



Winter 2012 Newsletter

Contact Us At:
ECDC
135 E. Frederick St.
Binghamton, NY 13904
Phone: 607-724-2111
Email: ecdc@stic-cil.org
Facebook: Mid-South ECDC

Celebrating the Holidays with Special Needs Children

'Tis the season for Holiday lights, parties, noises, changes in routines, all of which may lead to sensory overload in children with special needs. As parents, educators and caregivers, we need to remember that our traditions and rituals may not fit the needs of children with special needs. Be sure to incorporate "sensory breaks" for your children. Children may become over-stimulated during the holiday season and may require additional downtime to regroup and re-focus. Consider packing a relaxation bag or backpack ahead of time to provide calming strategies for children who begin to feel anxious. A relaxation bag could include play dough, a stress ball, headphones, music, a comforting toy or stuffed animal, or even a



special blanket. Many people travel during the holidays and your children may experience difficulty with the transitions of going from place to place to visit friends and relatives. Talk to your children ahead of time. Prepare a visual schedule using real life pictures of people and places they will be visiting. If your child is a picky eater or has food allergies, take his favorite food or snacks. This will help ease his stress level. Most importantly, remember that children learn by example. Have patience, remain calm and show them love throughout the holiday season and beyond. Happy Holidays!

There's No Place Like Home For The Holidays: Our Top 10 Activities To Beat The Winter Blues

With the winter break fast approaching, many parents become stressed about keeping their children busy over the break. Parents often state that their biggest fears about break are "the amount of time that the children

will be 'cooped up' at home" or that children will begin to go "stir crazy." Having pre-planned activities may help alleviate that "cooped up feeling." Here are our favorite "Top 10 Activities to Beat The Winter Blues:"

1. Exercise. Dance to your favorite music, join a special needs swimming class or yoga class. When you exercise, your brain releases endorphins, adrenaline, serotonin and dopamine. These chemicals all work together to

Volume 1, Issue 1
December 2012

Special Points to Ease Holiday Stress With Special Needs Children:

- Pack a relaxation bag or backpack to prepare for the Holidays.
- Prepare a visual schedule using real life pictures of people and places they will be visiting. Talk to them ahead of time.
- Remember, children learn by example. Have patience and remain calm.

Inside this issue:

Celebrating The Holidays With Special Needs Children 1

There's No Place Like Home For The Holidays: Our Top 10 Activities To Beat The Winter Blues. 1, 2

Back By Popular Demand: Bounce House Is Coming! 2

Gluten-Free Play Dough 2

There's No Place Like Home For The Holidays (continued)

make you feel better and help your muscles relax deeper.

2. Play in the snow with your kids. Help them build snow angels, snow forts, snowmen and go sledding.

3. Try some cooking or baking. This is great for enhancing early literacy skills, as well as math skills. Have them read, measure, mix and pour the ingredients.

4. Have an indoor picnic. Spread a blanket out as a tablecloth on the floor and put different food items and plates on the cloth. Make it a "sensational" experience. Try new foods and textures.

5. Visit the local library. See if there are any activities, story times, or movies planned at the library.

6. Make some crafts. It's always fun to dig out the paper, crayons, glue sticks, scissors. Be creative. Make a snowman using marshmallows, raisins, pretzel sticks. The possibilities are endless with the assistance of books, kits, the internet and pinterest.

7. Set aside time for family reading and storytelling night. Make a pretend fire using battery operated candles and sit around the fire with blankets and a flashlight or lantern. Share your stories.



8. Depending on the weather, visit a nature center, parks, zoos. Take a camera and take pictures.

9. Find out if there is a local indoor bounce house or bowling alley in your neighborhood.

10. Try something new. Let the imagination and fun begin.

Back By Popular Demand: Bounce House is Coming!



ECDC is proud to sponsor a Free "Sensory Friendly" Bounce House Children's Activity and Parent/Guardian Support Group once again for children with special needs and their siblings at TR Events in Binghamton. Our parent informational sessions and discussions will be led by Dr. Liz Anderson and Polly Emmons on Tuesday, Jan 15, 22, 29 and Feb. 5, and 12, 2013 from 5:30-7:00 p.m. These sessions are free for parents and children and limited to 30 children with registration required! TR Events is located at Taylor Rental at 1041 Upper Front Street Binghamton, NY 13905. This is an indoor carpeted, climate controlled, handicapped accessible facility. Please contact Sue Lozinak at 607-724-2111 to register.

Make and Take: Gluten Free Play Dough

This recipe is for play dough that is safe for children with gluten allergies or celiac disease. Playing with regular play dough is too risky for children with celiac disease or who can't eat gluten. Gluten is a protein found in wheat and other grains (and also in most forms of play dough)

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup rice flour
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 1/2 cup salt
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon cooking oil
- Food coloring, if desired.

Directions: Mix ingredients. Cook and stir on low heat for 3 minutes or until it forms a ball. Cool completely before storing in a sealed plastic bag.