



Weekly Newsletter #3

This e-newsletter has been created to try and help you and your family navigate this time of uncertainty both personally and academically. We will provide up-to-date resources and local events in this weekly newsletter. It will be sent out every Monday morning to help families and students across the state of Illinois.

April 6, 2020

Easterseals Joliet



Tips to Encourage Health and Wellness During Social Distancing

STAY ACTIVE

Whether you're more comfortable exercising from home or going outdoors - stay active.
Meet daily recommended levels of physical activity -- 30 min for adults & 60 min for children

GOOD NUTRITION IS IMPORTANT

A healthy diet can help you reach and maintain a healthy weight, reduce risk of certain chronic diseases, certain types of cancer and diabetes, and promote overall health and wellbeing.
Share healthy recipes with everyone using common foods in your home

SOCIAL INTERACTION IS KEY

Engage socially, whether in-person (following CDC recommendations) or other communications.
Draw a picture or write a note and send to a local nursing home

SLEEP IS CRITICAL TO YOUR BODY'S IMMUNE SYSTEM

Getting 7-8 hours of sleep keeps your immune system healthy, and ready to fight off viruses.
Use this time to focus on developing a healthy sleep routine

TAKE THE TIME FOR MINDFULNESS & SELF-CARE

The COVID-19 outbreak is stressful.
Self-care looks different for everyone -- spend time outdoors, connect with family, or read a book

Issue #3: April 6th - April 10th, 2020

Inside this Issue:

- **First Section: Community Resources**
 - **Free Grab and Go Lunches**

- Food Pantries
- Financial Resources
- Second Section: Educational Resources
 - Free WiFi
 - Kids + Parents Cooking Class with Delish
 - Storyline
- Third Section: Weekly Activity Schedules
 - Behavioral Health and Social Wellness
 - Occupational Therapy & Physical Therapy
 - Physical Therapy- Gross Motor Ideas
 - Speech Language Therapy
 - Feeding Therapy
- Contact Us

Community Resources: Food

Free Grab-and-Go School District Lunches

Morris School District 54

They are providing a sack lunch for all students in Morris grades K-12.

To receive a lunch fill out this [form](#) and submit online by 10 am the day of pick up.

- If you cannot fill out the form call the office at (815) 942-0056 to place your order.

Lunch pick up times on Monday April 6th and Tuesday April 7th:

- 11:00 am-12:00 pm at Morris Grade School (Door 24)
54 White Oak Dr. Morris, IL 60450

Check their [Facebook](#) for Grab and Go Lunch Sign-Up forms for the following weeks.

Contact your child's school district as many others are offering a similar service.

Food Pantries

[Northern Illinois Foodbank](#) will be holding 3 mobile food pantries open to the public this week in Will County:

4/6/2020 from 4:00 - 5:30 pm at New Hope Baptist Church
509 E. Briarcliff Road, Bolingbrook, IL 60440

4/7/2020 from 3:00 - 4:30 pm at Faith Movers Church
425 W Exchange St. University Park, IL 60484

4/8/2020 from 5:00 - 6:30 pm at St. Mary Immaculate Parish
15629 S. Rte 59, Plainfield, IL 60544

They will be holding one food pantry in Grundy County:

4/6/2020 from 5:00 - 6:30 pm at The Village Christian Church
8965 South Bell Rd., Minooka, IL 60410

Soul Food Pantry is a ministry of Judson Church with the mission to provide free food for those in Joliet (and the surrounding area) who are in need.

- They provide free food for the day (or more) to each family that participates on the first and third Mondays of each month:
 - 4/6/2020 from 4:30 to 6:30 pm at Judson Church
2800 Black Road Joliet, IL 60435

Financial Resources

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act:

The federal government will soon be issuing stimulus payments to qualifying households as part of the CARES Act.

Check [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov) for the latest information.

The distribution of payments will begin in the next three weeks and will be distributed automatically, with no action required for most people.

They will use your most recent tax return filing (either 2018 or 2019) to determine eligibility.

