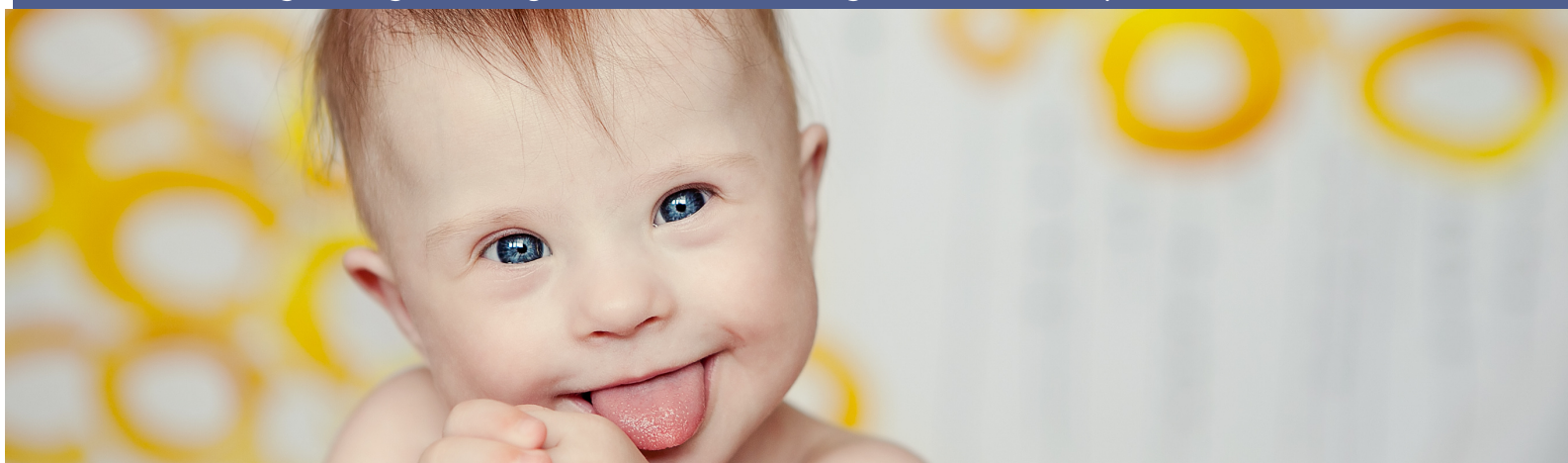




JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH
2022

Help Me Grow Early Intervention Newsletter

Serving Geauga County Children Birth To Age 3 With Developmental Disabilities



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EI PROGRAM UPDATE

The Geauga County Early Intervention program will be continuing a hybrid model of service delivery. This hybrid model is a mix of some services being delivered virtually (Zoom) and some being delivered in-person. Should you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your Service Coordinator or Meredith Myers, Early Intervention Manager: mmyers@geaugadd.org; (440) 729 - 5250 x1530.

We are happy to be getting back out in the community and providing inclusive activities for everyone in Geauga County. Here at the GCBDD, we pushing for inclusion & integration so our clients are able to **LIVE, LEARN, & EARN** within our community!

SAVE THE DATES!

Watch for details on our Fun Friday's with Friends! Make sure to follow us on social media for all the details!

Night to Shine is scheduled for March 31, 2022! Night to Shine is an event Geauga EI hosts annually to celebrate your child! Formal invitation will be coming in February, so be on the lookout!



[@Gaugadd](https://www.facebook.com/Gaugadd)



[@Gaugadd](https://www.instagram.com/Gaugadd)



SEND THEM OUTSIDE!

The Importance of Outdoor Play

Karla Faso MS, OTR/L, GCBDD

Cited from takethemoutside.com



Fresh air, warm sun, crisp breeze, sandy feet, muddy hands... Ahh the great outdoors!

Angela Hanscom, Occupational Therapist, the author of *Balanced and Barefoot* (2016), reports that the natural outdoors makes for a perfectly balanced sensory experience. Whether climbing on rocks, swinging from a branch, or playing in the grass, these free play activities allow us to practice skills such as upper body strength and **motor planning** while receiving **awareness of the position of our body in space (proprioception)**, movement (vestibular), and **touch/tactile** input. Unlike technology or man-made environments (indoor play spaces, sports arenas, malls), the natural outdoors tends to provide more subtle stimuli without bombarding children with too much at once. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our children likely aren't getting frequent enough breaks to move their bodies during the week. Therefore, it is important for us to provide them with an opportunity for active outdoor play!

