



Early Times

Infant and Toddler Connection of Fairfax-Falls Church

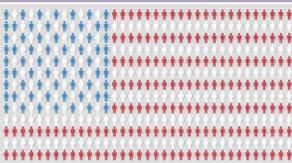
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/office-for-children/infant-and-toddler-connection>

The Vision of the Infant & Toddler Connection of Fairfax-Falls Church is:

All infants and toddlers with a developmental need are identified, supported, accepted, included and valued in their family and community.

The U. S. Census is Coming - Everyone Counts

By: Katie Strotman, Community Impact Unit Manager
Neighborhood and Community Services



Counting every person in the United States in a census every 10 years is a challenge. But counting every infant and toddler in the country may be one of the most challenging parts of the job. Parents and adults with young children often don't realize they need to include all children who live with them fulltime or at least most of the time. Counting young children will be vitally important in the 2020 Census because population statistics are used by local, state and federal lawmakers to determine how to spend billions of dollars in federal and state funds annually over the next 10 years. Much of that money funds programs that directly affect children. They include early intervention, nutrition assistance, Head Start, special education, foster care, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program and housing assistance to help a child's family.

If you have children in your home, make sure to count them when completing your Census this spring. For more infor-

mation on the census check out www.fairfaxcounty.gov and search for "census" or email census2020@fairfaxcounty.gov.

ITC Love Letters

We asked ITC families to share some of the experiences they have had with ITC, and here is what they had to say...



Dear ITC families,

I'm a current family of the ITC and I've attended many events. I wanted to share some of the opportunities that were/are available to my family.

When I first came to ITC events I was feeling a little overwhelmed, but the more events I have attended the stronger my support system has grown, and the socialization for my child has no doubt played a part in his recent developmental strides.

Some of my favorite events are the Terrific Parent Thursday Support Playgroup, Sensory Story-time, and Scramble. At every event I always meet new and returning families who are super friendly and supportive. My son genuinely looks forward to playgroup every week, with a huge smile as soon as we turn into the complex.

If I can give ITC families one piece of advice, it would be to go to

events and be open to meeting other families and sharing your experiences. I am so thankful to all of the staff at ITC for the fun opportunities/events and ongoing support to my family!



Ashley (Beck's mom)



Dear ITC Parents,

Thomas has been in ITC since he was just a few months old, right after we got home from the NICU. In his almost 3 years in ITC we've felt so supported by our therapists and the ITC team. The therapists helped Thomas first with physical skills like sitting independently, then crawling, then walking. Next

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we switched to speech therapy to help Thomas with talking. Both therapists have done a great job and Thomas has made so much progress.

Then when you add on to that the support you've given with the events you plan, it really gave me a community to talk to. I really loved the events you planned because you had a good variety and you gave us something to do nearly every day of the week - The story times at the library are great, and the King of Kings playgroup is always so much fun. I liked doing Kids In Motion because it has the fun songs at the beginning and the parachute at the end. Plus, Thomas and Theo's favorite thing at Providence's Kids in Motion was the free play with the bean bags to toss into the net.

Last year, my favorite activity was the music concerts like 123 Andrés and the other music therapist programs like Myra, Wee Got the Beat, Music Together, and Music and Movement with Mia.

The work that you do is so important for families. It really gives us a community to belong to. We're so grateful for all the time and love you've poured into us.

Kim (Thomas' mom)



Dear ITC Parents,

I'm a current family of ITC and I've attended many events. I wanted to share some of the opportunities that are available to my family.

When my family first started ITC, I was feeling discouraged, but then I realized that Fairfax County has so many resources to support my little guy. Some of my favorite events are sensory story times, playgroups and special nights at Busy Bees and Scramble.

One thing about the ITC events that really surprised me was the fact that they are offered all over the county, so no matter where you live you can connect to other families and enrich your child's day. One thing that I learned about my child by attending events was that he loved trying new things and meeting new people.

If I could go back in time and give future ITC families one piece of advice, it would be to check their website and take advantage of as many awesome events as



possible, because being part of a community makes us all stronger!

Betty (Joey's mom)



Dear ITC Parents,

I'm a current family in ITC and I've attended many events. I wanted to share some of the opportunities that are available to my family. When I first came to ITC events, I was feeling a little anxious, because my son was experiencing challenges with his speech but then I realized this was a "safe space" that was inclusive of all children.

Some of my favorite events are Scramble, because my child is EXTREMELY energetic, and the Thursday playgroup, because he can play with other children in an enclosed space while I talk to other parents/caregivers.

One thing about the ITC events that really surprised me was the amount of different opportunities provided. I feel like there are so many activities my son can engage in weekly. One thing that I learned about my child by attending events was his willingness to share with others, given some verbal praise.

If I could go back in time and give future ITC families one piece of advice, it would be to take advantage of the many activities. You won't be disappointed! Also, don't be afraid to reach out to the staff if you have questions. Everyone has been so supportive of my family at ITC.

Kate (Adler's mom)

A Note from the Director...

Recent Happenings at ITC

Hello ITC families. As always it is my pleasure to reach out to you and thank you for the opportunity to support your children and your family. I wanted to take this time, as we head into Spring, to give you a quick update about ongoing initiatives here at Fairfax ITC.

