

A Note from the Director...

Ready for School?

Happy Fall to all our families and children. Best wishes to all of you who are transitioning out of our program to community supports and/or Fairfax County Public Schools programs. We hope you found your time with us rewarding and that we met our goal of providing you with the tools you need to help your child flourish in their everyday activities and routines. For those of you who are not yet moving out of the program, it is never too early to be thinking about the next steps. Your infants and toddlers are learning the skills they need now to be successful when they move on to kindergarten and beyond. On July 24, 2019, Governor Ralph Northam signed a bill that established an Executive Leadership Team on School Readiness for the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Commonwealth defines school readiness as:

Ready Children

Ready Families

Ready Schools

Ready Communities

Each component plays an essential role in the development of readiness. You can read more about it here, http://www.doe.virginia.gov/early-childhood/school-readiness/va_school_readiness_definition.pdf

and here, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/office-for-children/school-readiness>

The services provided to you and your family at Infant and Toddler Connection are designed to identify the individualized supports and services each child and family need to support your child's development of positive social relationships, their ability to acquire and use new skills, and their ability to use appropriate behavior to meet their needs. Every day our service coordinators, therapists, teachers, and social workers take delight in watching the youngest children in our community become more independent and the families and care givers become more confident in their ability to promote that independence. As you watch those school buses go by each day, remember that together we are providing the early learning opportunities to lay the foundation for school readiness so whenever it is that your child climbs on that bus, they are ready to succeed.

As always please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, concerns, or compliments.

Susan Sigler, CCC-SLP

Director, Infant and Toddler Connection of Fairfax-Falls Church



ITC Welcomes Wolf Trap's Baby Artsplay

By: Ilse Rothenberg

In June, two dozen ITC children and their families participated in Wolf Trap's Baby Artsplay. Two locations were offered for Baby Artsplay, with the morning option held in Alexandria and an evening option in Fairfax.



The goal of the Baby Artsplay program is to use music, dance and the arts to stimulate a young child's intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development. ITC was fortunate to have Master Wolf Trap Artist, Kofi Dennis lead the 5-week series family friendly program. Music and movement is creatively used to dramatize concepts that spark a child's interest such as marching or watching a caterpillar land on a leaf. The classes are full of energetic singing and dancing. And as participants quickly learned, there is no passive sitting around in Baby Artsplay!



Parents and caregivers were encouraged to engage with their little ones. Another aspect of this program is that the lessons build upon each other from week to week. This added to a sense of familiarity and consistency. Service Coordinator, Morlinda Dawson commented that the repetitiveness of the program was a positive aspect and that by making it simple, it was easy for participants to follow from week to week. One of the ITC families said, "All of the children attending were drawn into the activities and made to feel special without exception." We are grateful to Wolf Trap's Institute for Early Learning through the Arts and are looking forward to being able to offer this unique program again in the future.



¡Hola Amigo! A concert with 123 Andrés

By: Mia Batson



On May 13, 2019, the toddlers of Infant Toddler Connection (ITC) were treated to a special music concert hosted by local celebrity children's musician Uno Dos Tres Andrés. Andrés Salguero is a Latin Grammy winner and international children's music star most famous for his hit song "Salta Salta." Mr. Salguero, along with his wife Christina, performed a free concert for ITC children on the stage of James Lee Community Center in Falls Church. Nearly 150 people attended the action-packed concert, which featured songs in both English and Spanish. "Parents, the most important voice in the room is Your voice. Now let's all sing together, as a group, and you're going to sing your child's name," encouraged Mr. Salguero during the opening song "Hola Amigo." The concert culmi-



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nated with the families joining Uno Dos Tres Andrés on stage for a jumping dance song.

Shared one ITC parent, "This was Zachary's first concert and it was such a memorable experience. He loved wiggling to the music and climbing onto the stage. And I loved the audience participation, especially when we did the conga line around the theater!" ITC Family Support Liaison Ilse Rothenberg noted that this was her favorite event of the year. "I loved seeing our families get to have so much fun, and it was a great way to celebrate both Spanish and English language!"