This [Stimulus Check Calculator](#) can be used to estimate if you are eligible and how much you will receive.

Unemployment Benefits:

IDES Offices are closed to the public until further notice.

If you have any questions about Unemployment Insurance call IDES Customer Service Center at (800) 244-5631

Visit [IDES website](#) to review Illinois' new policy regarding lay offs and closures due to COVID-19 to see if you qualify.

To apply for unemployment benefits:

Visit www.ides.illinois.gov or call Tele-Serve at (312) 338-4337 Monday-Friday 5:00 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.

United Way Worldwide's [COVID-19 Community Response and Recovery Fund](#):

This fund is intended to help families and people in need access critical information and services like food, shelter, and more.

You can dial 211 or follow the [link](#) to find your local number to speak with a trained professional about local assistance at any time, 24/7/365 and available in 180 languages.

Utilities and Housing:

- All evictions in the state of Illinois are halted.
- Illinois electric, natural gas, water and wastewater utilities will not disconnect any services during the corona virus public health emergency. All late payment fees on utilities are suspended until May 1st.

Educational Resources

[Access from AT&T](#)

They are currently offering:

- **2 months of free service** for new customers who order Access by April 30th. After the 60 days it will be either \$5/mo or \$10/mo depending on the speed.
- **Expanding eligibility** based on income and to households participating in National School Lunch Program/Head Start.
- **Waiving** all home internet **data overage fees**.

Cooking Together with Delish

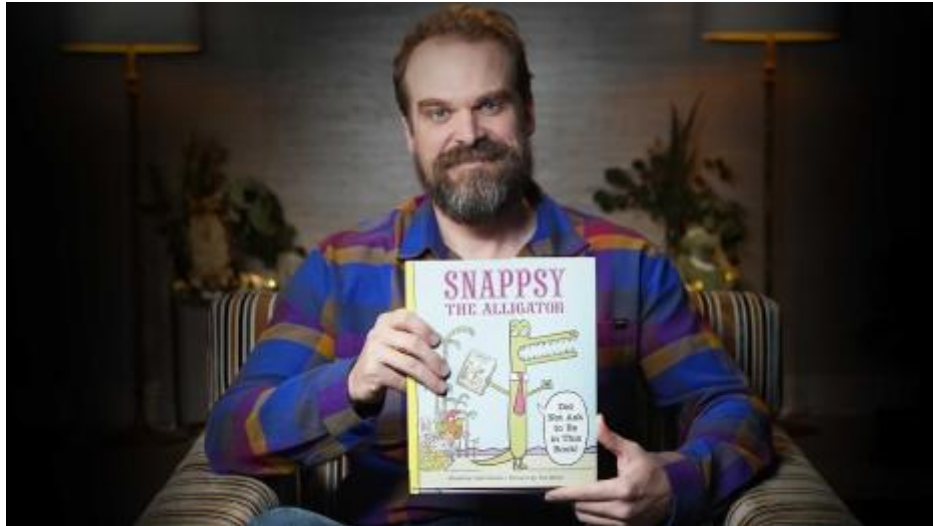
Virtual cook-along videos on Instagram Live [@delish](#) every weekday at 12 pm for parents and kids to learn recipes and cook together!

- For more ideas check out their previous recipes saved to their Instagram story highlights under "CookingTogether".

[Storyline](#)

Videos of famous celebrities reading your favorite children's stories!

- They include the suggested grade level for the book and activity guides for parents.



Weekly Activity Schedules

This next section includes a daily activity for Monday through Friday of this week. These schedules have been created by our talented and experienced team of therapists and social workers at Easterseals Joliet!

Behavioral Health & Social Wellness Activities

This week we will focus on building the character trait of being responsible...thanks to The Be Kind Project for all the resources we are using this week! *(The Be Kind People Project® (BKPP) is a public 501 (c) 3 non-profit dedicated to providing students with comprehensive youth development programming that effectively uses a positive approach to social, emotional, and academic learning.)*

Here is a short [video](#) that teaches kids a simple dance while also teaching kids about being responsible! It's only 5 minutes, but it's so much fun that your kids may want to watch it a few times to make sure they got the moves down! I encourage you to dance along with your child!



