

Avoid March Madness with Engaging Activities

Well if you haven't had enough bonding time with your kids on the multiple "snow days" this year, March Break is looming ahead. It seems an appropriate time to take stock of what we have around us to make life a little more interesting and fun. Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) says: Children are more likely to misbehave when they are bored so provide lots of engaging indoor and outdoor activities for your child. Fun time together is the perfect time to learn together. This is when we figure out how to talk to each other, how to work as a team, how to compromise and problem solve. Of course engaging activities can also be ones a child chooses and does alone or with other children. Being able to choose what to do when you are bored is an important skill to have in life.



Children engage with all their senses. When you think about activities, think of things they explore with touch, sight, smell, hearing and taste. Things like playdough, reading, drawing, colouring and cutting cardboard boxes, dress up, pretend play and blanket forts are indoor activities that use multiple senses. Set up containers and areas so children can choose activities at will. Make sure they are activities that work in your home. If you can't handle the mess of playdough or are worried about your child using scissors without supervision, those need to come out when someone is ready to monitor the situation. Cooking muffins, snack or special foods is also something that needs to be done with adult supervision. Make it easy and enjoyable for both of you. If you are going to let your child finger paint with pudding on a baking tray, let them do it without a shirt and have the bathtub ready for an easy clean-up. Keep some books at child level so they can choose them at will. A drawer or cupboard with plastic containers and wooden spoons for little ones, helps them be busy while you make meals.

Active indoor games like hide and seek, hallway hockey, dance and freeze, red solo cup bowling (stack them high first), ninja box kicking, move like an animal (hop, slither, crab crawl), don't touch ground, hopscotch (use painter's tape), flashlight tag and many more are good ways to wear off some energy. Check out <https://whatmomslove.com/kids/active-indoor-games-activities-for-kids-to-burn-energy/> for more ideas.

Kids need to spend time outdoors too. Learning to play outside is a skill. Rules and materials may be different and need to be learned. For kids who aren't used to it, starting with 15 minutes at a time is one way to introduce outside play. Extend the time as they learn different things to do. March usually has some beautiful sunny, blue sky/white snow weather. Make snow angels, toboggan, build a fort, draw in or paint the snow, make an up-side down snowman, go for a walk and leave handfuls of birdseed for the animals in special spots (go again the next day to see if they have been found), and blow/chase bubbles. Driveway hockey or soccer is usually a hit. Visit a playground, sugarbush, skating rink, or set up your own snow/mud kitchen (cookie cutters and snow are amazing). Don't forget to climb, roll, run, jump, crawl, shovel and slide! Check out these ideas <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/winter-activities-kids-2/>. Time spent outdoors includes, fresh air, exercise and space. Even for infants in strollers, it has the effect of destressing the body and mind.



Remember to have realistic expectations. All children misbehave at times and it is inevitable that you will have some discipline hassles. Trying to be the perfect parent can set you up for frustration and disappointment. Having engaging activities is just one piece of the parenting puzzle. For more parenting tips check out <http://www.manitobatriplep.ca/tips/parenting-quick-tips/>.

Remember to check out EarlyON's Parent Workshop Schedule at www.crowlanark.com. All workshops are free!

Jane Paul, Parent Education Coordinator, Early ON Child and Family Centre



A Child's Relationships

A child needs relationships with many people: parents, sisters and brothers, extended family members, friends, neighbours, teachers, health care workers, caregivers, classmates. The relationships a child has with other people are resources that foster physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and social health. Children also have a right to relationships. When children relate to many different people, they learn important social skills. For example, they learn how to make friends and how to get along with others. They learn that they are special and worth knowing.

The opportunities a child has to build relationships depend largely on their family's lifestyle. Do they have a large extended family, with grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins? Do they go to child care or to a playgroup? Do they have opportunities to be with people in the community?

