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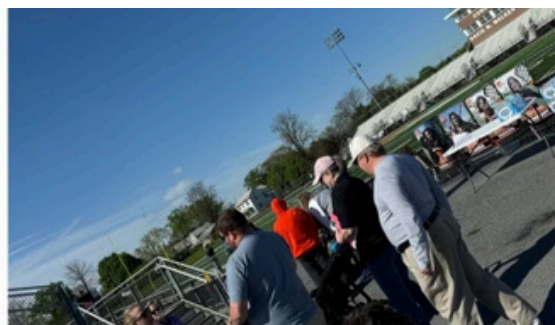
SUMMER 2024

TIDBITS

WVBTT RAU 8 EPIC



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EVENTS WE HAVE DONE

Autism Walk!

We partnered with Berkeley County School to do an Autism Walk / Resource fair! We had a few vendors and families could walk the track at their own pace. This event was so much fun and seeing the joy on everyone's faces really melted our hearts! We are happy to say that we will be doing this again next year as well!!!!

Easter Egg Hunt

We partnered with Berkeley County School to do a sensory friendly Easter Egg Hunt! This was well attended and everyone had so much fun! We are excited to see everyone next year!

Tony Music

We partnered with Tony Music to bring 4 different shows to our region! If you have not checked out one of his shows I highly recommend to check one of them out! The kids and parents absolutely enjoyed his show as he includes everyone!

FAMILY STORY

Written by Whitney DeGraw

As first time parents you experience all the emotions at once. Love, excitement, nervousness & anxiety. But when you get to hold your beautiful baby the world stops & it's just you two.

When we welcomed our first son into the world it was a very intense delivery. There were some complications we weren't aware of & caught everyone by surprise.

1. He had a true knot in his cord. It was not a loose knot it was very tight.
2. I ended up having a blood clot in my placenta.
3. He aspirated meconium.
4. We both ended up with fevers

Because of the intensity of the delivery he had some bleeding between his skull & skin and because of aspirating meconium he would need to be observed in the NICU. 6 hours after birth our son had a 43 minute seizure. The seizure was difficult to stop so he had to be emergency transported to a larger hospital. When he arrived he had another seizure which was difficult to stop so they ended up putting him on 4 different seizure medications. One of the medications was a sedative. So, not even 24 hours after birth our boy was intubated, sedated & had a feeding tube. Did I mention this was all during the covid pandemic. 😞 At some point during all this the doctors discovered he had had a stroke. Now, looking back they believe the stroke caused the seizures. Our son had a diagnosis of HIE.

After 2 weeks of being in the NICU we were able to bring him home. Our son's neurologist set us up with WV Birth to Three. It was an organization we had never heard of. But if it was something to give our son a chance & help him thrive then we were all for it and now we know this organization, the heart & passion they have for our babies/children.

Because of his diagnosis of HIE our son was able to receive the therapy he needed. We worked with:

Physical therapy
Occupational therapy
Developmental therapy
Speech therapy



This past year our son aged out of the program & has been deemed seizure free! He's no longer on any medications. Our son was also able to meet or exceed his developmental milestones!

Aging out of Birth to three was a day we were longing for but also dreading because the Birth to Three therapists have been an INCREDIBLE blessing to our family. They taught us life skills that we can use with our current & future children. They educated us & spoke hope/life into our situation. They helped bring peace & strength in our home when things felt chaotic & uncertain. They not only encouraged us but they empowered us!

They are creative & make therapy as fun as possible. They teach with grace & compassion. They not only want to see your kids succeed but they want to see them thrive. These are therapists who LOVE what they do.

We are so thankful that our son's neurologist connected us with them. I personally feel every doctors office & pediatricians office should advertise about this incredible organization. I also feel B23 should get more attention & support from our state. These therapists are helping children in our state thrive!

I will FOREVER be an advocate for Birth to Three & early intervention. I selfishly wish it was called Birth to Five."

WHY DOES MY TODDLER TRY TO HIT ME WHEN SHE DOESN'T GET HER WAY

Q: How do I respond to my 17-month-old who has started to swing at me with her hands when she doesn't get her way? –Concerned Parent

A: It ain't easy being 17 months. You have really strong feelings but lack the ability to use words to clearly let others know what's on your mind. How frustrating is that?

