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Winter NEWSLETTER 2022

Newsletter for Niagara County Child Care Providers, Parents & Child Advocates



It's not a secret that "winter" is my favorite season. I love to watch it snow! Give me a snow day? Oh, heart be still. Okay, I admit it... I've officially lost it but the idea of a "Winter Tea Party", absolutely perfect! It's the kind of thing I think kids would have fun with as well. True, they will think you're crazy but that's a minor detail. The memory of a "Winter Tea Party" will last a child a long, long time. Who knows, maybe a "Winter Tea Party" will be a memory they do with their own children later in life. That's a good thing!



It can be snack or lunch.



Use cookie cutters to cut food in various winter shapes.



Use foods to

create winter designs.  Have fun with it!

Have an absolutely terrific, simply marvelous winter and holiday season with family and friends!



Remember, snowflakes are kisses that fall from above.

Carolyn 



*Christmas is not a time nor a season,
but a state of mind. To cherish peace
and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy,
is to have the real spirit of Christmas.*

Merry Christmas

Have a wonderful holiday season!

 *Angela Burns*

 *Beverly McArthur*

 *Cindy Dugan*

 *Chatanna Black*

 *Debbie Perricelli*

 *Donna Striffler*

 *Jameelah Masaed*

 *Kelly Janese*

 *Kimmarie Brown*

 *Kristina Clark*

 *Carolyn Jacobs*





The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara would like to announce three new staff hires.

2 Registrars:

- * *Kristina Clark*
- * *Cynthia (Cindy) Dugan*

**Technical Assistance/Legally Exempt/Child Care Supply Specialist/Referral Counselor
(aka - Jack of all Trades)**

- * *Chatanna Black*





BabyGaga

Sensory Play For Toddlers Proven Benefits

Alexandra Sakellariou

Sensory play refers to any sort of activity that stimulates at least one of the five senses – touch, smell, hearing, taste, and sight. There's a wide range of activities that fall under this umbrella term. It can be as simple as building a block tower, or as creative as putting together a themed sensory bin.

This type of activity can benefit children of all ages, but it's especially important for babies and toddlers. Sensory play can help your young child develop a wide range of skills in a fun, engaging way. And, given how many different sensory activities there are, it doesn't take a lot of effort to put one together for your child.

Below, we look at the benefits that sensory play can have for toddlers to inspire you to introduce your child to activities that engage the senses.

Improves Language Skills

Most babies can say simple words between 12-18 months, and they may be talking in full sentences by 2-years-old. Sensory play is a great way to help your child practice their language skills.

Cleveland Clinic explains that it offers kids a way to learn through different experiences and environments, which encourages them to identify and express their emotions. It's a stepping stone to helping your child say how they feel, which will include bigger, more descriptive words as your toddler gets older.

Develops Fine & Gross Motor Skills

The development of fine and gross motor skills is essential to a toddler's development, and one easy way to do it is through sensory play. Gross motor skills refer to actions that involve large muscles, like running or jumping, while fine motor skills are those involving small muscles, like grabbing an object or drawing.

During sensory play, your child is going to be exposed to a variety of different objects with varying textures and shapes. It allows your toddler to practice grabbing and holding objects in addition to a variety of different actions as they explore and play, thereby helping them practice motor skills in a fun way.

It's A Calming Activity

Sensory play is great because it's stimulating but also calming, which means it can work for a wide variety of children with different needs.

- For a child that's bored or sluggish, it's an easy way to pique their curiosity and get them to engage in an activity that will benefit them.

- It's also a way to help hyperactive children struggling with their attention span by giving them something to focus on.

Encourages Problem-Solving

Problem solving skills allow a person to identify why an issue is happening and come up with a solution as well as evaluating its effectiveness. Problem solving skills start developing in early childhood.

During sensory play, toddlers are able to use their senses to solve small challenges in front of them like building a block tower or sorting toys based on their colors. This type of play builds creativity, resourcefulness, and confidence. It also helps develop your child's independence since they'll see their ability to solve problems on their own.

It's An Educational Opportunity

Sensory play isn't only a chance to help your toddler develop different physical and cognitive skills, it's also a learning opportunity. Depending on what sort of sensory activities or toys you use, it's possible to expose your child to different textures and items.

For example, *Learn Play Imagine* describes a few ways that parents can put together a nature sensory bin.

- Throw in a bunch of items from the outdoors such as leaves, twigs, flowers etc., and then let your toddler explore the different sizes and textures.
- Each time they pick up something new, tell them the name of the object and help them describe its qualities.

Good For Information Retention

Information retention refers to a person's ability to recall specific information. It's a function of our long-term memory. While some people naturally have a strong memory, there are also techniques that can be used to improve our retention, and these skills can start being developed in toddlerhood.

Team Cartwright explains that sensory play helps children become better at learning as well as information retention. By helping them to focus on a task or activity, the child is more likely to be aware of their environment. Paying close attention allows them to retain the information they're soaking up and build a strong memory going forward.

Encourages Social Interaction

If your toddler is engaged in sensory play with other children, it's a great opportunity for social interactions. It allows kids to engage and work together to solve problems. This helps promote good communication skills and adaptability to new environments.

Dr. Emily King, a child psychologist in North Carolina, told *Good Housekeeping* it's imperative that toddlers get as much social interactions as they can while young, especially if they're an only child. It doesn't just benefit them in the now but well into the future, as kids with strong social skills from a young age are better at listening to instructions, staying focused, and solving disputes with words.

