

## THE EARLY BIRD

### Local events for you and your toddler

- Saturdays from 1-4p  
Public Skating  
Morrison's Cove Park
- Fridays & Saturdays 10a-5p  
Quaint Corner Children's  
Museum open  
New climbing wall!
- Tuesdays from 11a-3p  
Free soft play  
Slinky Action Zone

2/19: *June B. Jones*  
Mishler Theatre

3/16: *Beauty Lou and the  
Country Beast*  
Mishler Theatre

3/17-4/7: Easter Bunny visits  
Logan Valley Mall

3/16-4/14: Easter Train Rides  
Logan Valley Mall

3/19: *Sleeping Beauty*  
Mishler Theatre

3/31: Kids' Day  
Logan Valley Mall  
9-11a: Breakfast with a  
Care Bear

**Welcome!** *This is the first issue of what we hope to be a quarterly newsletter for Early Intervention families. We will use gardening/ outdoor themes to give you some great family activities and ways to support your child's continued growth and learning. Enjoy!*



## BUSY BEES

Fun crafts to keep your bees busy

### HEART-TO-HEART WINDOW ART

This craft can be done for Valentine's Day. Talk to your child about why it is important to express our love for each other and ask them who they love. You can talk about colors and have your child rip the tissue paper pieces to encourage language and fine motor skills.

#### Supplies:

Picture of a heart  
Wax paper  
Markers

Tissue paper  
Glue  
Scissors

#### Make It:

1. Place a piece of wax paper over your heart picture and trace it with a marker.
2. Cut or tear tissue paper of any color into small pieces. This is a good way to recycle the tissue paper from Christmas.
3. Spread glue on the wax paper and have your child place the tissue paper over it. Press tissue paper firmly to make sure it sticks.
4. After your hearts have dried, cut them out.
5. Now they are ready to be hung up on your windows with a little bit of tape.



## MOCKING BIRDS

Encouraging communication through play

### COTTON BALL SNOWMAN

Language Goals: Naming or identifying body parts, colors, shapes and clothes; counting; teaching words such as "soft", "big", "small", "round"; using words to ask for cotton balls, glue, paper, crayons or markers.

You will need: 1 piece of construction paper, cotton balls, glue stick, markers or crayons

*Make it:*

1. Have your child choose a piece of colored construction paper. Have them point to or say the color they want. Encourage them to repeat the color you gave them.
2. Draw a large circle on the paper and a smaller circle on top for the snowman's body. Tell your child as you draw each circle which one is "big" and which one is "small". Point to each one and have your child point to them also. You could even have him trace the circles you have drawn with his finger.
3. Draw the body parts on next: eye, carrot nose, mouth, and sticks for arms. Ask your child to find their OWN body parts as you draw the snowman's. Have him point to where the next body part goes on the picture.
4. Draw the hat, scarf, and buttons. Ask your child if there are any other clothes they would like on the snowman. Be creative. Your snowman may wear boots or a sweater, too!
5. Next is the glue. You may offer your child the glue with the lid still on so they are encouraged to ask you to open it. Help them to open the glue and tell them what it is. Stick glue is fun to make dots with, so make lots of dots on your snowman and encourage your child to say "dot" or "glue" as you put the glue on the snowman.
6. Last, stick the cotton balls to your glue dots. Count your cotton balls or encourage your child to say "ball" as you give them each cotton ball. Talk about how soft they are and rub them on their cheek.

Once your snowman is complete, you can do a rhyme called "The Chubby Little Snowman". The rhyme has actions that go with the words which will increase your child's interest in the rhyme. When they see you doing the silly actions, they will be much more interested in trying to imitate you!

### *The Chubby Little Snowman*

A chubby little snowman  
*(hold hands out in front of your belly to demonstrate chubby)*

Had a carrot nose  
*(point to your nose)*

Along came a bunny  
*(hop like a bunny)*

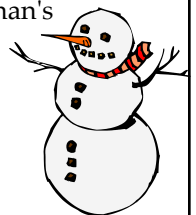
And what do you suppose?  
*(shrug shoulders and hold arms out as if to say "what?")*

That hungry little bunny  
*(rub stomach)*

Looking for his lunch  
*(hold hands above eyes, as if searching for something)*

Ate that snowman's  
carrot nose  
*(pretend to eat)*

Nibble, nibble,  
crunch!



