



# Tidbits

Volume 4, Issue 3

West Virginia Birth to Three  
RESA 8 Newsletter

2017

## Autumn is a Season for the Senses

Fall is a great time to go outside, see the seasons changing and feel the brisk air. It's the perfect time for children to experience sounds, smells, sights, and movement as forms of sensory input.

Pumpkins offer the ultimate tactile experience! Toddlers can help scoop out seeds and pulp. Offer a reluctant child a utensil to use instead of their hands. Roast your pumpkin to use in waffles, pancakes, or oatmeal. Don't forget to roast the seeds!

Go on a nature walk. You and the little ones can take in the powerful and unique scents, sights, and feel of fall. Put your treasures from your walk into autumn-themed discovery bottles. Make a variety of sounds while walking to stimulate the sense of hearing!

Gather fall leaves into piles and let the kids run and jump through them for loads of position, balance, and

touch input and fun! It's simple and if there are no leaves in your own yard, go to a local park.



Create "guess bags" filled with fall finds. Blindfold kids and have them feel what's inside! This is a fun way to develop touch discrimination. Include leaves, pebbles, moss, sticks or sand.

Collect your gathered treasures to make a fall sensory bin to use again and again. Consider adding small dried things like rice, beans or corn to sticks, pinecones, smooth rocks and more.

Examine fall seeds with tweezers, or magnify glasses, or put them on a plate. Make dry leaf confetti, which can be added to sensory bins or used in craft projects.

Bake and eat apple chips. Talk about how the texture and taste of the apple changes before and after cooking.



<http://yourkidstable.com>



### 10 Ways to Show Kids You Care

1. Keep promises you make.
2. Wave and smile when you part.
3. Use your ears more than your mouth.
4. Find a common interest.
5. Share their excitement.
6. Give them space when they need it.
7. Be silly together.
8. Introduce them to new experiences.
9. Cheer their accomplishments.
10. Hug them.

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Do you know a child who is not moving, hearing, seeing, learning or talking like others his age?

WV Birth to Three may be able to help.

Call (304) 267-3593 or 1-866-681-4957.

Find us on Facebook





## Hooray for an Apple a Day!

Apples are a low calorie food that contain essential nutrients, and apples can play an important role in your child's healthy diet.

Apples are rich in vitamins A, B1, B2 and C. They also contain minerals such as iodine, phosphorous, iron and calcium that aid overall development.

Minerals and vitamins are a must for the development of muscle tissues, skin, organs, blood and bones in children.

## No Cook Applesauce Ready in No Time

6 raw apples, peeled and chopped

1/2 cup water

1/4 cup brown sugar

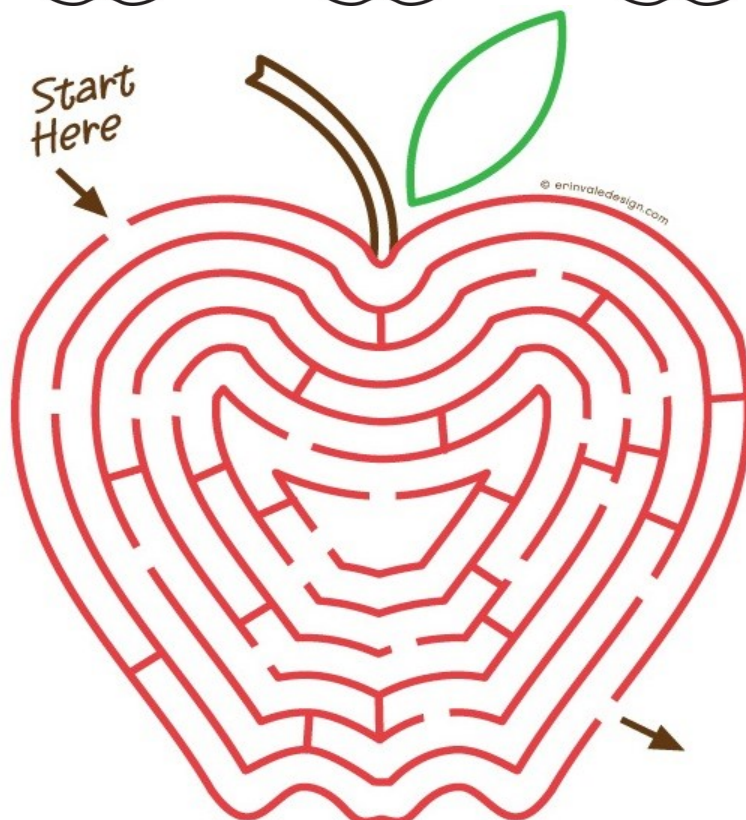
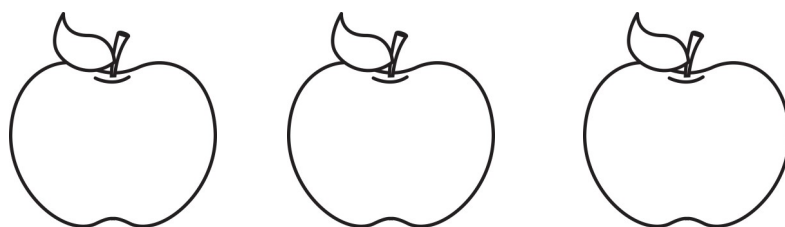
Cinnamon to taste