Can Help Improve Sensitivities

Some children (and adults) suffer from hypersensitivity. This is a sensory processing disorder that makes the individual more sensitive to sensory inputs, like light, sound, and touch. Not only can these sensations be a discomfort, but it can greatly distract the person or even make them irritable.

However, engaging in sensory play can help toddlers that have hypersensitivity. It allows them to be exposed to different sensations in a safe space without being overwhelmed.

For example, a picky eater can explore the different textures of foods they're wary of without being in a pressure-filled situation.

It's An Easy Activity

Finally, one of the simplest benefits of sensory play is that it's so easy to do. For example, to make a sensory bin, parents just need some sort of container to throw a variety of objects lying around the house into that their child can then safely explore with adult supervision, of course.

You can go with different themes, like a water sensory bin filled with water, dish soap, and bath toys. Or consider a beach one filled with sand, seashells, and sandcastle-making equipment. You can always head to your dollar store for fun, inexpensive items to add to the sensory bin if you're running out of ideas at home.

Be sure to check out our resources on how to introduce your baby or toddler to sensory play, including our guides on sensory activities for 1-year-olds as well as ideas for 2-year-olds. Don't hesitate to speak to your child's doctor for more information on the benefits of sensory play and ideas for your child.

Sources: Always Keep Progressing, Educational Playcare, Learn Play Imagine, Cleveland Clinic, Good Housekeeping, Team Cartwright, Healthline



Provider Survey
Basket Drawing Winner



B & D's First Step Child
Care Center, Inc.
Beth Klidonas

Congratulations!



Name _____

SNOWY

Comprehension



This is a snowman.

His name is Jed.

He loves the snow.

His nose is orange.

How many buttons does he have?

1. What is the snowman's name?

2. What does Jed love?

3. What color is Jed's nose?



What chores should kids do around the house?

An age-by-age guide

Josie Maida

For parents, it's often shocking how much more cleaning is required once kids are added to the mix. From sweeping up spilled cereal to organizing a playroom full of toys, it can be over-whelming to manage the day-to-day chores that come with parenthood.



© Provided by Yahoo Life.

How old should kids be when they are assigned chores? Experts say it may be younger than you think. (Photo: Getty Creative)

But how old should your child be before you start asking them to contribute to the workload? Is it OK for a toddler to have chores? And how can parents motivate younger kids to help with cleaning up the house?

Britnee Tanner is a professional home organizer based in Salt Lake City, Utah. Tanner's kids are 3 and 5, so she's also familiar with the struggle to maintain a clean home with kids underfoot.

How to teach kids to clean up

"One of the best ways to help children learn to clean is by showing them how," Tanner says. "Parents can't expect a child to just grasp the act of cleaning up, they really need to be shown and taught."

For Tanner, this has meant taking the time to show and remind her children how and when to assist with household duties like cleaning their rooms, tidying up the bathroom or wiping down the kitchen table.

However, Tanner reminds that just because children are helping doesn't mean perfect cleanliness should be expected right away.

"It's not about the house actually being perfectly tidy," she explains. "It's about teaching them *how* to do it so they develop habits over time."

When should you teach your child to help clean up?

According to Devon Kuntzman, the Cleveland, Ohio-based founder of Transforming Toddlerhood, helping your child develop these important habits and life skills should begin sooner rather than later.

"Toddlerhood is a sensitive period of time for getting kids involved in household tasks," Kuntzman tells Yahoo Life. "[Toddlers] are generally excited to help because they are developmentally driven to want to feel capable and have a role in the family without anything in return."

Kuntzman believes this developmental stage is what can create intrinsic motivation around household tasks for children in the long term. "As kids are still learning, we tend to brush them aside so we can get things done more efficiently," she says, "but children can start helping with daily household tasks around 18 months old or once they are steady on their feet. Start slowly and every week add a task."

As children grow, reframing chores as "family tasks" can be a positive shift felt by children and parents alike. "Chores tend to have a negative connotation because many of us felt forced to do chores as children and it wasn't fun," says Kuntzman. "Family tasks refer to teamwork to help the family function. A great benefit of this is children get to learn life skills so they can become more independent as they grow up."

Should you "pay" kids for household chores?

Paul Sullivan, a former *New York Times* columnist and founder of The Company of Dads has three daughters who range in age from 4 to 12. The Fairfield County, Conn. dad says, when it comes to household tasks, it's important to be cognizant of how you reward children for their accomplishments.

"Thanking them for helping you, absolutely," says Sullivan. "But paying them or offering up some bribe for basic household tasks? No way."

Sullivan believes these types of rewards can make it difficult for children to understand the meaning of their responsibilities as they grow. "Do any of us get paid by our spouse to take out the trash, do the laundry or grocery shop on a Sunday when we just want to relax? No."

Still, Sullivan shares that every once in a while, there's room for exception. "When it's above and beyond, that's different," he says. "My oldest daughter is hyper-organized and loves to earn money: When the playroom gets out of hand, we'll sometimes pay her to clean it up."

Kuntzman says rewards should depend on your family values and what you want to communicate around chores and household tasks. "Rewards are an extrinsic motivator," she explains. "I prefer celebrations the whole family can participate in such as a dance party, movie night or fun weekend outing over monetary or food rewards."

"This creates a culture of teamwork and celebration for reaching goals," she adds. "These tasks then become life skills instead of transactional tasks."

