

January
February
March

HELP ME GROW GEAUGA COUNTY EARLY INTERVENTION METZENBAUM NEWSLETTER

2024

Serving Geauga County Children from birth to age 3 with
Developmental Disabilities. Helping people Live, Learn, and Earn in our community

Visit our website for more
information on services
provided by the Geauga
County Board of
Developmental Disabilities:
www.geaugadd.org



@Gaugadd



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ARE YOU CONCERNED?

You know your child best. If you have concerns that
your child has a delay/disability or know someone who
has concerns, call us! There is no need to
"wait and see."

Early Intervention (EI) works with families with children
birth to age 3 who have developmental disabilities so
that they have the best possible start in life.

To make a referral: Visit www.ohioearlyintervention.org
to complete the process online or call us at
1-800-755-GROW

Had a great time at our 3rd annual
Halloween event at the Metzenbaum Center.
Around 70 families came for treats as they
enjoyed the decorated halls and some play
time afterwards.



METZENBAUM CENTER
The Geauga County Board
Of Developmental Disabilities





Did you know there is open swimming for Early Intervention Families with Brenda at the Metzenbaum Center's indoor therapeutic pool on Wednesdays! Contact Brenda at bpowell@geaugadd.org or 440-688-5846 to sign up.

PARENT RESOURCES

Watching out for your child's vision

Make a referral or questions
at 216-658-4685
registration@clevelandsightcenter.org

Behaviors to watch for:

Squinting, closing, or covering of one eye when looking at objects



Excessive tearing when not crying



Excessive blinking, rubbing, pushing and or poking of the eyes



Avoidance of or sensitivity to bright lights



Does not watch or follow an object with the eyes by 3 months



Music at Metzenbaum

The Geauga County Board of Developmental Disabilities offers a variety of inclusive music programs available to families in Geauga County. We will bounce, sing, and explore music together. Music is powerful, it helps with our attention spans, turn taking and preschool readiness skills. It builds relationships and creates a bond. Music engages a child by gaining their attention and motivating them and most importantly, MUSIC is FUN! Families must live in Geauga County to enroll in weekly classes. Anyone can join the virtual classes.

Virtual Facebook Music- available every Wednesday at 9:30 on the page Geauga County Board of DD, posts to Instagram afterwards



Mini Music is for babies ages 6 months up to 17 months old
Classes on Tuesdays at 9, 10 or 11

Movin with Music is for children ages 18 months up to 3 years old
Classes on Mondays or Thursdays at 9, 10 or 11

For more information or to enroll in a class
contact Carol at ccolombo@geaugadd.org



Geauga Park District

<https://www.geaugaparkdistrict.org>



Play-doh Recipe

3 1/2 cups flour

1/4 cup salt

2 packs of unsweetened
kool-aid

3 Tbsp vegetable oil

2 cups boiling water

Mix flour, salt and kool-aid, set aside
add oil to boiling water

stir liquid into dry ingredients

mix with a spoon, then knead until smooth

store in refrigerator



Valentina- By Deanna Leahy

Down Syndrome. In the past, that really didn't mean much to me. I knew of it, but it wasn't something I focused on. When I would see someone with DS my heart would break, for both the parent and the child. And although, they are "so happy and so cute" no one would really ever say "gosh I would love to have a child born with Down Syndrome!" I went about my life wanting kids, then getting pregnant, becoming so excited for that moment and in an instant it changed. All of the sudden I was left with "I am so sorry, your child has Down Syndrome". That excitement turned to fear, anger, and frustration, until Valentina came into this world. My perfect little baby number 4. No doubt, our days were hard, but this little baby made everything so much sweeter and the milestones that much better. Life just became more beautiful with her in it.

Early Intervention came into our lives when she was about a month old. I had no idea what to expect or what they would do. I remember this meeting like it was yesterday. Everyone was sitting around her in a circle while she just slept (she had a heart defect so we had a lot of trouble waking her to assess her) and talking to me about everything that they would be doing for us. I came out of that meeting feeling so confident and all of a sudden I had a team; I had a village of people who were there to support us and teach us and cheer us on. Every month, sometimes twice a month, these wonderful people have been coming into our home and cheering Valentina on. They have seen us through open heart surgeries, numerous hospitalizations, sickness, and other random surgeries and procedures. Through it all they kept our heads up and our hearts strong. They would always tell us she was on Valentina time. She was feisty and fiercely strong, and we have kept that motto going for the past 2 ½ years.

We have become part of the lucky few with our girl. A motto saying just how lucky we are that we get to have a child with Down Syndrome. Down Syndrome has brought so many beautiful things into our life. Valentina will be in this year's Brittany's Baskets of Hope calendar. Brittany's Baskets provide baskets to families who are expecting or who recently welcomed a baby with Down Syndrome. They provide information, guidance, and gifts. I have become a hope story advocate, which means when a physician has a patient who receives a prenatal or birth diagnosis, my contact is given to the parents to help guide them and support them, if they wish. I am a "Rockin Mom" a term coined by the Down Syndrome Diagnosis Network (DSDN). DSDN has a Facebook based support group for parents who have children with Down Syndrome. With the DSDN I have attended their "mom's retreat" where we meet other moms (some of whom have become my closest friends, even though we are states apart) and where I learn new information about Down Syndrome. This is also where I obtain a lot of my resources from. I am currently applying to become a Jack's Basket regional lead parent. Jack's Basket is a Basket that provides gifts and information to parents with a new diagnosis, but their greatest hope with the Baskets and local parents delivering them is that they know they are supported, and their child is worth celebrating! Physicians, family members, friends, coworkers, etc. can request a basket online for new diagnosis.



March is Disability Awareness Month and World Down Syndrome Day (3-21) Down Syndrome is just one of the many disabilities that are worth celebrating because disabilities do not define the person, they are just one part of their story, and they are such a beautiful part. Our lives were forever changed by our Valentina, for the better. She is light and love and joy and we wouldn't trade her for the world, for we are the lucky few!



Down Syndrome Diagnosis Network

Santa made a special appearance at our Cookies with Santa event on December 15th. 50 families joined in the Holiday Fun.



The Early Childhood Subcommittee meeting will be held Thursday January 4th, 2024 via zoom at 10:00 AM. Meeting ID 864 7505 2754 Passcode 881828 [Meeting link](#)

The ECS is an advisory group of Geauga Family First Council. Membership is comprised of various community agencies, representatives, and parents who partner together to share ideas, experiences, and expertise in the area of early childhood development. The focus of the group is to gather input regarding direction, planning & success for the Geauga County Help Me Grow program. We encourage Help Me Grow parents to join us to share feedback about services they are receiving and/or gaps in services they might be experiencing. We value your opinions, and your time is valuable to us and will send you a \$25 gift card for attending the meeting. Please contact your Service Coordinator if you have any questions.



Parent Rights

To file a complaint about your child's early intervention services please contact:

The Ohio Department of DD EI via:

Phone: 614.466.6879

Email: ei@dodd.ohio.gov

Mail: Ohio Dept. of DD

Early Intervention

30 East Broad Street, 12th Fl.

Columbus, OH 43215

[Click Here to View Your Rights as a Parent!](#)



Payment choices for additional Early Intervention (EI) services determined by child's IFSP. Additional EI services may include Audiology, assistive technology devices or other needed services to meet IFSP outcomes as determined by your child's EI team. For more information contact your child's Service Coordinator.

[Click Here to Learn about System of Payment!](#)