Hanscom suggests that playing on the monkey bars, biking, swimming, exploring in the woods (climbing trees, moving logs, and lifting rocks), and tobogganing (riding on or pulling sleds up steep hills) are all good activities to increase core strength. Movements which stimulate the inner ear, like spinning or swinging, help children develop a good sense of body awareness and balance. So, they are less likely to walk into furniture, more likely to have better balance, and more likely to have better coordination. She also suggests the positive effects of spinning and swinging can increase a child's abilities to concentrate and focus.

It's about giving children the space to do what they naturally do—to explore and figure out the world, to make decisions, and use their imagination. Being outdoors **allows children to learn about themselves**, gain confidence and flexibility, learn to problem solve, and get along with others.

So set your fears aside! Yes, kids will fall and get cuts and bruises. There will be grass stains and muddy socks. However, as Hanscom asserts, these minor hurts and inconveniences are well worth the risk when compared to the potential delays or shortcomings in our children's physical and emotional development. Have fun... go play... in the great outdoors!

explore

THE GREAT OUTDOORS





COLD-WEATHER CLOTHES

Ashley Bruno, MA, CCC-SLP, GCBDD

modified from Speech and language kids.com



Now that winter has arrived, it is the perfect time to start taking out all our winter clothes: hats, gloves, coats, scarves, etc. However, it has probably been several months since your child last saw these items, you may want to do some winter speech and language tasks using these items to improve his/her communication skills. Having a better understanding of what these items are called and how they are used will improve your child's ability to follow directions that contain these items. For example, "go get your scarf". As well as your child's ability to use these words in sentences to request ("I want gloves"), comment ("blue coat"), and ask questions ("Where's hat?"). Try these fun activities to help improve your child's understanding of cold weather clothes.

SUITCASE:

Place a variety of winter clothes (jacket, mittens, scarf, warm socks, cap, boots, etc.) inside a suitcase and have your child name each piece as you remove it. You can also have him/her find the matching item in the suitcase. Name the articles of clothing, use descriptive words for colors and textures of items, and describe the patterns and pictures on clothing.

DRESS A SNOWMAN:

Draw a snowman on a piece of paper. Cut out pictures of winter clothing items from advertisements. Start from the bottom up; tell your child your snowman will need some boots. Ask your child to find boots. Once your child finds the picture of the boots, glue them on the picture. Do the same for a coat, hat, gloves, scarf, etc. Help your child find matching mittens, match items by color, and find clothes to put on. Practice first, second, and third. Say, "First put on your coat, then the mittens." Be silly and see if your child notices things that do not belong. Introduce words such as over and under as you put on the pieces of clothing.

BOOK:

Read a book with your child about getting dressed to go outside. Try *Froggy Gets Dressed* by Jonathan Landon. In this book, Froggy keeps forgetting to put on all his cold-weather clothes and his mother must continually pull him back to have him put on another piece. These would be great for helping your child remember the names of all the clothes. It will also keep your child interested in the book. Once you have read a book about getting dressed to go outside, it's time to help your child get dressed and go outside as well! Tell your child it's time to play outside and ask your child if he can think of all the things you will need to put on to get ready. If your child can't think of some of them, give him clues without telling him what it's called. For example, "What could we put on our hands?" If your child is really struggling to think of the word, you can say it for him, but see if he can come up with it first.

DRESS UP WARMLY

Author unknown

Recite the rhyme and make matching movements together.

The day is cloudy and the wind is bold.
Dress up warmly, you mustn't get cold!

Put on your jacket and zip it up tight,
put on your left boot, put on your right.

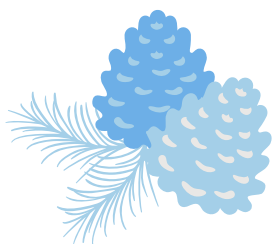
Put on your scarf and put on your cap,
put on your mittens and clap-clap-clap!

Go outside and play and play.
Come in again, and then we'll say-

Take off your jacket that was zipped up tight,
take off your left boot, take off your right.

Take off your scarf, take off your cap,
take off your mittens, and then take a nap!





INDOOR WINTER PLAY

Danielle Skrabec, MS, PT, GCBDD

Has snow or frigid temperatures kept you indoors since the Ohio weather has drastically changed so quickly? You don't need to go out in the cold to enjoy winter activities...just use a little imagination for an indoor snow day! These activities will keep your child active and moving, which is important to keep progressing their gross motor skills.