An age-by-age guide to assigning kids chores

Elizabeth Fraley is a Los Angeles, Calif. educator and CEO of Kinder Ready, an education program focused on kindergarten readiness and private school preparation for children ages 3-12. Fraley shares her list of chores that are appropriate for children of all ages.



Ages 1-2

- put toys away in a toy bin



Ages 3-4

- all of the above, plus:
- feed pets
- set the table
- make the bed
- put laundry in hamper



Ages 5-6

- all of the above, plus:
- load the dishwasher (with adult help)
- set the table
- clear the table
- wash dishes (with adult supervision)
- wipe the countertops with wet wipes
- match laundered socks
- water indoor plants



Ages 7-8

- all of the above, plus:
- pack lunch for school
- load and unload dishwasher
- help with cooking
- fold and put away laundry
- sweep floors
- rake leaves



Ages 9-10

- all of the above, plus:
- vacuum
- do laundry
- clean mirrors
- dust furniture
- sweep porch, deck, garage or sidewalks



Ages 11-12

- all of the above, plus:
- wash the dishes
- clean the bathroom
- clean the kitchen
- help with meal prep
- wash cars

Randy McCoy, a Philomath, Oregon child development expert and vice president of programming for [The Little Gym](#) shares that when trying to teach children the tasks and responsibilities behind cleanliness, sometimes it's best to just keep it simple.

"Sometimes parents can expect too much, too soon," he says. "Having unrealistic expectations can lead to negative hurtful feedback when the child can't live up to them. Be patient with your kids as they learn to do chores, as they learn to take pride in their work and as they learn what it means to do a good job."



Redbook

5 Ways to Tame After-School Meltdowns, According to a Child Therapist

By, Angela Anagnost-Repke

As a parent of both a kindergartner and second grader, I've seen my fair share of meltdowns after picking my children up from school. I've felt helpless. And trust me, I've tried it all. I've provided them snacks as soon as they step foot in the door, encouraged them to go outside to play, and simply given them the chance to relax. Some of these ideas worked, too, but the positive results never stuck around for long.



When kids get home from school, they're sick of behaving, and they let loose on you. Here are five child therapist-tested ways to fix after-school meltdowns and a little about why they happen in the first place.

Many kids suffer from some form of after-school restraint collapse. **Tantrums strike once they retreat back into the safe haven of home simply because they're sick and tired of behaving all day long. Their minds and bodies unable to keep it up for a single second longer.** So, they either have a tantrum, cry, or completely melt into the arms of Mom or Dad.

This, of course, can feel incredibly stressful for the parents. We're confused because their teachers tell us about how well behaved they are. When they come home all out of sorts, we assume there's something we can find a quick fix for, putting pressure on us, too, hence my barrage of snacks and enforced playtime.

Haley Szykiel, L.M.S.W., S.S.W., a child therapist who spends her time directly with children and parents, says that was part of my problem. I never stuck with a solution long enough, so it never became routine for my children. "It can be tough to go from a super scheduled school day to total freedom at home," she says. "Sometimes that change is too much for kids, and they seemingly melt down for no reason."

I can definitely see that this is the case with both of my children. They come home and lash out because I've provided them with no structure. I assumed they were craving freedom, but the whole time they still needed some form of routine to guide them. So, how do you negotiate a return home after school that doesn't push the tantrum button?



Create a "Calming Corner"

It's important for children to learn how to decompress after a long, hard day, just like adults do. **Michelle Borba, Ed. D.**, provides a solution in her book, *Unselfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World*, one she calls a "calming corner." Simply dedicate a space where the kids can go to wind down. The corner should be comfortable, maybe with a beanbag chair for lounging.

Next to the beanbag, you can place a basket with different items that could calm them down. My children grabbed a couple of their favorite books, a stuffed animal, and a coloring book with some crayons. If your children can write, throw in a journal so that they can write about whatever is on their minds.



Offer a Snack

Sztykiel notes a simple snack can go a long way in regards to shaping a child's mood. We all know that a hungry kid is a cranky kid. Sometimes a bite is all they need. Personally, though I try to provide healthy snack options for my children, I give them the opportunity to choose what they want. It's one less post-school battle I need to fight. Sztykiel also reminds me about the importance of drinking water, and how often it's overlooked.



Take Homework Cues From Your Kids

For children who like to get their homework out of the way, homework time can serve as a nice transition from school to home. Just be sure you don't force it. My son, for example, likes to climb up to the kitchen table and get right to work on his assignments. It's not a rule that comes from me, but it's something that he likes to do immediately so that he can use the rest of his evening time for playing or relaxing. But if your kids are more the type to save their homework for after dinner, trying to cajole them into doing after school will just cause more stress. Designate a consistent homework time, and stick to it.



Release Some Steam Outside

"After-school outside play lets children release their energy after the structure of a school day," Sztykiel says. "The outdoors allows children to decompress and properly transition back to home, while also providing them an outlet for that physical and emotional release." If it were up to me, I'd send my kids directly outside every single day to play after-school. But sometimes they're too tired or they just don't want to. Most of the time, while my son is doing homework, my kindergarten daughter doesn't even make it inside the house to drop off her book bag. She gets right on her bike and starts riding. Her mood is always much better after she returns.



Be an Ear for Your Children

Kids don't always want you to run in and fix their problems. They just want to be heard. If you make sure to put your device and work away, your children will see that your attention belongs solely to them. This could serve as a window for your child to open up with you and share something about their day that they just might not have had the opportunity to otherwise.

