

### Motor Groups -By Barb M. PT

Fridays in January have been the day of our therapy motor groups. Each Friday the groups have centered around a different theme. The first group was all about things to do with balls. We kicked balls into a net, played with various size and texture sensory balls, rolled balls at standing pins to knock them down, stood on ½ balls for balance, and threw paper balls at a target. The kids especially enjoyed the sensory table filled with pom pom balls, colored rice, and different scoops. Group ended with everyone sitting at a toddler table for snack. Our second group theme was bubbles. The kids really enjoyed the bubble machine trying to catch or step on bubbles. We also had hoops, a balance beam, activity area, and sensory table with bubble water and orbitz to explore. Again group ended with a snack and then parent discussion group with Brenda T. our school psychologist. We try to have activities for late infant to toddler ages and for all different ability levels. Some of the upcoming themes revolve around snow, buckets, and hearts. The next group will be Kindermusik on February 15th from 9:30 to 10:15. Please join us this Friday morning for free winter fun time.



### TEN WAYS TO TELL YOUR CHILD YOU LOVE THEM

1. Make your home a place of safety, acceptance and love.
2. Build feelings of self-worth by showing your children how they are special.
3. Offer your children opportunities to learn and succeed.
4. Make sure your children eat healthy foods, exercise regularly and get enough sleep.
5. Spend time with your children. Talk, laugh, play and enjoy each other.
6. Protect your children. Make their safety your top priority.
7. Acknowledge, praise, and reward your children's successes. Don't criticize when they try but fail.
8. Set limits to make children feel secure and to teach them responsibility.
9. Make a hug, a squeeze, a loving smile an everyday occurrence.
10. Say the words, "I love you", at least once a day.



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Please continue to collect “Boxtops for Education”, shop Market Day, and drop off your items to be recycled. Happy Day School earned \$1,382.67 from Market Day, \$806.40 from Boxtops, and \$145.27 from recycles in 2012 to use towards our program. We appreciate your participation and continued support. If you do not currently receive a market day flyer, or need additional information about any of these programs, please contact Debbie at 330-678-2400.

### Making a Winter Snow Day Box

With winter upon us, the chance of a snow day is always a possibility. An idea to have readily available activities for you and your child is to create a “Snow Day Box”. The activities can be used any time, not just during a snow day, and will be great for enhancing fine motor skills. The Occupational Therapy staff offers these suggestions for materials that you can include in your box:

A craft such as making a snowman out of paper plates and embellish with pipe cleaners, buttons, glitter, sequins, yarn, or other miscellaneous items you may find around the house.

A bag of dry pasta (rigatoni, elbow, penne) and yarn/pipe cleaners/shoe lace. Make “jewelry” by stringing pasta onto shoe lace.

Put in a favorite book to read.

Puzzles.

Coloring book and crayons or markers.

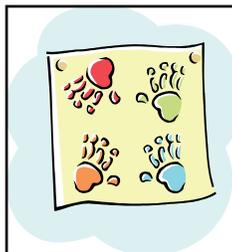
Packets of hot chocolate with a bag of small marshmallows. You can have your child place one marshmallow at a time to encourage a pincer grasp.

Cookie mix or rice crispy treats – you can have your child help with baking and then decorating the treats!

Finger paints and paper.

Make your own Play dough (see recipe below) and store in your box.

Here are some websites you may find helpful in looking for ideas for your own “Snow Day Box” or ask your Occupational Therapist for more suggestions: [www.pinterest.com](http://www.pinterest.com), [www.innerchildfun.com](http://www.innerchildfun.com), and [www.familyfun.com](http://www.familyfun.com).



Making your own play dough with your child can be fun. The dough can be stored in air tight containers, or left to air dry to save a finished creation.

#### Recipe 1

3 cups flour

1 packet Kool Aid

1.5 cups salt

6 tsp. cream of tarter

3 tbsp. oil

3 cups water



Pour all ingredients into a large pot. Stir constantly over medium heat until a dough ball forms by pulling away from the sides. Knead dough until the texture matches play dough (1-2 minutes). Store in plastic container. Should last for at least 3 months.

