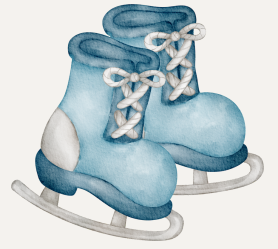




QUALITY TEAM NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER & JANUARY 2025

In our newsletters, the Quality Team is pleased to provide activities and 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.

Department Spotlight

We want to highlight some of the supports for programs and families that are available through the Quality Team. These include professional development, technical assistance, coaching, support with the Grow NJ Kids quality improvement cycle, and assistance with infant and toddler programs. We host family engagement events, provide opportunities for developmental screenings, and connect families to resources. We also coordinate the Mercer County ECE Shared Services Alliance, which is a membership-based organization that offers resources and initiatives relevant to child care businesses in our county.

For more specific information about opportunities available through our team, you can view our Padlet by scanning the QR code or by using this link: <https://padlet.com/ChildCareConnection/child-care-connection-iuddn4tz2c8lxxgv>



Resources



December is Safe Toys & Gifts Month, which is a reminder of the importance of choosing toys and gifts that meet safety standards and are developmentally appropriate. The goal is to prevent accidents and injuries from toys that aren't safe or appropriate for a child's age or developmental stage.

Some suggestions for selecting safe toys and gifts include: (1) Check labels for manufacturer's recommendations and make sure the toy passed a safety inspection; (2) Avoid small parts (including magnets and "button" batteries) that can be choking hazards for young children; (3) Check for hazards such as sharp edges or loose parts; (4) Consider children's age, interests, and abilities; and (5) Choose educational toys and gifts that encourage learning, creativity, and development.

You can also check for recalls of toys, clothing, equipment, and other items through the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission: <https://www.cpsc.gov/recalls>



Holiday Gift Giving



Holiday preparation includes decorating, cooking, shopping...the list goes on! But to give children a magical holiday experience, there's no need to stress or break the bank, especially when it comes to gift-giving.

Here is a basic gift guideline. Keep in mind the child's specific cognitive, emotional, and physical abilities:

- Infants (0-1 year): Soft toys, teething rings, simple rattles, large colorful objects.
- Toddlers (1-3 years): Push/pull toys, building blocks, simple puzzles, picture books.
- Preschoolers (3-5 years): Dress-up sets, arts and crafts, beginner games, dolls/action figures.

Think about what will excite them. Each child is unique, so anything personalized is sure to be a hit. Use their favorite TV show, movie character, hobbies, or extracurricular activity as a guide.

When possible, try to incorporate an educational element. For instance, if your child loves nature, a science kit to explore plants and insects would be fun and intellectually stimulating. Choosing a gift that will encourage outdoor or active play is a great idea. A bicycle, soccer ball, or swimming lessons will contribute to an active lifestyle, as well as promote social interaction and teamwork.

If you are keeping costs low this year, take advantage of the opportunity to teach children the difference between needs and wants with practical gifts, like a new pair of shoes or a set of books at their reading level.

Lastly, don't dismiss quality time, as it is always appreciated and appropriate! Get creative during those chilly winter evenings with a living room camp-out, put on a play, or go on a flashlight scavenger hunt. These experiences create memories that will last longer than anything you can buy in a store. ❤️

Activity

SNOW DOUGH RECIPE

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups corn starch
1/3 to 1/2 cup vegetable oil

OPTIONAL:
glitter, food dye

DIRECTIONS:

Mix together until combined and have fun!



Holidays/Special Celebrations

DECEMBER:

14- Hanukkah begins
21- Winter Solstice
25- Christmas Day
26- Kwanzaa begins
31- New Year's Eve



JANUARY:

1- New Year's Day
19- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
31- National Hot Chocolate Day



****Keep in mind, this list is non-exhaustive and is not intended to purposefully exclude any religious holidays or festivals****

Community Events

Capture Sweet Memories with Santa at MarketFair!

Location: Center Court (by Anthropologie)

Open daily until December 24

Bring your loved ones for a joyful photo experience surrounded by festive decor, twinkling lights, and traditional timeless charm.

Sensory-Friendly Santa: Sunday, December 7, 9:00 AM-10:30 AM



Winter Wonderland

Visit the holiday displays that come alive, meet with Santa Claus, and enjoy the sounds of the season at the 2025 Winter Wonderland!

December 5, 4:30 PM-7:30 PM

December 6, 2:00 PM-7:30 PM

*Tree-lighting on the 5th at 6:00 PM

Kuser Farm Park
390 Newkirk Ave
Hamilton Township



Roebling Museum

Saturday, December 13

3:00 PM-5:00 PM

Visit the museum to make holiday crafts, then head over to the tree-lighting in the center of Roebling! There will be craft stations set up in the museum for children of all ages.

Free admission.



Annual Menorah-Lighting

Tuesday, December 16

4:00 PM-5:00 PM

Nassau Inn Patio 10

Palmer Square, Princeton

Join us and our friends from The Jewish Center of Princeton for the annual menorah lighting!



"It's a New Year!" Hike

Friday, January 2, 2026 1:00 PM- 4:00 PM

Mercer County Park Marina

Free for all ages, registration required.

Family Sundays

1:30 PM- 2:30 PM

Free for all ages, no registration required.

Jan 4: Valentine's for Nature

Jan 11: Feed the Animals

Jan 18: STEM Games

Jan 25: Stories by the Fireside



I Spy Snowman



Puzzle Corner

Brrr! Winter is here, and there are lots of chilly things hiding in this picture!

1. Look carefully at the winter scene.
2. Count how many of each item you can find (hats, snowflakes, mittens, carrots, etc.).
3. Write the number in the box next to each picture.

	_____		_____		_____
	_____		_____		_____
					TOTAL _____

QUESTIONS
OR
COMMENTS?

CONTACT US AT:

609-989-7940

or

training@ccc-nj.org

