



Early Intervention Child & Family Connections #15 January 2022 Family Newsletter

Will/Grundy/Kankakee/LaSalle Counties

Hello to 2022!

What's happening this month in Early Intervention...

- New legislation goes into effect in this month that applies to children in Early Intervention with May 1 through August 31 birthdays. This legislation provides eligible families the option to extend Illinois Early Intervention (EI) services past your child's third birthday, if your child qualifies for an IEP through their school district. For more information, see this resource for families on [Early Intervention Extended Services](#) or contact your service coordinator.
- The [Early Intervention Clearinghouse](#) has technology items such as iPads and hotspots that can be borrowed by families participating in Early Intervention. These items can help families access Live Video visits in EI. Families can request a technology loan on the [EI clearinghouse website](#). **There is currently no waitlist to borrow technology items!** If your child is waiting for In-person EI services please consider trying Live Video Visit services until In-person services become available.
- Please note that for In-person visits it is recommended that **families and EI providers continue wearing masks, washing hands, and maintaining physical distance**. See below for additional safety protocols recommended by Early Intervention. If you or a member of your household is feeling unwell, please contact your EI provider to reschedule your appointment or try to meet using a Live Video Visit for that week!
- [The Early Intervention Clearinghouse is looking for families to share their EI story](#) If you are interested in recording a brief video about your experience in Early Intervention please contact Meghan Burke at meghanbm@illinois.edu. Families will be compensated \$50 for providing a video. See below for additional details.



Are you interested in sharing your story about early intervention with other families?

- The Early Intervention Clearinghouse is looking for parents in Illinois to share their experiences with early intervention with other families.
 - Specifically, you will be asked to record a brief video about your experience in early intervention.
- Families will be compensated \$50 for providing your video.
- We are looking for families who speak the following languages:
 - English, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Polish, Russian, Urdu
- You can participate if you have a child between the ages of 0-6 who currently or previously participated in early intervention.
- Interested? Contact Meghan Burke: meghanbm@illinois.edu



Please enjoy the information on **fun activities** and **support resources** for all families in this newsletter. This month we have included information on **some January awareness days** (this is not a list of all Awareness days for this month).

January is ..

- [National Blood Donor Month](#)
- January 17th is [Martin Luther King Jr Day](#)
- January 18th is [Winnie the Pooh Day](#)
- January 21st is [National Hugging Day](#)
- January 23rd is [National Pie Day](#)
- January 31st is [National Hot Chocolate Day](#) Try a new [Hot chocolate recipe](#) today!

If you know someone who is concerned about their child's development please refer them to our office or share this resource on [making a referral to Early Intervention](#)

-The staff at CFC 15

Fun Family Activities | January 2022

See below for some fun family events in your area!

Your local Park District and Library and great resources for fun events for preschoolers and families. Check them out today!



Free FUN events:

- [Downtown Lemont Ice fest](#) on January 22nd with live ice caving and free hot chocolate!
- [Wonderkids Groundhog event](#) for kids age 2-5 at Isle a la Cache Museum on February 1st
- [Best Sledding Hills in Chicagoland](#) from Chicago Parent

Fun and educational places for families to visit:

[Dupage Children's Museum](#) is open & pre-registration is required. See the website for details.

[Kidswork Children's Museum](#) in Frankfort is open for in person play.

[Discovery Center Museum](#) in Rockford is open and reservations are required.

[The Shedd Aquarium](#) tickets must be reserved in advanced and show proof of vaccination.

[Field Museum](#) is open with advanced ticket purchase & proof of vaccination

[The Museum of Science and Industry](#) is open with advanced ticket purchase & proof of vaccination. [Click here](#) to see their FREE days for Illinois residents!

[Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum](#) proof of vaccination required.

[The Art Institute](#) is open with advanced ticket purchase & proof of vaccination

[Lincoln Park](#) and [Brookfield Zoo](#) are open! Face coverings are required in all buildings.

[Cosley Zoo in Wheaton](#) is open with advanced registration.

[Sky Zone in Joliet](#) is open and has a Little Leapers program for kids age 7 and under on Saturdays from 10-11am. See their [calendar](#) for details.

[Starved Rock State Park](#) and [Matthiessen State Park](#) both located in LaSalle County are great places to get outside and enjoy nature!

Check out this article from [Kidslist.com](#) on Museums that have free days in 2022!

Virtual Events

- **Michaels Crafts** stores are hosting free online events for children and adults. Check out their [Free Kids club zoom events for Mini Makers age 3 and up](#)
- [Barnes and Noble](#) has a [you tube channel](#) with virtual kids story times and many adult book club virtual events as well.

Theatres with Sensory Friendly Movie Times

[AMC Theatres](#) in New Lenox, Naperville, Lombard and Morris

[Marcus Theatres](#) in Orland Park and Chicago Heights

[NGC Cinema](#) in Yorkville

[Imagine](#) in Frankfort

[Will County Forest Preserve District](#) has an [events calendar](#) with virtual & in-person events for

children and families.