The fact is that learning to express thoughts and feelings begins in the early years by using actions. Some are totally appropriate, like the 12-month-old who raises her arms up to show mom or dad that she wants to be picked up. Others can be distressing, like hitting, kicking, and biting. But they are all efforts on the part of the child to communicate. In this case, we can guess that your child is mad that she is not getting something she wants. She cannot say, Mom, I am so mad that you won't let me have that fourth cookie!

The fact is that learning to express oneself begins in the early years by using actions. The best way to respond to her swinging is to firmly—not roughly—hold on to her arm and say something like, No hitting. Hitting hurts. I know you are mad that (fill in the blank). You don't like it when... But you cannot hit. Hitting hurts. It is important to be clear and firm in your tone but not angry. Your child is not purposefully misbehaving. This is about teaching rules and limits, not about punishment. These moments are also important opportunities to teach your child about feelings. You need to show her that angry feelings are not the problem, it's what she does with these feelings that can be problematic. Your job is to let your child know what is and isn't acceptable and then to teach her what she can do with her feelings. Putting her feelings into words is important. It shows empathy and provides a good model for how to cope with feelings as she grows.

After you have stopped her behavior and validated her feelings, you can show your daughter other ways of expressing herself. While most parents agree that hitting is not an acceptable way to express anger, they vary in their beliefs about what is acceptable. Some suggest children shout in the air as loud as they can or make growling noises to get their feelings out. Others suggest stomping feet, scribbling with a crayon, ripping newspaper, or hitting an object that is safe and can't be hurt—such as a pillow. It is up to you to decide what is okay. The bottom line is that you acknowledge your child's feelings and help her learn healthy, non-destructive ways to express them.

After you have stopped her behavior and validated her feelings, you can show your daughter alternative ways of expressing herself.

Keep in mind that learning self-control is a process. Your toddler will not be able to stop her impulses and understand the consequences of her actions until she gets closer to 3. In fact, she'll keep working on these skills through the teen years. So, your daughter will need your consistent, patient support for a while yet. Being able to manage and cope with strong feelings is a critical skill for lifelong success, so don't fear these moments. Instead, see them as great opportunities for teaching your child an essential life skill.

Edited from Parlakian, R., (2022). My 17 month old has started swatting at me when she doesn't get her way. Retrieved from <https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/good-question/my-17-month-old-has-started-to-swing-at-me-when-she-doesnt-get-her-way/>.

SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN

MAKING THE MOST OF FAIRS, FESTIVALS, AND PARADES

WEST VIRGINIA INFANT/TODDLER MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION



Spring, summer, and fall in West Virginia often include lots of fairs, festivals, and parades. This is a great time for young children to explore different foods, music, animals, and fun new experiences. It can also mean that young children may experience unfamiliar sounds, smells, lights, and crowds. Preparing young children in advance, and a little pre-planning, will help to make the experience enjoyable for all! Fairs and festivals are a great way to explore the state, both in your own area and beyond.

WWW.NURTURINGWVBABIES.ORG



To access more resources of the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Mental Health Association, please scan the QR code.

Start with a plan. Begin with making sure the festival, fair, or parade is the right fit for your family. Other considerations could be the time when you attend, how long you attend, and what activities your family would be interested in seeing. Visit the areas that your family is most interested in first, in case you need to leave early. Depending on the length of time you will be staying, you may want to bring:

- comfort item for naptime,
- snacks to stretch between meals,
- sunscreen for hot days,
- jackets for cooler evenings, or
- change of clothes for water rides.

Consider sensitivity to sounds, lights, and costumes. Some children LOVE loud noises, bright flashing lights, and characters in costumes. Others do not. If your child is sensitive to these things, you may consider:

- bringing ear plugs or head phones, or leaving the event earlier before all the loud noises begin.
- avoiding activities with bright lights, or attending in the daytime when the lights are not as bright.
- redirecting the child away from an area that has characters in costumes. Children should not be made to interact with characters in costume if feeling anxious or afraid.

Recognize your child's need to have some quiet time if feeling overwhelmed. Signs that your young child is feeling overwhelmed:

- irritable or crying,
- anxious,
- agitated, or
- clingy behavior.

Plan for breaks and look for quiet areas. Sometimes, fairs and festivals will offer a sensory room that offers young children a quiet place to rest and recharge.