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# Network News

*e-Newsletter of the VA Infant & Toddler Specialist Network*

VIRGINIA

**INFANT & TODDLER SPECIALIST**

**N E T W O R K**

“Achieving Excellence in Early Care”

**December 2014-January-February 2015**

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## **Baby, It's Cold Outside!**

### ***Indoor Infant and Toddler Activities for Winter***

As winter gets closer, it is time to think of activities to keep infants and toddlers occupied during the cold months. It is important to have great times outdoors, when appropriate, and to make sure that the children's time indoors is well spent. Remember that daily physical activity is an important part of

healthy development for infants and toddlers.

### Infant Activities

Infants should be given opportunities to explore their environments and not have their movement restricted for long periods of time. They should also develop movement skills and engage in large muscle activities through daily interaction with caregivers.

Encourage infants to :

- Grasp and reach for toys and objects
- Roll
- Sit up
- Crawl
- Stand/walk (assisted)
- Play/move on tummy

Activities for infants include:

- Letting infants have time in front of a mirror. They won't be able to keep their eyes off themselves and may try to engage with the child in the mirror
- Singing songs and rhymes that point out body parts while looking in the mirror
- Laying an infant on his/her back and putting your hands under the child's feet and moving the legs up and down, as if pedaling a bicycle. Smile and talk while doing this
- Getting down on your hands and knees beside the infant and crawling a little ahead of the child and calling for him/her to follow. Laugh and talk a lot while you are racing.



### Toddler Activities

Toddlers should engage in at least 90 minutes of physical activity daily and not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except when sleeping. Help toddlers to develop movement skills, and allow them to access indoor and outdoor areas that meet or exceed recommended safety standards for engaging

large muscle activities.

Activities for toddlers include:

- Encouraging active play where children are moving
- Providing toys that can be pushed or pulled
- Providing objects that can be used to climb over, under, or through
- Leading rhymes and songs that encourage children to move
- Blowing bubbles for children to reach for or chase around
- Acting like animals as songs such as "Old MacDonald" are sung
- Having a parade inside or outside using homemade instruments
- Creating an obstacle course using some of these ideas:
  - pillows to roll across
  - blocks to step on and over
  - hoops to jump in and out of
  - lines to run, walk, or crawl on
- Encouraging children to participate in dramatic play. Seasonal items can be included as options
- Providing mats for tumbling
- Providing developmentally appropriate outdoor spaces
- Using natural spaces for exploring
- Encouraging children to dance to any type of music. Add scarves or ribbons to encourage creativity
- Gently rolling a ball back and forth. Gradually move back as the ability level increases
- Inventing silly names for simple exercises and then doing them together
- Having a scavenger hunt where children search for items of a certain color to help them learn their colors
- Creating targets on the floor and having toddlers attempt to jump on them

Some of these seasonal activities can be used with infants and toddlers during the winter weather:

- Read stories about winter and act out the parts of the story together
- Touch different materials on the children's hands that represent various animals and discuss how it feels, what the animals look like, and the noises they make
- Talk about cold weather clothes such as how they feel, how to put them on and take them off. Have the children help as much as possible such as taking off their hats
- Take advantage of the different weather days as the

seasons change by taking time to experience the windy, chilly, and sunny days of winter outside

*Adapted from: Active Solutions Age Appropriate Activities for Infants and Toddlers (www.education.gov.sk.ca/ELCC/physical-activity), Winter activities for your baby and toddler (http://www.babysense.com/happy-days/special-occasions/winter-activities-for-your-baby-and-toddler), Cryer, D., Harms, T, & Bourland, B. (1987). Active Learning for Ones. Parsippany, NJ: Dale Seymour Publications. Cryer, D., Harms, T, & Bourland, B. (1987). Active Learning for Infants. Parsippany, NJ: Dale Seymour Publications.*

## RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT ON: Playing Outside in Winter

Is it safe to play outdoors in winter? Yes! Actually, outdoor play is healthy even in winter but precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of the children. This resource describes important steps child care providers should take to safely enjoy the cold, winter weather.

[Click here to go to "Is It Safe to Play Outdoors in Winter?"](#)

## Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities:

Save the date for  
**Celebrating Active Babies & Tot 2015**

March 28, 2015	Chesapeake
April 18, 2015	Herndon
May 2, 2015	Roanoke
May 16, 2015	Richmond

These valuable professional development institutes

will focus on how movement and physical activity impact the overall health, development, and well-being of infants and toddlers.

***More information and registration will be available in January 2015 at [www.va-itsnetwork.org](http://www.va-itsnetwork.org)***

## WOW (Working on Wonderful)

Congratulations to the following programs that have completed Level 1 services with the VA ITSN during the current year, July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015:

**Deba Ehsan**

*Northern Region*

**Angelica Olea**

*Northern Region*

**Minnieland at Compton Village**

*Northern Region*



### **DID YOU KNOW . . .**

**1-2-3 READ! spring training dates and locations have been announced!  
Register now before these classes fill up!**

January 24 and 31, 2015	Williamsburg
January 30 and 31, 2015	Sterling
February 21 and 28, 2015	Harrisonburg
February 21 and 28, 2015	Danville

Visit [www.va-itsnetwork.org](http://www.va-itsnetwork.org) to register

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