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Summer NEWSLETTER 2023

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



Flamingos are such a pretty, graceful, fun bird or at least to me. Nah, it wouldn't have anything to do with being in

FLORIDA !!!

Did you know flamingos get their vibrant pink hue from eating shrimp and other crustaceans? It's a type of pigment called carotenoids.



To eat, a flamingo stands in shallow water, lower their necks and tilt their heads slightly upside-down. This allows their bills to hang upside-down facing backward in the water.

Did you know when a Flamingo rests, it stands on one leg with its head drooped down and eyes closed? This helps conserve body heat in cold climates as well as saves energy by using less muscle power to keep balanced. Flamingos are also able to lower their heart rate and metabolic rate while standing up on one leg. Just incredible!



When flamingos are in flight, they can reach speeds of up to 35 miles per hour in the air. Flamingos aren't just fast in flight, but they can also fly for very long distances. A flamingo can make it through about 400 miles worth of distance in just a single night's worth of flying, and they do this all the time! A lesser-known fact is that flamingos also have the ability to jump several feet in the air.



Have a fun-filled day with a fun-filled summer, Carolyn

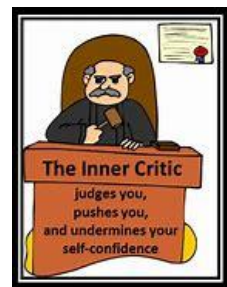
Bari

bari@barikoral.com

The #1 way to create more happiness and less stress is to start paying more attention to the conversations you have with yourself.

We tend to talk to ourselves very, **very** negatively.

It's not your fault! We have inherited a stress culture and negative bias.



Notice when you are hard on yourself, and instead, give yourself a break.

Be kinder to yourself. Try saying:

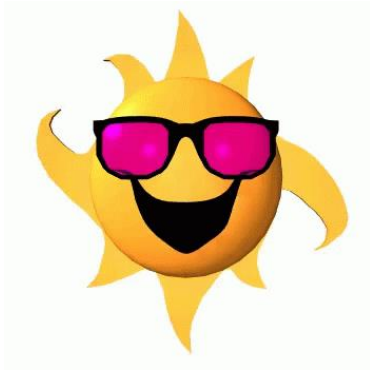
- "Oh well."
- "I forgive myself."
- "It's okay."
- "I'm giving myself a break today."

These small actions can lead to many positive changes in your life. I hope that serves you today.

Thanks for being here!



Fun Summer craft for kids!



**DIY Paper
Lanterns**



EAT SMART TO PLAY HARD



BE THE CHEF!

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES

Garden Fiesta Tuna Pockets

Fuel up with protein-rich tuna and colorful vegetables tucked into a pita pocket.



SERVINGS: 6

SERVING SIZE: 1 filled pocket

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 5-oz cans of low-sodium tuna packed in water, drained
- 1 15-oz can no-salt-added black beans, rinsed and drained
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup corn
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 medium carrot, diced
- 1 small red onion, diced (optional)
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 4 teaspoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 3 6-inch whole-wheat pitas, cut in half

SAFETY STEPS

In every food preparation activity, it's important to follow proper safety steps. Follow the food safety instructions on pages 4–5.

- Wash your hands. Use gloves or utensils to handle food. Clean surfaces to be used for food preparation with hot, soapy water. Cover the food preparation area with clean butcher paper or a disposable tablecloth for easy cleanup.
- Prepare the ingredients. Rinse and prepare produce for the **Garden Fiesta Tuna Pockets** using safe food-handling practices as described on pages 4–5. Place all ingredients on plates or in bowls, cover, and refrigerate until ready to use.
- Lead kids in proper hand-washing steps. See page 4.

DIRECTIONS

1. In a bowl, combine tuna with beans, corn, bell pepper, carrot, and onion.
2. Add in lime juice, vegetable oil, salt, and spices and mix thoroughly to combine.
3. Place 1 cup of the tuna mixture in each pita half.
4. Serve immediately.

OPTIONS

- Dice 1 avocado and add to sandwich for a delicious spin.
- Want a creamier filling? Before stuffing the pockets, add 1 tablespoon of fat-free sour cream to each pocket.
- Instead of black beans, use chickpeas (garbanzo beans) or pinto beans.
- Instead of pita pockets, use whole-wheat tortillas or lettuce leaves for a quick and easy wrap!

Food Demonstration Samples: Offer $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup portions of tuna salad in small cups. Cut each pita into 8 wedges and serve 1 wedge tucked alongside the tuna salad in each portion cup. Makes 24 samples.



