



Harford County Infants & Toddlers Family Resource Newsletter ~ October 2020

Join us for Virtual Get Togethers

Infants & Toddlers will be hosting a monthly virtual meeting for parents. This is a time to connect with other families, learn about resources, support one another, gain some new tips and, most of all, to relax.

We will meet the third Tuesday of each month at 7 PM. Meetings will be no longer than 40 minutes. And the best part, you can join us from the comfort of your own home with your feet propped up.

Our first Virtual Get Together will be Tuesday, October 20th. The theme will be *Playing with Pasta...and Other Fun & Simple Things to do With Your Child*. We'll share some easy activities to do inside now that the weather is getting cooler, then open up for discussion. If you would like to join us, please send an email to Carie.Sadowski@hcps.org. You will receive a reminder message with a link to the meeting the day prior.

We hope you can join us!



MSDE Parent Survey

Every fall, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) sends out a survey to parents and caregivers who have children receiving special education services through the Infants & Toddlers program. Due to restrictions from COVID, parents are encouraged to complete the form virtually. To access the survey, visit <https://mdparentsurvey.com/>. You do not need a code to take the survey.

Why is the survey important? We want feedback from your experiences with the Infants & Toddlers program this past year. We value your input and use it to build on our strengths and refine our practices. There are 26 questions with responses ranging from *very strongly agree* to *very strongly disagree*. Survey responses are anonymous.

MSDE collects the responses, then shares the feedback with the local school system so we can see how we're doing.

Surveys must be completed by Friday, November 13th.

Take the Survey
Please enter the 7-digit code printed on the bottom right of your paper survey

[Take the Survey](#)

Don't know your Survey Code?
[Take Survey Without Code](#)

Need additional assistance?
Contact the help desk at
800-287-1581 or
mdparentsurvey@icfi.com

Welcome to the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services Family Survey for the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program (MITP). Family members of infants and toddlers who were receiving early intervention services through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) as of June 30, 2020, are invited to complete the survey. Your responses will help guide efforts to improve services and results for Maryland's children and families.

You may skip any item that you feel does not apply to your family.

Make Your Voice Heard!

- ▶ Please take 5 minutes to complete the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services Family Survey.
- ▶ Please complete this Survey in one sitting. If you leave this page before submitting the Survey, you will have to start over.
- ▶ Remember the Survey must be completed by **November 13, 2020**.

<https://mdparentsurvey.com/>

Social Stories

My daughter was quite the love bug when younger, which wasn't so great when she started pre-school. Coming up with strategies, her teacher suggested a social story. I had never heard of social stories, but soon became very familiar with them.

Social Stories use words and pictures to teach behaviors and social interactions. The social story my daughter's teacher used talked about the importance of keeping hands to self. There are also stories about washing hands, sharing toys, kind hands (no hitting), personal space, etc. But they are not limited to encouraging positive behaviors. Stories are especially useful in preparing a child for an upcoming event, like trick-or-treating or a new baby in the family. Maybe it's an upcoming doctor's appointment or blood draw at the lab. Social stories can tell and show your child what to expect.

A quick online search will result in programs and templates for making your own social story. However, you can easily make your own from scratch. I make ours using Microsoft Word, using simple pictures and easy language. By creating your own, you can make stories very specific to your child. For example, if it's for a medical appointment, you can include the doctor's photo and name.



Maybe you have an upcoming trip by plane. A social story could include pictures of suitcases, the airport, security, exteriors and interiors of planes, etc. You can find these on a quick Google search. Talk about where you're going, who is traveling in your group, and what will happen at the airport and on the plane. Then end with the reward of arriving at your destination. Go over the story several times before the trip and consider taking it with you.

Want to explore a few social stories? There are ready-made stories online to explore and you can even download and print for your own use. Here are just a few:

I CAN WEAR A MASK



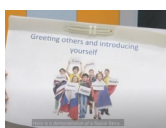
Pathfinders for Autism (<https://pathfindersforautism.org/coronavirus-social-stories/>) has a nice selection of social stories and story books about COVID, including wearing a mask and handwashing.

My Hands

a social story about using my hands with kindness and respect



Teachers Pay Teachers (<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/>) - If you haven't used Teachers Pay Teachers before, you will need to create an account. There are activities on there for a fee, but you can limit searches for free items.



If you would like to see a social story in action, check out this video on YouTube from the Autism Recovery Network. Christine, a behavioral therapist, uses a story about greeting others with an older student. The video is called "Autism Help - How to Write Social Stories for Kids" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INjVc-xTWdo>

Social Stores are another tool to put in your toolbox and can be helpful for any child.



Fall Happenings

There's lots to do this time of year. Check out these fall happenings for families!

Brads Produce (Churchville) offers free hayrides on the weekends to a u-pick pumpkin patch. In order to limit the number of people on a wagon, tickets are required. However, you can walk to the pumpkin patch without needing a ticket. <https://bradsfarmmarket.com/>

Harman's Farm Market (Churchville) has free hayrides to their pumpkin patch on the weekends. <https://www.facebook.com/harmansfarm>

Lohr's Orchard (Churchville) will be open until Halloween for apple picking. During the week, they suggest bringing a wagon to walk through the orchard. Wagon rides are available on the weekends, but space is limited. <https://www.facebook.com/Lohrs-Orchard-106552326091824/>

Shaw Orchards (White Hall) has wagon rides on the weekend to the pumpkin patch and apple orchards. <http://www.shaworchards.com/>

We Rock the Spectrum (Forest Hill) is offering a free, interactive storytime on Monday mornings in October. Registration is required. Then they're capping off the month with a Rockin' Pumpkin Party on Oct 31st. Fee is \$20. For info and registration, call 410-891-4600.

Harford County 4-H Camp and Deer Creek Overlook (Street) is planning a Halloween and Family Bingo on Oct 24th to benefit the camp. Tickets are available for the entire event or just the Trick or Treating portion (\$5/per person). <https://www.facebook.com/deercreek.overlook/>

The Playroom (Forest Hill) is hosting a Halloween Party on Oct 30th. Fee is \$35. For info and registration, call 443-640-6707.

These activities are provided for information sharing and are not specifically endorsed by Infants & Toddlers.

If you have any questions about the newsletter (or anything else!),
please contact Carie at Carie.Sadowski@hcps.org.