



## Keep Catchy Infections Contained

It's that time of year again! Flu. Pinkeye. Strep throat. These bugs spread fast. You can catch some of them, like the flu, from a person who doesn't have symptoms yet. Sickness spreads in many ways. You can breathe in germs when someone talks, coughs, or sneezes. You get some diseases, like chickenpox or pinkeye, if you touch a person who has it.

Germs are everywhere.

Follow these four easy steps to help keep your family clear from catchy infections.

### **Wash Your Hands**

The CDC calls hand washing a "do-it-yourself vaccine." It's one of the easiest things you can do to stop germs in their tracks.

### **Disinfect High-Touch Areas**

Germs can linger on hard surfaces for hours or days. That's why it's important to keep places like counters, sinks, and faucets clean. You'll also want to wipe down phones, remotes, doorknobs, and light switches often.

### **Cover Your Mouth**

Keep your germs to yourself. Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have one, use the inside of your elbow.

### **Don't Share**

Don't eat or drink after anyone, even family. Don't use each other's lip balm or utensils. One of the fastest ways for germs to spread from person to person is by mouth.

We can't promise you'll never get sick, but follow these basic tips and your odds of catching -- or spreading -- illness will go way down.

Edited article from <https://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/cold-guide/colds-and-flu-stop-the-spread#1>

## Sing-A-Long!



Hand washing is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of germs in child care. When washing hands, it is important to scrub for a full 20 seconds. Many children forget to wash their hands for this long. Teaching children in a child care setting to sing a "hand washing song" while they wash is a good way to help them measure if they have been scrubbing long enough.

### **This Is the Way We Wash Our Hands**

*(Sing to the tune of "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush")*  
This is the way we wash our hands, wash our hands, wash our hands,

This is the way we wash our hands, every single day.  
This is the way we scrub our fingers, scrub our fingers, scrub our fingers,

This is the way we scrub our fingers, every single day.  
This is the way we rinse our hands, rinse our hands, rinse our hands,

This is the way we rinse our hands, rinse those germs away!

### **Wash, Wash, Wash Your Hands**

*(Sing to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")*  
Wash, wash, wash your hands,

Play our handy game.  
Rub and scrub and scrub and rub

## Parenting and Essential Life Skills for Children

As parents we are often thinking about how we can nurture, encourage and support our children to be strong, confident and self-assured now and as they grow up.



Mind in the Making, a program of the Bezos Family Foundation, (<http://mindinthemaking.org/>) has published a book that highlights the seven life skills every child needs. The world is an ever-changing place and we all need these skills to ensure our children keep learning and growing as they become adults.

So, what are those skills and how can we as parents support children to develop these skills:

Children Develop Essential Life Skills . . .	When Parents . . .
Focus and Self Control	Provide age appropriate guidance and limits for behavior Recognize and regulate their own feelings, emotions, and behaviors before they respond to their children
Perspective Taking	Work to understand or imagine the child's point of view
Effective Communication	Respond sensitively to their child's cues
Making Connections	Delight in the moments of connection with their child
Critical Thinking	Act as a role model by seeking help, support or additional information when needed
Taking on Challenges	Balance both parental needs and child needs. Recognizing and celebrating their child's strengths, abilities and capacity to learn.
Self-Directed, Engaged Learning	Recognize that parenting is a process of learning and it can be stressful! Missteps are a natural part of child-rearing.

Zero To Three (2018). Positive parenting and the seven essential life skills for children. Retrieved November 2018 from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2468-positive-parenting-and-the-seven-essential-life-skills-for-children>.

## Get Outside and PLAY...Yes, Even in Winter!

### \* Build a snowman

Do you remember rolling the snow into balls to create three parts for a special snowman? It was a lot of fun, but that's not all. Making a snowman is also awesome exercise. "Moving all that snow around takes a lot of work," says mom Alethea Smock, whose kids are ages 3 and 5.