NUTRITION INFORMATION

Amount per serving: 1 pocket; **Calories:** 215; **Total Fat:** 4 g; **Saturated Fat:** 0 g; **Sodium:** 392 mg; **Potassium:** 454 mg; **Total Carbohydrate:** 32 g; **Dietary Fiber:** 6 g; **Sugars:** 3 g; **Protein:** 17 g; **Vitamin A:** 2364 IU; **Vitamin C:** 21 mg; **Vitamin D:** 0 IU; **Calcium:** 40 mg; **Iron:** 3 mg.

Get children involved in making the recipe!



SHOW them how to:

- Cut each pita in half using a plastic knife (for ages 6–7 and up with adult supervision).
- Cut the bell pepper into small cubes using a plastic knife (for ages 6–7 and up with adult supervision).
- Measure the lime juice and the oil; measure the salt, garlic powder, and chili powder.
- Stir the garden fiesta salad.
- Stuff 1 cup of garden fiesta salad into each pita pocket.

Share these fun facts:

- * **ASK** the children if they know the different colors of onions (red, white, and yellow). **TELL** them that today they are using red onions because they have a fun fiesta color.
- * Herbs and spices, like garlic and chili powder, help us create flavorful dishes.



MAKE HALF YOUR
PLATE FRUITS
AND VEGETABLES



BE THE CHEF!

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES

Berry Jams Party Bites

This healthy treat combines fruit, nuts, and whole grains to make sure you have lots of energy to dance and play all day.



SERVINGS: 6

SERVING SIZE: $\frac{1}{2}$ muffin

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 whole-grain English muffins
- 6 tablespoons peanut butter or sunflower seed butter
- 1 cup fresh or frozen (and thawed) strawberries, sliced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh or frozen (and thawed) blueberries

SAFETY STEPS

In every food preparation activity, it's important to follow proper safety steps. Follow the food safety instructions on pages 4–5.

- Wash your hands. Use gloves or utensils to handle food. Clean surfaces to be used for food preparation with hot, soapy water. Cover the food preparation area with clean butcher paper or a disposable tablecloth for easy cleanup.
- Prepare the ingredients. Rinse and prepare produce for the **Berry Jams Party Bites** using safe food-handling practices as described on pages 4–5. Place all ingredients on plates or in bowls, cover, and refrigerate until ready to use.
- Lead kids in proper hand-washing steps. See page 4.



DIRECTIONS

1. Using a fork, gently split English muffin in half.
2. Spread 1 tablespoon of peanut butter on each English muffin half.
3. Layer strawberries and blueberries on top of each English muffin half, covering peanut butter.
4. Serve immediately or chill until served.

OPTIONS

- Instead of strawberries and blueberries, use pineapple (canned in 100% juice is OK) or bananas for a delicious twist.
- **Allergic to nuts?** Use sunflower seed butter in place of peanut butter.

Food Demonstration Samples: Divide each muffin half into fourths. Makes 24 servings.



NUTRITION INFORMATION

Amount per serving: $\frac{1}{2}$ muffin; **Calories:** 177; **Total Fat:** 9 g; **Saturated Fat:** 2 g; **Sodium:** 195 mg; **Potassium:** 225 mg; **Total Carbohydrate:** 20 g; **Dietary Fiber:** 4 g; **Sugars:** 7 g; **Protein:** 7 g; **Vitamin A:** 10 IU; **Vitamin C:** 17 mg; **Vitamin D:** 0 IU; **Calcium:** 100 mg; **Iron:** 1 mg.

Get children involved in making the recipe!

SHOW them how to:

- Slice the strawberries, using a plastic knife (for ages 6–7 and up with adult supervision).
- Use a fork to gently split English muffin halves.
- Measure the peanut butter.
- Spread the peanut butter on each muffin half.
- Add the berries to muffins.



Share these fun facts:

- * Cups, tablespoons, and teaspoons are divided into fractions.
- * Show children $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and 1 cup to illustrate the fractions.
- * Nut and seed butters are an excellent source of protein.





BabyGaga

Motivating Toddlers To Go Out For A Walk

Alexandra Sakellariou

Moving your body and getting fresh air can do a world of good in helping you to feel physically and mentally better. Toddlers do not fully understand this concept. Many parents find it to be a struggle to encourage their young children to walk independently which can ruin an otherwise relaxing experience. If your toddler struggles to get excited about walks, use the following tips to transform their attitude.



© Provided by BabyGagaMotivating Toddlers To Go Out For A Walk

Pick A Fun Destination

Don't just go for an ordinary walk around the neighborhood. Your toddler will look forward to the walk if they think they're going somewhere exciting. Try to choose a place to walk that's convenient, but will also spark your toddler's interest and allow them to explore.

