



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.

ITC Graduation 2019

By: Ilse Rothenberg



On October 4th, the Infant and Toddler Connection (ITC) held its 9th Annual Graduation Celebration at Van Dyck Park in Fairfax. The celebration is held annually for children who are transitioning out of the program. Approximately, 200 people of all ages gathered to celebrate the successes of our newest ITC Graduates. We could not have asked for a better day. The weather was perfect. And the decorations were gorgeous!



There was a variety of activities for families to enjoy while the children eagerly awaited their turn to receive their graduation certificates and bubble wands. Some of the fun stations included time with Teddy the Therapy Horse, playing instruments at the

Music with Myra station, and petting the adorable therapy dogs from Healing House.



In addition, by having the party at the park, children were able to run around and get their wiggles out on the slide, swings, and merry go round. Mom (and fellow Family Support Liaison), Mia Batson, said that graduation was especially meaningful because it allowed her family to close the loop with their interventionist and service coordinator. It also was an opportunity to celebrate the progress that her son made during his time in the ITC program.



Mary-Elizabeth, mother of twins graduating from ITC said the event was a highlight in her time at ITC. "The boys loved all of the activities at graduation but playing in the toy bins was their favorite because they loved playing with the toy animals and toy cars. Plus, having graduation at the playground was so great - we got to play on the slides and the swings AND celebrate with the staff at ITC who have been so important to us!"

Seeing all the smiling faces was contagious and we're already looking forward to celebrating some big accomplishments next year.

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A Note from the Director...



Hello ITC Friends and Family members. Thanks to all of you who participated in the 2019 Virginia Family Survey for Infant and Toddler Connection families. The survey is meant to help us improve how we provide support

to all the families who enter into a relationship with our agency and our staff. I want to highlight a few of the areas that are measured in the survey, and stress that it is our goal in early intervention to support all caregivers in helping their child reach their full potential in the most critical years for development. It is our goal at ITC to provide early intervention services that help your family:

- Participate in typical activities for children and families in your own community.
- Feel more confident in your skills as a parent or caregiver.
- Do things with and for your child that are good for your child's development.
- Be able to evaluate how much progress your child is making.
- And, figure out solutions to problems as they come up.

These are just a few of the areas we asked about in the survey that you completed. I want to assure you that we take this information and use it to improve the services that we provide.

Each year when I receive the results of this survey there are a few questions that I immediately look to, as I feel they are a critical measure of quality. This year I was thrilled to see that 95% of all respondents agreed that what they say about their child and family is understood and respected by our staff. It is fundamental to all that we do to recognize that parents and caregivers are the experts on their children. It is the partnership with you that makes us successful. We bring our expertise in child development to you and you help us to figure out the best way to apply that knowledge to your unique child and the family that he/she is part of. As we head into 2020 we will continue to focus on all of the key elements of early intervention services that help children thrive; with a special focus on respecting the real expert in the relationship- YOU.

Susan Sigler, CCC-SLP

Director, Infant and Toddler Connection of Fairfax-Falls Church

Cox Farm Fall Festival

By: Mia Batson



On October 31, over 40 ITC families braved the rainy, muddy weather for a very special day at Cox Farms. Totalling over 100 people, with parents and children, and joined by 20 ITC staff, we ventured all over Cox Farms' Fall Festival. Cox's Fall Festival boasts over 40 acres of activities, including a hay ride, big slides, and live animals. ITC staff worked the welcome table, as well as enjoyed spending time with the kids

out in the play areas. Staff hosted a meetup area for families in the Kiddie Zone, with a corn crib sandbox, a bubbles area, musical instrument, and tiny slides. They also did face painting with little pumpkins and hearts. The outing ended with a group trip on the hayride around Cox Farms. Families packed onto the wagons and enjoyed seeing the live horses and costumed aliens as the hayride wound through the woods. Unfortunately, the hayride culminated with a big rainstorm, but families laughed and had a great time as they put on raincoats and opened umbrellas! "We had such a special day," said parent Katie Forshey. "Remy thoroughly enjoyed himself going down the slides!" ITC staff eagerly look forward to the Cox Farms trip each year. "I love getting to connect with my families at Cox Farms. It's



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such a fun place and I love seeing the kids light up over petting the animals, or going down the big slides. It's an event I love attending, and it gives us a unique opportunity to play with kids on our caseload in a new way," said Service Coordinator Bonnie Arjona. Cox Farms' Fall Festival is extremely popular, with between 40,000 and 50,000 visiting in the month of October. Said co-owner Gina Cox, "We probably have about 1,000 people per weekday, and a couple thousand each day of the weekend. But we're happy to extend the invitation to the Infant Toddler Connection community."

