



Early Intervention Clearinghouse

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Planning for Summer

The summer can be a fun and challenging time. It can be liberating to not have school or daily routines. Without formal scheduling guidelines, you can choose your preferred activities. However, it can also be difficult to identify such activities, especially without guidance or suggestions. Below, we list some suggestions for summer activities.

Capitalize on Your Child's Strengths and Preferences

As a parent, you know your child best. Think about your child's favorite activities, places, and people. Try to identify summer activities that align with your child's strengths and preferences. For example, if your child loves water play, consider visiting a local children's museum that has water activities, going to the local pool, and organizing water activities in your back yard.

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Build Skills When Exploring Outdoors

Warm weather means it is a great time to explore the outdoors. Outside play is a wonderful opportunity to work on early intervention (EI) outcomes. Talk with your EI team about strategies and activities that may be especially useful for your family as you work on your EI outcomes. As you talk, you can brainstorm how everyday activities can become opportunities to practice new skills.

For example, consider the fun warm weather pastime of blowing bubbles. Infants and toddlers love to see bubbles magically fly from a bubble wand. Did you know that when you are blowing bubbles you are working on many skills, including:

- **Oral motor skills:** Blowing bubbles develops the small muscles in your child's mouth as they pucker their lips and blow bubbles. Strengthening these muscles is important for developing their ability to form clear sounds when speaking and to eat and swallow safely.

- **Gross motor skills:** Your child can reach to pop bubbles and build hand-eye coordination as they reach. Walking toddlers and infants may follow the bubbles on their feet and practice their moving skills.

- **Eye tracking skills:** Younger infants and toddlers learn to follow the bubbles with their eyes.

- **Vocabulary and concept development:** As you talk to your child about bubbles, you expose them to words such as *clear*, *soapy*, *float*, and *pop*.

- **Cognitive development:** When young children touch a bubble, it pops, giving them a chance to explore cognitive concepts such as cause and effect.

- **Joint attention:** Smiling and laughing together builds strong relationships and helps children learn to connect with others and discover shared interests. Who can help but smile as bubbles float by?

Be creative when you think of places for summertime play. The sandbox, the park, the community pool, the farmers market, and the zoo are all exciting places to explore in warm weather.



Did you know that when you are blowing bubbles, you are working on many skills targeted in early intervention?

Let's consider swimming. The pool is a great place to cool off and enjoy time together. Your EI team's developmental or physical therapist can help you find the right equipment to help your child be safe in the water or teach you how to hold your child so you both feel safe and secure.

A trip the zoo or county fair might seem overwhelming, especially for a child with sensory challenges. Your EI team can help you find picture books to help your child become familiar with the upcoming experience and plan so

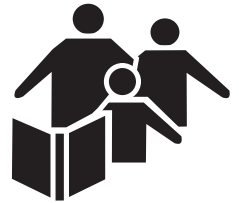
the pace and timing of activities are enjoyable for all of your family members. Adaptations such as a picture schedule or noise cancelling headphones could help your child manage this new experience.

Your EI team can help you think of adaptations you may need to make to help your child successfully explore these spaces. They are a resource to help you think of equipment or strategies to add to your favorite summertime activities.

Through planning and teamwork with your EI team, you can be ready for a full summer of fun and learning!

Set Me Up for Success!

Families reach EI outcomes by making the most of everyday moments. In early intervention (EI), we focus on how children learn during everyday routines. Caregivers can help children successfully participate by encouraging infants and toddlers to be active participants throughout the day. As a caregiver, you can:



Take Turns With Your Child

- You do, I do! Wet a washcloth and let your child take a turn wiping his own face.
- Wait for a response and help your child learn the routine. For example, say “so big” and wait for your child to hold her arms up over her head or help her hold her arms up.
- Take turns stacking blocks or throwing bean bags or rolled-up socks into a basket.

Match and Follow Your Child

- Notice where your child is looking or turn your head toward the sound your child is reacting to.
- Respond to your child’s feelings by naming emotions such as sad, happy, and mad.
- Copy your child’s action or sound. Wave your hand back at her wave or clap along with your child.

Challenge Your Child

- Give your child safe and interesting objects and toys to explore. She may enjoy banging on pots or looking through a transparent cup.
- Add to routines. Sing a new toothbrushing song, let your child fill and empty a laundry basket while you fold clothes, or play peekaboo with a towel during bathtime.
- Present “dilemmas” for the child to solve, such as hiding a toy in a box and encouraging your child to find it or putting a favorite toy further away to encourage her to pull up and reach for it.

Get in Place to Connect

- Position a nonmobile child so he can hear and see well.
- Physically support your child to allow interaction by using pillows or your hands.
- Use all of your spaces, such as a blanket on the floor, a grassy patch, or playground as places for interactions.



