



Early Intervention
Child & Family Connections #15
February 2023 Family Newsletter

Will/Grundy/Kankakee/LaSalle Counties

Happy Valentine's Day on February 14th

Save the date for these upcoming events and learning opportunities for parents and caregivers in Early Intervention.

The Director of the Bureau of Early Intervention, Benny Delgado, is hosting [four virtual town halls with families](#) of children in Early Intervention. During this time you can share your experiences, ask questions, and voice your suggestions to improve early intervention. These meetings will be held online and information will be presented in English and Spanish. Upcoming dates are:

- May 2nd, 7:30-8:30pm
- September 6th, 9:30-10:30am
- November 9th, 7:30-8:30pm

To register for a town hall meeting, [complete this form](#) OR contact Meghan Burke.
Email: meghanbm@illinois.edu or Phone: 217-300-1226



The [Early Intervention Clearinghouse](#) with funding from the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Human Services, has developed [short videos with families about their early intervention experiences](#). In the videos, families may answer some of the following questions:

- What do you wish families knew about early intervention?
- How would you describe an early intervention session?
- What was the most helpful strategy you learned from early intervention?

The videos are highlighted in the [Winter 2023 issue of the EI Clearinghouse Family Newsletter](#).

[16th Annual Early Childhood Today Conference](#)

in-person in Tinley Park on March 8, 2023, hosted by STAR NET Region VI in collaboration with the Illinois Early Intervention Training Program. **This conference is FREE for families, caregivers and professionals.** There will be two sessions for the conference and you must register separately for the sessions. There will be Raffle Prizes at each session and a break between sessions for lunch on your own.

1. The AM session is offered 8:30 AM to 11:00 AM and is entitled "Keep The Day Flowing Smoothly: Effective Transition Strategies That Support Children's Needs" Presented by Marilyn Peterson, education consultant. [Click here for more information and to register for this session.](#)

2. The PM session is offered 12:30-3pm and is entitled "Getting to The Bottom of Anxiety & Behavioral Challenges for Everyday Success" Presented by Nisha S. Sanghvi, OTR/L [Click here for more information and to register for this session.](#)

If you have questions about these events or want to learn more about Star Net, email them at starnet@swccase.org.



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

February is....

- [American Heart Month](#)
- [AMD/Low Vision Awareness Month](#)
- [Black History Month](#)
- [National Cancer Prevention Month](#)
- [Children's Dental Health Month](#)
- February 13th -19th is [Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Week](#)
- February 14th is [Valentine's Day](#) and [Read to your Child Day](#). Check out this list of [Valentine's Day books](#) from Scholastic.com. Look for them at your local library!
- February 17th is [Random Acts of Kindness Day](#)
- February 20th is [National Muffin Day](#) - Check out this list of [70 Muffin Recipes from Taste of Home](#)
- February 21st is [Presidents' Day](#)
- February 28th is [Rare Disease Day](#)



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 | February 2023



Will/Grundy County Events

[Presidents Day at the Joliet Historical Museum](#), 10am free admission

[Free Kids Fair at Troy Middle School](#) on February 20th 9am-noon

[Reels at the Rialto](#) February 23rd at 7pm Casablanca

YMCA Family Night Un-birthday Party
February 24th 6-7:30-pm. Free & open to the community at [Galowich YMCA](#) & [Avery YMCA](#)



Kankakee County Events

[River Valley Special Rec Association](#) is hosting a **Garage sale & bake sale** on February 18th and a

Check out your local park district to find fun family events in your area!

- [Bourbonnais Township Park District](#)
- [Kankakee Valley Park District](#)



Come for the Beauty, Stay for the Adventure.

LaSalle County Events

[Utica's Mardi Gras Parade](#) 5pm downtown Utical

[Starved Rock Saplings: Fossil Frenzy](#) Feb 11th at 9:30am Free, ages 3-10

[Princess & Superhero breakfast at Starved Rock](#) March 5th 9:30-

[Will County Forest Preserve District events calendar](#) has virtual & in-person events for children and families, such as the [Wild Child](#) event on February 24th and the [Shamrock Search](#) during the month on March.

