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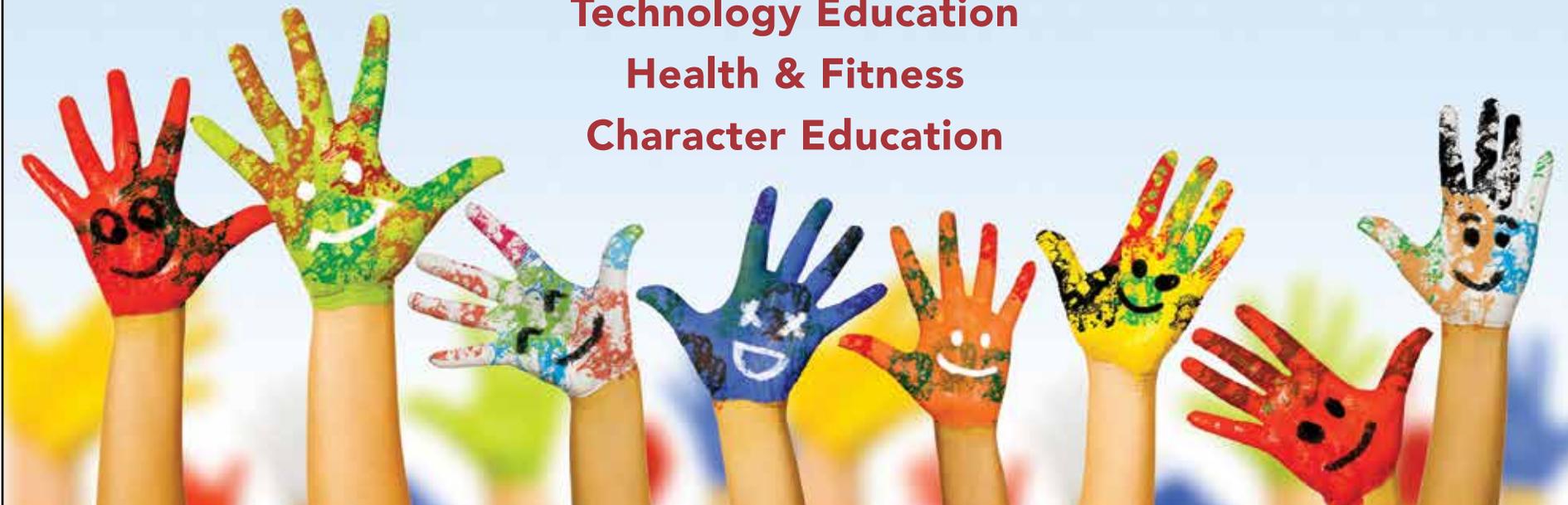
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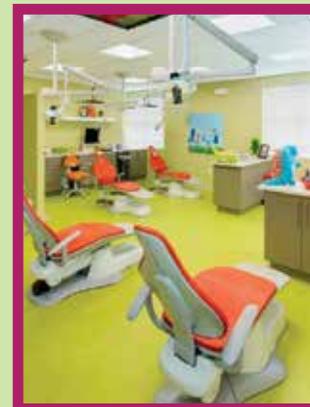


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# SCHOOL ANSWERS

## A Parent's Secret Weapon

By Susan Heckler

**M**any people have stand-out children. Some stand out as being gifted and talented while others stand out with struggles or disabilities. While the public school system does its best to teach and manage the education of their students, sometimes a little extra assistance is needed.

School Answers has recently opened up in Colts Neck. While there are many businesses out there to tutor students, this one seems to stand out as being significantly different. They work hand-in-hand with individual public and private schools to accentuate the existing curriculum. They are teaching the child exactly what the school requires them to know.

Their teachers are all multi-degree and multi-certified through the State of New Jersey's Department of Education. They offer instructional services ranging from one on one customized instructional sessions, group instruction, homework help, reading and math specialists, and online instruction.

For those with stand-out children, they offer child study team services and student diagnostic testing as well as counseling and social skills training. If you suspect your child has special needs or talents, they can get you the answer faster than going within your school district. They offer such services as ability testing, IQ testing, performance testing, and grade

placement testing. This will assess if your child needs remediation help to catch up to the level of their class or competitive help to advance beyond the classroom. On staff are psychologists, school certified social workers, and licensed clinical social workers available to work with students to address their varying needs for grief counseling, divorce, bullying and/or harassment, social skills training, or executive functioning training.

In addition to the academic tutoring, School Answers will teach organizations skills, time management, content learning, study skills, test taking strategies, project organization and completion and supplemental tutoring for that competitive academic edge. What student, no matter how bright, can't benefit from this?

School Answers offers monthly memberships, similar to those offered at fitness centers where your child can come five days a week for two hours a day. The pricing is affordable and competitive with companies who think they are the competition.

For more information about the services offered, contact Stacy Lynn Costa, MA, Ed.S. CEO at School Answers, 281 Route 34, Colts Neck, NJ 07722, 732-865-1900 or 855-KID-ANSWERS or visit their website at [www.schoolanswers.com](http://www.schoolanswers.com). ■

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# WHAT IS A WORD?