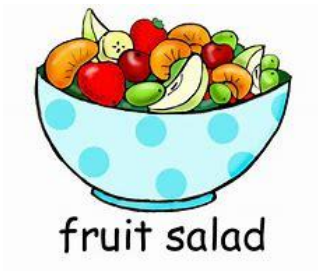
Of course, it takes some experimentation to figure out what after-school routine is right for your kids. And the schedule might change with the seasons, based on things like what time it gets dark or what after-school activities your kids are involved in, and you'll have to adjust on the fly. But once you get into a groove, Sztykiel says the results will improve the more you stick to it. Kids will feel better knowing what to expect, and the post-school meltdowns will be fewer and farther between.



Muffin Sundae - Serves 2

- 1 muffin
- 1 cup (8 ounces) yogurt
- 2 cups cut up fresh and/or dried fruit

1 divide muffin in half and break up into 2 bowls
Top each with half of the yogurt and 1 cut fruit



fruit salad

Simple Fruit Salad - serves 2

Use these suggestions or your own favorite fruits:

Bananas Pears Peaches Oranges Apples Cherries

Cut up 1-2 pieces of a few of your favorite fruits
Top with dairy whipped topping or yogurt.
Makes a great dessert or snack!



Rich Hot Chocolate Mix

- 1 pound instant cocoa mix
- 10 cups instant nonfat dry milk

In a large bowl mix all ingredients well.
Store in an airtight container

For one serving:
Add 1/3 cup mix to 1 cup boiling water.



Warm Fruit Wizards - 4 servings

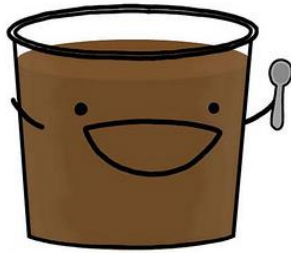
- 4 apples, halved and cored OR
- 4 pears, halved and cored OR
- 4 bananas, halved lengthwise
- Cinnamon and/or ginger to taste

Sprinkle your choice of fruit with cinnamon and/or ginger.
Place on microwave-safe dish and bake in the microwave on high:

- Pears need to cook about 1 ½ minutes
- Apples need about 3 minutes
- Bananas need about 45 seconds

Optional: For an even tastier 'wizard' add a spoonful of nonfat yogurt on top.

What's Up,



Pudding Cup?



Fast & Fun Pudding



Ingredients:

Instant pudding mix (any flavor)

Milk

Sanitized small plastic containers with lids OR small plastic baggies



Instructions:

Give each child a small container with lid OR plastic baggy.

Add approximately 1 teaspoon of instant pudding to the container OR baggy.

Cover the container OR close the baggy.

Let the children shake the containers OR mush the baggy contents around with their fingers.

Pudding will take approximately 5 minutes to set.

Give each child a spoon and allow them to open their container or baggy!

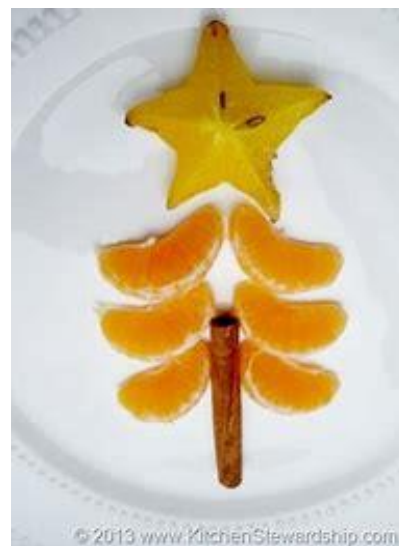


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COOKIE CUTTER IDEAS!





Edible Oreo Christmas Ornaments

By – Peyton's Momma

Note for CACFP providers:

Oreo Christmas Cookie Ornaments are not CACFP credible (but they look like lots of fun!)

To make these Oreo Christmas Ornaments you will need the following:

- ▲ White Fudge Covered Oreos
- ▲ Christmas Sprinkles
- ▲ Christmas Mini M&M
- ▲ White Frosting
- ▲ Mini Reese's Cups

If you cannot find white fudge covered Oreo cookies, you will have this extra step.

- ▲ You will need a package of traditional Oreo cookies and a bag of white chocolate.
- ▲ Melt white chocolate with either a double boiler or in 30-second intervals in the microwave.
- ▲ Be sure to stir the chocolate between each 30-second interval.
- ▲ Then dip the Oreo cookie in the melted white chocolate and set on wax paper to harden.



Edible Oreo Christmas Ornaments© Provided by Peyton's Momma

With a white frosted Oreo cookie:

- ▲ Take a little bit of frosting and place it on the bottom of the mini Reese's peanut butter cup. Attach the peanut butter cup to the Oreo cookie.



Oreo Christmas Ornaments© Provided by Peyton's Momma

- 🌲 Take a little more of the frosting and smear it on the white fudge Oreo cookie
- 🌲 Decorate the cookie with sprinkles, mini M&Ms, or your favorite candy toppings. The frosting is going to be like the glue that holds this all on so don't be stingy!

Let it set up by either placing them in the fridge for a half-hour or in a cool space.



Oreo Christmas Ornaments© Provided by Peyton's Momma

Time to enjoy!

You've made your very own **Edible Oreo Christmas Ornaments**.

- 🌲 **Note for CACFP providers:**
Oreo Christmas Cookie Ornaments are not CACFP credible





Wealth of Geeks

Screen Time vs. Traditional Play: Keeping Kids Balanced

By – Lynne Conner

"Go play!" Who hasn't heard this from their parents? This phrase meant spending time outside, with friends, or playing with traditional toys for generations of kids. And then there was a pandemic. But even before that, today's pop culture, entices young children away from conventional play (blocks, puzzles, books, trucks, dolls, and pretend) by the lure of screen time on electronic devices.

