

# Center for Early Childhood Education

## Newsletter

Our Mission: To help all children in Howard County to be successful when they enter school.

Issue 64, April 1, 2009

### Is Playing A Health Issue?

Are your children growing up without the chance to play? Do your children spend more time watching TV, using electronic hand-held games, or playing games on the computer than actually moving around either in the house or outside? Spontaneous play with other children, such as throwing a ball back and forth or make-believe play, help develop many skills that will be used later in school and in life. Cooperation is developed when your child plays ball with another person. Collaboration is developed when your child builds a fort out of boxes and boards with another person. Critical thinking and confidence are developed when your child has to figure out how to throw a ball and knock down as many milk bottle bowling pins as possible.



In the book, *To Play or Not to Play; Is it Really a Question?*, contributor Doris Bergen writes, "At all ages, the developing brain is active, and the active brain is the developing brain." Because of this theory, it is believed that play is likely to enhance brain development. We know that play does help children to be physically and mentally active, to have control and choices, and to solve problems.

For children who are in their first months, play is very simple. Place a soft blanket on the floor or middle of your bed, lay your baby on his/her stomach, and watch the baby stretch out, lift his/her head, and wave his/her hands. In a few months, your child will be able to crawl. Give your child plenty of space on the floor to "take off." The space needs to be free of any objects the child could put in his/her mouth, or anything that could be pulled over onto your child. A book by Dr. Roni C. Leiderman and Dr. Wendy Masi, *Play and Learn*, is an excellent resource for 1001 fun activities you can do with your children from newborn to 5-plus years. If you'd like to take a look at this book, just stop in at the Center and we'll be glad to share it with you. You might also check with the library to see if they have this or similar books.



The last newsletter stressed literacy activities at an early age. A play environment that is filled with print-rich props and materials will encourage children to explore the written language. Some examples include: A play kitchen that includes copies of recipes, a play restaurant that includes menus, a play "garage" that includes prices to fix a car, or a play store that includes books and magazines for sale. Although your child cannot read the materials, you can explain what something is (a menu) and read what is printed to your child, i.e. hamburger, french fries, etc. The next time you go to the grocery store, bring home one of the paper lists of groceries and prices, or any other printed materials you find that your child might use in make-believe play.

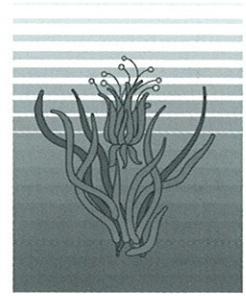
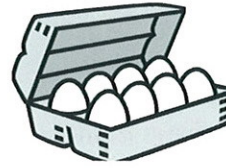
### Little Learners Child Care

Did you know that the Little Learners Child Care program on the IU Kokomo campus is open the public? The program serves toddlers (ages 1-2) and preschool children (ages 3-6). Call (765) 455-9306 or e-mail [childcare@iuk.edu](mailto:childcare@iuk.edu) for more information.



# Make a Bean Garden

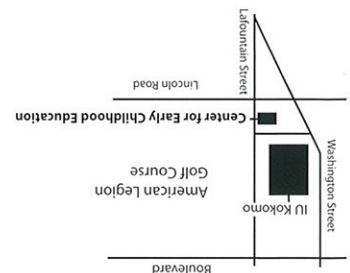
Start a bean garden in your home that you can transplant when the weather gets nicer. Take an old egg carton and poke a small hole in the bottom of each section, then fill with soil. Plant two bean seeds in each cup. Water the soil and put the cups in a small, sunlit place. Have your child check for dry soil every few days, and help your child water the plants as needed. When you see the first sprouts pop up, help your child measure the height and keep a record on the lid of the egg carton.



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