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**CALENDER OF EVENTS**


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2/14/2013	9:30am	VALENTINE'S PARTY & SCHOOL SPIRIT DAY (wear red & white)
2/15/2013	9:30-10:15am	KINDERMUSIK
2/15/2013	10:30-11:15am	KINDERMUSIK
2/18/2013		STAFF RECORD'S DAY- <u>NO SCHOOL FOR ALL STUDENTS</u>
2/19/2013		PROGRAM RESUMES
2/19/2013		SECOND GRADING PERIOD ENDS
2/20/2013	5:00pm	PCBDD BOARD MEETING
2/22/2013	9:30-10:15am	KINDERMUSIK
2/22/2013	10:30-11:15am	KINDERMUSIK
2/22/2013	5:30-7:00pm	SCHOOL AGE PARENT GROUP-DINNER & SOCIALIZATION
2/26/2013	6:00-7:30pm	BOARD ELIGIBLE FAMILY SWIM
3/1/2013	9:30-10:15am	KINDERMUSIK
3/1/2013	10:30-11:15am	KINDERMUSIK
3/4/2013	4:00pm	PARENT COUNCIL MEETING
3/6/2013		GRANDPARENT'S DAY
3/7/2013	3:15-4:15pm	MARKET DAY PICK UP
3/8/2013		AGENCY IN-SERVICE- <u>NO SCHOOL FOR ALL STUDENTS</u>
3/9/2013	9:00am-3:00pm	RUMMAGE SALE AT P.I. SPONSERED BY PARENT COUNCIL
3/11/2013		PROGRAM RSUMES
3/15/2013	9:00am-3:00pm	GENETICS OUTREACH CLINIC
3/15/2013	9:30-10:15am	KINDERMUSIK
3/15/2013	10:30-11:15am	KINDERMUSIK
3/15/2013	5:30-7:00pm	SCHOOL AGE PARENT GROUP-DINNNER & SOCIALIZATION
3/19/2013	6:00-7:30pm	BOARD ELIGIBLE FAMILY SWIM
3/20/2013	5:00pm	PCBDD BOARD MEETING

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**EARLY HEAD START NEWS**

As you know Early Head Start (EHS) is now occupying three classrooms in Happy Day School! We are excited to be welcoming five new staff members to our agency! We have four new teachers and a new teacher assistant. Jessica, Bobbi, Amanda and Jamie are all brand new teachers to Early Head Start and Patty is our busy Teacher Assistant! You can read about each new staff member on the poster hanging by the mailboxes in the front of the building.

EHS would like to thank all of the Happy Day staff for their hospitality! We are excited to be starting a new year in the Happy Day School and sharing your space with you. Everyone has made us feel very welcomed and we appreciate this very much!

If you would like to come visit us or have any questions, Debbie and Sierra are located in room 13.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAYTIME

Playtime is special. Not only is it fun, but it is critical to children's development. Play is child's "work" and their way of learning about the world around them. Through play, babies and toddlers try out new skills, explore their imagination and creativity, and learn about relationships with other people.

**So what can you do to make the most of your child's playtime?** Check out the tips below.

- ◆ **Follow your child's lead.** Provide an object, toy, or activity for your baby or toddler and then see what he does with it. It's okay if it's not the "right" way...let him show you a "new way."
- ◆ **Go slowly.** It's great to show your child how a toy works, but try to hold off on "doing it for him" every time. You can begin something, such as stacking one block on another, and then encourage him to give it a try. Providing just enough help to keep frustration at bay motivates your child to learn new skills.
- ◆ **Read your child's signals.** Your little one may not be able to tell you using words when he's had enough or when he's frustrated. But he has other ways-like using his sounds, facial expressions, and gestures. Reading the signals that precede a tantrum help you know when to jump in or change to a new activity. Reading his signals can also tell you what activities your child prefers.
- ◆ **Look at your play space.** Is the area child-friendly and child-safe? Is there too much noise or other distractions? Is the area safe to explore? Is this a good place for the activity you've chosen, such as running, throwing balls, or painting? Checking out your space beforehand can prevent a tantrum, an accident, or a broken lamp.
- ◆ **Play it again, Sam.** While this desire to do things over and over again is not necessarily thrilling for moms and dads, it is for their young children. They are practicing in order to master a challenge. And when they can do it "All by myself!" they are rewarded with a powerful sense of their own competency-a confidence that they can and that they are smart and successful beings. The more they practice and master new skills, the more likely they are to take on new challenges and the learning continues. So when you're tempted to hide that toy that you don't think you can stand playing with yet one more time, remember the essential role repetition plays in your child's development.
- ◆ **Look for ways to adapt play activities to meet your child's needs.** You may be a parent, relative, or caregiver of a child that has special needs. A physical, mental or social disability can pose the occasional challenge to play time. Still, all children learn through play and any play activity can be adapted to meet a child's unique needs. The guidelines below can help you think about how to make playtime enjoyable and appropriate to your child's skills, preferences, and abilities.
  - Think about the environment. How do variables like sound or light affect your child? What is the background noise like in your play area? Is there a television or radio on? Are there many other kids around? If your child seems distressed during playtime, and you've tried everything else, move to a quieter, less stimulating area to play.
  - How does your child respond to new things? Some infants and toddlers, particularly if they have a special need, are easily over-stimulated, while others enjoy a lot of activity. Try starting playtime slowly, with one toy or object, and gradually add others. See what kind of reactions you get. Are there smiles when a bear is touched and hugged? Does your child seem startled by the loud noises coming from the toy fire engine?
  - How does your child react to different textures, smells, and tastes? For example, some objects may be particularly enjoyable for your little one to touch and hold. Others may "feel funny" to them. Read your child's signals and modify the play experience accordingly.
  - Involve peers. It is important for a child with special needs, just as it is for a child who is typically developing, to establish relationships with peers. Arrange play dates or look for opportunities for your child to play with other children, such as at the park or during a library story hour. Having fun with peers is an important way that children learn social skills like sharing, conflict resolution, and empathy-and also help prepare children for the school setting later on.