

April  
May  
June

# HELP ME GROW GEAUGA COUNTY EARLY INTERVENTION METZENBAUM NEWSLETTER

2024

Serving Geauga County children from birth to age 3 with  
Developmental Disabilities. Helping people Live, Learn, and Earn in our community

Visit our website for more information on services provided by the Geauga County Board of Developmental Disabilities:  
[www.geaugadd.org](http://www.geaugadd.org)

  @Gaugadd

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## ARE YOU CONCERNED?

On March 7th we had our annual Night to Shine Event at the Metzenbaum Center.

You know your child best. If you have concerns that your child has a delay/disability or know someone who has concerns, call us! There is no need to "wait and see."

Early Intervention (EI) works with families with children birth to age 3 who have developmental disabilities so that they have the best possible start in life.

To make a referral: Visit [www.ohioearlyintervention.org](http://www.ohioearlyintervention.org) to complete the process online or call us at 1-800-755-GROW



 **METZENBAUM CENTER**  
The Geauga County Board  
Of Developmental Disabilities





Did you know there is open swimming for Early Intervention Families with Brenda at the Metzenbaum Center's indoor therapeutic pool on Wednesdays!  
 Contact Brenda at [bpowell@geaugadd.org](mailto:bpowell@geaugadd.org) or 440-688-5846 to sign up.

# PARENT RESOURCES

**Music at Metzenbaum**

The Geauga County Board of Developmental Disabilities offers a variety of inclusive music programs available to families in Geauga County. We will bounce, sing, and explore music together. Music is powerful, it helps with our attention spans, turn taking and preschool readiness skills. It builds relationships and creates a bond. Music engages a child by gaining their attention and motivating them and most importantly, MUSIC is FUN! Families must live in Geauga County to enroll in weekly classes. Anyone can join the virtual classes.

**Virtual Facebook Music**- available every Wednesday at 9:30 on the page Geauga County Board of DD, posts to Instagram afterwards

   

**Mini Music** is for babies ages 6 months up to 17 months old  
 Classes on Tuesdays at 9, 10 or 11

**Movin with Music** is for children ages 18 months up to 3 years old  
 Classes on Mondays or Thursdays at 9, 10 or 11

For more information or to enroll in a class contact Carol at [ccolombo@geaugadd.org](mailto:ccolombo@geaugadd.org)

 

**"Sixty minutes of daily unstructured free play is essential to children's physical and mental health."**  
 American Academy of Pediatrics



## Music at the Libraries

Movin with Music will be offered at: Thompson library on April 19th, June 14th, & August 30th.  
 Geauga West library on May 3rd. Burton library on July 12th. Contact the library for sign up.

# Before Your Child Talks, Playing with Your Child

## By James D MacDonald Ph. D & Paula Rabidoux Ph. D

Playing with your child is more important for communication than you may think. If playing with your child is difficult for you, you are not alone. Many parents find it difficult playing with children who have delayed communication skills. The strategies described should be helpful in finding ways to play with your child.

### **Play in the same activity as your child.**

Everything a child does, says, sees, and hears can be the start of an interaction with you or others. Begin by watching and listening to what your child is saying and doing. Follow your child's lead and quietly join in. When you become a part of your child's world, you will be in the best place to help her learn basic communication skills. Think of this: Don't we enjoy being with people who like to do (or talk about) the same things we do? So does your child.

This does not mean you must spend long hours playing on the floor surrounded by toys. If you have a playful attitude in all your daily activities and routines with your child, you can accomplish a lot than if you set aside an hour or two for structured language lessons.

These playful interactions are the first conversations whether words are used or not. Children need lots of practice staying with people in brief, frequent activities long before they talk. Later, when they start using words, they will know how to stay on a topic and spontaneous conversations will become natural parts of their lives.

### **Play like your child plays.**

Most of us are so eager for our language delayed children to do newer and more mature things that we act and talk in ways our child cannot possibly copy. Children need their parents to do things they can do now and show them new actions, sounds and words in small steps.

Learning communication skills is like learning everything else for your child- it is easier when it is fun. You do not need to have expensive educational toys and computer programs to do this. Your own imagination and sense of fun can be your best toys. In other words, your child needs you to be there.

For example, one mother found a way to make common routines a shared playtime while she watched her daughter wash her face and brush her teeth, she made faces in the mirror. Most times we tell our children to "stop playing and hurry up!" But for this mother she saw a way to make this routine fun and create some turn-taking. Learning to communicate is as important as getting clean.

To make an interactive game of brushing her teeth, this mother simply made faces back and forth in the mirror with her daughter. They began to imitate each other's gestures and expressions, including washing faces and brushing teeth. The girl loved the new game and continued it for a long time. Not only did she learn that playing with another person can be more fun than playing by herself, but she also got needed practice in staying in an activity.

Remember the first goal is to simply keep your child with you, doing something together, for as long as your child participates. The more your child interacts with people, the more she will learn to communicate.

### **Play more- talk less.**

Does the following sound a little like you? "Now watch! I'm making a red ball with your Play-Doh. See how I do it? Can you do that? Good! Now let's make a long, green snake."

Most of us talk too much when we play with our language delayed child. Children need us to do what they can do. And then wait and give them time to take a turn. A simple "pat...pat" or Roll... roll", would be easier for a child to do and say.

If you choose your gestures, sounds and words carefully, and use them sparingly, you will see your child staying longer with you in the activity and doing more with you. It sounds funny, but the less you do, the more your child can do. You just need to keep her with you.

Be more interesting than your child's distractions.

It is difficult to pay attention to a dull, boring speaker. Our minds wander and we go off into our own thoughts. Don't we learn more from someone who is interesting and excited about their topic. It is the same for your child. If you are like the dull, boring speakers and play in a very grown-up way, your child's attention will go elsewhere too. But your child will come back as quickly as she left if you are not interesting and exciting. Watch other adults play with children, it is easy to see what children like best- the lively, exciting, and maybe silly adult.



# A NIGHT TO SHINE



The Early Childhood Subcommittee meeting will be held Thursday April 4, 2024 via zoom at 10:00 AM. Meeting ID 820 5096 9459 Passcode 308460 [Meeting link](#)

The ECS is an advisory group of Geauga Family First Council. Membership is comprised of various community agencies, representatives, and parents who partner together to share ideas, experiences, and expertise in the area of early childhood development. The focus of the group is to gather input regarding direction, planning & success for the Geauga County Help Me Grow program. We encourage Help Me Grow parents to join us to share feedback about services they are receiving and/or gaps in services they might be experiencing. We value your opinions, and your time is valuable to us and will send you a \$25 gift card for attending the meeting. Please contact your Service Coordinator if you have any questions.



## Parent Rights

To file a complaint about your child's early intervention services please contact:  
The Ohio Department of DD EI via:  
Phone: 614.466.6879  
Email: [ei@dodd.ohio.gov](mailto:ei@dodd.ohio.gov)  
Mail: Ohio Dept. of DD  
Early Intervention  
30 East Broad Street, 12th Fl.  
Columbus, OH 43215  
[Click Here to View Your Rights as a Parent!](#)

Payment choices for additional Early Intervention (EI) services determined by child's IFSP. Additional EI services may include Audiology, assistive technology devices or other needed services to meet IFSP outcomes as determined by your child's EI team. For more information contact your child's Service Coordinator.  
[Click Here to Learn about System of Payment!](#)