This week, choose just 1 or 2 activities to do each day of the week from the Be Kind Daily pledge. <https://thebekindpeopleproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/monday-3.30-r.pdf>

(Or you can see a sample of how I broke it down and shortened it to quickly add in your daily routine!):

Monday-

- Be Responsible: Get a head start on a healthy day by drinking a BIG glass of water.
- Be Thankful: Write (or use pictures) in a gratitude journal! How are you able to keep your mind and body healthy?
- Dance along with the video! <https://youtu.be/8v5vR-YIBPk>
Family discussion: How can you stay active?

Tuesday-

- Be Supportive: Read a book about healthy habits.
- Be Respectful: Help keep things clean! Wipe down frequently-used surfaces like doorknobs, cell phones, light switches, and remotes.
- Dance along with the video! <https://youtu.be/8v5vR-YIBPk>
Family discussion: How can you be responsible?

Wednesday-

- Create something out of common household items.
- Be Honest: Remember to wash your hands.
- Dance along with the video! <https://youtu.be/8v5vR-YIBPk>
Family discussion: What are your favorite family board games?

Thursday-

- Eat the Rainbow: Fill your plate with colorful fruit and vegetables!
- Be Helpful: Ask to clean up! Put ingredients away, clean dishes, or wipe down the counter.
- Dance along with the video! <https://youtu.be/8v5vR-YIBPk>
Family discussion: What are your favorite fruits and vegetables?

Friday-

- Stretch your brain with puzzles, riddles, or word games.
- BE ME and LOVE IT: Be kind to your mind. List 10 things you love about yourself.
- Dance along with the video! <https://youtu.be/8v5vR-YIBPk>
Family discussion: What are your favorite healthy habits?

Have fun while you focus on the character trait of being **responsible** this week!

Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy

Outside Week:

The weather is getting warmer and warmer! It's a great week to get outside and have some fun!

Monday

Occupational Therapy (OT): Grab some sidewalk chalk and head outside with an adult to draw pictures or stories on the sidewalk or driveway. Parents or guardians, if your child is working on handwriting skills, you can use chalk to help them trace or copy letters, or give them a straight line to write on. For older kids, ask your parent or guardian to tell you a 1-3 sentence story, then draw it on the sidewalk!

Physical Therapy (PT): Let's get moving! Walk and run over different surfaces (grass, wood chips, sidewalk, etc.). Play the red light green light game to add stop and go commands to play. You can even add different movements to the game- bear crawl, frog jump, crab walk, skipping, galloping, walking backwards, or walking sideways.

Tuesday

OT: Let's get messy! Grab some shaving cream, make some slime, or even take some cooked spaghetti noodles outside to play in the grass or on concrete. Make a mess while designing a sculpture, artwork, or writing a fun message on the ground.

PT: Soccer day! Practice kicking a ball to a target. Use an empty garbage can, a couple of buckets, or anything you can find for a target! Practicing blocking the ball as your partner shoots to the target. You can also practice kicking the ball back and forth with a partner. Practice kicking the ball while it is moving or stopping the ball first, then kicking.

Wednesday

OT: Paint a picture today! Tape paper to a washable wall or window and create a masterpiece. Alternatively, you can "paint with water" using a brush and bowl of water on an outside wall - with an adult's permission, of course!

PT: Take me out to the ballgame! Practice throwing a ball to a target or back and forth with a partner. Practice blocking the ball as your partner throws to the target (if using a soft or lightweight ball). You can use any type of ball- playground ball, soccer ball, tennis ball, baseball and glove, etc. Bonus: use a basketball and practice shooting baskets.

Thursday

OT: Pretend you're at the zoo: and you're the animals! Do animal walks acting like every animal you can think of: be a bear, crab, rabbit, snake, elephant, and many more!

