




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

Will/Grundy/Kankakee/LaSalle Counties

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

- **Reminder:** New legislation went into effect in January 2022 that applies to children in Early Intervention who turn three between May 1 - August 31. **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.
- 
- **Is your child turning 3 soon?** Do you understand the Transition process out of Early Intervention when your child turns 3? Here are a few resources to help you better understand this process:
    - [StarNet](#) is offering a webinar for parents on the **Transition from Early Intervention to Early Childhood on Tuesday, April 26th at 9-10am and from 6-7pm** held via zoom. Click the time to register.
    - Tip sheet from the EI Clearinghouse - [Transition: Understanding Family Rights](#).
    - Transition workbook for families "[When I'm 3, Where will I be](#)" created by the IL State Board of Education.
    - The Parent Guide from the Illinois State Board of Education on [Educational Rights and Responsibilities: Understanding Special Education in Illinois](#)
  - **The Early Intervention Clearinghouse is looking for families to share their EI story** At this time they need families who speak Russian, Chinese, Polish, Urdu, & Sign language. If you are interested in recording a brief video about your experience in Early Intervention in one of the above languages, please contact Meghan Burke at [meghanbm@illinois.edu](mailto: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](mailto:meghanbm@illinois.edu)



newsletter. This month we have included information on **some April awareness days** (this is not a list of all Awareness days for this month).

### April is ...

- **National Autism Awareness Month**- learn more at the [Autism Society](#)
- **Occupational Therapy Awareness month** - read about [The role of Occupational Therapy in EI](#)
- **National Child Abuse Prevention Month** - learn more at [Prevent Child Abuse IL](#)
- **April 2nd was World Autism Day** -Connect to local Autism resources from [The Autism Program of Illinois](#), and [The Autism Community in Action](#).
- **April 16th - 24th is National Park week** - Visit one of these [National Parks in IL](#)
- **Easter is April 17th**, [Surprise your Kids with these Easter Bunny Shenanigans](#) from Macaroni Kid or check out this article on [5 Creative Easter Treats to Make with the Family](#) from Chicago Parent.
- **April 20th is National Banana Day**
- **April 22nd is Earth Day** - Check out these [Earth Day Activities for Preschoolers](#)
- **April 30th is National Oatmeal cookie day!** - Enjoy this recipe for [Oatmeal raisin cookies](#) from [kidsaregreatcooks.com](#)

If you know someone who is concerned about their child's development please give them the number for the Child and Family Connections 15 Referral Coordinator, (815) 768-3730, or share this resource on [making a referral to Early Intervention](#)

-The staff at CFC 15



## Fun Family Activities | April 2022

### *See below for some fun family events in your area!*

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

Spring is around the corner and that means Easter is almost here! Here are a few opportunities for pictures with the Easter Bunny. (Also check out your local park district for fun Easter events.)

- [Photos with the Bunny at Louis Joliet Mall](#) through April 16th
- [Bunny Photo Experience at Orland Square Mall](#) through April 16th
- [Easter Bunny Photos at Fox Valley Mall](#) through April 16th

[Free Easter Drive Through Event](#) at Church of the Nazarene on 16th from 12-3pm. FREE Easter bags filled with goodies for the kids (& coffee & treat for the adults too!)

[Free Easter Egg Hunt in Homer Glen](#) at Our Mother of Good Counsel Church on April 16th 12-3pm.

### **Fun and educational places for families to visit:**

[DuPage Children's Museum](#) Pre-registration is recommended and masks for children age 2 and over. See the website for details.

[Kidsworld Children's Museum](#) in Frankfort is open for in person play & masks are required for ages 2 and over.

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

[The Shedd Aquarium](#)

[Field Museum](#) masks are recommended.

[The Museum of Science and Industry](#) masks are required in certain areas. [Click here](#) to see their FREE days for Illinois residents!



[Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum](#) masks recommended, not required.

[The Art Institute](#) is open with advanced ticket purchase.

[Lincoln Park](#) and [Brookfield Zoo](#) are open!

