

Caregiver Chronicle



Don't miss the new application deadline!

ALL applications **MUST** be received by
December 10, 2017 to participate in January 2018!

.....
New Quality Improvement Supports!

Re-rate early or rate for the first time and receive
\$2500 in Support after receiving a 1-, 2-, or 3-Star Rating
\$1000 in support for completing Building Quality

.....
Join us for an orientation meeting at 1:30 p.m. on:

December 7th at Woodbury City Hall – Birch Room
December 8th at Blaine Human Service Center – Conference Room B

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Stressed? Tips for the Holiday Season

Stress and depression can ruin your holidays and hurt your health. Being realistic, planning ahead and seeking support can help ward these off.

Here are a few holiday tips:

1. Acknowledge your feelings.

If someone close to you has recently died or you can't be with loved ones, realize that it's normal to feel sadness and grief. It's okay to take time to express your feelings. You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season.

2. Reach out. If you feel lonely or isolated, seek out community, religious or social events. They can offer support and companionship. Volunteering your time to help others is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden friendships.

3. Be realistic. The holidays don't have to be perfect or just like last year. As families change and grow, traditions and rituals often change as well. Choose a few to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones.

4. Set aside differences. Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside grievances until there is a more appropriate time for discussion. Also be understanding if others get upset when something goes awry. Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression too.

5. Stick to a budget. Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. Don't try to buy happiness with an avalanche of gifts.

6. Plan ahead. Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities. Plan your menus and then make your shopping list. That'll help prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients.

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Happy Holidays!



A newsletter from
ACCAP Child Care Support Services
Serving Anoka and Washington Counties
Volume 4, Issue 12
December 2017

Birth to K Skills Reminders

With fewer storytimes at the public library in December, it is a good time to remember what you can do at home to build school readiness skills using five simple early literacy practices. Chances are you already know some of these tips; you just didn't realize they were important reading fundamentals. Spend some time each day playing, talking, singing, writing and reading with your child. These five simple early literacy practices will help your child get ready to read!

Read - Reading to your child helps them understand things, develop a love for books and shows children what print can do. You can:
Let your child choose the books during your next library visit.
Keep interaction with books positive and fun.

Write - Writing helps children learn names of letters and aids in learning sounds different letters make. You can:
Teach your child how to write their name and practice it.
Pick a letter of the day and point out words you say, hear or see with that letter.

Talk - Talking develops language and background knowledge of everyday experiences. You can:
Talk about the pictures and characters in books.
Ask your child to talk about their favorite part of the book.

Sing - Singing develops the ability to hear sounds in words and helps children hear language. You can:
Sing the ABCs.
Find fun CDs both you and your child can enjoy.

Play - Playing develops language and the ability to communicate using words. You can:
Go on a letter hunt and find as many signs as possible with the letters in your child's name.
Explore the library and find the places we've created for early literacy enrichment

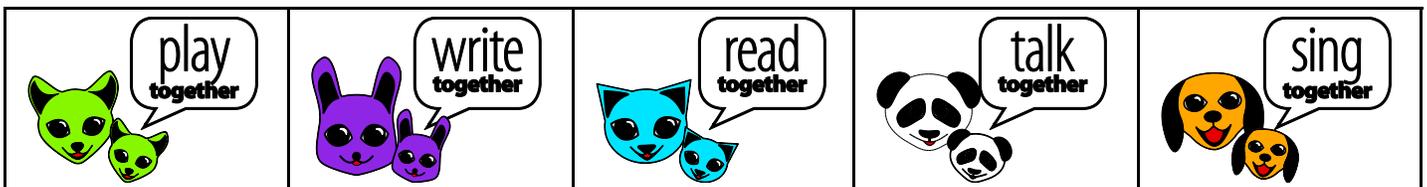
For more information, visit your local library's website:

Anoka County Library: <http://anokacountylibrary.org/>

Columbia Heights Public Library: <http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/index.aspx?nid=127>