Adapted from the Illinois Early Learning Project “Early Learning Moments” series

 For more information, visit the Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse at <http://eiclearinghouse.org>

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Early Intervention.



Family Fun Resources

I Love Dirt! 52 Activities to Help You and Your Kids Discover the Wonders of Nature

Jennifer Ward
Trumpeter, 2008
GV 197.63 .W39 2008



150+ Screen-Free Activities for Kids: The Very Best and Easiest Playtime Activities

Asia Citro
Adams Media, 2014
TT 157 .C4984 2014

Fifteen Minutes Outside: 365 Ways to Get Out of the House and Connect with Your Kids

Rebecca P. Cohen
Sourcebooks, 2011
GV 182.8 .C64 2011



And the Cow Jumped Over the Moon: Over 650 Activities to Teach Toddlers Using Familiar Rhymes and Songs

Pam Schiller and Thomas More
Gryphon House, 2006
MT 920 .S334a 2006
Also available as an **eBook**

The Rhythm of Family: Discovering a Sense of Wonder Through the Seasons

Amanda Blake Soule
Trumpeter, 2011
GT 2420 .S67 2011



Treasure Basket Explorations: Heuristic Learning for Infants and Toddlers

Laura Wilhelm
Gryphon House, 2017
LB 1139.35 .P55 W55 2017
Also available as an **eBook**

The Artful Parent: Simple Ways to Fill Your Family's Life With Art and Creativity

Jean Van't Hul
Roost Books, 2013
TT 157 .V285 2013



30 Fun Ways to Learn With Blocks and Boxes

Clare Beswick
Gryphon House, 2011
GV 1218 .B6A27 2011

Banish Boredom: Activities to Do with Kids That You'll Actually Enjoy

Rebecca Green
Gryphon House, 2016
Only available as an **eBook**

Baby Steps to STEM: Infant and Toddler Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Activities

Jean Barbe
Redleaf Press, 2017
LB 1140.5 .S35 B37 2017

The Sand Bucket List: 366 Things to Do With Your Kids Before They Grow Up

David Hoffman
Running Press, 2012
GV 182.8 .H64 2012



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SUMMER

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Meet Your Child's Needs

Summer can also be a great time to creatively think about how to address your child's needs. For example, think about your goals for your child. Do you want your child to eat independently? Do you want your child to have more words? Now, in light of these goals, identify activities that may provide a platform to meet them. At right is a list of potential goals and corresponding activities

Enjoy the Summer

As parents of children receiving early intervention services, it can be easy to stay in "therapist" mode. Many parents recognize the need to spend time with their children without working toward certain goals. To this end, you may want to look at these links written by parents of children with disabilities about how to balance responsibilities:

I Am Not My Child's Therapist

<https://themighty.com/2016/06/trying-to-be-a-mom-and-a-therapist/>

I Am Not My Child's Therapist . . . Or Am I?

<http://www.confessionsofthechromosomallyenhanced.com/2016/06/i-am-not-my-childs-therapist-or-am-i.html>

Regardless of the activities you pursue, make sure you enjoy the time being with your child this summer!

| Goals | Activities |
|--|---|
| Improve fine motor skills | Use Play-Doh to create items (e.g., bracelets), use tongs to pick up small items (e.g., buttons), encourage your child to turn pages in a book, practice coloring |
| Improve gross motor skills | Go to the park, practice jumping, go down the slide, try a tricycle, walk to a neighbor's house |
| Improve receptive and expressive language skills | Ask your child to request what he/she wants to do, encourage your child to respond to questions, practice saying "hello" and "bye bye" to new people you meet |
| Increase play skills | Identify play groups in the community, join local events for children, go to storytime at the local library |

Family Outcomes Survey

Improving outcomes for children and families is a priority of the Illinois Early Intervention Program. Every year we strive to learn just how effective early intervention has been in helping families achieve outcomes by sending out a "Family Outcomes Survey" to each family exiting the Early Intervention Program. The survey results help us understand the changes you experienced as a result of the early intervention services and support your family received.

Early intervention is intended to help both children and families. The Family Outcomes Survey questions focus on you understanding your child's strengths, abilities, needs, and your ability to help your child develop and learn.

Family feedback helps us evaluate our program for future improvements and can also help your local CFC understand how families are benefitting from their work. When you receive the Family Outcome Survey in the mail, please answer the questions and mail it back in the self-addressed, postage prepaid envelope as soon as possible.

We greatly appreciate your input, as it is invaluable! Thank you in advance!

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Illinois Early Intervention Clearinghouse

Early Childhood & Parenting Collaborative
College of Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Phone: 877-275-3227 (in Illinois)

Principal investigator: Meghan Burke
Contributors: Sarah Isaacs, Rebecca Swartz, Jill Tompkins, & Meghan Burke
Editor: Kevin Dolan

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