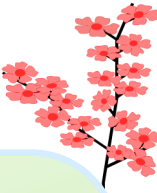


Connecting the Dots

West Virginia Birth to Three RAU-1 Spring 2024 Newsletter



A note from our Parent Partner

Hi! My name is Amanda Lovejoy, and I'm the Parent Partner for Region One and the "editor in chief" of our quarterly newsletter. I'm also a Momma of two wonderful kids, including my now 11 year old son, who is a graduate of our Birth to Three program. As a parent that has been through the program I can understand the concerns and fears that you may have and I am here to help ease them to the best of my ability.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at (304) 214-5775 or via e-mail at alovejoy@ccwva.org, and please follow us on Facebook at West Virginia Birth to Three RAU-1, Catholic Charities for the latest program updates, new resources, and activities for you and your family.

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Early intervention is critical. Why Wait?

To make a referral:

Please Call 1-800-619-5697

or email: referralsWVBTTrau1@ccwva.org

To access referral form visit:

<https://www.wvdhhr.org/birth23/referral.asp>



Share Your Story

We love to hear and share your family stories! Family stories are an invaluable way to show the impact that our program makes. If you are interested in sharing your family's story and experience, please contact our Parent Partner at (304) 214-5775 or alovejoy@ccwva.org

Connect With Us

Please follow us on Facebook at West Virginia Birth to Three RAU-1, Catholic Charities for updates about our program, local resources, upcoming events, and activities for you and your family.



Valentines Sensory Bottle

What's Needed

- 1 Water Bottle, 16-20 oz.
- 5 oz. Bottle Clear Glue
- Glitter, Pink and Red
- Small objects—beads, foil confetti, buttons, pom poms, and plastic hearts.

Directions

1. Pour out a little bit of water, and pour the bottle of glue into the water bottle.
2. Add some glitter and the small objects to the bottle, fill back to the top with water and put the cap back on tight.
3. Shake the bottle to mix everything up.
4. Look for certain objects by moving and shaking the bottle around, or just tip it back and forth to watch everything move around.

Adapted from: Pinterest

All activities require adult supervision and participation. Please be aware of small parts that could pose a choking hazard.



"Share The Pie"

Motor Skill Game

Supplies:

- Anything you have at home to make a pie (Card stock , Paper, cardboard)
- Get Creative !
- Scissors
- Cotton balls
- Fork or pie server

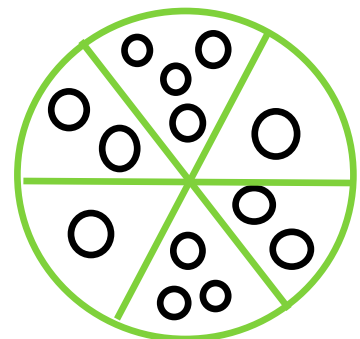
Directions:

- Draw a Circle (Pie with 5-8 pieces) With lines to center to form the slices
- Use scissors to cut out the pie. Then cut along the lines to form 5-8 pieces.
- Draw Circles on each slice (1-5 etc.)
- Set pie alongside the cotton balls and a fork or pie server. I recommend setting the pie in a plate or pie tin for some extra pizzazz.
- Have your child place a cotton ball on the white circles and serve the slices of pie.

This loose parts play activity for kids encourages sharing with others, all while developing fine motor and math skills!

Adapted from: Pinterest

All activities require adult supervision and participation. Please be aware of small parts that could pose a choking hazard.



Story Time

The Lion and the Mouse



Once when a Lion was asleep a little Mouse began running up and down upon him; this soon wakened the Lion, who placed his huge paw upon him, and opened his big jaws to swallow him. "Pardon, O King," cried the little Mouse: "forgive me this time, I shall never forget it: who knows but what I may be able to do you a turn some of these days?" The Lion was so tickled at the idea of the Mouse being able to help him, that he lifted up his paw and let him go. Some time after the Lion was caught in a trap, and the hunters who desired to carry him alive to the King, tied him to a tree while they went in search of a wagon to carry him on. Just then the little Mouse happened to pass by, and seeing the sad plight in which the Lion was, went up to him and soon gnawed away the ropes that bound the King of the Beasts. "Was I not right?" said the little Mouse.

Little friends may prove great friends.

Adapted from: kidsworldfun.com/shortstories.php



The Daddy Factor: How Fathers Support Development

Dads matter - a lot! The relationship between father and child has a deep impact on a child's overall and long-term healthy development. Let's take a look at some of the important ways Dad make a difference.