INDOOR SNOWBALL FIGHT:

Use cotton balls, bunched up paper, or rolled up socks, and pretend they are snow balls! Toss them forward to work towards aiming at a target, and scoop them up from the floor to build leg strength and endurance. Get creative and hide behind couch cushions or furniture and see who wins!

ICE SKATING – NO SKATES NEEDED!:

Ice skating fun starts by placing feet on paper plates or wax paper squares, and works best on smooth carpet or hard floors. Place their feet on the plates, move forward as if skating. Play with a variety of directions by moving sideways, in figure 8's and backward to work different muscle groups.

INDOOR SLEDDING:

Place your child seated or lying on a blanket and pull them on the "sled". This builds balance, equilibrium, and posture control. A miniature sled can also be created for them to pull, using a pillow case and their favorite stuffed friend! As they pull the sled, they are working upper body and core strength.





Playdough



Polly Meil, Developmental Specialist, GCBDD
Gabby Ball, M.Ed., Developmental Specialist, GCBDD

Toddlers love exploring and making things. Edible playdough is a great way to work on following directions, fine motor skills, provide language opportunities, etc. This can be a fun winter activity!

Favorite (Cooked) Playdough

- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 cup salt
- 2 cups water
- 2 Tablespoons oil
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1 package of Kool-Aid mix (optional *adds color & smell*)



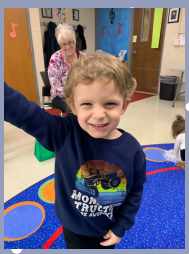
1. Put the flour, salt, oil, cream of tartar, & Kool-Aid in a large pan
2. Add water
3. Cook over low to medium heat until the mixture has formed into a soft lumpy ball
4. Knead for a few minutes until dough is smooth (careful *the dough will be warm/hot*)
5. Store in an airtight container

Edible Playdough

- 1 cup flour
- 2 cups oatmeal (Cornmeal can be substituted)
- 1 cup water

1. Mix flour and oatmeal together
2. Gradually add water
3. Knead the dough





MUSIC CORNER

Carol Colombo, Music Therapist, GCBDD



Hope you are singing songs and making music during this snowy weather. Remember a fun activity is to STOP everything, put on a great song, and DANCE! Enjoy this chant about Valentines Day!



**Valentine, Valentine, Won't
you be my Valentine.**

(tap legs for each syllable)

AIIIIIII RIGHT.

*(Wiggle fingers in the air and
clap on the word 'right')*

Movin' with Music and Mini Music are being offered in-person at The Metzenbaum Center in Chesterland. For more information please contact Carol Colombo at ccolombo@geaugadd.org

Zoom music is available for any family in Early Intervention.
Everyone is welcome to join in LIVE every Wednesday at 9:30 am on our Facebook page:
[Gauga County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Metzenbaum Center](https://www.facebook.com/GaugaCountyBoardofDevelopmentalDisabilities/MetzenbaumCenter)



SCREEN TIME FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Melinda Falconi, Early Childhood Mental Health, OhioGuidestone



Parents often ask if they should allow their young children to spend time watching television, tablets, or cell phones and, if so, how much time is acceptable. According to [Zero to Three](#):

- children from birth to 18 months should avoid all screen media,
- children from 18 months to age 2 can be introduced to screens, but only if you watch with them and talk to them about what they're seeing, and
- one hour a day of high-quality children's programming is OK for children from ages 2 to 5, but, again, only if you watch with them, discuss what they're watching, and help them to connect the images on the screen to their real-world experiences

The American Academy of Pediatrics provides slightly different guidelines:

- No screen time for children under age 2.
- No more than one to two hours of high-quality children's programming for children over age 2.

Human brains were constructed long before there were televisions. Young children's brains are hard wired to learn as much about the world around them as possible, using all of their senses. We learn through interacting with others and with our environments. Passively watching two-dimensional images on a screen generally provides no opportunity for interaction.

The negative effects of screen time far outweigh the positives, especially when adults are not watching with their children to ensure that the programming is appropriate and to extend their learning. Research indicates that too much screen time can adversely affect cognitive development, behavior, and vision. There is a strong link between screen time and obesity. Children who spend too much time watching screens often demonstrate underdeveloped social skills.