For more information on fun family events in the **Chicagoland** area go to [Chicago Parent.com](http://ChicagoParent.com) and [Family Time Magazine](http://FamilyTimeMagazine.com). Check out the [January/February 2022 Issue of Chicago Parent](#) online, they have some great articles for all families!

For fun events and parenting tips in **LaSalle County** go to the [Illinois Valley Area Parent References](#) Facebook page. Also check out the [LaSalle County Calendar of Events](#).

For fun events in **Kankakee County** visit the [Kankakee County Calendar of Events page](#).

Local **Special Recreation Associations** are continuing to host virtual events and in-person events. See below for websites of some area Special Recreation Associations:

- [River Valley Special Rec Association](#) in Bradley
- [Lincolnway Special Rec Association](#) in New Lenox - Check out their [Winter Program Guide](#)
- [Northern Will County Special Rec Association](#) (NWCSRA) in Romeoville. Check out their [Winter/Spring 2022 brochure](#). They have a sensory room that is available to reserve for individual use located at 10 Montrose in Romeoville. Check out this great resource! Email [Gina Petkus](mailto:Gina.Petkus@nwcsra.org) for info.
- [SRJC](#) - Special Recreation of Joliet and Channahon
- [The NorthWest Special Recreation Association in Rolling Meadows](#) hosts online [sibshops](#) for siblings, who are ages 8-12 year old, of children with disabilities to meet other siblings for peer support and fun! Contact ljevaney@nwsra.org for more information.

Important Information on Early Intervention In-Person Visits and Live Video Visits



Please review the [In-person checklists for Early Intervention providers and for families](#) to help determine if it is safe to have in-person visits. If you or a member of your family is sick with any of the symptoms on the checklist please contact your Early Intervention providers and cancel any upcoming in-person visits.

It is very important that all families are aware of and agree to the recommended safety protocols from IDHS for In Person visits to occur:

- To the maximum extent possible individuals providing in-person support be vaccinated.
- Masks are to be worn when meeting indoors.
- Teams consider conducting in-person visits outdoors or in well-



EI Live Video Visits continue to be a great opportunity for parents to help their child learn and grow! If your child is waiting for In-Person EI services consider trying Live Video Visits.

Below is information on programs that can help provide technology devices and internet access for Video Visits.

The [Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse](#) continues to offer a [device loan program for all families in Early Intervention](#). They currently have many available devices and no waitlist! Available technology includes: Ipads, hotspots, & Ipad stands. To apply to receive a device from the EI Clearinghouse, please complete the [Device Loan Request Form](#).

ventilated areas.

- Team members continue to utilize good handwashing practices and sanitize items that are used across homes before each use.
- Nothing unnecessary should be brought into a home/child care such as toy bags or other personal items.
- Maintain physical distance during indoor EI visits to the degree possible.
- In-person services should not occur if any individual participating has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days or if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- If individuals who are not fully vaccinated have been exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days, in-person services should not occur.

If you do have to cancel your In-person visit, consider trying a Live Video Visit so that you are still able to work with your Early Intervention Provider(s) to support your child. Please reach out to your service coordinator with any questions.

[The Arc of IL has an Assistive](#)

[Technology Consumer Stipend Program](#)

which provides funds to to pay for the assistive technology (Ipads, tablets, laptops etc) needed to attend virtual events and meetings for people with developmental disabilities and their family members.

- Click to [download the application](#).
- Any questions? Call 815.464.1832 ext 1010.
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[The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program](#)

is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program that provides a temporary discount on monthly broadband bills for qualifying low-income households. Go to:

www.getemergencybroadband.org or www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit to check if you qualify & apply online. You may also sign up through a participating broadband provider or by calling (833) 511-0311 between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. any day of the week to request a mail-in application and more information about the program.

The ETCA (Early Childhood Technical Assistance) Center has videos of real families talking about their experiences with Live Video Visits. Click here to be taken to [ETCA Center youtube videos](#).

Do you know someone who needs help with groceries?



[My Pantry Express](#) is an online food pantry that gives those in need of food assistance the opportunity to shop once a week for a variety of free grocery items. Items can be picked up from 3 locations in Will County. Please click the link for details.

No income or residency restrictions apply.



The Northern Illinois Food Bank has a list online of [upcoming Mobil Food Pantries and Pop up Markets listed monthly by county](#). Both types of distributions are currently using a drive-thru model. **Everyone is welcome – no ID or referral is needed.**



Will County has created [Food Access Maps](#) where you can locate food pantries, micro pantries, mobile food pantries, and community gardens in Will and some of the surrounding counties.

[Find Food IL Community Food map](#) allows you to search by zip code for food pantries, School

meal sites, grocery stores, and SNAP & WIC offices.

To get information or help with your [SNAP \(supplemental nutrition assistance program\) application](#) click the link or call 844-600-SNAP.