Mix all ingredients in blender and blend.

Ready to eat immediately.



Ten red apples grow on a tree  
Five for you and five for me  
Let us shake the tree just so  
And then red apples will fall below  
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10!



## Pick Your Own Apples

**Ridgefield Farm**

Harpers Ferry 304-876-3647

**Spring Valley Farm & Orchard**

Romney 304-822-7913

**Kitchen's Orchard & Farm Market**

Falling Waters 304-274-1994

Find out more about West Virginia  
farms and markets by visiting  
[www.wvfarm2u.org](http://www.wvfarm2u.org)



# Parents as Teachers Organizing Dads Group

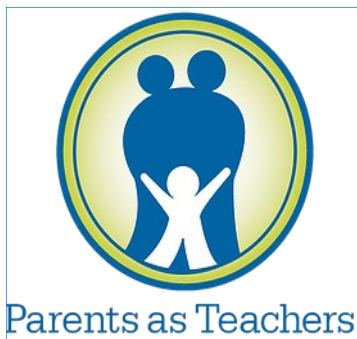
Corey Beahm has been with Parents as Teachers (PAT) since October of 2015. Parents as Teachers is a program that is available to families at no cost, and they serve prenatal mothers and fathers until the first year of school. They do home visits that focus on parent-child interaction, developmental topics, and family well being. PAT also hosts monthly community activities to encourage families to socialize.

During his ten years in the social work field, Corey did not see programs designed to empower and support fathers. "Being a father can be hard and requires a lot of patience and dedication. We want to help dads realize their full potential and feel that they have a voice," Corey said.



hope to establish meetings every other month and create a fatherhood program to serve local dads. Their purpose is to engage fathers and help empower them; to offer support and resources to all fathers to better equip them with tools to be more emotionally responsive and in tune with their children and families.

Corey organized a Big Truck Community Play Day in Martinsburg as a kickoff for the program. Cory says the project is "for all fathers including those playing a father figure role to a child." The Jefferson County Parents as Teachers Facebook page will list events for the group. Additionally, anyone who is interested is encouraged to call Corey at 304-698-3304.



As a result, Corey, five area dads and several community partners, are working to set up a support group for fathers. Currently, Corey attends community events to raise awareness and offer support. They

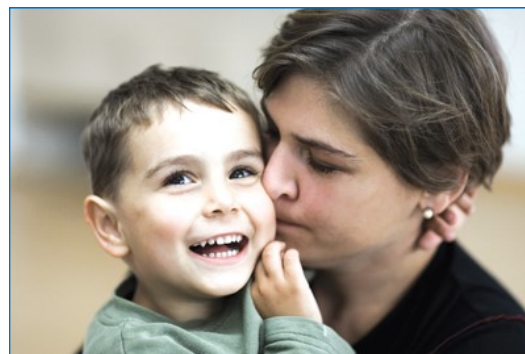


## Eastern Panhandle Parents of Special Needs Children Support Group

Are you the parent or caregiver of a child with special needs? West Virginia Birth to Three offers a group for families to network and share ideas as well as get information about community resources.

Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month at The Orchard House on Rt. 45 between Martinsburg and Shepherdstown. This space is very accommodating to all, and it is located near Horses with Hearts!

Current Birth to Three Families who attend 3 of the next 6 support group meetings (by November 2017) can receive a gift card or an interactive play box!



Our Facebook page allows families to access and share information online. For more information, contact Laura Turman, Parent Partner, at 304-267-3593.





# Assistive Technology Ideas for People with Autism

Assistive Technology (AT) can play an important role in the lives of people with autism spectrum disorder. An AT solution can be as simple as a picture of a glass of milk or as complex as an iPad with a communication app. AT devices can help with challenges like a choice-making, sensory integration, communication, positive reinforcement and social interaction. For example:

Switches can be used to turn something on and off, play with a battery operated toy, access a communication device or make a choice like "I want ice cream." Switches are made so you can press them with a hand, foot, head or whatever works best.



Sensory toys can offer visual, tactile or audible output that capture one's attention. Many sensory toys allow you to turn on/off colorful lights, music and vibration features, and can be used either as a sensory toy or a switch. Some can be paired with communication devices to help with social interaction.

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices can help people with limited or no speech

express themselves. Low tech AAC can be pictures and communication boards that a person can point to or touch; mid tech AAC devices have the capacity to record a voice to accompany a switch and



matching image. There is also a range of high tech AAC tablets, apps, and devices that can produce digital voice output and/or typed word output.

Weighted vests and blankets are designed to help provide calming, deep pressure and steady body awareness. Some people say that wearing a weighted vest is like having a wearable hug without the stress a person with autism may experience from too much human contact.

Noise cancelling headphones or earmuffs can help



reduce background noise while making it easier to focus on what someone is saying.

To find out what assistive technology items are available for loan, exchange or demonstration, visit West Virginia's Assistive Technology Loan Library and Exchange System at <http://vll.cedwvu.org> or call WVATS at 800-841-8436.

## Little Lobbyists Share Family Stories on Capitol Hill

The Little Lobbyists is a group of DC-area families with medically complex children. They visit Capitol Hill to share their family stories, and they are eager to expand.

Former West Virginia Birth to Three parent Christy Judd is an active participant. She attributes much of her son, Ethan's, successes to his Birth to Three team. She says the team was "amazing." Christy is eager to have more West Virginia families join her as she meets with state lawmakers.



To find out more about Little Lobbyists, visit [www.littlelobbyists.org](http://www.littlelobbyists.org), follow them on Twitter@LittleLobbyists, or e-mail them at [contact@littlelobbyists.org](mailto:contact@littlelobbyists.org). Families can also contact Christy Judd at [jcjudd@frontier.com](mailto:jcjudd@frontier.com).



### Adult-Led Activity

### Free Play

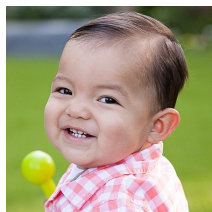
#### Younger Toddlers (12-24 Months)



- ♥ Listen to music and dance together.
- ♥ Hold your child's hands while he or she jumps.
- ♥ Explore the backyard or playground together.
- ♥ Climb stairs and use climbing equipment, with supervision.

- ♥ Use push and pull toys (popcorn popper, play broom, vacuum).
- ♥ Imitate animals or adults at work (mowing lawn, making dinner, using tools).
- ♥ Play with shape sorters and other floor toys.

#### Older Toddlers (24-36 Months)



- ♥ Play "Follow the Leader," "Ring Around the Rosy," and other easy games.
- ♥ Play ball.
- ♥ Take a mommy-and-me movement class for toddlers.
- ♥ Walk like a penguin or imitate other animals.

- ♥ Play on a playground or in the backyard, with supervision.
- ♥ Enjoy imaginative play (playing with toy cars, making play figures talk, caring for a doll).
- ♥ Build with blocks.