For instance, look up a playground or park in your area that you've never been through, or hit up a different trail you've never taken. If you don't mind a drive, consider going to the next town over or taking a ride to the beach, forest, or another outdoor spot that's engaging but also great for family walks.

Make It Into A Game

Children have short attention spans, especially the younger they are. You can't expect your toddler will simply be happy to walk peacefully for the full outing. Turning the walk into a game can keep them focused and motivated to keep going. The type of game you play will depend on your child's age and skill level. You don't want to try something too confusing, or else they'll get frustrated and make the walk unbearable.

For example, *Playworks* suggests playing a color game. Choose a color and have each family member find an item that matches it. You could also prepare a scavenger hunt ahead of time and instruct your child to find various nature items like leaves and rocks.

Bring Along Distractions

Another way to keep your toddler occupied on the walk is to bring along distractions you can utilize. For example, *5 Minutes for Mom* suggest bringing along bubbles that your child can blow as you carry on. You can easily find these for cheap at the dollar store. It's small enough to fit in your bag or pocket. Plus, it's a no-mess activity your child can do as they walk.

Other ideas include bringing sidewalk chalk they can color with, or a toy camera that your toddler can use to pretend they're a nature photographer.

Pack Snacks & Water

Many toddlers will say they're hungry or thirsty on a walk if they want to stop. While it may be true that they're hungry or parched, it could also be an excuse to wrap up the walk. Don't let your kid get the best of you.

Come prepared for the walk with some snacks and water. You can take a quick 5- to 10-minute break with your child if they ask for either. Once they're done, encourage them to get back on their feet to continue the walk. Choose snacks and water bottles that are easily portable.

Bring The Right Equipment

When you have a toddler, you can't expect them to walk very long or far. Some 2-year-olds are just getting the hang of being stable on their feet. So, it's important to bring the right gear while going on a walk with your young child to ensure they can make it through.

Consider bringing a stroller if your toddler still uses one regularly. It's best to choose a stroller that will work on all sorts of terrain both smooth and bumpy, so you can take it wherever you plan to walk. Try to find a model that's lightweight and easily folds, so you can easily throw it in your car if you're driving to the area you'll take a walk like a beach or a playground.

You may find it more convenient to use a baby carrier since this will keep your hands free. But remember, it takes more effort to put a child in a carrier versus a stroller which they can hop in and out of.

Use Positive Reinforcement

Finally, if you want your toddler to have a good attitude on the walk, then you need one yourself. Refrain from getting frustrated or upset with your child. They'll be able to sense your disappointment, and it won't do much to help rectify the situation.

Rather, focus on using positive reinforcement to keep your child motivated. This involves using a stimulus like positive compliments, a high-five or hug, or even a reward to reinforce good behavior.

Vocalize when your child is doing a good job on their walk. Tell them you're proud of what a big kid they're being. Toddlers may not understand the concept of a reward fully, but don't be scared to coax your child into good behavior with the promise of a special treat after a well-behaved walk.



Water Painting

Painting with ice cubes is an entertaining sensory activity that engages the senses of sight and touch. This is a great project to do outside on a sunny day.

The Rules:

There are no rules! Let kids' creative juices flow with this fun water-based art project.

Water Play Materials:

- ✚ Butcher paper
- ✚ Masking tape
- ✚ Silicone ice cube molds
- ✚ Food coloring
- ✚ Old shirts you don't mind getting stained

How to Play:

1. The night before play, fill up your ice cube tray with water and mix in a few drops of food coloring in each square. Using large molds allow kids to easily grip onto their painting tools.
2. Use masking tape to adhere large strips of butcher paper to a table.
3. Let the kids have fun painting! For extended play, consider giving them a list of certain objects to draw.

SUMMER, SUMMER

By Sarah Griffin

Summer, summer,
I'm so glad you're here!

Summer, summer,
Let's give a cheer!

Summer, summer,
I'll meet you at the park.

Summer, summer,
Let's stay up till dark!



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Sunny Day

Yellow sun, yellow sun,
Shining down so bright.

Sunshine, Sunshine,
Giving lots of light.

The sun is warm,
It hits my face,
It really makes me smile!
I do not want the sun to leave,
So please stay for a while!





As a parent/ caregiver, you can help emotionally support children with these positive affirmations!

by Dannielle Beardsley

Children feel happy and healthy when they feel safe and loved. They also love and deserve to be told how amazing they are especially on the rough days. Though we could all benefit from a little self-love through affirmations, it's important to start this habit early on with your children.



From making sure your children build up their confidence to keeping their spirits up when life gets them down, these positive affirmations for kids should be said every day.

