write Spanish well will help these parents learn English more quickly and will also give them the skills to help with their children's education. Silver Lake Head Start is partnering with the Mexican Consulate and the Jewish Community Center of Staten Island for this program which was funded through the generosity of the Staten Island Bank and Trust Foundation.

Silver Lake Head Start is also continuing its successful ESL program for parents this year, as well as its computer classes. Two special parent workshops in November and December will feature Dr. Isabelle Barriere, Director of YVY's Multilingual Research Institute, who is a

specialist in language acquisition in multilingual children.



SPARK Training Helps Teachers Promote Physical Activity and Good Nutrition

This past September, Silver Lake teachers, assistant teachers, and home visitors attended training given by the New York City Department of Health in the SPARK (Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for kids) program which they will be implementing in their classrooms this year. Early childhood programs are an ideal setting for promoting physical activity and for laying the foundation for gross motor development so that health risks later in life are reduced. The SPARK program provides a curriculum and materials to help teachers plan gross

motor activities which can be easily integrated into the regular classroom routine. Home visitors can also adapt this program to benefit the children enrolled in their program.

A grant from City Harvest will also help achieve the fitness goals set by SPARK. City Harvest delivers fresh fruit, milk and juice to the Silver Lake sites weekly so that the children benefit from proper nutrition and also learn about the importance of eating healthfully. YVY Health Services Director Dr. Garey Ellis, who is working on extending the SPARK program to all YVY sites, has been studying patterns of obesity in the YVY preschool population, and has been instrumental in encouraging all YVY sites to emphasize both fitness and nutrition (see related article on page 1).

Silver Lake Classrooms Elect Representatives

All Silver Lake sites have elected classroom representatives who have elected a site parent committee. Representatives to the Policy Council meetings in Brooklyn have also been selected. The Parent Committee at Silver Lake I has already been active; new chairs for the parent room were requested and have already been ordered.

DIRECTORY)

For more information on any of Yeled V'Yalda's services, please call the following numbers:

Headstart: (718) 686-3700

Early Headstart: (718) 686-3750

Special Education: (718) 686-3700 ext. 1 ABA Program: (718) 686-3788

Early Intervention: (718) 686-3700

ext. 576

Ezra Medical Center: (718) 686-7600

Yeled V'Yalda WIC Program: (718)686-3799

YELED V'YALDA STATEN ISLAND:

Silver Lake Headstart, 10 Gregg Place (718) 815-4488

Silver Lake Headstart II, 20 Park Hill Circle (718) 720-0090



Parenting Hotline

Mondays 11-3

(718) 686-3750 Ext. 125

All calls are confidential You do not need to give your name

Comment Line

(718) 686-3700 Ext.150







Parent Magazine

November/December 2006 Volume 5 No. 2

A sub-committee of YW's Health Advisory Committee has been meeting to consider ways to address the rise in cases of postpartum depression in the communities served by YW. The committee includes physicians from Maimonides Medical Center, which serves a large proportion of YW families. YW Health Coordinator Janie Friedman, R.N., has been coordinating the work of the committee

Postpartum Depression

enerations of women have greeted the birth of their baby as a joyous and thrilling occasion. However, child-birth can also bring out ambivalent and even negative emotions in a new mother since dealing with a new baby can often cause some anxiety. Still, most new mothers are able to adjust to their new baby and to enjoy their newborns without too many problems.

There are, however, many new mothers who find themselves awash in negative and ambivalent emotions after the birth of their child. They often feel guilty for having these emotions and for falling short of society's idealized view of motherhood. These mothers are not alone and should not be ashamed of their contradictory emotions. Gynecologists estimate that nearly 10% of all new mothers suffer from a short period of depression after giving birth known as the "baby blues."

The physical and emotional changes that a woman goes through during childbirth are most often the underlying cause of "baby blues." After childbirth, the estrogen, progesterone and thyroxin levels in a woman's body drop sharply, leaving her feeling tired, sluggish and depressed. In addition, changes in a woman's postpregnancy blood volume, metabolism, and immune system can also cause physical symptoms such as mood swings and fatigue. Emotions are also a contributing factor to developing "baby blues." A new mother who is sleep

deprived and overwhelmed by her new situation can have trouble handling even the simplest tasks. In addition, the social pressure to be the "perfect mother" and the feeling of not being up to the job of caring for a newborn can all contribute to making a new mother feel inadequate.



very long.

Typically, they peak four to five days after delivery and only last several hours to, at most, several days. They generally go away by the tenth day after delivery and usually require no medical treatment or intervention other than rest, family support, relaxation, and stress reduction.

In cases where the "baby blues" don't go away in a short period of time or the depressive symptoms get worse, the new mother is considered to be suffering from a syndrome called "postpartum depression" (PPD). Postpartum depression affects 10-15% of women who have given birth and can come on at any time from a month

What a New Mother Can Do

There are a number of things that new mothers can do for themselves to help prevent or alleviate postpartum depression.

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle -Get enough rest, exercise and eat a healthful diet.
- Be kind to yourself Set realistic expectations and don't put pressure on yourself to be the perfect house-keeper or the perfect cook. Do the best you can and accept all the help that is offered.
- Take care of yourself When you're feeling overwhelmed, take a break. Chat on the phone, visit a friend or schedule some alone time with your husband.
- Avoid isolation Being alone with your thoughts is never helpful in a high stress situation. Talk about your feelings with friends and loved ones. If stress really gets to you, go to a support group for new mothers or women with postpartum depression.

Postpartum depression and the baby blues are nothing to be ashamed of. Millions of women have been successfully treated for the condition. The actress Brooke Shields recently wrote about her experience with postpartum depression following the birth of her daughter in a national magazine and discussed her experience on a television show watched by millions.

You don't have to suffer from postpartum depression. Ask for help. It's the first step toward getting better.

The Antidepressant Controversy

Should women who are breast-feeding take antidepressant medications to help with their postpartum depression? If they do, what effect will these medications have on their breast milk and more importantly, on the health of their breastfed infants? These are the questions that need to be answered before any woman and her doctor decide on a course of antidepressant treatment for postpartum depression.

Years of studies have shown that while some antidepressants can be used during breastfeeding and pose little risk to an infant, there are a number of anti-depressants which do raise some concerns. Still others have not yet been adequately tested to come to a conclusion about their use

Generally speaking, for postpartum depression in a breastfeeding mother, most experts recommend medications called serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), which affect the brain chemical serotonin. The most recommended SSRI is Zoloft (sertraline). It has been the subject of scientific studies for many years and is the most widely studied antidepressant in breastfeeding mothers and their infants. Data have shown that while small amounts of the antidepressant enter breast milk, little or none of the medication can be detected in infants, and there also seem to be no adverse effects on the infants.

Paroxetine (Paxil) is also considered to be a good choice for nursing mothers and their infants. Paroxetine is not detectable in breast milk or nursing infants. Fluoxetine (Prozac) and citalopram(Celexa), two other widely used SSRIs, enter breast milk in small amounts but are considered to be acceptable from an infant safety point of view.

to a year after childbirth. Because of the guilt and shame associated with having depressive or negative feelings after childbirth, postpartum depression is often under diagnosed and if the mother does not receive treatment promptly, can have serious adverse effects on the mother, her family and her new baby.

While postpartum depression (PPD) is difficult for a new mother and can affect a woman's confidence in herself as a mother, it can have even more traumatic effects on her baby's social, emotional and cognitive development. PPD interferes with motherchild bonding. Babies depend on mothers for emotional nurturance. protection and stimulation – the very things that a depressed mother cannot provide. Children of mothers with untreated postpartum depression are more likely to have behavioral problems, including sleeping and eating difficulties, temper tantrums and hyperactivity. Delays in expressive language development and cognitive skills are also common.

The symptoms of postpartum depression are more severe than those associated with the "baby blues" and can become so intense that they interfere with the woman's ability to cope with daily life. These symptoms may include depressed mood, lack of interest in pleasurable activities, sleep disturbances such as insomnia or hypersomnia (too much sleeping), weight loss, loss of energy, agitation or nervousness, feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt, diminished concentration, or indecisiveness and frequent thoughts of death or suicide.

Women who are most at risk for developing postpartum depression are women who

- have a history of depression, either during pregnancy or at other times
- have had postpartum depression after a previous pregnancy
- have a history of severe premenstrual syndrome (PMS)
- experienced stressful events during pregnancy, including illness, prema-

ture birth or a difficult delivery

- have a difficult marriage or other lifestyle problems
- whose pregnancy is unplanned or unwanted

In rare instances – less than 1% of new mothers - a woman's postpartum depression becomes so severe that she lapses into a condition called "postpartum psychosis" and is considered a danger to herself or her baby. "Postpartum psychosis" usually occurs within the first six weeks after delivery and is characterized by a refusal to eat, frantic energy, sleep disturbances, hallucinations and delusions, disorientation, paranoia and irrational thoughts such as murdering the baby in the bathtub. Women with "postpartum psychosis" need immediate treatment and often require hospitalization for a period of time.

There are a number of treatments for those who suffer from postpartum depression —as opposed to psychosis—that have proven to be quite effective. How postpartum depression is treated depends very much on the severity of a woman's condition and the recommendation of her doctor and other mental health professionals.

Women with more severe forms of postpartum depression have several treatment options. The treatments most often recommended are:

- **Counseling** a psychiatrist or psychologist can help a woman with PPD cope with her feelings, resolve her problems and set realistic goals.
- Antidepressants Antidepressant medications have been proven to be an effective treatment for postpartum depression. However, breastfeeding women are advised to discuss this with their doctors as some medications may enter the breast milk and affect the baby. [See Box]
- Hormone therapy Women who suffer from mild postpartum depression (baby blues) due to an underactive thyroid gland may benefit from thyroid medication. Estrogen replacement therapy is also used to help correct the steep drop in estrogen that

happens after childbirth. However, estrogen therapy after childbirth may affect a woman's milk production and increase her risk of developing blood clots in the leg or lungs. These issues should be discussed with the doctor.