## Toddlers Naturally Enjoy Doing What is Healthiest for Them: Being as Active as Possible!

Experts say that kids between 12 - 36 months old should get at least 30 minutes of structured physical activity (adult-led) and at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity (free play) every day. Limiting TV time is another good way to keep kids physically active.

Even educational programs aren't as enriching as real-life activities, such as figuring out how a toy works, playing games, or singing songs together.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, media use should be discouraged for children under 18 months, except for video chatting (Skype or FaceTime).

Parents of children 18 - 24 months who want to introduce digital media should choose high-quality programming and watch it together.

For children 2 - 5 years, media use should be limited to one hour a day to ensure they have enough time to engage in other activities.

<http://kidshealth.org>



## Here's a Quick List for an Autumn Scavenger Hunt

Something alive  
Leaf with jagged edges  
Interesting weed  
Dry leaf  
Leaf with smooth edges  
Three acorns  
Seed from a tree  
Twig  
Pinecone  
Handful of grass  
Branch with leaves on it

Red leaf  
Yellow leaf  
Green leaf  
Smooth stone  
Three little pebbles  
Wild berries  
Leaf bud  
Piece of bark  
Bit of moss

<http://innerchildfun.com>



# What is Social & Emotional Development?

As parents, we all want our children to be healthy and happy. It is easier to tell if your child is developing physically, but do you know if your child is developing the appropriate social and emotional skills? Supporting their emotional and social development is just as important as supporting their physical development. So, what is social and emotional development?

- Social and emotional development is a child's ability to understand the feelings of others, control his or her own feelings and behaviors, get along with other children, and build relationships with adults.
- In order for children to develop the basic skills they need such as cooperation, following directions, demonstrating self-control and paying attention, they must have social-emotional skills.

## Why is it important for children to have positive social and emotional skills?

- Having positive social and emotional skills is important throughout life and can have an impact on how they function at home, school and in the community.
- When young children are faced with social, emotional or behavioral challenges it can impact their chances for school success and healthy relationships.
- A child's positive relationship with trusting and caring adults is the key to successful emotional and social development.



## What can I do to support my child's positive social and emotional development?

- Be using the behavior you want your child to use
- Be affectionate with your child and others
- Be considerate and respect their feelings, wants and needs
- Be interested in their daily activities
- Let your child know you are proud of their accomplishments
- Encouragement and support them when it gets stressful



Edited from —Missouri Early Childhood Mental Health Project. *What is social emotional development.*  
Retrieved from <http://dmh.mo.gov/healthykids/parents/social-emotional-development.html>.



## Pick-Your-Own Pumpkin Patches

**Orr's Farm Market, Martinsburg** - Open from mid-September to Halloween.

Hayride, small corn maze, pumpkin picking. 304-263-1168

**Ridgefield Farm and Orchard, Harpers Ferry** - Hayride, corn maze and pumpkin picking. 304-876-3647

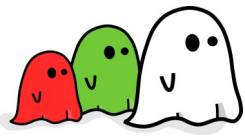
**Brookedale Farms, Keyser** - Hayride, corn maze, early September to the end of October. 304-298-3760

**Town & Country Nursery, Kearneysville** - Tractor rides, corn and hay mazes, feed a goat! 304-725-1252

**Old McDonald's Pumpkin Patch & Corn Maze, Inwood** - Hayride, corn maze, Kiddie Korn Kastle 304-839-2330



Visit [www.wvagriculture.org](http://www.wvagriculture.org) for more information!



# Tricks for Making Halloween a Treat for Kids with Sensory Disorders



For most of us, Halloween means chilly weather, leaves crunching under our feet and a good excuse to dress up and celebrate. However, for children who have any kind of sensory disorder, Halloween can mean distress, anxiety and meltdowns.

Many of the little details that define Halloween can be a major stressor for kids with sensory disorders. Flashing strobe lights, itchy costumes, unfamiliar homes and people, fog machines or even loud spooky music and sounds.

Halloween does not have to be all stress and no fun. After all, walking around is a great way to tame stress brought on by the sensory overload. So whether you have a Sensory Sensitive child or not, here are some tricks to keeping the treats a part of Halloween.