Stillwater Public Library: <http://stillwaterlibrary.org/>

Washington County Library: <https://www.washcolib.org/>

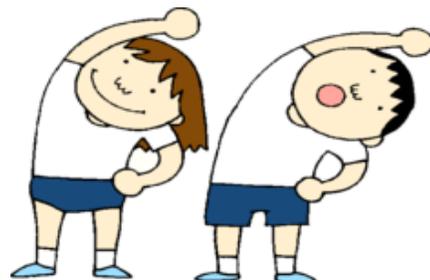


Take Time to Stretch

You can do stretches any time during the day - if you've got five seconds, you've got time! Use a chair or table for support. The real virtue of stretching and strengthening the body lies in its benefits as an anticipatory practice. It's a preventative measure. You change the oil in your car, right? Your body's the same way. You've got to put in the time and effort now, and you'll reap the benefits later. Think the long game.

Here are five **EASY** stretches:

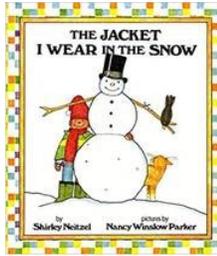
Seated Twist, Chest/Shoulder Openers, Seated Pigeon, Hip Flexor Stretch and Hamstring Stretch



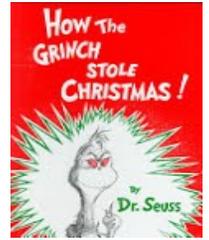
Source: <http://mcnabsenergy.com/2017/08/23/5-easy-stretches-work-boost-energy/>

Favorite Holiday or Winter Books from Our Staff

Allison likes The Jacket I Wear in the Snow by Shirley Neitzel. This story is wonderful to go through all the steps of getting ready to play in the snow! The story is repetitious and invites children to join in by identifying all the steps of getting ready with corresponding pictures.



Katy likes How the Grinch Stole Christmas, by Dr. Seuss. Children and adults enjoy Dr. Seuss's whimsical rhyming and adventurous story lines. And there is always a theme that speaks to improving humanity.



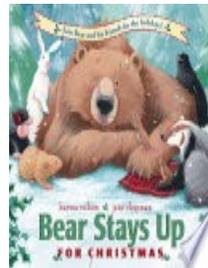
Annette likes 'Twas The Night Before Christmas, by Clement C. Moore. This book is a must for Christmas Eve. It is enjoyed by young and old year after year.



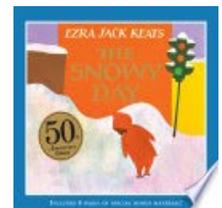
Lori likes The Mitten by Jan Brett. This is a Ukranian folktale retold and beautifully illustrated by Jan Brett. The mitten is lost while its owner is on a walk in the woods and the forest animals take shelter in it.



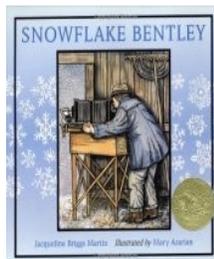
Ashley likes Bear Stays Up for Christmas, by Karma Wilson and Jane Chapman. This is a great book that teaches children about giving to others. Bear's friends wake him up for Christmas and go on an adventure. By the end of the story, bear learns that giving is one of the best Christmas presents.



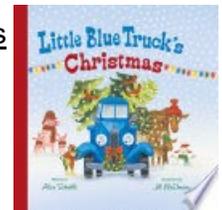
Stacy likes The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats. A little boy is outside simply playing and using his imagination while enjoying the snow. What could be better than that for a young boy who enjoys Winter!



Doreen likes Snowflake Bentley by Wilson Bentley. "Of all the forms of water, the tiny six-pointed crystals of ice called snow are incomparably the most beautiful and varied." This is the story of Bentley's passion and determination to photograph the beauty of a snowflake.



Tara likes Little Blue Truck's Christmas by Alice Shertle. Little Blue Truck delivers trees to his animal friends. The rhythmic story helps practice counting, introduce sharing, and talking about animal sounds.



Spinach Egg Bake

An egg bake, also known as a frittata, is an easy-to-prepare dish that provides a perfect opportunity to encourage children to eat vegetables.