These quick and simple positive affirmations should be said with your child every morning to let them know each day starts with beautiful vibes only.

- I am loved.
- I deserve to be happy.
- Today will be an amazing day.
- I am an awesome person.

When your child is anxious

Some days are just rough. When your child is having a stressful day, there are still affirmations to say to help them feel better, reset themselves, and to know the feeling is temporary.

- I am safe.
- I am capable of getting through this.
- I will try my best, and that will be enough.

For body positivity

While a child's body image seems to be discussed at a younger and younger age, we need to remember how this could affect them in the long term. Start with body positivity as soon as possible.

- I will grow healthy and strong by taking care of my body.
- My body does amazing things for me every day.
- Our bodies are all unique and different, and that is beautiful.
- I appreciate the amazing things my body does.

For friendships

True friends are there for each other, and they are there to let each other be their true selves. Children will grow up to have healthier relationships when they understand this about friendships early on.

- I treat others the way I want to be treated.
- With a true friend, I can relax and be myself.
- I will fill my life with positive people.



To help them think great things about themselves

No one has confidence like a toddler coming into their own. All children need to have that level of appreciation for themselves all the time.

- There is no one else like me, and that is amazing.
- I will use kind thoughts and words about myself.
- I will try my best today, and that will be enough.

For days they need more support

Even on the hard days, there's some part that is positive. When your child needs a little extra emotional support, remind them of these affirmations.

- Today is a new beginning.
- Every day has good in it.
- I am capable of getting through this day.
- I will live in each moment.

Whether your child says these to themselves, writes them down, or has you say the affirmation with them, the important thing is that they say them every day. The repetition will become their truth, and your child will feel happier and healthier about themselves. Rotate through your child's favorite ones and give them the emotional support they need and deserve. If you happen to find any you like, make them a part of your routine as well.

JOKES FOR KIDS



**Q: What is brown, hairy and wears sunglasses?
A coconut on vacation.**

HOW DO YOU KNOW CARROTS ARE GOOD FOR YOUR EYES?
YOU NEVER SEE A RABBIT WEARING GLASSES!



**Q: What part of the fish weighs the most?
The scales.**

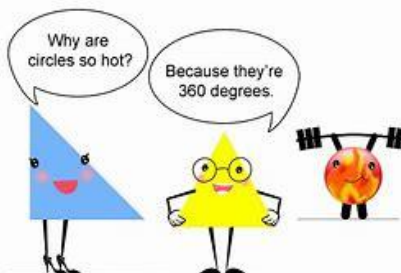
**Q: How can you tell that the ocean is friendly?
A: It waves!**

**Q: Do fish go on vacation?
A: No, because they're always in school!**

**Q: Why don't oysters share their pearls?
A: Because they're shellfish!**

Why are circles so hot?

Because they're 360 degrees.



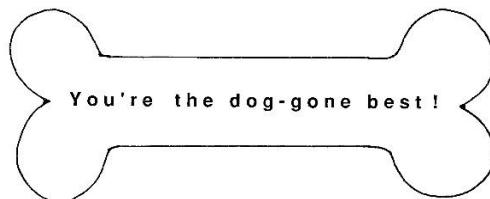
**Q: What did the beach say to the tide when it came in?
Long time, no sea.**



Tickle the funny bone with these kids' knock-knock jokes!

by Dawn Miller

- Knock, knock! Who's there? Orange. Orange who? Orange you going to let me in?
- Knock, knock! Who's there? Needle. Needle who? Needle little help right now!
- Knock, knock! Who's there? Owls. Owls who? Yeah, they do!
- Knock, knock! Who's there? At. At who? Bless you!
- Knock, knock! Who's there? Tank. Tank who? You're welcome!
- Knock, knock! Who's there? Alpaca. Alpaca who? Alpaca the suitcase if you packa the car.
- Knock, knock! Who's there? Toucan. Toucan who? Toucan play at that game.
- Knock, knock! Who's there? Snow. Snow who? Snow use. The joke is over.
- Knock, knock! Who's there? Dozen. Dozen who? Dozen anybody want to let me in?
- Knock, knock! Who's there? Kanga. Kanga who? Actually, it's kangaroo!





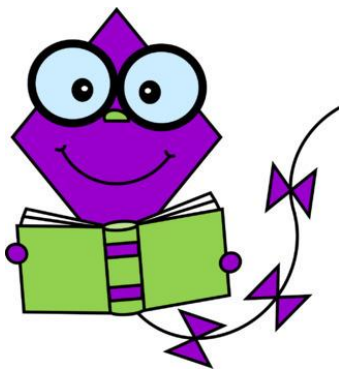
Crafts and making gifts for others is important. Children enjoy giving. Parents or caregivers enjoy receiving a gift especially for no particular reason other than to say “I love you!”, or “Thank you”. So have the children make a gift, just because.