## Simplify Costumes

Costumes are a huge consideration when it comes to keeping Sensory Kids comfortable and calm on Halloween. Many pre-made costumes are made with itchy

fabrics and may have uneven seams creating all around discomfort. For some kids, it's enough to add some soft (and preferably warm) clothing underneath. For others, it may help to devise costumes out of clothes or fabrics you know they are already comfortable with. Sometimes costumes with a little weight behind them can also help ground your sensory child and help them feel secure (think in terms of a weighted blanket). Consider avoiding things like make up, face paint and masks.

## Familiarize Yourself

Stick to routes and houses your child is familiar with. Walk or drive the route ahead of time so they know what to expect. Also, familiarize children with their costume ahead of time. If they've had a chance to wear it for a while, they can point out any adjustments that need to be made ahead of time.

## Set Guidelines

As with setting the route, it's good to plan with your child when they want to start and stop celebrating and to determine behavior expectations. Knowing what to expect is huge for helping children avoid meltdowns. When setting time guidelines, it's good to give them a way to keep track of the time or give them substantial warnings before its time to wrap things up.

## Follow Their Cues

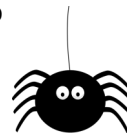
Keep in mind that parents should watch for their children's cues. Sometimes they will let you know they've had enough, but many times children are not going to realize they have exceeded their limits until a tantrum or meltdown is eminent. Devise a system for either of you to let the other know that it's time to wrap things up.



## Make New Traditions

If your child is still overwhelmed by the idea of Halloween parties or trick-or-treating, or the sugar overload is too much, you can keep the holiday fun by starting your own traditions. Halloween shows or book marathons with Halloween themed healthy snacks are activities your child can look forward to.

Create Halloween themed sensory toys. Plan a Halloween scavenger hunt. Carving pumpkins and getting a feel for their guts and seeds may be fun. Roast the seeds for a healthy, crunchy snack.



<http://ilslearningcorner.com>







## West Virginia Birth to Three Graduates Gavin & Declan: the Keys to Speech Found

Just after his second birthday, Rikki Twyford suspected that her oldest son, Gavin, was not speaking like he should be, so she asked a neighbor about West Virginia Birth to Three when she saw an ongoing service coordinator leaving the house. Rikki then referred her son, and he did indeed have speech delay of 40% which qualified for ongoing services.

Rikki said Gavin, now 7, worked with a Birth to Three speech therapist for less than a year. They worked with Birth to Three to transition to the school system when Gavin turned three. Rikki said that he still has an Individual Education Program (IEP), but now it's for the gifted program. Gavin is now a second-grader and reads at nearly a 6th grade level. Gavin also enjoys reading to his little brother, Declan.

When Rikki's youngest son, Declan, now 2, showed a communication issue, she called Birth to Three again. Declan had a different speech therapist than his older brother, and Rikki said both speech therapists "just triggered something" in the boys. "They were phenomenal," she said at finding the key to their communication and speaking skills. Rikki said she sensed "there isn't anyone who isn't wonderful," with the Birth to Three program.

The practitioners included the middle son, Owen, now 6, when they came to the house to work with Declan. "They played games and they didn't know they were learning." Rikki said she and her husband were given the tools they needed to work with their sons when the speech therapists were not there as well as "tons of ideas" for activities.

For example, to aid in communication, Rikki took pictures of the children's own things: Declan's bed, his bear, which helped him explain what it was that he wanted to say. His own bed, not a bed in a book.

With Gavin, Rikki said the key to his success was his confidence. With Declan, it felt like they found the key that allowed him to say, "Okay, I'll talk now."

She says both Birth to Three teams helped unlock a tremendous vocabulary in her sons. She said she was surprised by the breadth of the initial evaluation and the depth of the work with her son and with the school as he transitioned out of Birth to Three.

Rikki encourages parents to "just jump in with both feet" if they have a concern about their child's development. She adds, "There's no harm in having your child evaluated, and no shame or guilt in getting your child everything they need."



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Region 8 Regional Administrative Unit  
109 South College Street  
Martinsburg, WV 25401

WV Birth to Three is administered by the Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health in cooperation with the Early Intervention Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC).