



Did You know?

February is the shortest month of the year.

ECDEC/FIND News

February 2021

Hello everyone!

My name is Shannon Myers and I am an occupational therapy doctoral student who will be working with ECDEC for the next three months. I am so excited to be here! As a part of my time at ECDEC, I will be making resources for parents to support social-emotional development at home. Thank you for taking time to fill out my survey- your answers will help me make these resources! I will also be doing a workshop on fine motor skills- look out for an invitation in the next couple of weeks!



A little bit about me: I grew up in Grayslake, IL and went to the University of Iowa for college. I now go to Northwestern University. I love hiking, traveling (my favorite places I've been to are Peru and Nicaragua), playing with dogs, reading books, and walking outside. In the future, I want to work with kids and their families in schools.

What is occupational therapy?: Occupational therapists help people do the things that they want and need to do to live a happy life. For kids, this could be things like playing, getting dressed for school, drawing and writing, managing their emotions, making friends, or participating at school. Occupational therapists also work with parents so they can help support their kids in these activities!

Fun activity to try at home this month: Ripping Pieces Craft: Encourage your child to cut or rip out pieces of scrap paper to fill out a shape that they draw. They can glue or tape the pieces down or keep them loose on the page. Encourage them to draw whatever shape that they would like and to be creative! This fun craft could be done with anything in your house such as the back of a cereal box, wrappers, paper plates, tissue paper, napkins, or pieces of paper (that could be colored on). It encourages creativity, hand strength and endurance (which helps with other skills like zipping a coat), and drawing/writing skills.



Be A Voice

The next PAC meeting will be Tuesday, February 23rd from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm via Google Meets
Please join us!

Winter Conferences are happening in February. Please check your child's backpack/Seesaw for dates and times.

Be aware Kindergarten registration has begun in most districts. Contact your teacher or parent educator if you have questions.

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Brain Building

Remember to spend some quality time with your child everyday. Even a few minutes of time spent with your child helps their brain grow. Below are a couple “Brain Building Activities” you can try at home.

Clean up: Have your child help you dry the dishes. Talk about what is the same/different about the things he/she is drying. Discuss where the items go and ask: “What other things are in the drawer with the spoons?” “What else is round like a bowl?”

Bedtime Recap: Talk with your child about his/her day. Ask what he/she did first? Tell what you remember as well. Have fun and switch the order of events that day for example: “You went outside and then you got dressed?” Wait for your child to correct you. Continue to have fun mixing up the details.

(Vroom.org Building Brain Activities)



Brain Growth in your Preschooler:

Your child’s brain goes through stages of growth from the moment of birth through 5 years of age. It is important to know that the growth of the brain is effected by a child’s **relationships, experiences and environment.**



Did you know that 90% of your child’s brain will develop by age 5? The infant brain is about a quarter size of the adult brain. Amazingly it doubles in size (80%) by age 3 and by age 5 (90%) which almost is fully developed.

Since the brain grows through touch, talk, sight and sound it makes sense that Early Education (Preschool) would help your child to receive some of those *interactions* and *experiences* needed. However, nothing replaces **you** as your child’s main *caregiver* and first *teacher*. Practices in your home along with the interactions and the routine of school allows your child’s brain to grow and expand from his/her skills.

Ideas to Encourage Brain

Growth:

- **Play:** Play is a wonderful way to help your child’s brain to develop. Play might be a game, talking or singing to actively engage your child’s brain.
- **Comfort:** Your child can feel stress too and needs ways to comfort him/herself.
- **Read:** Reading or telling stories is one of the best ways to promote a child’s brain development.
- **Listen:** Listening is one of the most important things you can do as a parent. By listening you encourage your child’s talking, ideas, questions and responses that he/she needs to expand his/her language.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_period

With the support of you and your child’s teaching staff together you can build a solid base for a healthy and successful future for your child.

Gross Motor:

While outside, have your child march through the snow. Walk up a hill. Slide down a hill. Make snow angels (Child lays down in the snow and moves legs out and in and arms up and down).

Indoor: Have your child act out Winter activities inside your house as well. Try doing the following with your child. While inside, dance to music using creative movement to the beat. Incorporate towels, scarfs, ribbons to move along with the music.



Shovel the Snow: Have your child imagine shoveling snow. He/She can pretend picking up snow and turning to drop it down.

Walk like a Penguin: Turning each foot slightly out have your child try to walk like a penguin. Add flapping your hands against the side of your legs and ask your child is this easier or harder? This is a fun activity for the whole family.

Snowman Melt : Stand straight up and extend both arms out to the side. Have your child imagine a warmer sunny day and ask:” What happens when it starts to warm up outside? What will happen to the Snowman when the sun is out? Will you show me?” Then you and your child bend your knees and go down slowly as melting snow until you reach the floor with your hands.

Have you ever tried snow painting?

All you need is colored markers and a spray bottle of water.

- Draw a picture or design in the snow using different colored markers. Make sure to leave space in the snow for the colors to spread.
- Once you have drawn your picture or design spray the water over the colored drawing and watch the colors spread and blend . Beautiful! Ask your child to observe what new colors may have been created by the water on the colored snow.
- If you would like to do this inside you will just need to bring a large bowl of snow from outside in and continue with the steps listed above. Enjoy!