IDEA: A little dirt, a plant and a container. Have the kids decorate the container or add a decoration or 2 with the plant.

Dig into READING! SUMMER CRAFT!

Be sure to encourage children to read this summer.

Reading is such an important skill and one they will use their entire life. Being able to read opens up a whole world of learning and using their imagination.



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



How to Talk to Kids About Mental Health

[Be The Difference](#) [Mental Health First Aid News](#) [The "Awkward" Conversation](#) [Youth Mental Health](#)

By Mental Health First Aid USA on March 7, 2023

Having a serious conversation about mental health with a young person can be challenging, to say the least. How do you start the conversation? What should you bring up? How much is too much information? Should it even be discussed?

The Mental Health First Aid curricula says national studies estimate that 22.2 percent of youth in the United States will have a mental health challenge that significantly impacts their life. This makes it likely that an adult will interact with an adolescent who is experiencing a mental health challenge. Adults who interact with young people need access to information and resources about how to have conversations with kids and answer the tough questions.

Youth Mental Health First Aid can help. [Youth Mental Health First Aid](#) is designed to teach parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health and human services workers, and other caring citizens how to help adolescents (age 12-18) who are experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge or are in crisis. YMHFA is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people. To learn more, [download the Mental Health First Aid for Youth information sheet](#).

According to the Youth Mental Health First Aid curriculum, conversations can be initiated by anyone close enough to the young person that he or she can detect noticeable differences in behavior, thoughts and feelings. This person could be a parent, coach, teacher, family member, youth group member, or other trusted and responsible adult.

Before talking to a young person, consider looping in a parent, caregiver, or guardian. You can help them find affordable mental health care options or help a youth navigate their legal right to access care. Be aware that rights vary from state to state. For example, in some states, a 14-year-old can access substance use counseling without parental permission.

Still, how do you effectively talk to youth about this challenging topic? This can depend on the age and maturity level of the young person, but there are things you can keep in mind to help make the conversation hopeful and helpful. Use these tips from the Youth Mental Health First Aid curriculum, coupled with the 5-step [MHFA Action Plan](#), to get started.

Do:

- **Be authentic:** Kids have a sixth sense when an adult is pretending, so be yourself. If you're uncomfortable talking about the topic, admit it. You could say, "This is hard for me to bring up, and it may be hard for you to talk about, too."
- **Be careful about using slang:** Like the tip mentioned above, youth know when an adult is trying too hard to be someone they're not. Using slang words out of context can be a red flag to a kid.
- **Allow for silence:** Embracing quiet moments allows kids to find their own words to describe their feelings. Interrupting a silent spell may break their focus. If enough time passes, try offering words that could help them express their emotions, like "To me, you don't look happy. Are you sad, frustrated, or angry?"
- **Watch your body language:** Body language sends big signals to young people. Talk to kids on the same level as them, like sitting next to them or walking side by side. Keep your arms unfolded and talk in a low, calm voice. Avoid folding your arms and standing above them, which can intimidate them and cause them to lock up.
- **Provide positive feedback:** Genuinely complimenting the young person's strengths and abilities can encourage them to talk. Give a specific example of something they did and what it reflects, for example, "I saw that you made it to school on time despite having a rough morning. That shows a lot of determination."

Don't:

- **Compare the young person's life experiences to yours at that age:** It's easy to want to relate to youth by sharing your experiences at that age. However, a young person can see it as devaluing or outdoing their experience. Keep the conversation focused on them.
- **Make light of the young person's feelings:** Avoid downplaying kids' feelings by asking what they have to be anxious or depressed about. Though the situation may seem minor to an adult, to a youth, it may seem like it's their whole world.
- **Ask a young person to justify or explain behavior:** Kids often act impulsively without much forethought. It's not intentional — they simply haven't mentally developed the ability yet. Asking "Why did you throw a tantrum?" or "Why did you leave without permission?" only puts children on the defensive.

Recognizing mental health challenges is the first step toward helping a young person. According to MHFA, studies show that with proper care and treatment, children and youth with mental health and substance use challenges get better, and many recover completely.

Interested in learning more about YMHFA? [Find a course](#) near you today and #BeTheDifference for young people in your community.

Sources:

Mental Health First Aid. (2020). *Mental Health First Aid USA Manual for Adults Assisting Children and Youth*. National Council for Mental Wellbeing.



Wind Chimes Outside Your Window May Help You Unwind

By Brooke Younger



NOTE: This article was written with another purpose in mind, but with a little ingenuity, it could be used in a day care setting inside and/or outside.

Wind chimes have a very long history possibly dating as far back as 3000 B.C.E. in China. It's speculated that their clunky noise was used to repel birds from rice fields. Eventually, these quickly traveled worldwide and became common at Buddhist temples, where they would ward off evil spirits and promote meditation. Today, keeping wind chimes at your home can have the same purifying and calming effect. In addition, they help to engage the five senses, add visual and auditory beauty to your home or garden, and even improve your well-being. That's because they emit vibrational frequencies that have been shown to improve mood and promote relaxation!

Different chime vibrations and sound frequencies can even have varying effects on your health. Some frequencies are better for inspiring spirituality and creativity, while others promote sleep and stress relief. The best design and sound frequency for you may also depend on where you want to hang them. Choosing the right wind chime for your home is essential to maximize its benefits. So we've shared everything you need to know about picking the right one to suit your space and emotional needs.



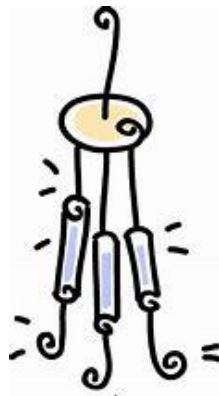
Wind Chimes Bring Good Vibrations



There are many types of wind chimes including tubular, bell, gong, and decorative varieties. However, all work similarly; when the wind blows, it pushes a paddle or clapper that strikes against the chimes, or else the chimes collide against one another. When this happens, the whole piece vibrates, emitting a sound frequency that can be strong and low, high and soft, or anywhere in between. Modern metal varieties are designed to emit harmonious sounds that are especially loud and appealing, while bamboo and natural materials offer a more muted background noise.

Most wind chimes feature an audible range between 300 and 3,000 hertz (Hz). At 396 Hz, sounds can relieve negative emotions and promote self-acceptance. 963 Hz, they are said to clear the mind and encourage divine spiritual connection. 432 Hz is a common frequency for wind chimes, and it promotes positive emotions, mental clarity, and inward healing. For this reason, wind chimes sporting a similar frequency can be a beneficial tool for people struggling with anxiety, depression, insomnia, self-love, or stressful times in general.

Choosing The Right Chimes For You



Wind chimes are a relatively affordable addition to your home and garden, but they can make a huge impact. Look for a design that balances your overall aesthetic, whether dark and classy or colorful and playful. Materials like bamboo and shells lend a natural, beachy vibe to your space, but brass and steel are more modern and durable, making them better for areas with harsh weather. That said, regardless of the style, remember to bring them in when a severe storm rolls in.

As you shop for wind chimes, consider the sound frequency and desired effect on your mood and space. For example, gentle, twinkling tones can generate joy, spirituality, and creativity, which are great for garden spaces and children's play areas. On the other hand, low, soothing frequencies give off calming vibes and are ideal for sleep and meditation, so they're best near tranquil gardens and reading nooks. If you decide to hang multiple chimes, make sure that the sounds blend with each other to avoid creating chaos. The patio is a classic space for wind chimes, but hanging them up in your office or kitchen window is also a great idea so that you can still appreciate the gentle ringing sounds from inside your home.



NOTE:

If cans are used, be sure ALL rough edges are smooth.



These are just a few ideas to create a wind chime. For more ideas, be sure to check out the internet.

Try adapting your wind chimes for the different seasons and holidays.



Taco Cups

Taco cups are like mini piñatas filled with deliciousness. They are a super kid-friendly snack for any occasion, whether it's a playdate, dinner party, or midday snack. Plus, they're extra easy to make. To make taco cups, cut the tortillas into circles and place them in the muffin cups, pressing them down to form a cup shape. Then, brown some ground turkey in a skillet and add your favorite taco seasoning. Next, spoon the meat mixture into the tortilla cups and top with tomato salsa, guacamole, and a dollop of sour cream.

If your little ones are picky eaters, you can customize the taco cups to their liking. For example, you can swap ground turkey for ground beef, chicken, or even tofu if you have vegetarians in the house. You can also offer a variety of toppings, such as shredded cheese, diced tomatoes, or black beans, so your kids can choose their favorites.

Taste of Home



Chicken & Bacon Roll-Ups

TOTAL TIME: Prep: 20 min. + chilling

YIELD: 4 dozen.

My children like these so much that they ask for them every day for lunch during the summer. Whenever I have leftover chicken or turkey breast, this is a delicious way to use it up. —Patricia Nieh, Portola Valley, California

Ingredients

- 1 can (9-3/4 ounces) chunk white chicken, drained
- 1 carton (8 ounces) spreadable garden vegetable cream cheese
- 1 cup salsa, divided
- 4 pieces ready-to-serve fully cooked bacon, crumbled
- 6 flour tortillas (8 inches), room temperature

Directions

1. Mix chicken, cream cheese, 1/2 cup salsa and bacon; spread over tortillas. Roll up tightly; wrap. Refrigerate at least 1 hour. Just before serving, unwrap and cut tortillas into 1-in. slices. Serve with remaining salsa.



Mini Zucchini Pizzas

TOTAL TIME: Prep/Total Time: 20 min.

YIELD: about 2 dozen.

Looking for low carb? This simple snack recipe is a fantastic way to satisfy your pizza cravings while skipping the usual carb-filled crust. —Taste of Home Test Kitchen

Ingredients

- 1 large zucchini (about 11 ounces), cut diagonally into 1/4-inch slices
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1/3 cup pizza sauce
- 3/4 cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup miniature pepperoni slices
- Minced fresh basil

Directions

1. Preheat broiler. Arrange zucchini in a single layer on a greased baking sheet. Broil 3-4 in. from heat just until crisp-tender, 1-2 minutes per side.
2. Sprinkle zucchini with salt and pepper; top with sauce, cheese and pepperoni. Broil until cheese is melted, about 1 minute. Sprinkle with basil.



Cheesy Cauliflower Breadsticks

TOTAL TIME: Prep: 20 min. Bake: 30 min.

YIELD: 12 servings.

These grain-free, cheesy cauliflower breadsticks are made with vegetables instead of flour. Serve them with your favorite marinara sauce.—Nick Iverson, Denver, Colorado

Ingredients

- 1 medium head cauliflower, cut into 1-inch florets (about 6 cups)
- 1/2 cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- Marinara sauce, optional

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425°. Process cauliflower in batches in a food processor until finely ground. Microwave, covered, in a microwave-safe bowl on high until tender, about 8 minutes. When cauliflower is cool enough to handle, wrap in a clean kitchen towel and squeeze dry. Return to bowl.
2. Meanwhile, in another bowl, mix cheeses together. Stir half of the cheese mixture into cauliflower; reserve remaining cheese mixture. Combine next 6 ingredients; stir into cauliflower.
3. On a baking sheet lined with parchment, shape cauliflower mixture into an 11x9-in. rectangle. Bake until edges are golden brown, 20-25 minutes. Top with reserved cheese; bake until melted and bubbly, 10-12 minutes. Cut into 12 breadsticks. If desired, serve with



Important Information for Child Care Deserts Grant Recipients

If you are a child care Deserts grant recipient which opened a new child care program or an existing child care program that received Deserts grant funding, please remember you must create a Child Care Program Sustainability Plan as a requirement of the Deserts grant award. The Child Care Program Sustainability Plan must be uploaded into your Deserts grant portal once the document is complete.

The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara has scheduled trainings to assist Deserts grant recipients with creating a Child Care Program Sustainability Plan. Please contact the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara at 716-285-8572 ext. 106 for more information on the Child Care Program Sustainability Plan trainings and other business trainings needed to be in compliance with the Deserts grant requirements.

Recipients can also schedule an appointment for someone to review the Child Care Sustainability Plan prior to uploading the document into your Deserts grant portal.

All Deserts grant recipients can access the Deserts grant welcome packet which includes information on all deliverable requirements and additional information that is needed to remain in compliance with the Deserts grant at:

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/assets/docs/deserts/CCD-2.0-Welcome-Packet-B.en.pdf>

To access resources specific to Deserts grant recipients who opened new child care programs, please access: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/deserts/#resources>

To access the slide presentation for existing child care programs that received a Deserts grant award, please access: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/assets/docs/deserts/CCD-Grant-Presentation-Existing-Provider.pdf>

As always, all Deserts grant recipients may contact the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara at 716-285-8572 ext. 106 with any questions related to the Desert grant.





Important Information for All Stabilization Grant Recipients

If you have received Stabilization Grant funds from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services to help with your child care program expenses, it is important to remember that you must complete expense reports for all funds that were received even if your child care program has closed since the receipt of the funds.



The steps to completing the expense report are listed below.

- **Step 1** Access the OCFS website at the following link:
<https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/contracts/funding/COVID-relief/childcare-stabilization/>
- **Step 2** Click on "View my Application."
- **Step 3** Log into your NY.Gov account.
- **Step 4** Log into the Stabilization Portal. You can use either box to log into your portal. Enter your license number in the box on the left or click inside the box on the right (do not use the arrow as it will not work). Then click on your name. If your name does not appear, then you must enter your license or registration number in the box on the left.
- **Step 5** Once in your account, scroll to the section that states "Actions" and click on "WSE Expense Report."