According to the Pew Research Center, 26% of US parents surveyed reported that their children aged 11 or younger spend too much time on smartphones or playing video games. Pew Research also noted that a whopping 60 percent of children "began engaging with a smartphone before the age of 5."

The Case for Reading

These statistics cause alarm, as child development experts from the Michigan Health Lab have found that kids spend more time on electronic devices instead of participating in traditional childhood play. The American Academy of Pediatrics proposes that children between the ages of two and five have no more than one hour of screen time per day, a recommendation some disagree with.

"I don't advise giving young children access to electronic devices or screens at all during early childhood," said Dr. Errol Baptist, MD, FAAP Baptist, who maintains a thriving practice and teaches medical students as a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the University Of Illinois College Of Medicine at Rockford. "What I tell parents from the beginning is that children should learn how to read. Reading to children starts during pregnancy. From that point onward, parents should encourage children to read, first with picture books and then with books containing prose. The important thing is to emphasize reading, learning, and acquiring knowledge; not learning how to kill someone in a video game."

The benefits of hands-on childhood play, Baptist says, are numerous. "Traditional toy play makes kids think; it allows them to develop critical-thinking skills, construct things and use their imaginations. Kids understand relationships when they can take stuffed animals or dolls and put them in real-life situations."

"When kids come in for an office visit, I will first 'check-up' their stuffed animal and then do a check up on the child. Traditional play gives kids the opportunity to develop their ideas instead of having a screen tell them what to do," he said.

Baptist advocates screen time for kids on an age-dependent basis only, which he feels should start later in childhood. However, he acknowledges that educational television shows and computer learning games supplement traditional play and reading.

"In my 45 years of my pediatric practice, based on experience and evidence, it is obvious that children exposed to reading do well later in life. If parents start with a habit of reading, this teaches children the importance of life-long learning. Children who learn to read at an early age have that practice ingrained in them."

The Developmental Divide

Another compelling reason to severely limit screen time for kids relates to brain development in young children. Elaine Sharpe, Associate Professor of Psychology at Rockford University, explains why. "Children aged three and younger cannot determine the real world from the fantasy world. Watching a screen confuses some of their reasoning and presents the world in two dimensions. Young children are tactile, hands-on learners, and that is not how things present on a screen."

Sharpe said traditional play also helps children develop skills they will utilize throughout their lives. "Traditional play helps foster creativity. The situations children act out with their toys mimic what they are going through in real life. They're trying to integrate their own lives into their imaginative play."

"Interactive make-believe play, especially with peers, siblings, or family members, also develops a young child's ability to read faces, understand social skills and learn empathy," she said.

Sharpe says that relying on electronic devices to entertain children poses developmental risks. "Increased screen time over creative play can lead to sleep issues, behavior problems, and obesity. Because a screen can change rapidly, it's harder for children to process what they see, possibly contributing to attention deficit disorders."

"When kids play with traditional toys, they are in charge of the action; it moves at their pace. Children have time to process the scene because they are orchestrating it," she said. "Traditional play sets the foundation for decision making, problem solving and fine motor skills."

Play-Based Curriculum

Engaging young children in traditional play is the basis for Rockford Public Schools (RPS) 205's early childhood curriculum. Vicki Sherman, an RPS preschool teacher for 21 years, has her classroom set up to facilitate hands-on interaction among her students.

"I have various play-based centers which the kids rotate through each day. They plan and review what centers they visit. My students can choose dramatic play, block building, science, reading, manipulatives, art, and sensory centers," she said. "I also have the Cozy Cube, which is an area where kids can retreat and have some quiet time." Since beginning her career, Sherman said that electronic device usage among her students has become more commonplace.

"I have seen a change in my students' behaviors through the years as technology has evolved. Nowadays, kids start engaging with electronic devices when they're practically babies; they struggle to pay attention and have shorter attention spans."

"When I first started teaching preschool, there were no smartphones or tablets, so there were fewer ways small children could engage in screen time," she said. "Kids just had TV or educational computer games."

Sherman advocates reading and play, encouraging young children to use their fine motor skills. "Writing skills seem to be more difficult for young children to master. Kids are playing on electronic devices instead of using crayons or coloring books. Any toy that helps children build fine motor skills can be very beneficial."



Mom's Screen-Free Hack for Keeping Toddler Busy at Restaurants

By, Nicole Pomarico

Eating at a restaurant with children of any age isn't always the *most* relaxing thing in the world, but bringing toddlers along gives a whole new meaning to the word "chaos." They're up, they're down, they're refusing to eat their food, and usually, they're also refusing to let *you* eat your food. It's just the way it goes!

And while many of us may be tempted to pull out an iPad to maintain some level of peace at the table and there's nothing wrong with that, one mom has found a way to keep toddlers busy at restaurants without it. She's a genius!

Best of all, this hack is using items you likely already have at your house. In the video, we can see a tot sticking cotton swabs into the holes in a spice shaker. He's very focused, but most of all, he's busy and he's probably letting his mom eat her food in peace, which is what really matters here.

When he runs out of cotton swabs, she can just dump the shaker out and he can start all over again. Genius!