1 2 3
ANDRÉS



The Cooperative Learning Garden



Little hands are getting dirty and little minds are growing in the Infant & Toddler Connection Cooperative Learning Garden! The garden is located in the courtyard of the Joseph Willard Health Center in Fairfax. Donations from community partners have made container gardening and a garden bed for observations possible. The learning space offers families receiving services an opportunity to explore new learning activities, engage socially, and have fun! Carolyn Ricks, a Developmental Specialist with ITC, developed the program based on a need she was seeing with many of the families she serves. Parents and caregivers asked questions about

exploring new foods, sensory-based play, and ways they may creatively engage with their child. Over a series of four weeks, children and their parents explored the basics of planting, making

observations, touching and tasting edible plants, and using garden yields to foster healthy eating habits. These activities are early opportunities for chil-

dren to explore the scientific method, creative arts, and build communication and social skills. A fall series is being planned where children and families will explore fall edibles, such as pumpkins.



How to Make a Galaxy in a Bottle

Here's a neat idea for a making a cool, calming sensory bottle using baby oil and water, great for all ages.

Materials needed:

- Plastic water bottle with screw on lid
- Baby Oil
- Water
- Purple and blue liquid food coloring
- Silver glitter

Directions:

1. Remove label (if any) from water bottle.
2. Fill the bottle half full with baby oil.
3. Add about 1/2 teaspoon of silver glitter.
4. Add enough water to a measuring cup to fill the rest of the bottle. Add approximately 8 drops of purple food coloring and 5 drops of blue food coloring.
5. Mix the water and pour it into the bottle, leaving about 3/4" of air space in the mouth section of the bottle.
6. Use a non-toxic glue to secure the cap on.



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.



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.

Here Come the Preschoolers

By: Carolina Kasper



Every summer, ITC and Fairfax County Public Schools unite to offer the Pathway to Preschool program to ITC children who will be transitioning into the Fairfax County Public Schools non-categorical special education preschool classroom in the fall. This program is offered to our families without charge, and is specially designed to help transition children into a preschool setting. The Pathway to Preschool program was offered at Baileys Lower Elementary school, Island Creek Elementary school and Greenbriar East Elementary school. Each classroom was led by a current FCPS special education teacher, an FCPS Instructional Assistant and an ITC Service Coordinator.



The children were able to experience what a typical and exciting day at school would be like for them. They started their morning routines by saying good-bye to their parents and following their teachers to the classrooms. In the classroom the children participated in circle time, table-top activities, art projects, social play with peers and outdoor fun at the playground.



There were songs to sing and videos to dance with. And toys! So many toys! "We got a taste of preschool!" said an ITC parent.

Not only is our Pathway to Preschool program a wonderful opportunity for the children, it is also a learning experience for the parents as well.

While the children were in their classrooms, the parents participated in a workshop led by an ITC Family Support Liaison and an ITC Family Counseling and Support staff. There were various FCPS presenters who offered parents insight into what the transition process would look like for them and their children and different resources they could access as parents and students in the FCPS system. During the workshop, parents were able to share their experiences during transition with one another. "We enjoyed the opportunity to connect with other families," said one ITC parent. "Being around other parents and children who are going through the same path [was a valuable aspect of the program]" said another parent.



We wish all the best to those ITC children and families who will be starting preschool this fall. We look forward to hearing about all of their successes.

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And a very special THANK YOU to all the Service Coordinators who took time out of their busy schedules to help out in the Pathway's classrooms. Your time and dedication is appreciated.

Annie Foster, Blanca Siles, Deon Mccutchen, Jessica Sherman, Katie Boyd, Kellie Ortiz, Linda Anh, Morinda Dawson, Nicole Jensen, Scott Evans, Suzanne Durrant and Terry Gilmartin.