

# Healthy Kids West Virginia

West Virginia Child Care Nurse Health Consultants and Health Educators Newsletter

Volume 5, Issue 1



## Keeping Children Safe and Healthy in the Winter! By: Glenna Bailey, RN

Winter and cold weather is upon us and with it comes unique challenges in keeping kids safe and healthy. The American Academy of Pediatrics has some tips for caregivers and parents in how to navigate the winter months. Outside play is encouraged even in the winter. The key is proper clothing and an eye on the weather. Infants and children should be dressed warmly for outdoor activities. Use several thin layers and don't forget boots, hats, and gloves or mittens. A rule of thumb for babies over one year old and older children is to dress them in one more layer of clothing than an adult would wear in the same conditions. Also don't forget the sunscreen in the winter. UV rays can cause sunburn in cold weather especially if they are reflected off of snow.

Local weather reports should be checked on a daily basis and children should be kept indoors when there are weather advisories. In winter this means keeping an eye on the wind chill factor rather than the actual temperature. Local television reports and newspapers are a good source of this information.

The idea that cold weather causes colds and flu is not true. However, the viruses that cause colds and flus are more common in the winter and therefore we see more of these illnesses in the winter. Reduce the spread of germs with good hand washing and teaching children the proper way to cough and sneeze into their elbow. Children six months and older should get the influenza vaccine to reduce the risk of catching the flu. If you care for children less than six months of age, it is important that you get the flu vaccine to protect these infants too young to receive the vaccine.

Nosebleeds are more common in children in the winter due to dry heat indoors. First aid for nosebleeds include: Remain calm. A nosebleed can be frightening, but is rarely serious. Keep the child in a sitting or standing position. Tilt his head slightly forward. Have him gently blow his nose if he is old enough. Pinch the lower half of the child's nose (the soft part) between your thumb and finger and hold it firmly for a full ten minutes. If the child is old enough, he can do this himself. Don't release the nose during this time to see if it is still bleeding. Release the pressure after ten minutes and wait, keeping the child quiet. If the bleeding hasn't stopped, repeat this step. If after ten more minutes of pressure the bleeding hasn't stopped, call the child's parents for pickup. Don't Panic. Don't have him lie down or tilt back his head, as this can cause blood to drain into the back of the throat. Don't stuff tissues, gauze, or any other material into your child's nose to stop the bleeding.

Winter can be a magical time for children with snow and holidays. So have fun and follow these simple steps to stay healthy and safe through the cold months.



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Any topics you would like to see or ideas you would like to share in the Healthy Kids West Virginia newsletter? Let us know by emailing or calling

Renee, Jennifer or Glenna. Our contact information can be found on the back page.

Any topics that you feel would make a great training? Feel

free to let us know. We are always looking for new ideas!

Feel free to make copies of this newsletter to distribute to other child care providers and parents.

Check out our website [www.wvearlychildhood.org](http://www.wvearlychildhood.org)

## Winter...The Season To Get Outside? By Jennifer Conkle



### Winter...The Season To Get Outside?

As the air gets chillier and the snowflakes start to fall we have a tendency to spend more time indoors, but should we? You probably have heard people say “Don’t go outside, you’ll catch pneumonia” but have you ever heard the saying “There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes?”

Winter can be an exciting time for children to explore the outdoors and learn about the season. Most young children are unaware of the changes that occur outside during the winter months. Do you know that many young children have never experienced making a snowman or throwing snowballs? Some have never observed how hard the frozen ground can be or seen the effects of a frost.

There are many benefits to taking the children outside during the winter. The obvious one is that they have the opportunity for physical activity and play. With obesity remaining a concern for children, especially in WV, children need time to run and explore. This time also allows them to use their imagination and explore the outdoor environment in a way that they can’t do during the warmer months. The environment is very different in winter than it is in the other seasons. Prepare activities that explore these differences. The physical play will help them to be more focused and better able to listen and follow directions during less active times.

Have you ever felt a little run down and out of energy during the winter months? Even though it is colder, the sun still provides our bodies with vitamin D. Vitamin D helps promote better moods, higher levels of energy, and improved memory. Just 10-15 minutes of sunshine a day will help all of us reach our recommended daily allowance of vitamin D.

One of the biggest reasons to get some outdoor time is to escape the germs that are inside. Colds and flus are more common in winter partially because the air is continually recycled. For this reason alone, we all could benefit from some fresh crisp air. Research shows that when children play regularly outside they are less likely to develop autoimmune disorders and allergies.

Don’t wait for that rare warm day during the winter to take the children outdoors. Be proactive and go outside as often as you can. Dress the children appropriately and allow them to receive the benefits that the outdoor environment has to offer in cooler weather.

## Banana Oatmeal Cookies

2/3 cup ripe bananas

1 cup quick oats

½ teaspoon vanilla

½ teaspoon cinnamon

1. Mash bananas in a bowl.
2. Add remaining ingredients and mix well.
3. Drop cookie dough onto greased cookie sheet using a tablespoon, leaving 1 inch of space between cookies.
4. Bake at 350 degrees F for 15 minutes. Makes about 10 cookies.