Check out your local park district to find fun family events in your area!

- [Joliet Park District](#)
- [Bolingbrook Park District](#)
- [Romeoville Park District](#)
- [Lemont Park District](#)
- [Mokena Park District](#)
- [Frankfort Park District](#)
- [New Lenox Park District](#)
- [Plainfield Park District](#)
- [Naperville Park District](#)
- [Channahon Park District](#)
- [Crete Park District](#)
- [Braidwood Park District](#)
- [Wilmington Island Park District](#)

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](#).

· [Mokena Park District](#)

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



11:30am

For fun events and parenting tips in LaSalle County go to:

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

[LaSalle County Calendar of Events](#)

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

For family events in the Chicagoland area go to [ChicagoParent.com](#). Check out the [Fun things to do with kids in Chicagoland this weekend](#) and view the [January/February](#)

Issue of Chicago Parent Magazine.

Check out the [Free Family Concert with Jim Gil at Liberty Cultural Center in Berwyn](#) on February 12th

FUN ways to celebrate Valentine's Day:

[12 Ways to Celebrate Valentine's Day for Kids](#) from Urban Sitter

[Valentine's Day crafts and Activities](#) from PBS Kids

[Ways to Celebrate Valentine's Day with kids](#) from Chicago Parent

[15 Fun Valentine's Day Family Traditions](#) from Aha Parenting

Fun and educational places for families:

[DuPage Children's Museum](#) in Naperville.

[Kidsworld Children's Museum](#) in Frankfort.

[Discovery Center Museum](#) in Rockford

[Chicago Children's Museum](#)

[Field Museum](#) masks are recommended.

[The Museum of Science and Industry](#) masks required in certain areas

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

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

Click [here to see information about Free Museum Days for Chicago Museums](#)

[Lincoln Park Zoo](#)

[Brookfield Zoo](#)

[Cosley Zoo](#) in Wheaton

[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

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](#).
 - 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](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.

How play supports your child's development



The importance of play! The [Harvard Center on the Developing Child](#) shares the following information on why play is so important for a child's development. "For babies and toddlers, simple, playful interactions with adults help develop sturdy **brain architecture**, the **foundations of lifelong health**, and the building blocks of **resilience**. Through games and playful activities, children can practice and strengthen important **executive function** skills that will help them throughout their lives, including learning to focus their attention, strengthening their working memory, and developing basic self-control."

Social Emotional Tip: Play builds your child's brain, so play with your child each day. Simple games are best for babies, and parents and caregivers are a child's favorite playmate.

Here are some fun and easy activities for brain-building-play for you and your baby or toddler:

- [6 Games to play with babies \(6 months\)](#)
- [5 Games to play with babies \(9 months\)](#)
- [5 Games to play with toddlers \(12 months\)](#)
- [5 Games to play with toddlers \(18 months\)](#)
- [6 Games to play with toddlers \(2-3 years\)](#)



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 Visits

[In-person checklists for Early Intervention providers and for families](#) 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.

If you have to cancel your In-person visit for any reason, consider trying a Live Video Visit for that week! 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: Ipads, hotspots, & Ipad stands. To apply to receive a device from the EI Clearinghouse, please complete the [Device Loan Request Form](#)



If you want to learn more about Early Intervention Video visits, see these videos from [ETCA](#) (Early Childhood Technical Assistance) Center of families talking about their experiences with EI 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.

[Text for baby](#) is an app that helps you track you babies, health, growth, and development from birth through your babies first year.

[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.

[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.

The only thing we
never get
enough of is love; and
the only thing
we never give enough
of is *love*.

HENRY MILLER

[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 illinoiscaresforkids.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](#). They host a [Virtual Parent-to-Parent Chat](#) via Facebook Live on the first Tuesday of every month (except June, July and Aug.) from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

[The Illinois Respite Coalition](#) has a Free statewide respite hotline. If you are in need of respite services please call 866-455-7377.

[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.

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.****

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