



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

Will/Grundy/Kankakee/LaSalle Counties

Happy Holidays from everyone at CFC 15!!



Reading books with your child is a great way to support their language development and can be a time to snuggle together and connect during the busy holiday season. See below for some great holiday books to read with your child. Look for them at your local library, or click the link to listen to the stories read aloud.

[The Very Hungry Caterpillars's Snowy Hide and Seek](#) by Eric Carle

[Little Blue Truck's Christmas](#), by Alice Schertle

[Little Red Sleigh](#), by Erin Guendelsberger

[Meet the Latkes](#), by Alan Silerberg

[The Giving Snowman: A Children's Bedtime Story About Gratitude](#), by Julia Zheng

And this is a great book to help teach children about emotions and the power of listening, [The Rabbit Listened](#) by Cori Doerrfeld

Are you looking for something fun to do with your children this holiday season? Below are links for holiday crafts and fun activities for young children. Continue reading the newsletter to learn about fun family holiday events in all 4 counties!

For fun and educational ideas for your young ones this holiday check out [9 Things to do This Winter to Boost your Child's Development](#) from Brooks Publishing, and this link with [50+ Christmas Activities for Toddlers](#) from busytoddler.com

Here are two great links from Care.com on

- [13 easy holiday crafts kids can make](#)
- [10 DIY Christmas gifts kids can make](#)

This is a fun indoor play activity to do with your toddler, [Magic Foaming Dough Snowman](#) from funathomewithkids.com

Making cookies together is a great activity for you to do with your preschooler. Kids can help with measuring, mixing ingredients, and of course eating the cookies!

- [20 Easy Cookie Recipes for Kids](#)
- [25 Three Ingredient Simple Cookie Recipes](#)
- [Festive Holiday Cookies](#) from ChicagoParent.com

Try to take some time each day (even if just for a few minutes) to play with your child, it is good for them and for you too! According to the [National Institute for Play](#)



Please enjoy the information on **fun activities** and **support resources** for all families in this newsletter, as well as information on **some December awareness days and holidays**.
December is....

- [National Safe Toys and gifts month](#)

HAPPY KWANZAA!
Merry Christmas
Happy Hanukkah
Happy Holidays

- December 6th-12 is [National Influenza vaccination week](#)
- December 11th is [Worldwide Candle Lighting Day](#)- a global candle lighting ceremony symbolizing support for families grieving the loss of a child.
- December 18th is the first day of [Hanukkah](#)
- December 18th is also [Bake Cookies Day](#) - Bake a new Christmas cookie from [100 best Christmas Cookies from Food Network](#)
- December 21st the [Winter Solstice](#) or the first day of Winter
- December 24th is [National Egg Nog Day](#) and Christmas Eve
- [Christmas](#) is December 25th
- [Kwanza](#) beings December 26th - January 1st
- Happy New Year on December 31st - [Kid Friendly New Years Events from mykidslist.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.
-The staff at CFC 15

Fun Family Activities | December 2022



Will/Grundy County Events

[Reels at the Rialto 2022 Movie Series](#),
 Movie time is 7pm and tickets are \$5.
 December 18th - *It's A Wonderful Life*

[Where to see Santa in Will & Grundy Counties 2022](#)

[Lionel Railroad club open house and visit with Santa](#) in Mokena on
 December 10th 10am-2pm

[Visit with Santa at Big Frog Custom T-shirts in Shorewood](#) December
 11th, 1-3pm.

[Christmas in the Commons in New Lenox](#), weekends through December
 18th

[Evening with Santa](#) at C.W. Avery
 YMCA December 9th, 6-7:30pm

[Fosterpalooza Holiday Party](#) for foster
 and low income families at Joliet
 Junior College Dec 9th, 4-7pm

[Holiday Fun at the Morris YMCA](#) on
 December 15th, 5-7pm

[Santa is coming to the Galowich Family YMCA](#) on December 16th, 5-
 8pm. Register online

[Free Community Christmas Party](#) at
 Achieve Health & Wellness in



Kankakee County Events

[The Kankakee Salvation Army](#)
 has an Angel Tree program for the holidays.
 Families can register at
<https://www.saangeltree.org/>
 Enter "No" for invitation code, and then
 enter zip code to apply.

[Herscher Christmas Parade](#) Dec 9th

[City of Kankakee Christmas Parade](#) Dec
 10th

[Winter Wander](#) December
 10th in downtown
 Kankakee 10am-2pm.

