

# Network News

e-Newsletter of the  
VA Infant & Toddler Specialist Network

VIRGINIA  
INFANT & TODDLER SPECIALIST

NETWORK

"Achieving Excellence in Early Care"

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## Let's Talk, Read, and Sing About STEM

Did you know that you can talk, read, and sing about **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)** with infants and toddlers? Young children are naturally curious about the world around them and, as a child care provider, you can help them learn STEM concepts and words simply by talking about your discoveries together.

These moments can happen anytime and anywhere, through exploration, play, and building curiosity about the natural world and the way things work. You are probably already teaching the infants and toddlers in your care early STEM skills through your daily interactions and activities: something as simple as peek-a-boo with your infant or toddler can teach the concept of spatial awareness. Infants and toddlers also develop STEM skills through activities such as manipulating objects, crawling and walking around their environments, holding and carrying toys and other objects, and block play.

STEM learning is important for everyone and the real-life skills that are developed when learning STEM help make better problem-solvers and learners.

### Let's Talk STEM Tips

**Let's discover the world!**

Below are examples of activities that can be incorporated into the care routine provided to infants and toddlers

Talk throughout the day about what you see and what the children are looking at: "Wow, I

love that **big** red truck you are playing with! How many wheels does it have? **1, 2, 3, 4** wheels. Four wheels **all together**."

### Use STEM language in everyday routines.

During snack time, encourage children to lift the **heavy** apple and the **light** napkin. Show children a **whole** sandwich being cut into **half**.

### Ask open-ended questions.

These are questions that encourage children to respond with more than a "yes" or "no" answer. Ask children to describe objects and toys around them. Encourage them to compare the **size, shape, color, texture, smell, and weight** of different objects.

### Use books.

During reading time, use STEM language, too. **Count** objects on a page out loud for infants, or ask toddlers if they can find a **square** or a **triangle**.



For more ideas, click below for STEM tip sheets in both English and Spanish for infant and toddler teachers and providers as well as for families with young children.

### Tips for Infant & Toddler Teachers and Providers

[Click here for English version](#)

[Click here for Spanish version](#)

### Tips for Families with Young Children

[Click here for English version](#)

[Click here for Spanish version](#)

*Adapted from: Let's Talk, Read and Sing About STEM ([http://toosmall.org/blog/lets-talk-read-and-sing-about-stem#skip\\_intro](http://toosmall.org/blog/lets-talk-read-and-sing-about-stem#skip_intro) )*

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## RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT ON: Virginia Shared Service Network

Save time, save money, and improve quality!



Join Today!

HOME COST SAVINGS CLASSROOM PROGRAM ADMIN REGULATIONS HR MARKETING TRAINING LIBRARY COMMUNITY

The Virginia Shared Services Network is an easy-to-use website offering many tools and services to help child care centers, family child care homes and after school programs manage their programs more cost-effectively and efficiently. The website features **exclusive discounts** on items from office supplies to toys to food and beverage products. The site also contains resources related to program administration, human resources, marketing, a library of early childhood reference materials, licensing regulations and classroom resources.

We call it “child care in a box” because it contains so many resources you can download and customize for your program needs. For example, the site includes sample policies, procedures, handbooks (for parents and employees), forms, job descriptions, and much more!

**Our Goal:** To provide support to child care centers and family child care providers to help strengthen the quality of care for all children.

Child Care Aware of Virginia chose this innovative approach because it offers a one-stop shop for child care providers to access group discounts for common services and products that individual programs alone could not access.

**Our Plan:** Child Care Aware of Virginia is looking for programs to participate in the pilot phase of this project. **Access to the Virginia Shared Services Network is currently FREE while we evaluate its effectiveness and seek comment on ways to improve the website. We are in the process of working on an upgraded version which will provide many more services to make your business run more effectively!!**

Get started today, go to [www.vasharednetwork.org](http://www.vasharednetwork.org) and fill out the online form to request access. Then your username and password will be emailed to you. For questions, please contact Jodi Roberts at [TheTeam@VASharedNetwork.org](mailto:TheTeam@VASharedNetwork.org)

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## Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities:

[Resources for Early Learning](#) is a site that provides exciting, engaging media-rich learning opportunities for educators, parents, and caregivers of children.

[Click here](#) for more information on how to nurture the roots of language, literacy, and STEM in infants and toddlers by building strong, caring relationships and offering stimulating learning opportunities.

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DID YOU KNOW . . .

. . . that you can receive on-site training and technical assistance services which include individualized consultation, targeted training, classroom-focused mentoring, and feedback by participating as a Level 1 program with the **Virginia Infant and Toddler Specialist Network (VA ITSN)**? You will receive resources and materials related to increasing the quality of care provided to infants and toddlers.

[Click here](#) to request on-site services from one of our infant and toddler specialists!

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## Working on Wonderful (WOW)

Congratulations to the following programs that have recently completed Level 1 services with the VA ITSN!

**123abc Little Learners Academy**

North Central

**Amberly Child Care**

Eastern

**Bright Beginnings Childcare Center**

North Central

**Carmen Falcon**

Northern

**Evelyn Santiago**

North Central

**F. A. Z. Creative Education Center**

Northern

**First Baptist Church**

Piedmont Southside

**Harmony Amnathvong**

Northern

**Horizon Child Development Center**

Northern

**Joe Silver**

Northern

**Kenya Rogers**

Eastern

**Kindercare Springfield**

Northern

**Kindercare at Ashburn Village**

Northern

**Learn N' Play Preschool**

North Central

**Lucinda Mack**

Eastern

**Maria Ines Robles**

Northern

**Merit School of Manassas Park**

North Central

**Minnieland at Braemar**

North Central

**Minnieland Academy at the Castle**

North Central

**Minnieland Academy at Dominion Valley**

North Central

**Minnieland Academy at Hanover**

Central

**Minnieland Academy at Westchester**

**Commons** Central

**Miriam Ayala**

Northern

**Naz Yazdani**

Northern

**Pleasant Grove Baptist Church**

Eastern

**Rainbow Station**

Central

**Sandra Sandagorda**

Northern

**Sara Mercado**

Northern

**Sheran Oliver**

Peninsula

**STEP, Inc. Of Patrick County**

Piedmont Southside

**The Learning Experience**

North Central

**VCU Health Systems Family Care Center**

Central

# *Working on Wonderful* WOW

We are striving to achieve excellence in  
early care for infants and toddlers!

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*For more information contact Amy Stutt, VA ITSN Statewide Director at (757)566-3300.*