School and Career Success - Children whose fathers are involved in their daily care tend to be more confident; and, as they grow older, enjoy stronger social connections with peers. Fathers who care for, nurture, and play with their babies raise children with higher IQs and with better language and cognitive skills. The more time fathers spend in enriching, stimulating play with their child—such as playing pretend or sharing stories—the better the child's math and reading scores are at 10 and 11 years old.

Healthy Risk-Taking - The rough-and-tumble kind of play that fathers engage in with young children helps regulate their feelings and behavior. It teaches children how to deal with aggressive impulses and physical contact in socially acceptable ways. While mothers are more likely to form secure attachments by comforting their children when they are distressed, fathers are more likely to provide security in the context of the controlled excitement of play or discipline. This helps children learn where the boundaries of safety and risk-taking exist in the world - a very important skill that builds self-regulation and can prevent problems with aggression and violence later on. Fathers push children beyond their comfort zone - in the best ways. Dads, typically more than moms, encourage their children to take calculated risks: trying the deep end of the pool, talking to someone new, or finding ways to overcome obstacles.

Managing Emotions - Children with involved fathers tend to be more patient; and, when they are older, they can handle the stresses and frustrations associated with schooling more easily than children with less involved fathers. Children of involved fathers are less likely to get in trouble at home, in school, and in the neighborhood, and they are less likely to experience depression. Fathers who are actively involved in their babies' lives tend to experience less conflict with their wives. This not only benefits children; it strengthens the parenting relationship which also has long-term benefits for children.

The Benefit is Mutual - Fatherhood is life-changing, for dads and for babies. As tiring as being a Dad is at times, all those moments add up to a lifetime of love and connection.

Cues for Caregiving - We know moms' hormone levels change during pregnancy. So do Dads'! Scientists say both parents experience a rise in the hormone prolactin around the time of a baby's birth. Prolactin promotes child-caring behaviors in both parents.

The Love Hormone - Here's something to smile about: bonding time with your baby activates the circuits in your brain that are also involved in falling in love. When a dad has skin-to-skin contact with his baby, he releases oxytocin - the love hormone. Babies' oxytocin levels rise, too. (Skin-to-skin contact between moms and babies has the same effect.)

Brain Rewards - MRI images provide more evidence that men's priorities change when they have kids. Brain scans of fathers and non-fathers showed that the reward-sensing region of dad's brains lit up when they saw pictures of toddlers. Not so in the non-dads.



The Daddy Factor: How Fathers Support Development:

Getting Involved: Advice for Fathers

Before Baby Arrives

Talk, read, and sing to your baby-to-be - Babies can hear during the second trimester of pregnancy, and recognize voices in the third trimester—including yours!

Attend doctor's visits as much as you can - During Ob/Gyn checkups, you will be able to see your baby's growth and development. These opportunities to track your baby's development help you both begin to feel connected to your little one even before their birth day.

Try a class for expectant parents - Classes will help you prep for parenting (diaper changing, feeding, keeping baby healthy and safe), as well as cover strategies for how to co-parent with Mom.

Support healthy habits - Your encouragement helps mom eat the right foods and avoid smoking and drinking during pregnancy.

Be there for labor and delivery - Both moms and dads naturally worry about the labor and delivery process. Some dads say they worry about doing the wrong thing in the delivery room, seeing their partner in pain, or being left out of important decisions. But they show up in big numbers and most are glad that they did. Moms report that having their partners in the delivery room reduces their anxiety and pain. And many dads find that meeting their baby right after birth is an experience that changes them forever—and helps them bond with their babies from those first seconds. Dads who play an active role during pregnancy lower moms' stress levels. And lower stress means a healthier environment for your growing baby.

Once Baby Arrives

Continue the conversation - You've been talking, reading, and singing to your baby for months. Now enjoy seeing their responses for the first time!

Figure out how to share responsibility for the baby - New dads can do almost everything new moms can do: Change diapers, give baths, share stories, and take your turn walking and soothing when the baby is crying. If your partner is breastfeeding, you can participate by bringing the baby to her, or burping them when they're done. Sharing these responsibilities right from the start gives you a chance to get to know your baby and builds a strong foundation for your relationship with them.

Pay attention to your baby's cues - Over time, babies develop their own ways of telling you what they need—through a particular cry, look, or movement. By spending time caring for and playing with your baby, you'll start to decode those cues.

Adapted from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/the-daddy-factor-how-fathers-support-development/>





7 Creative Ways to Calm A Child

At one time or another all children will get angry, but what do you do to calm them down. While we all feel like telling them to knock it off and go to their room, that isn't the best choice. Here are seven creative ways to calm a child.