Frying Pan Farm Fun

By: Carolina Kasper



We started off our fall ITC events with a bang at our Frying Pan Farm Park event this past September. The weather was beautiful, a warm day with sunny

and clear skies. We had 52 families join us from all over the county. Everyone gathered at the picnic tables in the grassy area where there were sensory bins that were filled with farm animals. It was a great ice breaker for the kids to jump right in and make some new friends. There were also farm animal dot activities to color in, toys and some large building blocks to stack and tumble.



Families enjoyed a nice tour through the farm with Family Support Liaison, Mia Batson. There were so many baby animals to see! Some crowd favorites were the piglets, and how rambunctious they were. The



children also enjoyed the goats and cows. They came right up to the fence to show the kids how much they like to munch on grass, and some animals



even came close enough for some petting.

After the tour, Frying Pan Farm Park's Support Assistant, Claire Thomas, brought a calm and friendly, gray Flemish giant rabbit to our families for a chance to see a farm animal up close and personal. He was cuddled up in Claire's arms and one by one, each child was able to pet and take a picture with him. It was a wonderful day all around, and ITC thanks Frying Pan Farm for such a memorable experience.

ITC's Spotlight on Service

By: Mia Batson

ITC is proud to highlight Rebekah Stone, Inclusion Specialist at Providence Community Center, as an outstanding supporter of ITC programs and families. Ms. Stone has been working for Therapeutic Recreation Services for Fairfax County for 4 years, and in that time she has worked with patients from ages 9 months old to 90 years old! Rebekah recently became the Inclusion Specialist for Providence Community Center and coordinates the programming for the Sensory Room. The Sensory Room at Providence Community Center is a state-of-the-art room designed to offer a variety of sights, sounds, and interactive elements that promote physical and intellectual developments. It includes a touch/texture wall board, swinging chairs, fiber optic bubble tubes, and an interactive floor mat. ITC families have gotten to know Rebekah through their time at Sensational Explorers in the Sensory Room, as well as through her participation in the Kids N Motion program, the PAWSitive Playtime program, and through family events like Community Day.



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She also worked with ITC parents this year at our Pathways to Preschool Transition workshop, sharing about opportunities in the community for families as they're exiting ITC. Said Larissa, mom of 18-month-old Pete, "Bekah is a real gem. She's so great with my son, and really is patient with all the kids. She's professional, full of ideas, and fun to be around. It's so great to get connected with friendly staff and to learn about cool events in the community!"

Easy, Homemade Pumpkin Spice Play Dough

By: Melissa Davis

This recipe uses non-toxic ingredients that are safe if accidentally eaten. Please consider your child's allergies before making.

Ingredients:

2 Cups Flour

½ Cup Vegetable Oil

½ Cup Canned Pumpkin

½ teaspoon pumpkin pie spice, or cinnamon



Directions:

Add all ingredients in a large bowl and mix well.

Take out of bowl and place on a clean, flat surface. Knead dough for about 1 minute until flour is incorporated. If dough sticks to your hands, add a little more flour and knead again.

Play on a surface that is easily cleaned, as the dough will leave a little oily residue.

Store in an airtight container for play another day!

Play dough activity ideas

Use common kitchen items like plastic cups, spoons, forks,

etc. to make a silly face with the play dough. Point to and name the eyes, nose and mouth on the silly face and your child.

Hide small items in the dough, such as coins, beans, or small toys, and ask your child to use their fingers and both hands find them. Praise your child when your child finds an item.

Help your child use both hands to squeeze, push down and roll the play dough into a big ball or a long "snake" on the table.

Use cookie cutters to press out fun, fall shapes like pumpkins and leaves. Talk to your child about the season and weather these shapes represent.



WINTER WEATHER PROCEDURES

- * ITC will make every effort to accommodate family needs during inclement weather and hazardous driving conditions. If Fairfax County Government is OPE, ITC offices REMAIN OPEN for administrative purposes and for center-based assessments.
- * When public schools are CLOSED- assessments, reviews and session IN THE HOME/DAYCARE may be cancelled.
- * When public schools announce a LATE OPENING or EARLY DISMISSAL- assessments may be scheduled for a different start time.
- * Your Service Coordinator or provider will contact you directly when changes need to be made to scheduled appointments due to weather or road conditions.



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.