PT: Obstacle course! Practice stepping or jumping over sticks, cracks in the sidewalk, rake/broom handle, etc. How many sticks can you line up and jump over? Try lining them up side by side or end to end. If jumping over something is a little too tricky, practice jumping up. How high can you jump?

Friday

OT: Go on an outdoor scavenger hunt! Try to find as many outdoor items as you can- you could even ask an adult if you can go on a walk. Bring a clipboard and paper to draw or write about what you find. Be on the look-out for pine cones, newly blooming flowers (let them grow and enjoy them with your eyes or nose!) leaves, birds or squirrels, cool rocks, and many more neat outdoor items.

PT: Ready, set, go! Ride a bicycle, riding toy, or scooter, gallop, skip, jump rope, or play hopscotch. The possibilities are endless!

Physical Therapy- Gross Motor Movement

Monday- “T” ball.

Using a balloon, crumpled paper ball (you can use the sale flyers or junk mail) and have your kids help you crumple the paper into a ball shape (add layers as needed) or a pair of socks rolled and folded into a ball. Set up bases (this can be done inside or outside). For a bat you can use a paper towel roll, toilet paper roll, yard stick, etc. Then “play ball”. Remember if the balloon pops to pick up all the pieces and throw them out as they can be a choking hazard!!

Tuesday- Obstacle course- couch, chairs, pillows, stepping stones, under/over coffee tables.

Anything that you can think of to crawl or climb over, under, go through, around, etc. Have kids help you set it up and create obstacles. For older kids, they can create a course that you have to complete. Ideas include: using decorative pillows or bed pillows as stepping stones that they have to stay on so their feet don’t get “wet”, setting up dining room chairs in a line for an elevated balance beam or crawling through the legs of the dining room chairs to create a tunnel, get old boxes or pots or laundry baskets and kids have to climb in and out of them, and use couch cushions as a trampoline that they can jump on. Remember to have the kids help you clean up!!

Wednesday- March in a parade.

Find something you can use for an instrument: paper towel roll or toilet paper roll can be banging sticks or make sounds through one end like a trumpet or kazoo, get a pot and wooden spoon for drums, create shakers with plastic Easter egg (or paper plate) and put something inside like rice, dried beans, coins and close and tape up to help keep it closed (staple sides of paper plate). Or you can get a ribbon or string to be color guard or drum major. Then have a parade while marching with your feet.

Thursday- Simon Says.

For babies, you can give the direction and assist them in completing the task. For younger kids, you can just give the direction of “put your hand on your...” or “do...” and leave the Simon says part out. If needed you can pair the verbal direction with you completing the action so they are able to hear and see the direction completed. For older kids provide the verbal cue “Simon says do” and other times just give the direction and if they complete the direction without the “Simon says” then they are out!! Take turns being Simon and being the follower.

Friday - Easter egg hunt.

As Easter approaches a lot of us have plastic Easter eggs. Get those out and start with Easter egg hunts. To add to the excitement you can put a variety of things inside the eggs. One idea is a small treat. Another idea is a paper with different physical activities (like do 5 sit ups/10 jumping jacks, etc.), small gestures (give mom a hug/put your books away), affirmations (you have an amazing smile/you were so helpful yesterday). BE CREATIVE!!

Speech Language Therapy Ideas for Preschool/Kindergarten

Monday, April 6th – Activity: Reading

Here is the link for Scholastic Learn at Home for Preschool/Kindergarten. They are currently offering free lessons during this time with a different theme each day. They include an animated book, a read along book, a couple games, and links to other websites related to the topic.

<https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome/grades-prek-k.html>

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Books are great to build vocabulary! The read along books on the site above highlight different words in the story. Your child can help click on the word to hear the definition. Some lessons have a game to learn the vocabulary words as well!

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Talk about the animated books after you watch the video! Talk about the pictures in the read along books. Some of the days have games to talk about what is fiction vs nonfiction or ordering events in the story. There are lots of ways to work on talking at all different levels while interacting with your child during these activities.

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

When reading the read along stories have your child look for their speech sounds! Have them practice the words that have their speech sound!

