



Child Care Connection

Quality Team



NEWSLETTER

December 2023/January 2024

Happy Holidays!

In this newsletter, the Quality Team is pleased to provide activities & ideas in the spirit of celebrating young learners and their families. We hope you will take some time to get to know us and reach out with any questions about the services we provide to Mercer County Child Care Providers and the families they serve.

Special Days & Celebrations

- December 7: Hanukkah begins at sunset
- December 21: First day of winter
- December 25: Christmas Day
- December 26: Kwanzaa begins
- December 31: New Year's Eve
- January 1: New Year's Day
- January 15: Martin Luther King Day

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

My name is Ariel Perez and I am the Family Engagement Specialist at Child Care Connection. I facilitate Parent Cafés and Books, Balls, and Blocks events to inform families on desired services and positive child development outcomes.

The Parent Café is an opportunity to connect with other parents and engage in conversation regarding their strengths and challenges in parenting.

Books, Balls and Blocks is an interactive event for families with children 0-5 years old to learn about developmental milestones, developmental screenings and fun ways to encourage learning at home. Additionally, I am available to assist with accessing community resources such as housing and food assistance, child care referrals, enrichment programs and a variety of other resources in Mercer County.

You can reach me at arielperez@ccc-nj.org if you would like to receive more information on our events and resources.

I look forward to assisting you!

Community Events

- **Winter Wonderland at Kuser Park**
Friday December 1st 4:30-7:30
& Saturday the 2nd 2:30-7:30
- **Home Depot hosts DIY workshops for kids**
December 2nd is Gingerbread making from 9am-12pm.
- **Skating on the Square at Palmer Square in Princeton**
\$10 cash per person
Thursday – Friday 4pm – 7pm
Saturday – Sunday, 12pm – 3pm & 4pm – 7pm
- **Holiday Craft Day at Roebling Museum (all ages)**
December 9th 3pm-5:30pm
Visit the museum to make holiday crafts, then head over to the tree lighting in the center of our historic village!
- **Photos with Santa at the Princeton Marketplace**
Monday through Friday 11am-7pm (break 3pm-4pm)
Saturdays 10am-8pm (break 3pm-4pm)
Sundays 12pm-6pm (break 3pm-4pm)
Christmas Eve 9am-4pm (break 1pm-2pm)

Winter Boredom Busters

Tape Shape Game: Use painters tape to create a variety of shapes, letters, and/or numbers on the floor. Have your child stand on their favorite one, then give them instructions to follow that will lead them to their next destination. For example: "Bear crawl to the square", "Hop like a Frog to the T" or "Run to the rectangle"). This game keeps your child moving, but can also help them learn their shapes, letters and numbers!

Puzzle Piece Hunt: Takes pieces of a wooden puzzle and have your child search for them, returning each piece to the board as they go. This game gets them moving, encourages their critical thinking, and they will enjoy working towards a goal. They'll beg you to hide them again!

Ice Fishing Science Experiment

Supplies
Ice cubes
Glass of water
Salt

Food coloring (optional)

String or twine

Directions: Add half a dozen or so ice cubes to a cup and fill with water. Lay the string over an ice cube. Sprinkle salt over the string and ice. Wait 30-60 seconds. Gently pull the string. The ice should come along with it!



Get Cooking!

Cooking with your children is not only fun, but has developmental benefits as well! When you cook with your children, you improve their social-emotional development by building their confidence and encouraging self-direction and independence, improve their physical development using fine motor and hand-eye coordination skills, and improve their cognitive development by encouraging their thinking, problem-solving, and creativity!

Banana Snowman

What you'll need:

- Bananas
- Mini chocolate chips (or small raisins if you prefer)
- Pretzel sticks
- Baby carrots (sliced into small pieces by adult)
- Strawberries

What to do:

- Prepare the ingredients
- Peel and slice the bananas into several round pieces
- Cut strawberries into halves for the hats
- Arrange three banana slices on a plate, one on top of each other
- Place strawberries on top of the snowman's body with the cut side down.

MAKE A BANANA



Snowman

Recalls

- Cosco Jump, Spin, & Play Activity centers. The straps can detach or break while a child is in the activity center, posing fall and injury hazards.
- Thomas & Friends Wooden Railway Troublesome Trucks & Crates, and Thomas & Friends Wooden Railway Troublesome Truck & Paint. Small plastic piece contains a high-powered magnet that can detach or become loose, posing choking and magnet ingestion hazards.
- Hearth & Hand w/ Magnolia Mushroom Peg Sorters. Stems of toy mushrooms can detach, posing a choking hazard.
- UncleWu Life Infant Bath Seats. Fails to meet federal safety regulation for infant bath seats, including requirements for stability and leg openings, and can tip over while in use, posing a drowning hazard to babies.

You can find more at safekids.org and cpsc.gov

Resources

- Are you looking for more recipes you can make with your children? You can find some at www.mondaycampaigns.org/kids-cook-monday. (If you sign up for their newsletter, you'll receive weekly health and nutrition tips, too.)
- Want ideas for fun fitness activities for families? Go to www.mondaycampaigns.org/move-it-monday/fun-family-fitness
- Healthy Kids Healthy Future has tips and resources to support physical activity and healthy eating: [Healthy Kids, Healthy Future \(healthykidshealthyfuture.org\)](http://HealthyKidsHealthyFuture.org)
- Sesame Workshop also has lots of resources: [Healthy Minds and Bodies - Sesame Workshop](#)

Questions or Comments?

Contact us at:
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