- **Antipsychotic agents** Antipsychotic agents that are generally used to treat psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia can also be used to treat postpartum psychosis
- **Lithium** This drug is generally used to treat bipolar disorder and can be helpful in balancing the mood swings associated with postpartum depression.
- Electroconvulsive therapy This treatment triggers chemical changes in the brain and has been shown to help with the symptoms of depression. It is usually used when other treatments have not worked.

Women who experience postpartum depression and their families need not despair. They need only to access available help.



Postpartum Support International

927 North Kellog Ave. Santa Barbara, CA 93111 (805) 967-7636

http://www.postpartum.net

Depression After Delivery

91 East Somerset St. Raritan, NJ 08869-2129

(800) 944-4PPD (to request information packet)

http://www.chss.iup.edu/postpart

Relief

5904 13 Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11219 (718) 431-9501

Books

Postpartum Depression: A Guide for Patients and Families

Margaret L. Moline, Ph.D., David A. Kahn, M.D., Ruth W. Ross, M.A., Lori L. Altshuler, M.D., and Lee S. Cohen, M.D.



Preschool Dental Health

It is truly amazing to see! Healthy children coming from homes in which they are very well cared for come to the dentist. They "open wide." Suddenly we see a less than optimal picture. Many very healthy children—infants, preschoolers, elementary and high school age-- have poor oral health. They have cavities, early tooth loss, and even gum disease. These problems can be prevented. We as parents and practitioners can do better.

In the recent past, there has been an increased recognition by those in the health care field of the need to improve the oral health of our children. A recently published symposium by the College of Diplomates of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry addressed this issue with specific concern for the most acutely affected-infants and young children. A recent survey showed that sixty percent of children had signs of tooth decay by age five. A second study showed that 43% of three-year-old children had cavities, but

by the time they were four that number increased to 62%. That's a lot of cavities for a lot of kids.

While genetics may play a big part in how susceptible we are to developing cavities, we have to remember that dental caries/decay is an infectious disease. That means it is transmitted to our children. Bacteria cause cavities, and we acquire bacteria as children from our parents and care givers. Infection starts at a very young age. When bacteria enter our mouths, they begin to colonize, or grow, on newly-erupting teeth of a baby. That is how early the process starts! That is one of the reasons that The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) has developed the idea of a Dental *Home*. This is a policy that promotes early professional and comprehensive dental care as well as guidance.

The consensus is that the *dental home* should be established by **age one**. That means that as part of your child's one-year check up, a dental exam by a quali-

fied pediatric or general dentist should be performed. Much like our children's medical care, this dental care should be ongoing and comprehensive. That means we start early, at age one, and keep following through, especially since preschoolers are at such high risk. A cavity may be small and manageable today, but if neglected, can lead to pain, root canal or extraction in the future.

Dental caries (cavities) can be considered a "chronic and complex disease." It needs consistent care. Think about it. Our kids are at the pediatrician's office for regular check ups, follow ups, cultures, bumps, and lumps. However the excellent, consistent care and concern which they deserve does not extend to the care of their teeth and mouth. It should.

The bottom line is that if we start our children's oral and dental health care early, we can anticipate better outcomes. Healthier mouths, healthier children. It makes sense!



PARENT

ACTIVITIES

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Swimming Boro Park YM/YWHA Tuesdays November 7,21

Aerobics Boro Park YM/YWHA

Thursdays November 2,9,16,23,30

99 Heyward Street

Every Monday and Thursday

Men's Fitness 4001 16th Avenue Tuesdays November 14, 28

99 Heyward Street Every Thursday

Parenting Workshops 4001 16TH Avenue Tuesday November 14

99 Heyward Street Tuesday November 21

6002 Farragut Road Tuesday November 21

Expectant Mom's Program Parenting and Childbirth Education

Parenting Skills for Postpartum Moms 4001 16th Avenue

Sundays November 19,26

99 Heyward Street

Wednesdays November 1,22

November 2006



SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Focus on Fathers 99 Heyward Street Tuesday November 14

Safety Around the House 99 Heyward Street Wednesday November 23

Challah Baking 4001 16th Avenue Wednesday, November 22

99 Heyward Street Tuesday November 22

Professional Development

Generating Fluent Speech: A Dynamic Stuttering Therapy

> **Health Advisory Committee Meeting** 3820 14th Avenue

Thursday November 30

STATEN ISLAND ONGOING ACTIVITIES

ESL Classes Every Wednesday

Spanish Literacy Class Mondays November 6, 20, 27

Computer Class Tuesdays November 14, 21, 28

> **Parent Committee** Thursday November 16

Fathers in Action Thursday November 9

Home Based Socializations Toddlers Friday November 3 Music Friday November 10 Infants Friday November 17

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Staff Development Tuesday November 7

Parent Teacher Conferences Monday November 13

Parent Literacy Workshop Thursday November 16

Yeled v'Yalda

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