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## Banana Snowman

1 banana, peeled and sliced (3 banana slices for each snowman)

5 mini chocolate chips

1 pretzel stick

1 baby carrot

1 strawberry, sliced into quarters

1. Take three banana slices and line them up as illustrated in the picture.
2. Use two mini chocolate chips for the eyes.
3. Use the other three for the buttons on the snowman.
4. Slice a sliver of the carrot off and poke it into the top banana slice under the eyes to serve as the nose.
5. Break the pretzel stick in half and these will serve as the arms. Poke them into the middle banana slice.
6. Place one of the strawberry quarter slices above the top banana slice to serve as the hat.



## When it comes to caring for children, always “Watch Your Back!”

Caring for children can be hard work: both mentally and physically! Providing optimal care to a child requires a certain amount of physical demand. Child care providers can spend a good portion of their day sitting on the floor with children or sitting in child-size chairs. When they are not sitting, they may be moving or carrying heavy objects, lifting young children, kneeling down to a child’s level, or reaching above shoulder height to obtain stored objects. Over time, many of these every day motions can cause stress or damage to our back and shoulders. Whether it is dull and aching or sharp and stabbing; pain can make it hard to concentrate on your job.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than one million workers suffer back injuries each year. Many of these injuries involve the lower back and are caused by lifting incorrectly. Ergonomic professionals claim, it’s not how much you lift or carry, but the technique in which you do it. For child care providers, proper lifting techniques can prevent back and shoulder strain and serious injury when it comes to lifting children from the floor, in and out of high chairs, cribs, etc., and on and off of changing tables. Even sitting incorrectly can cause stress and strain to our musculoskeletal system.

To keep yourself safe, use the following suggestions adapted from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to make your job easier:

**Use back support and stretch** – avoid sitting on the floor (or small chairs) too long without good back support. Use the wall, larger furniture or a large pillow to provide good support and proper posture guidance. Stretch muscles often.

**Lift smart** – don’t lift children or other objects with your back. Even small objects like toys can contribute to back damage if the lifting procedure is wrong. Always lift with your legs. Bend your knees and keep the child or object close to your body.

**Do not twist** – avoid twisting and jerking motions when lifting. You should always point your feet in the direction of the lift.

**Avoid heavy loads** – never carry heavy loads by yourself. If possible divide the load into smaller, lighter loads, or use a cart or co-worker to assist you.

Remember you only have one back and it is up to you to watch it! Strive to incorporate these tips into your everyday routine to protect your back and keep yourself healthy.



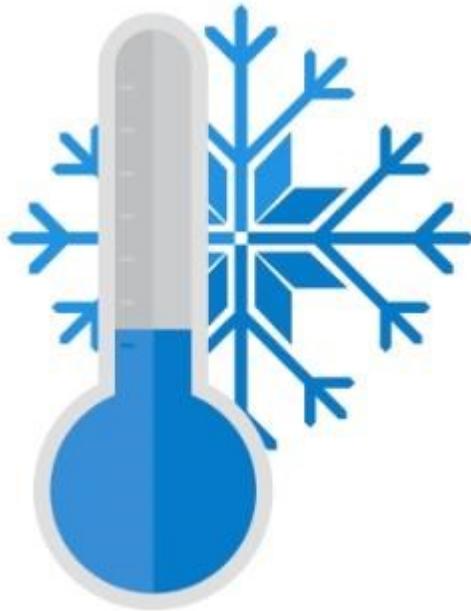
WV Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources (WV ECTCR) is a statewide program designed to provide professional development opportunities for the early care and education community. Through an extensive network of information, training and technical assistance, resources, and collaboration, WV ECTCR strives to improve the quality of early education services for young children and their families.

[www.wvearlychildhood.org](http://www.wvearlychildhood.org)

# Movement Ideas To Share!

(Please copy and distribute to families and other Child Care providers)

## Indoor Physical Activities by Renee Y. Stonebraker, RS



Winter will be here soon, and that means cold temperatures. Some days may be too cold to take the children outside, so the moderate to vigorous activity time has to be done inside. Here are some activity ideas to get them moving!

- Throw a soft ball into a bucket and vary the distance
- Musical chairs
- Crazy golf – set up a golf course using household items
- Have a dance party
- Follow the leader games
- Make an obstacle course
- Practice kicking and throwing using a soft ball
- Play ‘Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes,’ ‘Hokey-Pokey,’ and ‘If Your Happy and You Know It’
- Act out a story
- Bowling using a soft ball and empty water bottles
- Jumping over a piece of rope or yarn
- Hopscotch

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Covers Link, Connect, and MountainHeart South

**Nurse Health Consultant Vacant Position**

Covers MountainHeart North, Choices, and CCRC



**We are pleased to welcome Jennifer Conkle as our new WV Child Care Health Educator.**

Hello!

My name is Jennifer Conkle and I am the Child Care Health Educator for the Link, Connect, and Mountain Heart South CCR&R regions. I am a graduate of Marshall University with a Bachelor's degree in Counseling and Rehabilitation and a Masters in Preschool Special Needs. I have over 20 years of experience in the field of early childhood. I have worked in the classroom with children 12 months to 12 years of age. I have also been the director of a nationally accredited child care center that served children 6 weeks through 5 years. I was also previously an Early Childhood Specialist with Link Child Care Resource and Referral and the Regional Coordinator for WV's ACDS program. Throughout my years working on behalf of children and families I have met many wonderful and caring individuals, and I look forward to meeting many more as I travel to new places to provide training and technical assistance in the areas of health, safety, and nutrition.

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