



Winter 2011

NEW DIRECTIONS

Early Childhood Direction Center

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ECDC is a regional clearinghouse that provides free information, referral, technical assistance and support to families, professionals, and community agencies concerned with children birth to five with suspected or diagnosed delays or disabilities.

We provide ongoing community training programs for both parents and professionals.

ECDC is funded by the New York State Education Department, hosted by Women and Children's Hospital and provided in-kind support from People Inc.

If you would like to be included on our list serve to receive the latest federal, state and local updates, please send an email to ecdc@kaleidahealth.org and indicate whether you are a parent or a professional.

Five Best Toys

By Tracey Banks

In a recent article in Wired Magazine (www.wired.com/geekdad/2011) Geek Dad Jonathan Liu wrote about the five toys no child should be without. These toys fit easily in any budget and are appropriate for a wide age range. You may think that the list included the newest gadgets and technology, but surprisingly there was not one electronic device or store-bought item on the list. Here are Jonathan Liu's five best toys:



1. Stick – this classic toy comes in a variety of shapes and sizes and can be found throughout your neighborhood or in a local park. Sticks are great for pokers, diggers, reach extenders, snowman arms, and swords. They can also be easily combined with other toys.



2. Box – another versatile toy that comes in a variety of shapes and sizes. The box can be turned in to furniture, robot costumes, and forts and combined with sticks to make a boat.



3. String – (not for infants and toddlers) can be used to tie things together, hang things on knobs, make leashes for stuffed animals, create telephones and combined with the stick to make fishing poles.



4. Cardboard tube – (also known as “spys,” “tooters,” and “hoo hoos”) are free with rolls of toilet paper, paper towels and wrapping paper. Cardboard tubes can be used for telescopes, binoculars, and instruments.



5. Dirt – has been around longer than any other toy. It's great for digging, piling, and sifting. Just add water to make more fun with mud.

Children of all ages will not only have hours of fun with these simple toys, but will learn new science, math and language skills as well as improve their large and small motor skills. If Geek Dad's five best toys are not enough, here are three more:

Water – is easy to access and fun in all of its forms – liquid, snow, and ice. Water is great for experiments and becomes even more fun when you add soap.

Rocks – the variety of sizes and shapes makes them great for building and collecting and they can be easily combined with sticks, strings, boxes, dirt and water for more fun.

Blankets/sheets – make fantastic forts, tents and capes. They are fun to hide under and roll up in.

Most of us have fond memories of playing with these items or watching our children get hours of enjoyment with these simple toys. I'm sure you can think of even more simple, free or low cost items that are great for children. Ask yourself, your friends and your children – “What are your five best toys?”

In The Spirit of Giving!

Many of us as parents and family members are so grateful for all the help that we have received for our children with special needs. Often we think "what can I do" to give back and help to make things better for other families.



With as little as a couple of hours every few months you can make a difference. Agencies, schools and community groups are always looking for parent's input and ideas about services, programs and the needs of families and children with disabilities and special needs.

Here are some ways to help:

Local Early Intervention Coordinating Council (LEICC)

If your child currently receives or has received services through Early Intervention (birth to 3 years old) the LEICC is the place for you. Every county has a Local Early Intervention Coordinating Council. It is an advisory council to the county that provides services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays. The council typically meets quarterly and is interested in ways to improve services to families and children.

Committee on Preschool/School Age Special Education (CPSE/CSE) Parent Member

For families of children 3 to 21 that receive or have received Special Education services this is a wonderful volunteer opportunity. The parent member of the CPSE/CSE is a parent of a child with a disability who lives in the school district or a neighboring school district. They attend the Committee meetings to support the parents/guardians and to help insure that the focus of the meeting is on the child. A parent member of the CPSE/CSE should not be confused with a Parent Advocate.

The role of the parent member at a Committee meeting is:

- support the parent(s) and explain the process as needed
- provide feedback from a parent's point of view

- seek clarification and explain to the parent as needed
- participate in decisions as an equal member of the Committee

Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA)

Many schools have Parent Teacher Associations or Special Education PTA's. Parent involvement is so important to your child's success in school. Joining your PTA or SEPTA is a great way to meet other families in your school district and be the first to learn about new district ideas and programs!

Call ECDC 1-800-462-7653 to find out how you can get involved and "Give Back"

Websites to investigate:

Grants for children with medical needs not covered by health care plan:

http://www.uhccf.org/apply_applicant.html

Learn more about the Association of Perinatal Networks, the Premature Infant Health Network and our other initiatives.

www.associationofperinatalnetworks.org



New location for 2012

The Conference Center Niagara Falls
101 Old Falls Street
Niagara Falls, NY
For more information see
www.ddawny.org