Ingredients

- 2¼ cups Spinach, frozen, chopped, thawed, drained
- 6 Eggs, large or 1¼ cup whole liquid eggs
- 1 tablespoon Feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 tablespoon Onions, dehydrated, chopped
- 1/8 teaspoon Black Pepper, ground
- 1/8 teaspoon Salt
- Nonstick Cooking Spray

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Thaw spinach using package directions.
3. Drain excess water from spinach .
4. Whisk eggs in small bowl. Add feta cheese, onions, salt and pepper. Mix well.
5. Lightly coat medium (8"x8") baking dish with spray.
6. Spread spinach evenly on bottom of baking dish.
7. Top spinach evenly with egg mixture. Place baking dish in oven. Bake for 15 minutes to internal temperature of 165 degrees or higher for at least 15 seconds.
8. Then broil for 2 minutes or until eggs are set and top is golden brown color.
9. Cut into 6 even pieces and serve immediately.

Source: [USDA.gov](https://www.usda.gov), *What's Cooking? Team Nutrition*: Adapted from *CNPP Cultural Recipes*.



Encourage a Child's Development through Games and Play

Parents and caregivers help little ones learn and grow by actively engaging and encouraging development.

Games are a wonderful way to do this, as they offer a fun-focused opportunity to play and see how a child is developing. The following game ideas foster development as a child grows.

For ages 3-9 months: Peek-a-boo is a perfect game to encourage a child's reaction and eye contact as their eyes follow your movements. It also helps children learn about predictability, emotional connectedness and playing with another person.

For 12-month-olds: A favorite way to encourage large motor skills is by playing "How big is (child's name)? So big!" When you say "So big!" raise your hands in the air and stretch up to the sky. Ask the child to raise their hands and stretch alongside you.

For ages 1-3: Songs and rhymes with finger motions, such as "Itsy Bitsy Spider" or "Little Bunny Foo Foo," encourage fine motor skill development and hand-eye coordination. Help your child's fingers make the movements in the beginning, and continue to demonstrate the motions as they move on their own.

For ages 2-5: Play hide and seek together. This game encourages exploration, curiosity, imagination and spatial reasoning as your child thinks of places to hide or where to find you when it's his or her turn to seek.

For ages 3-5: Simple games like memory and matching, or bingo using colors or pictures of animals, encourage cognitive development. To extend the fun, have your child help make homemade versions of these games with their favorite colors and animals.

For ages 4-5: Candy Land or Chutes and Ladders are great games to help children learn to count and follow instructions. It also teaches patience as they wait for their turn, and sportsmanship as the game is played.

Games are just one way that parents and caregivers encourage and support a child's progress as he or she grows. For more information and ideas, visit helpmegrowmn.org.

Portions of this content, developed by Help Me Grow Minnesota, may have previously appeared elsewhere.



Inclusion Resources

Sesame Street in Communities Resources

Did you know that resources are available for children, families and providers on the following topics? <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/>

- Building Language Skills
- Caring for Kids
- Caring and Sharing
- Coping with Incarceration
- Dealing with Divorce
- Developing Math Skills
- Eating Well
- Exploring Emotions
- Explaining Autism
- Handling Emergencies
- Helping Kids Grieve
- Learning Through Play
- Learning Through Routines
- Managing Asthma
- Milestones
- Moving Our Bodies
- Offering Comfort
- Reading and Writing
- Resilience
- Staying Healthy
- Traumatic Experiences

Let's Move... Cold Weather Fun!

Cold weather offers great ways to have family fun. Take time to play together – and move more. You will all feel good! As an adult, you need at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days. Your child needs at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week.



Get Moving Indoors

• Act out a story.

Read a book together; move to give it action. If it is a book about food, make it in the kitchen together later.

• Create an obstacle course.

Kids love to tumble over pillows, crawl through open boxes, and jump into hula hoops.

• Turn up the music and dance.

Swing your arms like a conductor. Or move to the music like a cat, bird, horse, elephant, or bug. You do it, too!

• Make whole-wheat bread, soft pretzels, or pizza.