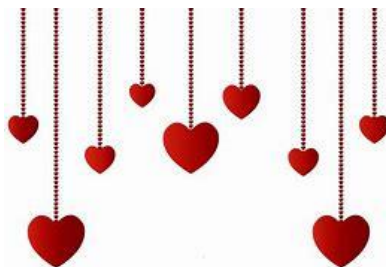
"I leave it in the diaper bag and only give it to him when needed," the mom wrote in a comment. This is smart, using it *only* when out and about will maintain the novelty of this game.

Next time we dare take our kids out to dinner, we'll be bringing this activity along with us. If it helped her kid, it might just work for ours!

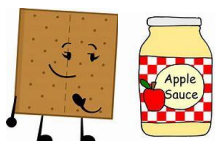




EASY KEEPSAKE CRAFT



Happy Valentine's Day!



Graham-Apple Stack – serves 1

3 graham crackers

2 tablespoons applesauce

🍎 Spoon 1 tablespoon on a graham cracker.

🍎 Put another cracker on top.

🍎 Put applesauce on this cracker. 🍎 Put a 3rd cracker on top. 🍎 Place in refrigerator 40 20 minutes.

🍎🍎🍎 Enjoy!!!



BabyGaga

Why Toddlers Throw Food On The Floor

Jessica Tucker

As excited as parents are to have their toddlers try new foods, one of the downsides is winding up with food on the floor. Or worse still, having food thrown directly at parents themselves. Something that may seem malicious at the moment but is nothing more than normal toddler development. And while it can be aggravating to deal with a mess to clean up, the mess can be cleaned. What is important to remember is that toddlers do not throw food to irritate parents.



Mealtimes are an important time for toddlers. It not only lets them explore different flavors and textures, but it also teaches little ones what is and is not appropriate when sitting down for a meal. But, when toddlers are unable to communicate what it is that they need, no amount of seeing what is appropriate helps them with their frustration to express themselves. And this means turning to any means possible to get the point across, specifically when sitting in a high chair, throwing food.

Here is why toddlers do not throw food on the floor to irritate parents.

Toddlers Do Not Throw Food To Irritate Parents

When trying to get toddlers to eat to no avail, it can seem like their throwing food is done purposefully to get a rise out of parents. But what parents need to understand is that toddlers are still cognitively developing. Along with this, their abilities to know right from wrong are not yet fully developed. And as a result, **they do not understand that throwing food is wrong.**

According to *Psychology Today*, **toddlers are still working on controlling their impulses.** Because of this, if it sounds fun to throw food or interesting to see what happens if it sticks to the wall, toddlers will do it. Food is not being thrown to make parents mad. That is the last thing that toddlers want to do. **The goal is cause and effect, which helps toddlers better understand the world they live in.**

Why Toddlers Throw Food

While toddlers are not throwing food on the floor to irritate their parents, there are reasons why food is being thrown. Some of the reasons which parents may not have thought of but in hindsight, make total sense.



According to *The Children's Nutritionist*, the reasons that toddlers throw food on the floor include:

- They are done eating
- Boredom has set in
- The effort to eat the food on the tray is too great
- Seeking out attention from parents
- Learning about cause and effect
- Testing how far they can push boundaries
- The food is not pleasing on the palate

There could also be reasons that revolve around watching pets eat the food thrown or that throwing food is just plain fun at play, according to *What To Expect*.

Regardless of what the reason for the throwing may be, if parents can remember that it is not being done to upset them that will go a long way to keeping cool heads when explaining why it is that food is not thrown during meals.

How To React When Toddlers Throw Food

It can take every bit of patience that parents have on some days to deal with toddlers throwing food. But with calculated reactions, parents can help to put an end to food throwing in fairly short order.

According to *Solid Starts*, **the best reactions parents can give their toddlers who are throwing food include:**

- Ignore the food being thrown
- Ask toddlers if they are full
- Stay calm no matter how hard it may be
- Not ending dinner for the rest of the family because toddlers threw their food on the ground
- Remind toddlers to keep food on the tray

It may take some time for toddlers to stop throwing food because they truly want to see the reaction they get from their parents. But, if the reaction is no reaction, there is no longer a need to throw food to get attention.

How To Stop Toddlers From Throwing Food

Just like there are a variety of reasons that toddlers are throwing food, there are just as many ways to combat it from happening. And when parents can understand what it is that motivates babies to throw food, it is a situation that can be addressed.

According to *Today's Parent*, ways to get toddlers to stop throwing food, include:

- Do not give the situation a reaction
- Push the highchair up the table without the tray
- Put animals outside at mealtimes
- Understand that toddlers are trying to communicate and work to understand what that is

Other ideas, according to *What To Expect* include:

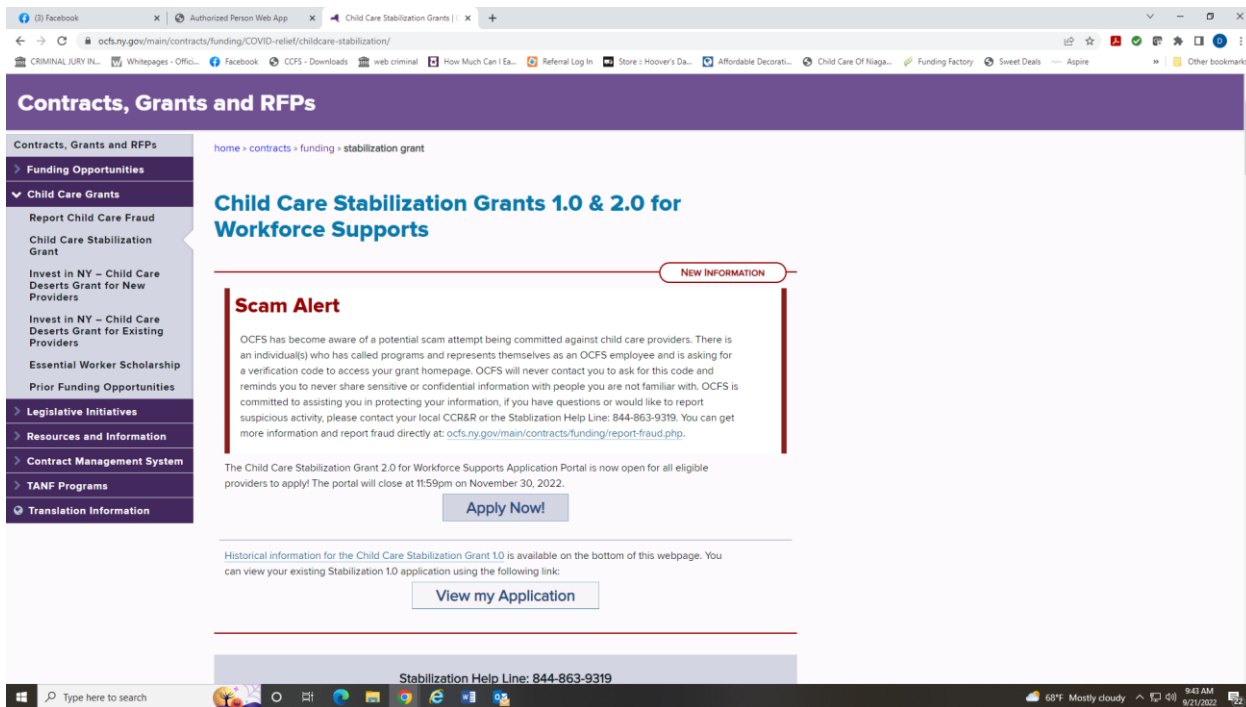
- Teach toddlers to sign the words "full," "bored," or any other words that revolve around mealtime
- Put less food on the plate
- Make mealtime short
- Make mealtimes the same daily

Any of these reasons and potentially more are what is causing toddlers to make a colorful mess during meals. But by addressing them calmly versus being angry and upset, the food throwing will eventually come to an end. A day that parents who have to constantly deal with food throwing may feel like cannot come soon enough.

Source: Psychology Today, The Children's Nutritionist, What To Expect, Solid Starts

Stabilization Grant Expense Reports

In order to continue to receive stabilization grant payments, every provider must complete the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) required expense report. The expense reports appear in your stabilization grant 1.0 application. The expense report appears 30 days after each payment is received. Please see the directions below to access the expense report. It is very important that you complete each expense report that appears in your "Actions List" before the next payment will be released. As always, if you have any questions on how to complete the expense report, please contact the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara at 716-285-8572.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL 'ocfs.ny.gov/main/contracts/funding/COVID-relief/childcare-stabilization/'. The page title is 'Child Care Stabilization Grants 1.0 & 2.0 for Workforce Supports'. A prominent 'NEW INFORMATION' banner contains a 'Scam Alert' warning about a potential scam attempt against child care providers. Below the alert, there is an 'Apply Now!' button. A sidebar on the left lists various menu items like 'Funding Opportunities', 'Child Care Grants', and 'Legislative Initiatives'. At the bottom of the page, there is a 'Stabilization Help Line: 844-863-9319'.

If you are having trouble accessing the Stabilization 2.0 Grant opportunity please start here:

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/contracts/funding/COVID-relief/childcare-stabilization/>

- When you see this screen above, please click on *View my Application*.
- It will take you to the applications, choose stabilization 1.0 and put your Registration number in the search box, click next or pick your facility name from the dropdown and click next.
- Scroll about halfway down the page, as you will see your application info from the 1.0 grant, on the right-hand side about halfway down there will be a short list of a few links in blue, choose the workforce support application link. You should then be asked 3 questions before beginning the expense report for the 2.0 grant.
- On the expense report please remember it will not let you go any further until you have successfully put 75% of the grant monies into the report for where you plan on using the money.
- Hit next once you have the report done, fill out the attestations and electronically sign.
- Please write down your application number or print the page at the end, and download and print the application for your records, if you need help at any time, please have the application number handy as this is how we look up your application.
- If you get through the application, or get an error message or not eligible message, please screenshot the page and email it to dstriffler@niagaracap.org.
- If you are looking to access the Stabilization 2.0 Grant, please follow the same instructions. The links in blue will show Workforce Support Application.

Registration Form December, 2022

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

- Family/Group Family Day Care Provider Day Care Center Staff
 School Age Child Care Staff Legally Exempt Provider

Child Care Program: _____

Training fees are non-refundable. There is a \$40.00 fee for returned checks.

DATE	TITLE	LOCATION	COST	AMOUNT PAID
12/03/2022 8:30 am to 12:30 pm	First Aid/CPR/AED Training	Mount St. Mary's Child Care Center 5310 Military Rd. Lewiston, NY 14092	\$100.00	
12/05/2022 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm	Safety, Supervision and Security	Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara, 1521 Main St., N.F., NY 14305	\$15.00	
12/06/2022 9:00 am to 12:00 pm	Ongoing Financial Management	Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara, 1521 Main St., N.F., NY 14305	None	
12/07/2022 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm	Ongoing Financial Management	Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara, 1521 Main St., N.F., NY 14305	None	
12/12/2022 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm	201-Level Adverse Childhood Experiences Institute	Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara, 1521 Main St., N.F., NY 14305	\$20.00	
12/13/2022 9:00 am to 12:00 pm	Facilities and Liability	Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara, 1521 Main St., N.F., NY 14305	None	
12/14/2022 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm	Facilities and Liability	Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara, 1521 Main St., N.F., NY 14305	None	

Please send your completed registration form along with a **check or money order** payable to:
NIAGARA COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM, INC.

Mail or drop off to:
 Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara
 1521 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14305 (716) 285-8572 EXT. 115

Please contact Beverly McArthur @ bmcarthur@niagaracap.org
 For more information regarding on-site training classes.



FREE ON-LINE TRAINING CLASSES – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

<http://www.ecetp.pdp.albany.edu/elearncatalog.shtm>

Supporting Language Development: Birth to 5 ****NEW****

OCFS Training Topics 1, 3 & 4 (2.5 training hours)

Media Use and Safety with Children ****NEW****

OCFS Training Topics 1, 3, & 4 (1.5 training hours)

Prevention and Identification of Brain Injuries, including Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) ****NEW****

OCFS Training Topics 7, 4, 1, 6, 8, & 9 (2.0 training hours)

Information and Resources to Promote a Successful Program ****NEW****

OCFS Training Topics 4 & 5 (2 training hours)

Identifying and Responding to Anaphylaxis: Elijah's Law ****NEW****

OCFS Training Topics 1, 2, 4 & 5 (1 training hour)

Foundations in Health & Safety

OCFS Training Topics 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 & 9 (5 training hours)

Expulsion & Suspension Prevention Strategies

OCFS Training Topics 1, 3, & 4 (1.5 training hours)

Infant Brain Development

OCFS Training Topics 1 & 3 (1 training Hour)

School Age Child Care

OCFS Training Topics 1, 3 & 4 (1.5 training hours)

Supervision of Children

OCFS Training Topic 4 (1.5 training hours)

Obesity Prevention

OCFS Training Topic 2 (2.0 training hours)

Emergency Preparedness

OCFS Training Topics 4 & 7 (1.5 training hours)

Family Engagement

OCFS Training Topics 3 & 4 (1.0 training hours)

Early Intervention

OCFS Training Topics 1 & 4 (1.5 training hours)

Transportation

OCFS Training Topics 3, 4 & 7 (2.0 training hours)

Managing Challenging Behavior: Birth to 18 Months

OCFS Training Topic 1 (1.5 training hours)

Managing Challenging Behavior: 18 Months to 36 Months

OCFS Training Topic 1 (1.5 Training hours)

Keeping Children Safe: Prevention of Lead Poisoning and Other Dangers to Children

OCFS Training Topics 1, 3, 4 & 7 (1.5 training hours)

Preventing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Promoting Safe Sleeping

OCFS Training Topics 1, 3, 4 & 7 (1.0 training hours)

Mandated Reporter On-Line Training

OCFS Training Topics 5, 6, & 8 (2.0 training hours)

Niagara Community Action

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Mission Statement:

Niagara Community Action Program, Inc. is a countywide agency dedicated to reducing poverty in a collaborative effort by initiating and conducting programs of self-sufficiency. Our ultimate goal is to empower individuals and families to reach their fullest potential.

Office Closings:

- December 23 & 26
- January 2
- January 16
- February 20

Contact Information:

Community Child Care
Clearinghouse of Niagara
1521 Main Street
Niagara Falls, NY 14305

Phone: 716-285-8572
Toll Free: 1-800-701-4KID (4543)
Fax: 716-285-9693
E-mail: crrniagara@niagaracap.org
Web: www.childcareofniagara.com

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/CCRandR/>



We're here to help if you are have a curriculum which isn't working for you, a disgruntled parent or a screaming child.

We know these are just a sample of the issues you may face as a child care provider. If you would like help with these or any other problems in your child care program, contact:

- ❖ Beverly McArthur for children ages 3-12 years
- ❖ Kelly Janese for children ages 6 weeks up to 3 years

We will come in to your program to observe and assess. We then will help you by providing technical support, trainings and create a quality improvement plan.

For more information about this service available to you, contact:

- ❖ Beverly 716-285-8572 ext. 115 or opt. 4
- ❖ Kelly 716-285-8572 ext. 104 or opt. 7



Please keep our office informed of any changes such as phone #'s and vacancies. Voice message or e-mail is sufficient.

I may be reached by: Phone: 716-285-8572 ext. 109 or opt. 2
or 1-800-701-4543

E-mail: crrniagara@niagaracap.org



Infant Toddler Mental Health Project

- Are you a caregiver of infants and/or toddlers?
- Do you have staff that cares for infants & toddlers?
- Are you dealing with stress, burnout, or struggling with staff turnover in your child care program?
- Would you or your staff like additional strategies to assist with challenging behaviors?

The work of an Infant Toddler Mental Health Consultant is to help providers and staff to:

- Create a positive learning environment which is emotionally safe and responsive.
- Develop and implement plans designed for an individual program to promote child growth.
- Reduce staff stress.

Our Mental Health Consultant works closely with providers to execute a plan created for them. Weekly meetings and support are provided as needed.

For more information regarding the Infant Toddler Mental Health Consultation project, contact:

Jameelah Masaed • jmasaed@niagaracap.org
716-285-8572 ext. 120

This service is offered by the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara free of charge.