1. **Hug them:** It can be as easy as that. Now, depending on how angry they are, you may need to be quick when you go in for the hug. Their first reaction will be to push you away. Don't let them. Make soothing sounds as you hold them tightly and reassure them that everything will be okay. This technique won't work on all kids. You will need to judge if the child likes to be hugged or is not really that touchy-feely. If the child is normally affectionate when they are calm then the hugging method should work for you. As long as it's appropriate in the setting. If you are a teacher trying to calm a student this won't be your best bet. Keep reading though, there are others.
2. **Music:** Turn on some soothing music in their room and ask them to sit there and listen to it for a while. You may get some angry words about how they hate this music etc., but just tell them that it will help them feel better. I find that classical music fits the bill here. With the Internet at our fingertips it's pretty easy to play almost any kind of music. If the classical doesn't work you can always try really funny upbeat happy music. You need to break through the shell of anger and get their mind on something else.
3. **Make them laugh:** Do something totally crazy and make them laugh. It's really hard to stay angry while laughing. Put on a crazy wig from Halloween or a funny mask. Do a spit take and spray water on them. If you can break the tension it will be that much easier to make them laugh and anger will go away.
4. **Take deep breaths:** Deep breathing can be used for many things from pain control to relaxation techniques. This time you are trying to get the child to relax. Make sure that you stay calm and breathe with them. Let them know that you know how it feels to be angry and explain softly that once they calm down they can tell you why they are upset, but until they calm down you won't be able to fully understand what is going on. If you are speaking in a soothing manner and asking them to inhale through their nose and let their breath out all at once out of their mouth they will calm down.
5. **Bake some bread:** This works for a child that's a little older all the way up to a teenager. First of all you are causing them to be distracted from what they are angry about by mixing up the ingredients. Kneading and pounding the bread will give them a healthy way to release the pent up anger. When you are all done you can enjoy the warm comforting smell and taste of home-made bread. Who doesn't like some warm bread?
6. **Blow bubbles:** Start by blowing bubbles near your child. If you blow them right at them that will more likely irritate them more. Bubbles are so carefree and happy that it's hard to stay mad when blowing bubbles. If you have a child that tends to get angry I would encourage you to keep bubble wands and solution around, but if this is spur of the moment you can make bubble juice by mixing dish soap and water. No wands lying around to use? You can use an empty paper towel tube or fashion your own wand out of some wire that you have sitting around. It's really easy to do and the activity will change their mood in a very short period of time.
7. **Rub their back:** Human touch has a way of reassuring the child and letting them know that you are there for them. You don't need to rub very hard since you aren't trying to rub out sore muscles. Gently run your hand back and forth over their back and shoulders. This action should relieve the tension that they are experiencing with being angry and they can calm down enough to tell you what's wrong. Be sure to listen so you can perhaps avoid the anger next time.

Adapted from: childcarebunge.com



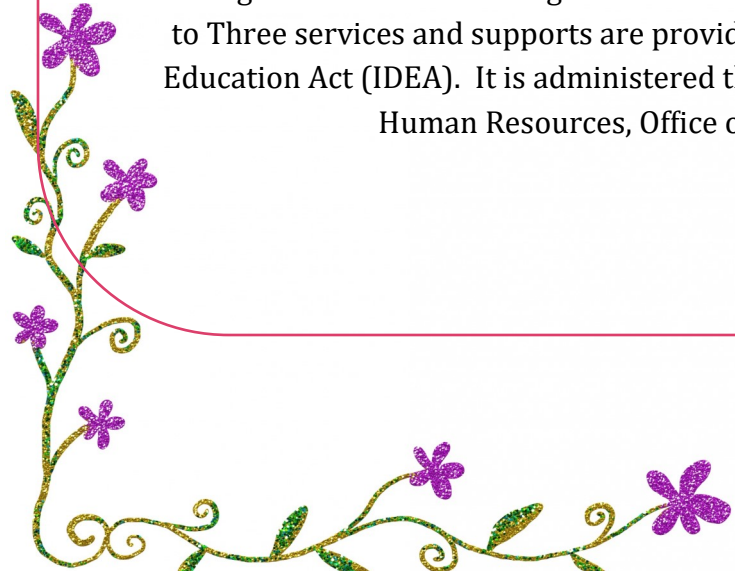


Contact us!

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Is your child moving, hearing, seeing, learning and talking like other children their age?
If you have any questions, please give us a call!

1-800-619-5697 • www.wvdhhr.org/birth23



West Virginia Birth to Three Region 1 RAU is a program of Catholic Charities WV. West Virginia Birth to Three services and supports are provided under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It is administered through the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health.