[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

[Emagine](#) in Frankfort

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

Check out the following websites to find fun family events in your area:

- For fun family events in the [Chicagoland area](#) go to [Chicago Parent.com](#) Check out their [Spring Family Fun Guide](#) or this article on [Things to do with kids with special needs this Spring](#).
- To find fun events in the south suburbs go to the [Chicago Southland visitors bureau](#)
- For events in Will County go to the [Visit Will County website](#).
- 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](#).

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 [Spring-Summer Program Guide](#)
- [Northern Will County Special Rec Association](#) (NWCSRA) in Romeoville. Check out their [Summer 2022 brochure](#) and their [Summer Day Camp Guide](#) 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](#) 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 [ljevane@nwsra.org](mailto:ljevane@nwsra.org) for more information.

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



Updates on In-person Early Intervention visits:

- [Illinois Early Intervention Covid 19 Protocols for Families](#) - updated February 2022
- [In-person checklists for Early Intervention providers and for families](#) to help determine if it is safe to have in-person visits.
- **Masks continue to be recommended for all in person visits.**
- **Live Video Visits (LVV) remain an option for families who do not want to have in-person visits with EI service providers.**

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.

If you have to cancel your In-person visit for any reason, consider trying a Live Video Visit for that week 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.

Live Video Visits are an approved Early Intervention service delivery method, and will remain an 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.

The [Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse](#) continues to offer a device loan program for all families in Early Intervention. Available technology includes: Ipads, hotspots, & Ipad stands. To apply to receive a device from the EI Clearinghouse, please complete the [Device Loan Request Form](#).

[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.

*If you are not sure what to expect during an Early Intervention Live Video visit, 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](#). These and other videos are also available on the [EI Clearinghouse website](#).*

## 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 on their website 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:**

[Star Net Region VI](#) offers workshops and information for parents & professionals who shape the lives of children age 0-5. Register for one of their **Parent Transition workshops** via zoom on April 26th at [9-10am](#) or [6-7pm](#). Also save the date for StarNet's family day on June 11th in Frankfort. Registration info to follow.

[Hands of Hope](#) is hosting a [Free food giveaway](#) on Saturday, April 16th, from 10am-2pm at 511 Oak Leaf Ct, in Joliet. See their [facebook page](#) for more information.

[The Spanish Community Center](#) in Joliet is hosting a Drive through [Children's Day Celebration](#) on April 30th at the JJC parking lot from 11am-2pm.

[Will County Center for Community Concerns](#) in Joliet has many supports for low income families. See below for information on some of their programs or call 815-722-0722:

- [LIHEAP](#) - utility assistance
- [Tax Preparation](#)
- [Case Management services](#)
- [Scholarship Program for low income students](#)

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.](#)

- 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=VGNkNjA4RUcyVjFSN2xNzNjMIBzdz09>

[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](#).

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](mailto: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.



[Chicago Feeding Group](#) is nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting families with children who struggle to eat. They offer workshops for parents and have several [Free on-demand webinars](#).

[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:**

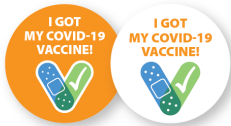
[Chicago Parent Magazine is hosting ParentEd Talks](#) which is a FREE virtual speaker series featuring some of the nation's top parenting experts! Virtual events are now through June 2022. Click the link for more information and to register.

[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 [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. Individuals can also text 5-5-2-0-2-0, with keywords such as "unemployment" or "food" or "shelter" and will receive information on how to navigate and access supports and services. This is free and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



## 2022 Will County Community Themes and Strengths Survey

If you are a Will County resident please take this 15 minute [Community Survey](#) about health in your town.

The Community Survey is part of an initiative by the MAPP

## WILL COUNTY RESIDENTS

Improve local health response, share your thoughts

#yourvoicematters



SURVEY IN ENGLISH:  
[HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/MQYJHP9](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MQYJHP9)



Collaborative conducted every 3 years to assess and address public health and community wide inequities, vulnerabilities and readiness to handle emerging public health threats and link individuals to essential public health services.

Will County residents are encouraged to participate in this survey, provided in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Your experience within this community will provide the detailed information to make key improvements. Thank You!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MQYJHP9> (English)

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9MCPGSP> (Spanish)

## 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.\*\*