

# WV Birth to Three RAU 2

# BTT BITS



Happily serving Calhoun, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Pleasants, Ritchie, Wirt, and Wood counties in WV

## Parent Partner Corner

Warmer weather is here which means it's time to get up an moving! This year I would like to focus on various areas of development to help get your little ones the practice they need to excel. Below are some activities to do with your child. These activities help build strength and body control, balance/coordination, body awareness and concepts.

### Walking Skills

Sideways, backward, on a line, over uneven ground.

### Activities

- ◆ Follow the leader
- ◆ Walk backward and sideways both directions
- ◆ Have them push and pull toys
- ◆ Walk on a balance beam or curb with hand support
- ◆ Walk on slopes going up and down
- ◆ Play circle games like Ring Around the Rosie

## SPRING 2022

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Activities provided by  
Shawn Jones,  
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WV Birth to Three via  
Easter Seals

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# Featured Family

## The Coffeys



*Pictured: Aryaunna Coffey with her brothers, Kolton and Kamren*

### **ARYAUNNA'S STORY**

was shared with us earlier in the year and we are thrilled to share it now. Thank you Kathleen for sharing with us. If you would like to share your child(ren)'s story with us in an upcoming news-letter contact me at :

[olivia.parsons@thearcmov.org](mailto:olivia.parsons@thearcmov.org)

WV Birth to Three entered Aryaunna's life when she was placed in foster care right after birth and the foster mom wanted to make sure Aryaunna was okay. Aryaunna received services in Beckley, WV until she was placed back in my care.

I noticed Aryaunna wasn't able to hold her baby bottle, hold her own head up, or do a lot of the normal things babies her age was able to do. So, I began services in Parkersburg WV. After the first visit Aryaunna started receiving OT, PT, and Speech therapy once every week. All of these lovely ladies were amazing to Aryaunna, always going the extra mile if needed.

Aryaunna was diagnosed with cerebral palsy while she was in Birth to Three services. Birth to Three helped me get a bunch of equipment I needed to help Aryaunna to be as active as possible.

Most of the people that entered our lives while Aryaunna was still young enough to receive services were a god send. I would have been truly lost if they weren't there to help guide us in the right direction. I have two other children so being a parent to a special needs child is more challenging.

There was one practitioner, Sonja, that always went above and beyond for us, and it felt like she became family. She was always there for us when we needed something or if I had a question. Tina Linthicum, our Ongoing Service Coordinator, also was amazing.

Everyone was so helpful with helping me get chairs, walkers, and ect. When it was time for Aryaunna to age out of Birth to Three they helped me get her enrolled in preschool.

We are not originally from Parkersburg so we have no family members here. All the help I have is people we've meet here. Birth to Three was a part of my family. Not only were they there for my daughter but they helped my whole family. I couldn't have asked for a better team for Aryaunna.

# Rituals & Traditions That Nurture Strong Families

## Surviving the Family Vacation



We all love vacations – including children. Vacations give children something much more than a location and something far more important: Connection with you! Usually, parents are more relaxed, more fun, more emotionally available. It's common for kids to say that their favorite summer memory is something simple and free of charge, like lying on a blanket looking at the stars with the family. These sweet pleasures are the golden experiences that shape rich childhood memories.

But vacation can also be stressful. Kids often stay up late, get disconnected from parents, and melt down from the overload. Of course, parents often experience their own version, whether from extended family tensions, grandparents judging their parenting, or logistical pressures. So, the first rule for a restful vacation is to find a way to restore your own peace when you get off balance and avoid tears and tantrums. Here are tips to help you manage life during vacation so you can maximize the joy and minimize the tears.



# Rituals & Traditions That Nurture Strong Families

## Surviving the Family Vacation (cont.)

### 1. Before You Leave

**Give plenty of warning about upcoming events so they know what to expect.** Before traveling with young children, you might make a little book to show them what will happen each day. Your book doesn't have to be fancy -- print out photos on loose-leaf paper and put them in a 3-ring binder. Or, you can have kids who love to draw create a picture of what will be happening each day to add to your book. This helps them both enjoy the anticipation and conquer any fears. And seeing those smiling faces in advance helps them warm up more quickly to relatives they don't see often.

**Coach your kids about the social behavior you expect.** Role play with them in the car before you arrive, or make a game of it before you go:

*"In the hotel hallways, we use inside voices, and we don't run. Why do you think that is?"*

*"What do you do when Uncle Norman wants to hug you hello?" (Don't force kids to hug if they don't want to but teach them to offer a hearty handshake instead.)*

*"What if you don't like the dinner that's served?"*

*"When you want to leave the table, how do you ask?"*

*"The airplane is like a flying village with everyone close together, so there are special rules to be safe and considerate. Let's see if we can guess what they are... It can be hard to stay in your seat...what do you think you could do on the plane if you get bored?"*

*"What will you do if the cousins start arguing?"*

### 2. Travelling

#### Flying?

Plan to arrive early enough that they get to "run" a bit in the airport hallway after sitting still in the car and before sitting still on the plane.