- **We continue to upgrade our technology so that we can better serve you in your home and other community settings. Providers are expanding their use of mobile technology to provide real time documentation.**
- **Our family support professionals have been**

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diligently expanding our community partnerships to provide you with a variety of opportunities for you and your children.

- **Our service coordinators are embarking on a study of how to support families using a coaching interaction style of communication.**
- **Our clinical team continues to address functional assessment skills for providers. The key is assessing how children participate in routines with their family in order to develop goals to support them in these routines.**
- **ITC is working closely with our partner divisions in the Office for Children to increase the screening of children in the community, training providers in many early childhood settings to administer the Ages and Stages Questionnaire and helping them to know where and how to make a referral.**

We are committed to educating ourselves in the best practices for supporting very young children and their families. I hope you continue to see this excellence in all of the services that you receive during your time in our program.

Susan Sigler, CCC-SLP

Director, Infant and Toddler Connection of Fairfax-Falls Church

Baby Artsplay!™ Returns to ITC

By: Carolina Kasper



This winter, ITC was thrilled to welcome back Wolf Trap's Baby Artsplay!™ program to our families. With the program being such a success last summer, families asked for more opportunities for Wolf Trap and ITC to collaborate on this amazing program. Baby Artsplay!™ was offered to ITC families as a lottery system, and a total of 90 families entered. 24 lucky families were chosen to participate in a five week series held at our Alexandria and Fairfax locations.

Baby Artsplay!™ is a family-based program that offers children and their parents/caregivers an opportunity to further improve their learning and development using music, movement and drama. This season we were treated to two Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artists, Anne

Sidney and Kofi Dennis. Together with families, Ms. Anne and Mr. Kofi showed us how to incorporate music into just about anything. Families learned how to sing a "Hello" song in Spanish, Korean, Hebrew and Chinese. They read the book, Brown Bear Brown Bear to the tune of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star while tapping on a drum. Each child took turns for a one-on-one peek a boo song with a scarf and the teacher while the group sang along. The families were marching, jumping and walking in a circle to the beat of a drum. There was music and movement everywhere!



Sidney and Kofi Dennis.

Thank you to Wolf Trap's Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts for this wonderful program. We can't wait to offer it to families again!

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Pages and Paws

By: Ilse Rothenberg



This past January, families gathered at Richard Byrd Library in Springfield for Pages & Paws. The Saturday morning event was a hit! One hour before opening to the public, the library was open to

ITC families for a private browsing hour. Families had an opportunity to explore, browse, and get a tour of the library. At the same time, they were able to interact with three of the cutest, friendliest dogs from the non-profit organization, K-9 Caring Angels. These furry friends were laid back and looked very comfortable with the graciousness of their hosts. Some little ones were also interested in the toys and books provided.

On their way out, families were able to choose a book to take home that was donated by the library for this spe-

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cial event. The following quote from Melissa, a mom who attended the event with her two children, summed it up, “Our family had a wonderful time meeting the dogs, snuggling and reading books with them. As a parent with kiddos who are not always quiet when we look for books, it was very comforting to be able to visit the library before it opened to the public.”

ITC is grateful to Valerie Suttee, Branch Manager at Richard Byrd, for thinking of this collaboration opportunity. We plan to offer similar events in the future. As expressed by the mom above, this event allowed families to visit the library without the pressure that sometimes comes with having to be quiet. This is hard to do with young children and at “Pages & Paws”



there was a relaxed, calm atmosphere while families learned what the library has to offer. We also are very appreciative to the volunteer trainers, including ITC’s own Amparo Solano-Rodriguez and the loveable therapy dogs who spent their Saturday with us.

NOVA Playlabs

By: Mia Batson

“Which playroom do you want to play in first, honey?” a mother asked her 2-year old. “Tell me the choices,” her son answered. At our play date at Nova Playlabs on a Sunday morning in January, there were truly so

many choices.

Nova Playlabs is located in Chantilly, and is set up like you’re visiting someone’s home. There are many themed rooms, each with a different set of fun for kids



to enjoy. For older children, there’s an art room, a science experiment room, and a board game room. For the ITC kids, some of the favorites were the garage, where wheely toys were housed to ride around the room, and the playhouse room. The playhouse room had themed houses including a



doctor’s office and a coffee shop. ITC children wandered happily from the playhouse room to the garage, and to the game room and the story time room. “This was a really fun event,” said Thomas’s mom, “and we’ll definitely come back here again. It was so nice of them to let us all in for free!” 20 families attended the event, with nearly 70 people in the building. “The nice thing about this space,” said Carolina Kasper, Family Support Liaison, “is that because there’s all these different rooms, it never feels crowded!”



ITC’s PURPOSE

The Infant & Toddler Connection of Fairfax-Falls Church provides early intervention supports and services to infants and toddlers from birth to age three who are not developing as expected or who have a medical condition that can delay normal development. Early intervention supports and services focus on increasing the child’s participation in family and community activities that are important to the family. In addition, supports and services focus on helping parents and other caregivers know how to find ways to help the child learn during everyday activities. These supports and services are available for all eligible children and their families regardless of the family’s ability to pay.



To request this information in an alternate format, call ITC-FFC, 703-246-7180, 703-538-5292 (TTY). Fairfax County is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all county programs, services and activities and will provide reasonable accommodations upon request. To request special accommodations call ITC-FFC, 703-246-7180, 703-538-5292 (TTY). Please allow seven working days in advance of the event in order to make the necessary arrangements.