### \* Bubble time

You might associate blowing bubbles with sundresses, bare feet and green grass. But in the winter time, it takes on a whole new (and fun!) dimension. "My kids' favorite is blowing bubbles on freezing days and watching them turn into ice bubbles — they look amazing," says Sam'n Iqbal, a parent educator and mother of three.

### \* Look for animal tracks

Whenever it snows, it sets the stage for an ultra-fun family activity: Tracking animals. Grab a camera and your kids and check out the animal tracks in your freshly fallen snow. Take photos too, so you can compare them to photos of animal tracks later.

Mom Rebecca P. Cohen of RebeccaPlants.com, who is the spokesmom for the National Wildlife Federation's Be Out There movement, says that although she has a book for IDing tracks, the internet is her preferred tool. "Most of the time we just do a quick internet search when we get inside for animal tracks pictures. It's a fun way to

'investigate' the mystery of which animal track you saw and to get used to looking up answers to questions together. Outside time definitely piques kids' curiosity and they have lots of questions. So looking up questions with your child on the internet is a great way to learn together," says Cohen.

### \* Shoveling help

It goes without saying that shoveling snow is hard work. It's also awesome exercise — even for kids. Pick up a kid-sized shovel and have them help out by clearing a path in the snow, or digging to make fun patterns. Afterwards, they can look from second story windows to see their winding snow walks!

### \* Flashlight tag

Love the game of tag? Flashlight tag is like the fun classic game, except players tag each other with beams of light, instead of hands. "We started playing flash tag just by stepping outside at night with our flashlights in winter and the kids started flashing their flashlights and chasing each other," says Cohen.

So, how does she keep track in the dark? "I'm pretty specific with them about where they can play and I stay with them for flash tag," says Cohen.

Edited article from: <http://lenaweegreatstart.org/blog/2013/01/04/come-outside-play-its-beautiful-out-here/>



"Do you wanna build a snowman?"

-Princess Anna

## Easing the Sensory Overload of the Holidays

For kids with sensory sensitivities, travel, rich food, over- or under-activity and even hugs and faces of infrequently seen relatives can feel uncomfortable or actually painful. Thankfully, there are ways to reduce the overload:

### Educate relatives

Before adjusting beloved traditions, let relatives know how the sensory overload can grate on your child's nervous system. Explain that this causes irritation similar to what they might feel if trapped in a room with strobe lights and loud dance music while wearing an itchy wool sweater and eating lemons!

### Modify plans

We used to fly five hours to meet relatives and then immediately drive with them another four hours to our holiday destination. After a trip ended with our daughter screaming for an hour, we broke the journey into two days and traveled alone. Disappointing relatives is difficult, but I learned that accommodating extended family isn't as important as meeting our child's needs.

### Do less each day

Can you schedule the fancy dinner on one day and gift-opening the next? It helped our daughter if we unwrapped fewer gifts over several days rather than all in one sitting.

### Provide familiar foods, preferred clothing and frequent calming breaks

We found sensory relief by swinging outside or reading a familiar book in a quiet room. If you cannot find a soothing break for your child, seek ideas from an occupational therapist with a specialty in sensory integration.

Karen Crum is the author of *Persevering Parent: Finding strength to raise your child with social, emotional or behavioral challenges*.



### winter word search



mitten



hat



scarf



sled

s	b	e	k	q	v	a	m
n	f	c	o	c	o	a	i
o	h	r	w	b	e	l	t
w	a	c	g	m	s	x	t
f	t	s	c	a	r	f	e
l	a	h	n	t	y	c	n
a	d	o	s	l	e	d	i
k	s	n	o	w	m	a	n
e	j	p	u	z	d	f	p