Tuesday, April 7th – Activity: Trains

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Let’s play with trains today. See if your child can follow directions if you tell the train to “go” and “stop.” See if your child can follow directions to make the train go “fast” and “slow.” See if your child can follow directions to put passengers “in” and take them “off” the train. Make the train “long” and “short.”

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Work on vocabulary related to this activity such as “go,” “stop,” and “choo-choo.” Model “in” and “out” as you take the passengers in and out of the train. If your child says one word, model back two words to them to show them how they can make an utterance longer. For example, if they say “go” model back “go train.” If your child says “stop train,” then model by “stop the train.”

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Choose a word that can be used often when playing with trains that has one of your speech sounds that you were working on in speech therapy. For example, if you were working on the “G” sound, then work

on saying “go” with this sound. If you were working on the “D” sound, then work on saying “ride.” If you were working on saying the “F” sound, then work on saying “fast.”

Wednesday, April 8th – Activity: Coloring

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Let’s color today! We can use this activity to work on vocabulary as well! You can work on colors by asking your child to find different colors. Tell your child to “go” and let him/her scribble, then say “stop” and help him/her to stop coloring. Alternate “go” and “stop” to teach this vocabulary. If you don’t have coloring books, draw some pictures on paper for your child or print some from online. You can work on following simple directions such as telling your child WHAT to color in the picture. There are several apps for coloring as well.

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Encourage your child to talk to you while coloring! Have your child name the crayon colors if they are at that level. Have them tell you to “go” and “stop” during the activity described above. Have them name the picture they are coloring.

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

See if your child can write their speech sound (or trace it if you write it)! Have them practice the sound 10 times if they can!

Thursday, April 9th – Activity: Puzzles

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Puzzles are great for learning!! Lay out puzzle pieces and tell your child which piece to get to put into the puzzle. You might need to present just two or three puzzle pieces at a time for some kids. If you don’t have puzzles, try making a matching activity by printing pictures instead. There are some apps that also have puzzles.

Expressive Language or “Talking”

See if your child can name each puzzle piece before placing it in the puzzle. If this is too easy, see if the child can get a piece you describe. For example, if you are working on an animal puzzle, ask your child questions such as “What animal says moo?” or “What animal swims?”

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Have your child say their speech sound 5 times before giving them a puzzle piece to put into the puzzle!

Friday, April 10th – Activity: Apps

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

The app “My PlayHome” has a Lite version that is free. You can have the family members act out different routine activities around the house and work on following simple directions! Ask your child to follow directions with the people such as “Feed Mommy some cereal.” or “Put the cup in the sink.” See if your child can find common objects in the house and reward correct answers by making the item move in the house. If you do not have the ability to get this app, then try this same concept around the house. Give your child a direction to follow and praise them when they follow it correctly!

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Watch the video “Nighty Night Circus.” As each animal falls asleep, model “nite-nite” then the animal name (example “Nite-nite bear” or “nite-nite bunny”) and wave to the animal. See if your child can imitate the “nite-nite” you model! Keep doing this for each animal. There is also an app available, however it does have a cost. The link below has a free YouTube video!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEvQdhEISLo>

You can do this same concept with stuffed animals or figures!!

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Using the app “My PlayHome” described above, try to find items in the house that have your speech sound! Practice saying the item 10 times in a row if you can! If that is too easy, try it in a sentence!

Speech Language Therapy Ideas for Older Children

Monday, April 6th – Activity: Reading

Here is the [link for Scholastic Learn at Home](#) for lessons preschool through 9th grade. They are currently offering free lessons during this time with a different theme each day. For younger grades they include an animated book, a read along book, a couple games, and links to other websites related to the topic. For older children they have a targeted online magazine and links to additional educational articles, websites, and videos themed around the topic. They have an option for text-to-speech and some articles have different reading level options you can choose from depending on a child’s reading level.

