

Harford County Infants & Toddlers Family Resource Newsletter ~ September 2020

New School Year, New Experiences

What does this year look like with Infants & Toddlers? In the spring, as a result of the COVID pandemic, providers started meeting with families virtually. They will continue doing so into the near future.

Playgroups, along with all in-person activities, have been cancelled until school buildings can open for all students safely. Does that mean we can't connect and learn from each other? Certainly not. We're just going to do it in a different way.

Virtual activities are being planned for the upcoming months. While I am disappointed we won't be sitting next to each other, I'm trying to look on the bright side. Virtual gatherings help solve problems of location and childcare; you can join a virtual event without leaving your house or finding a babysitter. We're in the process of selecting topics for our gatherings. If you have a topic idea, or if there is something you'd like to learn more about, email your suggestion to Carie at Carie.Sadowski@hcps.org.

HCPS Resource & Virtual Calming Room

Have you checked out the Virtual Calming Room on Harford County Public School's webpage? It's for anyone to use, including students, families and staff. Along with strategies, resources, and stress relievers, they also have links for calming music, live animal cams, yoga, and satisfying videos.

Under Community Resources, there's a great link to United Way and their 2-1-1 service for finding direct resources. Looking for a food pantry? Maybe job assistance? You can search for support within your zip code.

I explored all the features of the calming room and there are some I've bookmarked for future visits. The live animal cam of the jellyfish at the Monterey Bay Aquarium was quite relaxing. And, oddly enough, I became fascinated by a video of hydraulic press moments under the satisfying videos tab. Yes, hydraulic press moments. To access the site and see what features you enjoy, visit <https://www.hcps.org/virtual-calming-room/Home.html>.

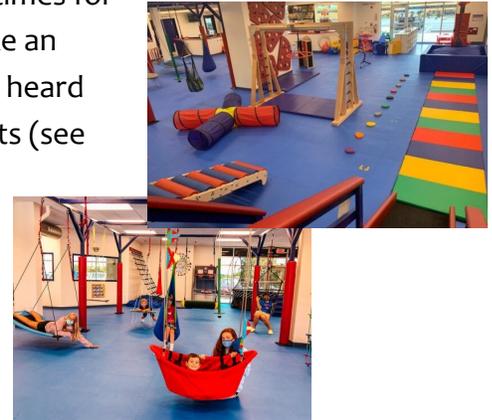
***The average mom gets
only 17 minutes of free
time to herself each day.***

*Erin Leyba, LCSW, PhD
Psychology Today*

Community Spotlight... We Rock the Spectrum

A lot of businesses temporarily closed during the pandemic, however one special business opened in Forest Hill. *We Rock the Spectrum* is a sensory gym that provides a fun environment for kids by providing support and amazing sensory gym equipment. They encourage exploration and embrace the motto “finally a place where you never have to say I’m sorry.” Children of all ages and abilities can play on an indoor zip line, trampoline, basketball hoop, and more. They offer times for private play dates, limited open play sessions, and special events like an upcoming Parents’ Night Out. Fees are required, however we have heard from several families that they have used LISS funding to cover costs (see page 3 of this newsletter about LISS).

To learn more about what *We Rock the Spectrum* offers, visit their website, <https://www.werockthespectrumforesthill.com/>, or Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/WRTSForestHill/>.



Harford County SECAC - Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee

Did you know the SECAC Board is made up of parents, just like you? The newly elected board for this year is led by Jeanne Erdley, Angelique McKoy and Kaylee Cooper. At the kickoff session this month, they focused on advocating for your child. Although it was geared toward those in school, most of the tips shared would apply to many areas of life, including Infants & Toddlers, medical appointments and within the community. Some of my personal takeaways were:

- Strive for open communication
- Communicate the good, not just the bad
- Base concerns on fact, not emotion

If you are interested in SECAC and would like to learn more about upcoming meetings, check out their Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1207814129409560>.

Developmental delays
are commas, not periods

LISS Update

LISS, which stands for Low Intensity Support Services, has made some changes as a result of COVID. They've put the Random Selection Application online!! This is a big change and will make the application process so much easier.

To access this online application, visit the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration website, <https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/liss.aspx> and look for the application link half-way down the page. Upon completion, you will receive a confirmation of your submission and a "Thank You" reply.

If you do not have computer access or the ability to access this online platform, please contact Penn-Mar Human Service at 410-343-1069 to request a hard copy of the Random Selection Application.

Never heard of LISS? Here's a quick run-down: It's state funding for individuals with disabilities, providing up to \$2,000 for services or items to improve quality of life. Recipients are chosen by a lottery and not based on financial need. If selected, an applicant must show proof of disability, proof of Maryland residency, and proof of identity. Funds can be used for respite care, child care, therapeutic services, vehicle modifications, adaptive equipment, specialized equipment, assistive technology, and much more.

Note: Applications are being accepted for Round 2 of funding until November 23, 2020.



**Penn-Mar
Human Services**
Transforming Life Into Living

Library Story Time... ..and FREE printing!



Virtual Story Time? Yes! Harford County Public Library has been sharing Story Time videos on their YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/user/hcplonline>. Videos are less than 10 minutes and include a book, fun facts and a song. There are a variety of themes to choose from—colors, cats, jumping and boats, just to name a few—and there are more to come.

Another cool feature of the library during this time is printing. Did you know the Library is offering contactless printing? You can print up to 20 black and white copies per day for FREE! For more information and instructions, visit <https://www.hcplonline.org/contactlessprinting.php>.

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