cocoa



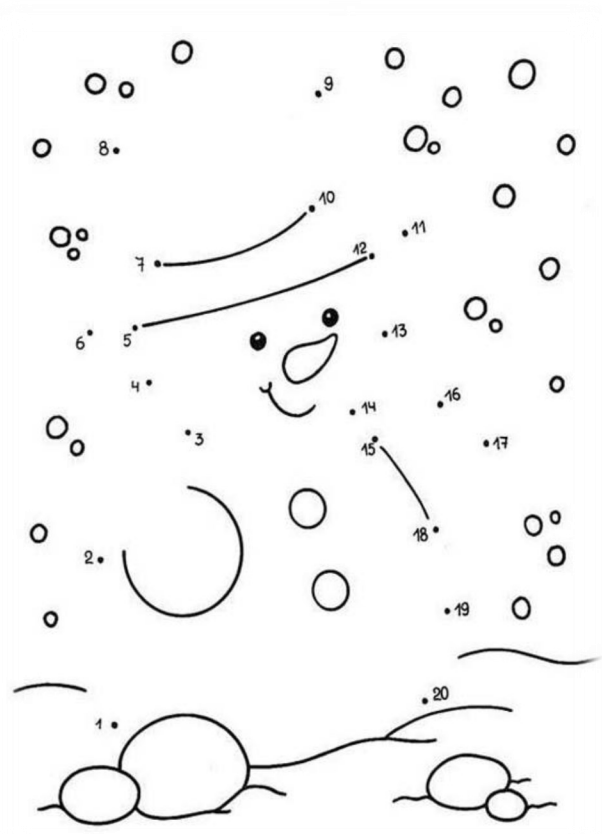
snowman



snowflake

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## Meet the New Parent Partner

When I look back at the path that brought me to where I am today I know I am exactly where I'm meant to be. My name is Katie Heidel and I am the new Parent Partner at Birth to Three Region 8.

I graduated from WVU in 2004 with a degree in Child Development and Family Studies and an emphasis and internship in Child Hospital Life. Fast forward through life a bit and I married my college sweetheart, bought a house, adopted a puppy, and had a beautiful daughter. We were living the dream, but something was still missing. And then along came Jacob...

When Jacob was 3 months old he was diagnosed with a brain tumor and our happy little life was turned upside down. He spent many months at the hospital battling post-op complications, seizures, and just trying to heal his tiny little body. I felt safe at the hospital, surrounded by the people who saved my little baby's life, but eventually it was time to come home. And that was terrifying.

When Jacob was referred to Birth to Three I had to laugh. This was one of those full circle moments for me. Not only had I known all about Birth to Three from my WVU days, but I had even been a practitioner myself shortly after we moved to Martinsburg. Now I needed these services for my son.

We opened our home and hearts to these beautiful strangers who quickly became friends and our closest allies in the fight for Jacob's childhood and development. They helped get Jacob back on track developmentally. They helped me rebuild my confidence that I was, in fact, the best person for the job of being his mom. We worked together and eventually Jacob was walking, communicating (non-verbally) his wants and needs, and showing interest in the things and people around him. The hospital wasn't our safe haven anymore, home was. And our amazing Birth to Three practitioners are to thank for that.

Jacob is now in 1st Grade with an IEP in place and the most wonderful set of teachers we could ask for. Our daughter, Preslyn, is in 5th Grade. She has such a gentle, caring soul and truly is the best big sister ever. My husband and I realize this isn't the life we asked for or expected, but we are so very thankful for the life we were given. I am beyond excited and grateful for my new opportunity with Birth to Three. I am looking forward to meeting you and helping out in any way I can.



Jacob with 2 of his favorite things, his Mom and his trampoline!



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## Make Some Yummy Snow Ice Cream!

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup (8oz) Sweetened Condensed Milk
- 1/3 cup Sugar
- 1 tsp. Pure Vanilla Extract
- 4 cups Fresh Snow
- Sprinkles (optional)



### Directions:

In a medium bowl, combine sweetened condensed milk, sugar and vanilla. Whisk until smooth.

In a large bowl, pour condensed milk mixture over snow. Stir to combine. Freeze 30 minutes to 1 hour or until almost solid. Scoop into bowls and serve. Garnish with sprinkles if desired.