If there is no report in your portal, please take a screenshot of the page and email it to ocfs.sm.stabilizationgrantquestions@ocfs.ny.gov along with your application number and license or registration number. In the email, ask that the expense report be reset as it is not appearing in your portal.

As always, if you have any questions or need assistance with completing the expense reports, please contact the Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara at 716-285-8572 Ext 106.



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)

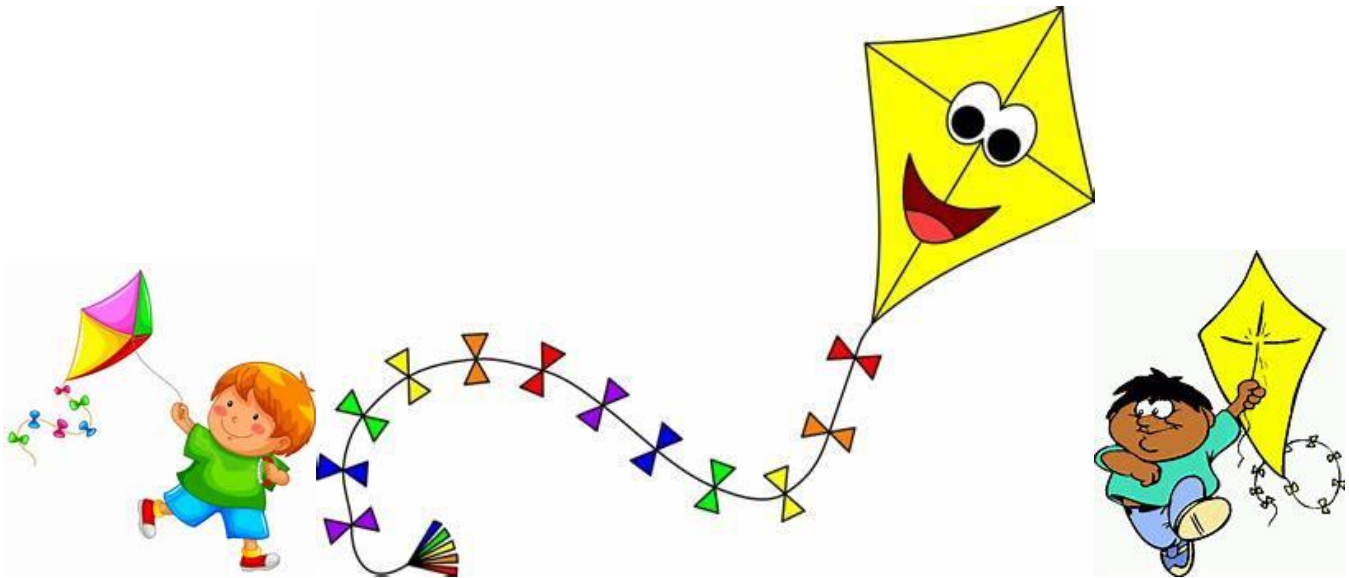
Mandated Reporter On-Line Training
OCFS Training Topics 5, 6, & 8 (2.0 training hours)

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)

***For complete information regarding Training classes,
be sure to check your Training Calendar for May – August 2023!***

Go Fly A Kite!!!



Mini Paper Kite Directions

[Bust boredom with these adorable mini paper kites! - onecreativemommy.com](http://onecreativemommy.com)

Niagara Community Action

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| Infant Toddler Mental Health Consultant: | Jameelah Masaed |
| Legally Exempt: | Debbie Perricelli Donna Striffler |
| CC Referrals: | Carolyn Jacobs |
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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:

- June 19
- July 4
- September 4

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: ccrniagara@niagaracap.org
Web: www.childcareofniagara.com

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



DO YOU HAVE:

- ♥ a screaming child,
- ♥ a disgruntled parent, or
- ♥ a curriculum which isn't working for you?

We're here to help if you 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:

- ❖ For children ages 6 weeks up to 3 years, contact Kelly Janese at 716-285-8572 option 7
- ❖ For children ages 3-12 years, contact our office at 716-285-8572

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



Please keep our office informed of any changes in your provider record such as phone # and number of vacancies. A voice message or e-mail is sufficient.

I, Carolyn, may be reached by: Phone: 716-285-8572 ext. 109 or opt. 2 or 1-800-701-4543
E-mail: ccrniagara@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

These services are offered by the
Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara free of charge.