Communicate! Some tips for active listening:

Clear communication and lots of it is the most useful tool to build a close relationship with a child. Adults must learn to be active listeners, paying close attention to a child's words, sounds, behaviour and body language. Here are some tips:

- Use words like "I hear you telling me that you are sad because.... Can you tell me more?" This lets the child know that you were really listening to her. It gives her an opportunity to correct you if you didn't quite understand. It encourages her to express her own point of view.
- Use I-messages like "I see you are having fun but when you climb the fence, I'm afraid that you are going to fall and get hurt." This way, you acknowledge the child's point of view, as well as voice your concerns about his behaviour and your feelings about him. Children need to know that you still care about them, even when they are doing something you don't think is in their best interest.
- Children who feel acceptance and trust are more likely to express themselves openly. They feel safe knowing that you care about them, no matter what.

Mine!

Sharing is hard when children don't understand that they are not losing something. Very young children tend to be concerned mostly with themselves until they have more experience learning social skills and building relationships. It is normal for a child of two to be more interested in "me" than in relationships with other children. A three-year-old who spends time with others is more likely to practice skills you have tried to teach like sharing, cooperation, planning and working together.

What does play have to do with relationships?

When children role play and pretend, they learn about daily life and relationships. A child who plays with a doll may be pretending to care for a baby sister or brother. A child who stuffs a large purse with paper may be pretending to be Mom leaving for work with her briefcase. These children come closer to understanding what life is like and what possibilities it holds. Children explore relationships through play. They find answers to puzzling questions and ease their fears. When a child is upset about something, she will often process the problem by acting it out or by pretending.

Children play roles that they know about: Mom, Dad, teacher, doctor, nurse, librarian, grandparents, brother, sister, caregiver, crossing guard. Adult clothes, hats, shoes, phones, child-sized furniture and kitchen appliances and other props encourage imaginary and pretend play.



Adapted from the Canadian Child Care Federation

Workshops

Workshop (Pre-Registration Necessary— Call 613-283-0095 x300)	Date	Time	Location
Tips for Twos	Monday, March 18 & 25 **2 week session **	6:30 - 8:30 pm	Arklan School, 123 Patterson St., Carleton Place
Bounce Back & Thrive	Wednesday, March 20, 27, April 3, 10, 17, 24 **6 week session**	6:30 - 8:30 pm	Stewart School, 7 Sunset Blvd, Perth
Family Science Adult/Child workshop	Thursday, April 18, 25, May 2 **3 week session **	6:00 - 7:30 pm	Caldwell School, 70 Caldwell St, Carleton Place
Triple P Parenting Café Coping with Stress	Tuesday, May 7	6:30 - 8:00 pm	Almonte Library, 155 High St, Almonte
Triple P Positive Parenting	Monday, May 6, 13, 27, June 3, 10 **5 week session**	6:30 - 8:30 pm	EarlyON Child & Family Centre, 4 Ross St, Smiths Falls *Park and enter off Harold St*