Knead, shape, and roll dough. It is good for arm muscles. Tip: buy frozen dough to keep it easy for you!

• Start planning your garden.

Find a library book about kids and gardening. Look at seed catalogues. Plan for spring activities.

• Your family's ideas:



In Cold Weather

- Cover your child's head with a hat, maybe earmuffs. A lot of body heat gets lost through an uncovered head. A hood can interfere with moving and seeing.
- Dress your child in layers for warmth. Be sure that he or she can move easily for fun and safety.
- Tie a scarf over your child's nose and mouth to warm air that's breathed in. Tuck the scarf inside the coat so it won't get caught in play equipment and choke your child.
- Remember mittens or gloves and boots!

Get Moving Outside

• Enjoy autumn leaves.

Rake leaves in a pile and enjoy the pleasure of jumping in it!

• Bundle up for snow play.

Create angels. Make a "snow family" – with a pet.

Go sledding. Climb a snow mountain. Make paths through the snow.

• Take a nature hike.

Look for animal tracks in the snow, wild flowers and buds in early spring, or colorful fall leaves.

• Walk in the zoo!

See how animals look with their winter coats on. Talk about how they live in the cold weather.

No zoo? Look for squirrels and birds in the park.

• Take a neighborhood walk.

How does it look different in cold weather?

• Decorate an outdoor tree for the birds.

Hang apples, pinecones rolled in peanut butter, or popcorn strings.

• Your family's ideas:



Play Safe Outdoors!

• Always stay with your child for safety's sake.

You also have the fun of playing together!

- Protect your child's skin with sunscreen – even in cold weather.
- Check the safety and conditions of sleds and other play equipment.
- Bring water if your family is outside longer than an hour. When you are physically active, you sweat – even in Winter!

Provided by **NIBBLES FOR HEALTH 37**

*Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children,
USDA, Food and Nutrition Service*



Early Childhood Professional Learning Communities

Washington County Dates:

All meetings take place on the 3rd Thursday of the month from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at **Peace of Mind Early Education Center**

February 15, 2018

March 15, 2018

April 19, 2018

May 17, 2018

June 21, 2018

Anoka County Dates:

All meetings take place on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at the **Blaine Human Service Center**

February 13, 2018

March 13, 2018

April 10, 2018

May 8, 2018

June 12, 2018



**Please RSVP to:
Annette Borman at
aborman@accap.org**

Child Care Aware of Minnesota Metro is sponsoring an Early Childhood Professional Learning Community - an extended learning opportunity to foster collaborative learning among colleagues in the field. This is a place for you to meet with other providers, learn new things, help each other be successful, and share what you know and what works for you! Your experience being an early childhood provider and/or teacher is important for children. Your thoughts, ideas, and wisdom will lead the discussions along with Special Guests!

Tips for the Holiday Season (Continued from page 1)

7. **Learn to say no.** Saying yes when you should say no can leave you feeling resentful and overwhelmed. Friends and colleagues will understand if you can't participate in every project or activity. If it's not possible to say no when your boss asks you to work overtime, try to remove something else from your agenda to make up for the lost time.

8. **Don't abandon healthy habits.** Don't let the holidays become a free-for-all. Overindulgence only adds to your stress and guilt.

9. **Take a breather.** Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.

10. **Seek professional help if you need it.** Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores. If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Source: Mayo Clinic Staff (11/7/17)
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art-20047544>



EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIPS

**Ensuring all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed
by increasing access to high-quality early childhood programs**

This program awards scholarships of up to \$7,500 to high-need families meeting eligibility requirements. A family's income must be equal to or less than 185% of the federal poverty level or be participating in any of the following programs: CACFP, CCAP, Food Distribution for Tribal Members, Foster Care, Free and Reduced-Price Lunch, Head Start, MFIP, Protective Services or SNAP.

Scholarships are available to children who are 3 or 4 years old by September 1 of the school year the scholarship is awarded. Some children birth to age 2 may also qualify. Families interested in applying for an early learning scholarship should contact the Anoka County Community Action Program at aborman@accap.org or 763-783-4711.