[KVPD Holiday Ice Show](#)
 on December 10th

[Breakfast with Elmo and Cookie Monster at Exploration Station](#) on
 December 10th. \$10/child

[Ugly Christmas Sweater & Hot Chocolate Party](#) at the
 Kankakee County Museum
 December 16th, 3-8pm,
 Free



LaSalle County Events

[The Ottawa Salvation Army](#)
 has a holiday Angel Tree program for more
 information contact 815-
 433-0798, See the [Angel Tree Program Flyer](#)

[Gingerbread Bash at Crossbridge Church](#) in
 Ottawa December 10th

[Oglesby Winter Parade](#)
 December 10th at 4pm

[Illinois Valley Food Pantry Christmas Basket](#)
 Christmas Food Basket
 Pick up on December
 14th. No prior
 Registration needed

[Utica Annual Santa Parade](#) on December 17th

[Breakfast with Santa at Starved Rock Lodge](#) on
 December 18th,
 registration is required.

[Chris Kringle Market](#) in
 downtown Ottawa
 through December 18

*For fun events and
 parenting tips in LaSalle*

Bolingbrook on December 22nd

[Will County Forest Preserve District events calendar](#) has virtual & in-person events for children and families. Check out their [Christmas on Turtle Island zoom webinar](#) on December 23rd and the [Hibernation PJ Party](#) on December 29th

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](#).

[Bounce House Nights at Adventure Commons](#) for children with Special needs & their Families. \$3/child. Dec 19th & Dec 26th

To find more fun events in Kankakee County go to the [Kankakee County Calendar of Events](#).

County go to:

[Illinois Valley Area Parent References](#) Facebook page

[LaSalle County Calendar of Events](#)

[Ottawa IL Pick Us calendar of events](#).

Visit with Santa:

- Enter your zip code at [WhereisSanta.com](#) to find a Santa photo experience near you!
- [Find Holiday photos at a mall near you](#)
- [Santa visits at Louis Joliet Mall](#) through Dec 24th. Click the link for information. Reservations recommended.



Ongoing Holiday events around Chicagoland:

[Best Christmas light shows in Chicagoland](#) from mykidlist.com including a map of residential Christmas lights displays!

[Amaze Light Festival at Odyssey Fun World](#) in Tinley Park through January 8th. Tickets required.

[Aurora Festival of Lights Drive Through](#) through December 25th, registration required

[Santa's Naperville Workshop at the Riverwalk Cafe](#). Visits with Santa daily through December 22nd, Reservations required.

[Holiday Tunes & Twinkling Lights at Promenade](#) in Bolingbrook Nightly shows at 5pm through Dec 31

[Holiday Lights Festival at Romeoville's Village Hall](#) nightly through January 1st

[Naperlights in downtown Naperville](#) through December 31st 4-10pm. Santa will be there on Friday and Saturday nights!

[Chicago Botanic Garden Lightscape](#) an after dark illuminated trail, through January 8th. Tickets required

[Morton Arboretum Illumination: Tree lights](#) through Jan 7th. Tickets required.

[Lincoln Park Zoo - Zoolights](#) through January 1st, tickets required. On Mondays tickets are no charge!

[Brookfield Zoo - Holiday Magic at the zoo](#) runs through December 31. Purchase tickets online.

[Cosley Zoo in Wheaton - Festival of Lights](#)

[Museum of Science & Industry Christmas Around the World and Holiday of Lights](#) through January 8th. Tickets required.

[Christkindlmarket](#) in Chicago and Aurora

[Winter Wonderland at Discovery Museum](#) in Rockford Dec 17th- 30th. Tickets are \$10 or free to museum members.

[Email Advent Calendar sign up](#) from Chicago Parent. Receive a daily email reminder of the magic of the holidays!

Fun and educational places for families:

[DuPage Children's Museum](#) in Naperville. They are hosting a [New Years Eve Bubble Bash](#) on Dec 31st tickets required.

[Kidswork Children's Museum](#) in Frankfort. They are hosting a [brunch with Santa](#) on Dec 11th at Dancing Marlin. Tickets required.

[Discovery Center Museum](#) in Rockford

[The Shedd Aquarium](#)

[Field Museum](#) masks are recommended.

[The Museum of Science and Industry](#) [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.

[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!

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

[Broadway in Chicago is hosting a Sensory Friendly performance of The Lion King](#) at the Cadillac Palace Theatre in Chicago on January 7th, 2pm. Tickets prices start at \$33

Special Recreation Associations host virtual and in-person events for kids of all ages:

- [River Valley Special Rec Association](#) in Bradley
- [Lincolnway Special Rec Association](#) in New Lenox
 - Check out their [Winter 2023 Program Guide](#).
 - They have a [Family Holiday Party on December 12th](#) and the [Day with the Grinch on December 10th](#)
 - Families can reserve time in the [Nest Sensory Room](#)
- [Northern Will County Special Rec Association](#) (NWCSRA) in Romeoville.
 - Check out their [Winter/Spring 2023 brochure](#).
 - Their **sensory room** is available to reserve for individual use located at 10 Montrose in Romeoville. 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 ljevaney@nwsra.org for more information.

A New Initiative to Support Illinois Families

[Birth to Five Illinois](#) is an new statewide initiative with the goal of creating [Birth to Five Action Councils and Family Councils](#) across the state. Illinois has a goal of becoming the best state in the nation for families raising young children by improving and expanding the delivery of child care and early learning programs for children from birth until they start kindergarten.