Staff Directory



Children's Resources on Wheels 613-283-0095

Jennifer Coughlin, Reception

Diane Bennett, Executive Assistant

Joyce Buckley, Program Facilitator— Perth

Sue Cavanagh, Executive Director

Linda Cybulski, Program Facilitator – Almonte

Jen Lafleur Bell, Program Facilitator

Peggy Lavigueur, Bookkeeper

Janice Kelly, Home Visitor Licensed Home Child Care

Issie Mullen, Program Facilitator – Carleton Place

Jane Paul, Parent Education Coordinator

Andrea Snyder, Program Facilitator – Lanark, Montague

Janet Wheeler, Resource

Lori Wintle, Program Facilitator – Smiths Falls

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Playgroup Schedule

Day	Location	Time	Staff	Dates
Monday	Almonte - Naismith School	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Linda	March 4, 11, 18, 25
Monday	Baby Talk Group at Almonte Library – Almonte	2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Linda	March 4, 11, 18, 25
Monday	Carleton Place - Arena	9:00 am -12:00 pm	Issie	March 4, 11, 18, 25
Monday	Carleton Place - Caldwell School	9:30 am -11:30 am	Andrea	March 4, 11, 18, 25
Monday	Lanark - Maple Grove School **MARCH BREAK**	9:30 am - 12:00 pm	Andrea	March 11
Monday	Perth - Perth Pool Annex	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Joyce	March 4, 11, 18, 25
Monday	Perth - Perth Pool Annex (Afternoon)	1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Joyce	March 4, 11, 18, 25
Monday	Smiths Falls - EarlyON Child & Family Centre	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Lori	March 4, 11, 18, 25
Monday	Baby Talk Group at EarlyON Child & Family Centre - Smiths Falls	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Lori	March 4, 11, 18, 25
Tuesday	Almonte - Naismith School	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Linda	March 5, 12, 19, 26
Tuesday	Carleton Place - Caldwell School	9:30 am - 11:30 am	Issie	March 5, 12, 19, 26
Tuesday	Lanark - Maple Grove School **MARCH BREAK**	9:30 am - 12:00 pm	Andrea	March 12
Tuesday	Montague - Montague Centennial Hall	9:00 am -12:00 pm	Andrea	March 5, 19, 26
Tuesday	Perth - Perth Pool Annex	9:00 am -12:00 pm	Joyce	March 5, 12, 19, 26
Tuesday	Smiths Falls - EarlyON Child & Family Centre	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Lori	March 5, 19, 26
Wednesday	Almonte - R Tait MacKenzie School	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Linda	March 6, 13, 20, 27
Wednesday	Carleton Place - Arena	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Issie	March 6, 13, 20, 27
Wednesday	Carleton Place - Lanark Community Programs, 30 Bennett St *NEW FRENCH PLAYGROUP*	9:30 am - 11:30 am	Jen	March 20
Wednesday	Carleton Place - Caldwell School	9:30 am - 11:30 am	Jen	March 6, 13, 27
Wednesday	Baby Talk Group at Caldwell School - Carleton Place	1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Issie	March 6, 13, 20, 27
Wednesday	Lanark - Maple Grove School	9:30 am - 12:00 pm	Andrea	March 6, 20, 27
Wednesday	Perth - Perth & District Union Library	9:00 am -12:00 pm	Joyce	March 6, 13, 20, 27
Wednesday	Smiths Falls - Lower Reach Park (Kinsmen Bldg.)	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Lori	March 6, 13, 20, 27
Thursday	Almonte - R Tait MacKenzie School	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Linda	March 7, 14, 21, 28
Thursday	Carleton Place - Caldwell School	9:30 am - 11:30 am	Issie	March 7, 14, 21, 28
Thursday	Lanark - Maple Grove School	9:30 am -12:00 pm	Andrea	March 7, 21, 28
Thursday	Perth - Perth Pool Annex	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Joyce	March 7, 14, 21, 28
Thursday	Baby Talk Group at Perth Pool Annex - Perth	1:00 pm - 2:30 pm	Joyce	March 7, 14, 21, 28
Thursday	Smiths Falls - EarlyON Child & Family Centre	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Lori	March 7, 14, 21, 28
Friday	Smiths Falls - EarlyON Child & Family Centre	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Jen	March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Saturday Events

March 2, 9 am - 12 pm: Saturday morning playgroup fun with Joyce at the Smiths Falls EarlyON Child & Family Centre.

March 9, 1 - 3 pm: Enjoy a Saturday afternoon full of fun “hands-on” activities with Janet at the Perth Library.

March 16, 10:30 am - 11:30 pm: Where is Milo? fun will take place at the Almonte Library with Linda. Please register by calling 613-283-0095.

March 23, 9 am - 12 pm: Jane will be hosting a Saturday morning playgroup at the Smiths Falls EarlyON Child & Family Centre.

March 30, 9:30- 11:30 am: Jen will be hosting a French playgroup at J.-L.-Couroux in Carleton Place. Come say hi!