Make sure to change diapers and use the bathroom just before boarding. If you use overnight diapers (more absorbent), you might get lucky and avoid diaper changes on the flight.

Bring small wrapped "presents" – books, treats, chapstick, puzzles, simple crafts – for each child. Kids can look forward to getting one as soon as they've buckled their seat belts, and more whenever you need a distraction mid-flight.

Blue painter's tape always comes in handy, too -- you can make a tic-tac-toe board on the tray table, use it for crafts, tape up blankets around his seat to make a cozy fort, and even make a hopscotch board in the airport while you're waiting.

# Rituals & Traditions That Nurture Strong Families

## Surviving the Family Vacation (cont.)

Be sure to bring bottles, sugar-free lollipops or something else to suck on during take-off and landing if your child isn't nursing (sucking on anything will help equalize the air pressure on those tiny ear drums.)

And even if you don't usually use screens with your child, it's smart to have movies downloaded and at the ready so your child has something to watch even if there's no wifi on your flight.

### Driving?

Plan time for extra stops to allow little ones to move

Overnight diapers might eliminate potential accidents when you cannot stop quickly

Those same "presents" shared above will work here too, along with snacks and downloaded movies too

### 3. Once you are at your vacation spot

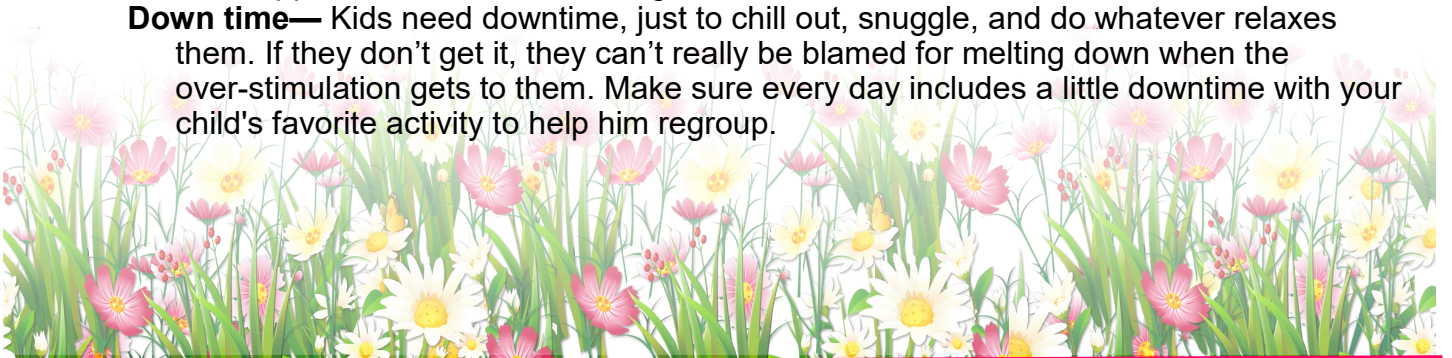
**Keep kids on their usual schedule as much as possible—** Kids need the security of familiar routines. They get stressed by unfamiliar events and what feels to them like chaos and unpredictability. Do what you can to keep them on schedule and be patient when they get hyped-up or irritable.

**Plan no more than one event per day—** What you want to avoid, of course, is racing around, getting stressed out by a busy trip that includes lots of meltdowns, and returning home in need of a vacation. Kids tend to get cranky and stressed with travel and schedule changes, so plan to do less. You'll all enjoy it more.

**Have age-appropriate expectations—** A young child can't be expected to sit quietly while you enjoy a fancy dinner. If you're doing a lot of visiting with adults, be sure the kids have something to occupy them. Even if you usually have dinner as a family, vacations are a great time to feed kids early-- less pressure on the kids to "behave" at a table of adults, and the adults can enjoy a chance to talk at dinner. Remember, you need to recharge your own batteries, too!

**Physical Activity—** Be sure your schedule includes plenty of visits to the playground or other opportunities for the kids to get wild.

**Down time—** Kids need downtime, just to chill out, snuggle, and do whatever relaxes them. If they don't get it, they can't really be blamed for melting down when the over-stimulation gets to them. Make sure every day includes a little downtime with your child's favorite activity to help him regroup.



# Rituals & Traditions That Nurture Strong Families

## Surviving the Family Vacation (cont.)

**Soothing activities for little ones** ...that work for most kids:

**Sand play**— Put some sand in a lasagna pan on the deck, add small figurines, vehicles, and a strong spoon for digging.

**Water play**— At the beach or lake, of course. But even on a back deck with a spaghetti pot of water. For variety, add ice cubes, paint brushes, sponges, plastic water pitchers. Toddlers love to "paint" the deck or wash the picnic table.

**Bubbles**— You'll have to help the little ones, but all kids love bubbles and blowing bubbles reduces stress. You can easily make your own bubble mix (Add 3 Tbsp of glycerin and 2/3 cup of dish soap -- Joy & Dawn are best -- to a gallon of water.) Any twig with a loop of yarn can be used as a bubble wand.