Below are facebook pages for Birth to 5 Councils in the 4 counties CFC 15 covers.

[Will County - Birth to 5 Region 56](#)

[Grundy/Kendall Counties - Birth to 5 Region 24](#)

[Kankakee /Iroquois Counties - Birth to 5 Region 32](#)

[LaSalle/Marshall/Putnam Counties - Birth to 5 Region 35](#)

Is your Child Turning 3 soon and leaving EI?

Do you understand the Transition process out of Early Intervention when your child turns 3? Here are a few resources to help you during this time.

- [Transition: Understanding Family Rights](#) from the EI Clearinghouse
- ["When I'm 3, Where will I be"](#) Transition workbook for families from IL State Board of Education.
- The Parent Guide - [Educational Rights and Responsibilities: Understanding Special Education in Illinois](#) from the Illinois State Board of Education

If you have any questions about your child's transition out of the Early Intervention Program, please reach out to your service coordinator.

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



- [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 Early Intervention Visits are 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: Ipad, 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 pay for the assistive technology (Ipad, 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.

- [A Home visit with Zander's Family](#) 14 min
- [A Home visit with Sam's Family](#) 8 min
- [A home visit with Ares' Family](#) 9 min

Family Support Resources

Parent/Family Support Programs:

[Diaper Depot](#) is a program of United Way of Will County. Families in need can pick up FREE pre-packaged diaper packets once a month from one of three locations in Will County. Click the link for more information.

[Star Net Region VI](#) offers workshops and information for parents & professionals who shape the lives of children age 0-5. They are hosting a [webinar on "One Family's Encounter with Life and Special Education" for parents of children age 3-5 years](#) on January 17th or 30th. Click the link to register!

[ParentEd talks from Chicago Parent](#) are back! Click the link to register. The 2022-2023 series features experts sharing insights on parenting topics such as overcoming trauma, ADHD, understanding depression and anxiety, and more!

[Free ACES Parenting class](#) held at We Care in Morris. This 5 week program runs periodically



throughout the year and usually meets from 5-7pm, with meals and childcare provided. If your child has experienced trauma or trauma is impacting your ability to parent call 815-942-6389 for more information on this program.

[2-1-1 is now available in all counties](#) 211 is a 24/7 resource/crisis line that families can call to get connected to local human services and crisis intervention resources in their area.

[9-8-8 is a new mental health suicide and crisis hotline](#) that is free, confidential and available 24/7 to anyone experiencing mental health related distress.

[Count the Kicks](#) is an app for expectant parents to help monitor their baby's movement in the 3rd trimester. The app is free and available in 12 languages! Click the link to learn more.

The [IL Cares for Kids website](#) was created to support all IL families with children from birth through school age. They offer a FREE text program called [Ready4K](#).

- Ready4K is a FREE researched-based text program for families with kids ages 0-11.
- Families can expect to receive 3 texts a week with fun facts and tips on ways to help their child learn and grow, as well as links to local resources.
- TEXT IL4KIDS to 70138 to register or visit illinoiscareforkids.org

[Aunt Martha's Healthy Families Program](#) in Cook, Will, & Kankakee Counties has a home visiting Program to support new and expectant parents. Click the link for more information.

[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 815-725-2194 and ask to speak to someone in the Jump Start Program, or in Kankakee County call Tyler at 815-600-9744. Families can also [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 for the zoom link to join. They also offer [a Spanish Speaking group that meets weekly - 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 8 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.

[Family Resource Center on Disabilities](#) is Chicago's Metropolitan Area Parent Training and Information Center and supports families in 8 IL counties including Will & Grundy Counties. Call 312-939-3513, email: info@frcd.org, or go to the [FRCD facebook page](#)

[Family Matters Parent Training and Information Center](#) supports families in 94 IL counties including LaSalle and Kankakee Counties to provide information, referral, linkages, and training to parents, students with disabilities, and special education professionals. They can be contacted toll-free: 1-866-4FMPTIC (1-866-436-7842), or [FMPTIC facebook page](#)

[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](#)

[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 month for Dads to connect. [Click here to view the list of previous and upcoming zoom calls](#).

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

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 multiple 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.

[The Salvation Army in Kankakee](#) has a walk through family-choice food pantry open Tuesdays from 10:00am-12pm-1:00-3:00pm. 148 Harrison Ave in Kankakee.

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

COVID-19 Information

All Illinois residents age 6 months and over are eligible for the Covid vaccines. For more information go to [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)

At [COVID.gov](https://www.covid.gov) you can enter your county and get information on nearby locations for masks and respirators, vaccines and boosters, as well as testing and treatment options.

Did you know that your [private health insurance will cover the cost of home covid tests](#)? For more information contact your insurance provider.



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.

Child & Family Connections #15 | 2300 Glenwood Ave., Joliet, IL 60435

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