## WIGGLE WORMS

Ideas to get your child moving



The cold weather is here, *weather* we like it or not, but we want to keep our worms warm and wiggling! Help your child put on warm weather clothing to practice dressing skills, then head out for some fun winter activities!

- Make snowballs and throw them to increase eye-hand coordination.
- Build a snowman to learn about body awareness and body parts.
- Make snow angels with your child to practice using both sides of his body- great for coordination and so much fun!
- Give your child a small shovel or broom to help you shovel or sweep snow while improving body strength and coordination.
- For the really little ones: walking in the snow wearing boots is a challenge in itself!

Don't forget the hot chocolate when you are back inside!



## SOCIAL BUTTERFLIES

Social opportunities for your child and family

Warm up in the months to come by having a tea or hot chocolate party. Your child will love this quality time with you. You could even prepare a special snack together to be enjoyed by all. Stuffed animals make great party guests and you can practice manners with your toddler. Your child can practice saying "please" and "thank you" while enjoying a snack with Mommy, Daddy, brothers, sisters, and anyone else who wants to join in the fun!

Use bath time as a way to connect with your child. Practice pretend play in the tub by using simple things such as cups, old toothbrushes, empty plastic containers with lids, spoons, etc.... A plastic baby doll in the tub so your child can bathe him is fun, too!



## THE DIRT PILE

Fun sensory play to help your child grow

### THE BEST COOKED PLAY DOUGH

B-r-r-r, it's cold outside! Need a fun indoor activity to entertain the kids? You can make a pliable and long-lasting play dough at home. To get your child's senses involved, give the play dough a vibrant color and fruity smell with unsweetened Kool-Aid!

#### *Ingredients:*

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 cup flour                 | 1 tablespoon oil                                  |
| ½ cup salt                  | Food coloring or 1 packet of unsweetened Kool-Aid |
| 2 teaspoons cream of tartar |   |
| 1 cup water                 |   |

#### *Make it:*

Combine the flour, salt, and cream of tartar in a saucepan. Mix liquids and gradually stir them into dry ingredients. When the mixture is smooth, cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until a ball forms. Remove from heat and knead until smooth. Next, mix in food coloring until the play dough reaches desired color. Or, use the Kool-Aid for this step. Purple and orange are fantastic! Store in an airtight container.



## MIRACLE GROW

Fun and easy food ideas

### TATER TOT CASSEROLE

Cold weather calls for comfort food that is easy to make! This casserole is an inexpensive meal that lots of kids love. Children will often try foods if they are involved in the cooking process. Young children should not be near a hot stove or oven for safety, but perhaps on a table away from the oven, they can help with steps 4 and 5 to sprinkle the cheese and tater tots onto the dish.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Yield: 8 servings

#### *Ingredients:*

2 lbs. ground beef

Salt and pepper, to taste

1-10 oz. can low-sodium cream of mushroom soup

(You may choose regular cream of mushroom soup. Just reduce the amount of salt added to the beef if you prefer.)

1 cup sour cream (low-fat is okay)

2 cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided

1-32 oz. package frozen tater tots

#### *Make it:*

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Spray a 9 x 13 pan with cooking spray.
2. Brown ground beef. Season with salt and pepper while browning. Drain.
3. Spread ground beef in the prepared baking dish. Whisk together soup and sour cream. Spread over ground beef in an even layer.
4. Sprinkle one cup of cheddar cheese over the soup layer.
5. Top with tater tots.
6. Bake 30 minutes. Sprinkle remaining cheese on top. Bake another 5-10 minutes until cheese is melted.



## GARDEN TIPS & TOOLS

Ideas for helping toddlers manage behavior

Toddlers are realizing that they are separate individuals and are driven to assert themselves, communicate their likes and dislikes, and act independently. Here are some ways to help them:

- Talk about feelings. "It makes me so happy when you share."
- Empathize with your child. "I know you are mad."
- Let your child make choices appropriate to her age. "Do you want to wear the Mickey shirt or the puppy shirt?"
- Look for ways to help your child "practice" self-control positive behaviors. "Let's play taking turns with your brother."
- Give words to replace behaviors. Suggesting "I don't want that" when he throws his cup on the floor.
- Teach what to do instead of a behavior. "Hand Mommy your toy when you want help" (instead of throwing it).
- ***Always re-establish the love between the two of you after an upset with a hug.***