**Clay**— If you're in a rented space on vacation, limit clay to a tray, pan, or outside. But clay, Sculpey, or playdoh is a wonderful, tactile way for kids to knead and pound out the stresses that inevitably accompany all new experiences.

**Plan time with you**

**Snuggle with your child every morning** before getting out of bed. It's very grounding for kids to connect with you and review how the day is expected to unfold -- even if it will be a lot like yesterday.

Your kids may be chasing the older cousins, but they still want, and need, time with you. This is a perfect opportunity to **turn off your cell phone and see what an inspired parent you are** when you have a chance to relax and revel in just being alive. Spend five minutes in the water with your child. You'll be amazed how much more alive -- and connected to your child -- you feel after a five minute water fight. And how much more willing your child is when you need their cooperation.

### 4. Mealtimes

**Watch your kids' food intake in the midst of too many treats and hyped-up schedules**

Many tantrums originate from hunger. And all parents recognize the sugar high that sends kids bouncing off walls and then crashing into tears. If necessary, speak with others in advance about limiting treats. And carry small protein-rich snacks with you so your child doesn't have a melt-down while the adults are negotiating where to go to dinner.



# Rituals & Traditions That Nurture Strong Families

## Surviving the Family Vacation (cont.)

### 5. Bedtime

**Schedule decompression time before bed**— bring some favorite, comforting books from home. And don't forget stuffed animals and blankets!

**White noise machines can be invaluable** both to keep kids sleeping longer in the morning, and to block out the sound of adults and older kids carousing, so little ones can settle down.

**Bring black out curtains** to keep your child sleeping longer in the morning and to help your child settle on those summer evenings when the sun is shining so long.

### 6. Take Care of YOU!

**Don't try to work on vacation**— this is family time. Forgo organized evenings in favor of family board games and keep your focus on connecting rather than sight-seeing or structured activities.

**If friends and family criticize your parenting**— Parenting in public is always hard and kids are often not at their best when they're out of their usual routine and schedules. Stay calm, smile, and acknowledge the other person's concern. Then do whatever you can to address their concern. Don't worry, this is just a case of conflicting needs, not a referendum on your parenting.

**Manage yourself so you can stay calm**—You're on vacation with your child or children, so this is by definition a "working vacation." And traveling is stressful for everyone. But remember that your kids depend on you not only to regulate their environment, but also to help them regulate their moods -- so you need to maintain a state of well-being yourself. Besides, you deserve a vacation too! Make sure you take this opportunity to trade off child care responsibilities with other adults, if possible, so you get a chance to replenish your own spirits. You're never too old to have a summer vacation you'll always remember.

Adapted from Aha! Parenting (n.d.) Family vacation survival guide. Retrieved from <https://www.ahaparenting.com/read/Summer-Family-Activities-Vacation>.

# March 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Baby Sleep Day	2 Dr. Seuss Day	3	4 National Day of Unplugging	5
6	7	8 International Women's Day	9 National Barbie Day	10 National Pack Your Lunch Day	11	12 National Plant a Flower Day
13	14 National Napping Day	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19 National Let's Laugh Day
20 First Day of Spring	21 World Down Syndrome Day	22 World Water Day	23 National Chia Day	24	25 International Waffle Day	26
27 International Scribble Day	28	29	30 Take a Walk in the Park Day	31 National Crayon Day		



# April 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Move More Month	APRIL Child Abuse Prevention Month	IS... Stress Awareness Month	National Pet Month		1	2 International Children's Book Day
3 Find a Rainbow Day	4 Nat'l Library Week (3-9)	5	6 National Walking Day	7 World Health Day	8	9 National Unicorn Day
10 National Farm Animal Day	11	12 Nat'l Library Workers' Day	13 Nat'l Make Lunch Count Day	14 Int'l Moment of Laughter Day	15	16
17	18 National Velociraptor Day	19	20 National Banana Day	21 National High Five Day	22 Earth Day	23 World Book Day
24 National Skipping Day	25 National Telephone Day	26 National Playground Safety Week (25-29)	27 National Tell a Story Day	28 National Superhero Day	29 International Dance Day	30



# May 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 May Day	2	3 National Teacher's Day	4 National Orange Juice Day	5 National Astronaut Day	6 National Nurses Day	7 Children's Mental Health Day
8 Mother's Day	9 Get Caught Reading Day	10	11 National Eat What You Want Day	12	13 Frog Jumping Day	14 Nat'l Dance Like a Chicken Day
15 International Family Day	16 National Drawing Day	17 World Baking Day	18 Visit Your Relatives Day	19 May Ray Day	20 Pick Strawberries Day	21 Eat More Fruit/Veg Day
22	23 National Turtle Day	24 National Scavenger Hunt Day	25 National Sing Out Day	26	27 National Sunscreen Day	28
29	30 Memorial Day	31 National Smile Day				