Will-Grundy Counties



Family Support Resources For All Areas

Parent/Family Support Programs:

Join the [Early Intervention Clearinghouse](#), [Early Choices](#), and [Family Matters](#) as they share information and resources for families in EI. [For more information click here.](#)

- February 3, 2022: Knowing Your Rights and Advocating for Your Child
- March 3, 2022: Helping Your Child Develop and Learn
- April 7, 2022: Having a Support System
- May 5, 2022: Accessing the Community

No need to Register just join Zoom Meeting(s) using the recurring link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83842899272?pwd=VGNkNjA4RUcyVjFSN2xNZNyMIBzd09>

[The Jump Start homevisiting Parental Training Program](#) is a parenting enrichment program offered in Will, Grundy & Kankakee counties. It is a free program that offers parent education and family support services throughout pregnancy until their child is 3 years old. **In Will and Grundy Counties contact Alyssa at 309-370-9998 or in Kankakee County call Tyler at 815-600-9744 or [enroll online](#).** For more information on this great program check out their [facebook page](#). See their [current flyer here](#).

- Jump Start is hosting an [Informational meeting](#) for anyone interested in learning more about the program on January 27th 6-7pm. Here is the zoom link to join the meeting. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83393930118?pwd=RCtQb2NtMEdPT0l1MU5WSk5GTHIPUT09>

Easter Seals has a [Parent's Raising Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders Support Group or other Social Interaction/Communication Disorder](#) that meets the first Friday of each month 11am-12 pm via Zoom. Email Alicia ahann@joliet.easterseals.com for the zoom link to join the group. They also offer [a Spanish Speaking group that meets weekly on Fridays at 3pm](#).

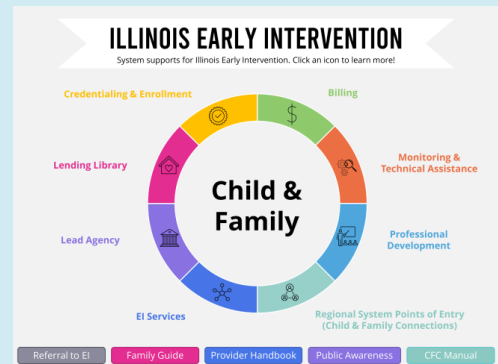
[Easter Seals is offering Free walk in mental health screenings for children](#) age 1-17 years old. Following the screening, families will be provided with information, resources, & tools if needed. Screenings are held the 2nd Friday of every month from 9am-11am, or to schedule a virtual appointment call 815-927-5466. [Screenings are also offered in Spanish.](#)

[Erikson Center for Children and families](#) is offering **in-person and virtual mental health services** to parents, caregivers, and children focusing on prenatal to 5 years old. Services available in English and Spanish. For more information contact their intake line at 312-709-0508 for English and 312-934-6446 for Spanish.

[TPS Ministry](#) an organization that supports foster children and foster families.

[The Special Fathers Network](#) is a Dad to Dad mentoring program for fathers raising children with special needs. They host zoom calls on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each months for Dads to connect. [Click here to view the list of previous and upcoming zoom calls.](#)

Educational & Informative webinars for parents & caregivers:



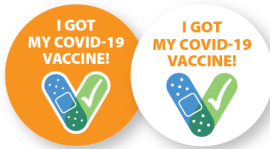
[Chicago Parent Magazine is hosting ParentEd Talks](#) which is a FREE virtual speaker series featuring some of the nation's top parenting experts! Virtual events are now through June 2022. Click the link for more information and to register.

[Illinois School for the Visually Impaired has a listing of recorded zoom webinars](#). These webinars are free for families and professionals who are interested in learning more about children's eye conditions. Also check out their [facebook page](#) for info.

[Be Strong Families has a webinar series](#) for parents to help them stay strong and positive for themselves and their children. Past webinars are also available to view. Click the link for more information or to register. Registration information is in English and Spanish.

To view additional informational online resources for families related to Early Intervention and Child Development please [click here](#).

COVID-19 Information



All Illinois residents age 5 and over are eligible for the Covid vaccines. For those interested in learning more about the COVID-19 vaccine and its availability in your area, go to <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov>

The CDC has information on [Key Things to Know about Covid-19 Vaccines](#)

The [Illinois Department of Public Health website](#) is a resource for information on the current regional COVID 19 conditions and the activities permitted within each region.

You may also access information on the vaccine from your local Health Department.

- [Will County Health Department](#)
- [Grundy County Health Department](#)
- [Kankakee County Health Department](#)
- [LaSalle County Health Department](#)

Information to support families:

- [Call 4 Calm](#) - text TALK to 552020 for English or HABLAR for Spanish if you or a loved one are struggling with stress related to the pandemic. This is free and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
- The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (ECTA), the Office of Head Start (OHS), has created [a list of resources to support children with disabilities and their families](#) during the COVID pandemic.
- Parenting for Lifelong health has created [COVID-19: 24/7 Parenting](#) with information and online resources for parents.



About Us:

Visit our
website

[Child and Family Connections #15](#) is the regional office serving as the point of entry for children and families into the Illinois Early Intervention Program. CFC #15 serves children age 0-3 year and their families in Will, Grundy, Kankakee, and LaSalle Counties.

For more information about the Illinois Early Intervention Program, please visit: [Illinois Department of Human Services](#) or [The Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse](#)

The events and information contained in this newsletter are not sponsored by Child and Family Connections #15. This newsletter contains information from many different agencies and organizations and is provided to families as a resource.