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Books are great to build vocabulary and language at all levels. The younger grades have targeted vocabulary highlighted within the read along books and sometimes a game related to this vocabulary. The lessons for older grades sometimes have words that you can also click on to gain the definition. You can have your child write down any words they do not know and together you can look up the definition and talk about what the words mean.

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Some of the lessons have discussion questions. If not, then just having a discussion about what the lesson was about helps support language.

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

When reading through the lesson, have your child read some paragraphs out loud while making sure they say their targeted speech sounds correctly.

Tuesday, April 7th – Activity: Pictures

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Help your child take photos of different steps of an activity. For example, make a meal and have your child take pictures of each step. You could complete a daily activity together such as laundry, but take photos of each step.

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Have your child retell you the steps by using a complete sentence to describe each photo. Help them to use transition words such as first, second, next, then, or last. Have them write out the steps after you talk about them together.

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Have your child take pictures around the house or outside of things that have their speech sound. Have them tell you about the pictures while using their correct speech sounds.

Wednesday, April 8th – Activity: Drawing

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

[Mo Willems](#) has a “Lunch Doodles” series that walks you through how to draw different characters from his books. He talks some about the characters and about how he makes his books. This activity is great for following directions as he gives step by step directions on how to draw each character. He has written directions as well.

Expressive Language or “Talking”

After you learn to draw a character, try giving the directions yourself to someone else and see if they can draw the character based on your directions!

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Practice drawing pictures of items that contain your speech sound then practice saying your speech sound in a sentence. Try writing your speech sound, then turning the letter into a pretend character!

Thursday, April 9th – Activity: Puzzles

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Crossword puzzles are great for building vocabulary! Word searches as well, as long as you talk about what the words mean before or after your child finds them. There are several websites and apps that have free puzzles like these!

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Have your child write or say a sentence using the vocabulary in a crossword or word search. Have them write the sentence or a paragraph using the words.

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

As your child completes a word search or crossword puzzle, have them use the words that contain their speech sound(s) in a sentence.

Friday, April 10th – Activity: Magazine/Newspaper Articles

Receptive Language or “Understanding”

Help your child find an appropriate magazine or newspaper article to read. The following site offers a free trial during this time and they provide articles addressing world topics at adjusted levels from articles with picture symbols through written text: <https://www.n2y.com/> You can also use the internet to find this. Read the article together and highlight any words that your child does not know. Look them up together.

Expressive Language or “Talking”

Ask your child questions about the article. Ask them open ended questions such as what they thought about the article or how it relates to their life. Ask them if they know the meaning of some of the words in the article.

Articulation or “Speech Sounds/Intelligibility”

Have your child highlight words with their speech sound then practice reading the word in the sentence with their correct speech sound.

This Week’s General Feeding Recommendation for Picky Eaters:

Hopefully you have made some gains with eating family meals together and finding ways to talk about and describe foods to learn about them (week 1 and 2’s suggestions). For this week continue to introduce your child to a variety of new foods and model for him/her ways to interact with them in a playful manner. Kids learn through play so we can use this to learn about new foods and decrease some anxiety kids might be feeling about a new food. If your child is older, it might not be as much “play” as learning about foods through cooking or making a grocery shopping list together. Or maybe even some food “science experiments.” This week try to take some time to just play with foods. Maybe you string some noodles or cereal together to make a necklace, maybe you paint with yogurt, maybe you make ants on a log with celery/peanut butter/raisins, maybe you use cookie cutters to make shapes out of bread, or maybe you just stack some chicken nuggets to make a tower. It takes 10-12 times of a child trying a new food before they can decide if they like it or not. Try to think of a new food you didn’t like as a child, but now you do! Some children might need to see and interact with a food this same amount before they can get to the step of actually trying the new food. These are all steps in the right direction! While you’re “playing” with food this week, check out the song [“Three Bite Rule” by Pete the Cat](#)! This is a song about trying new foods! You can find it on Amazon music also! There is also a whole episode about the “Three Bite Rule” as part of the Pete the Cat TV show series on Amazon Video. If you don’t have access to this, you can watch this [YouTube video](#) that shows a clip of the episode.

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