Child development professionals warn against:

- television watching during mealtime. For today's busy families, mealtimes are often the only time family members have to talk together and stay involved in one another's lives.
- using television as a babysitter. Permitting children to watch television so that you can "get something done" makes it impossible for an adult to monitor what their children are watching.
- allow children to fall asleep watching television. It is important for children to learn to calm themselves and fall asleep independently. Having a television in the bedroom can extend a child's wakefulness, especially if the child is watching action-packed or suspenseful programs. Also, the light from the television disrupts children's sleep patterns.
- having the television on for background noise. With all of its sounds, colors, and movement, TV is difficult for children to ignore. Being drawn to the television screen interferes with the benefits of children's play: imagination, creativity, verbal and social skills (if playing with a partner), fine motor skills, and so on. Remember that young children are soaking up their environment; television contributes to sensory "pollution", making it difficult for young children to focus their attention on the important things going on around them.

Take the time to honestly calculate the amount of time your child spends looking at a screen during their day, and then think about what they could be doing instead that would support their healthy growth and development. Turn the television off when your child is playing and when the family sits down to enjoy a meal together. Instead of watching the television before bed, read a bedtime story or two, talk about the day, or make plans for tomorrow. Rather than handing your child a tablet while you make dinner or do the laundry, keep them beside you and teach them to help. Singing together, telling stories, or just listening as your child talks is beneficial for both of you and strengthens your relationship. Having a healthy relationship with a caregiver makes it easier for children to learn and to manage stress. Plan to use screens sparingly as a teaching/learning tool and never as a substitute for your time and attention.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

The Early Childhood Subcommittee meeting will be held Thursday, January 6, 2022 via Zoom at 10:00 am (Meeting ID: 853 6563 2655 Password: 097693 - [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.



Join Us!

Your Early Intervention Support Team



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Help Me Grow Contract
Manager
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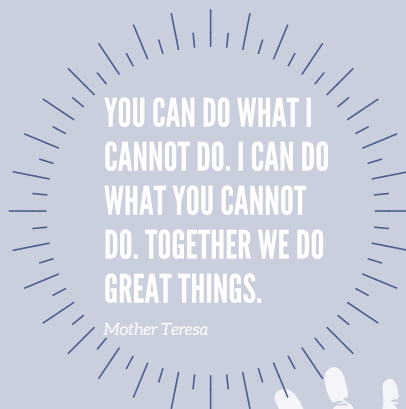
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INFANTSEE



**NO-COST EYE
ASSESSMENTS
FOR INFANTS
6-12 MONTHS**

The American Optometric Association recommends scheduling your baby's first eye exam around six months of age.

Dr. Graley, 14894 N State Road in Middlefield is a provider for the InfantSEE program and works with children of all ages. She prefers to start seeing children between 6 months-1 year old. Remember you can get that first visit for free if your child is 1 year or younger. Make your appointment now, Call 440.632.9277 More information and full list of providers; Visit: InfantSEE.org

LAKE-GEAUGA UNITED HEAD START INC.



FREE Preschool for children ages 3-5. Eligibility is based on family income. Please CALL 440.636.5387



Michelle Frygier
Geauga County Parent Mentor
mfrygier@escwr.org
Free assistance for parents needing guidance when transitioning from an IFSP to an IEP.

STARTING POINT



Need Help Finding Child Care? Try Starting Point's FREE child care referral line for information on child/early education options! Serving Lake, Cuyahoga, Geauga & Ashtabula counties. Call us at: 800.880.0971 Or visit us online at: www.starting-point.org

PARENT'S RIGHTS IN EARLY INTERVENTION



To file a complaint about your child's early intervention services please contact: The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities Early Intervention 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

STABLE ACCOUNT Please visit stableaccount.com or call 1.800.439.1653 for more information

Savings and investment solutions for people with disabilities. Stable account allows you to save or invest up to \$14,000 per year without losing government benefits like Medicaid or SSI.

GEAUGA WIC PROGRAM



Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a nutrition education program that provides nutritious foods to pregnant women, women who just had a baby, breastfeeding moms & infants & children up to age 5. Visit lcghd.org/WIC/ for more information on income eligibility. Please call to schedule an appointment at 440.636.5331.

BIRTHRIGHT GEAUGA COUNTY



440.286.9711
24 Hour Line:
1.800.550.49
00

Birthright serves those in Geauga & surrounding counties by providing tangible, compassionate support for pregnant women and families with small children. In addition to being a source for non-judgmental support, we can provide free pregnancy testing, maternity and children's clothing and other material needs for children. Open Monday- Friday - 11:00 - 4:00

SYSTEM OF PAYMENTS



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.