**Noun:** A noun is a person, place, thing, quality, or act.

Can you name 3 examples: \_\_\_\_\_

**Verb:** Verbs are action or existence words that tell what nouns do.

Can you name 3 examples: \_\_\_\_\_

**Adjective:** An adjective describes a noun.

Can you name 3 examples: \_\_\_\_\_

**Adverb:** An adverb describes a verb, adjective, or adverb. It often ends in "ly".

Can you name 3 examples: \_\_\_\_\_

**Interjection:** An outcry or sudden utterance. Usually starts a sentence.

Can you name 3 examples: \_\_\_\_\_

**Preposition:** A preposition describes the relationship between a noun and another noun (or verb or adverb).

Can you name 3 examples: \_\_\_\_\_

**Conjunction:** A conjunction joins together words, phrases, or clauses.

Can you name 3 examples: \_\_\_\_\_

**Pronoun:** A pronoun replaces a noun or noun phrase that is understood from context.

Can you name 3 examples: \_\_\_\_\_



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### Amelia Earhart Word Find

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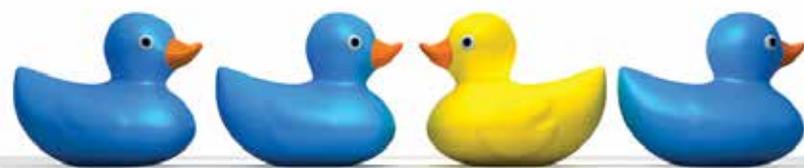
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## Fun Ways to Celebrate National Opposite Day

By Brianna Siciliano

**D**id you know that opposite day is a real holiday? On Sunday, January 25, it is National Opposite Day! Children will love celebrating this day from start to finish, so why not fuel their entertainment and excitement by celebrating the day as a family?

Your kids will get a kick out of the wacky ways to celebrate this fun-filled holiday! Start out celebrating this holiday from the very second you wake up. Doing simple things like starting the day off with dinner instead of breakfast, getting dressed before taking a shower, and saying goodbye instead of hello will cause your children to burst out in laughter and join in on the fun.

Opposite day is celebrated in winter, so it might be fun to celebrate the day as if it were summer! Dress up in summer clothes, eat your favorite summer foods, and pretend to get a nice tan in a room filled with light. Make sure to stay indoors if you celebrate the day as if it were summer—we don't want anyone to suffer any colds!

Another cute idea for opposite day is to switch roles with your children for the day (to an extent). Let your children take on the role of parent by taking care of you, picking out your clothes, and preparing your meals for the day. This does not include letting your children use appliances like an oven, a toaster, knives, or any other devices that can cause harm. Children will love being the boss for the day!

Lastly, have your children say the opposite of everything they mean for the day. If your daughter is hungry, she'll say, "I'm not hungry." To make this even more fun, you can jokingly act like it is not opposite day in times like these, and jokingly reply, "You're not hungry? Good, I didn't want to cook anyhow."

The more creative you are, the more fun opposite day will be. Have a great time celebrating...or should I say, don't have a great time! ■

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# Teen Dating Violence

By Susan Heckler

**W**hen your children mature and start having romantic relationships, it is the perfect time to sit them down and explain the difference between a healthy relationship and an unhealthy one.



Hopefully you are all blessed to be in a healthy, loving, respectful relationship with your significant other. If you are, you may be setting an example for your children on how you should treat other people and be expected to be treated by them. Some good talking points about a healthy relationship would be:

- Your partner respects you and your individuality.
- You are both open and honest.
- Your partner supports you and your choices even when they disagree with you.
- Both of you have equal say and respected boundaries.
- Your partner understands that you need to study or hang out with friends or family.
- You can communicate your feelings without being afraid of negative consequences.
- Both of you feel safe being open and honest.

Dating violence can happen to any teen in a romantic, dating, or sexual relationship, anytime, anywhere. Physical abuse is only one part of a domestic violence situation that you want your children to avoid. Jealousy in excess, public humiliation and dishing out guilt are ways some people try to control you. Finding the right place to draw the line can be difficult for tweens and teens, so it is up to a parent or guardian to enlighten them.

February is the chosen month to raise awareness to teen violence. Wearing orange is a show of solidarity. On Valentine's Day, take the opportunity to talk to your kids about unhealthy relationships...they can last a lifetime or have a negative impact on them for the rest of their lives.

According to the Center for Disease Control 1 in 10 teens reported being hit or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend at least once in the 12 months prior to the survey, and nearly half of all teens in relationships say they know friends who have been verbally abused.

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# Fun Indoor Activities for Winter

By Brianna Siciliano

The winter weather tends to trap us indoors time after time, and when this happens, most of us are frustrated and annoyed. Being trapped indoors might not have been fun in the past, but it will be fun from now on! Here are a number of engaging, entertaining activities to do inside to keep your family busy.

## Make an awesome breakfast

Everyday we rush our breakfast to get to school or work on-time. There's no need to rush on an indoor day. Days indoors are the perfect days to make big breakfasts with all your favorite foods; treat yourself and your family to foods such as French toast, bacon, eggs, sausage, waffles, or pancakes with a side of hot chocolate. By the time you're family is finished eating the breakfast, you'll be wishing for weather to trap you indoors more often!

## Make an indoor fort

With your kids' creativity and imagination, your living room (or any other room in your home) can be transformed into an indoor fort! Use chairs and blankets to make a cozy hideout for the day.

## Spend the day with movies and popcorn

This is pretty self explanatory; who doesn't love a good movie with some popcorn?



## Camp out by your fireplace

If you have a fireplace in your home, grab some pillows and blankets and lay down together, as a family, nearby to warm up. While you're laying there, it could be fun to eat some snacks, play a few games, tell stories, or read a good book. Make sure no one gets too close to the fireplace!

## Create an indoor obstacle course

If your kids need to burn off some energy, setting up a safe obstacle course might be the perfect way to spend a portion of your day. Use objects such as pillows, hula hoops, bench chairs, and string to create an exciting adventure for your kids to conquer.

## Story time

Turn off all electronics and bring your entire family together for some old-fashioned story time. Read a few stories aloud, and when you run out of stories to read, make up some of your own!

Winter days can be fun no matter what! Fun activities put the win in winter, and these indoor activities do just that. Keep warm and enjoy your everything that winter has to offer! ■



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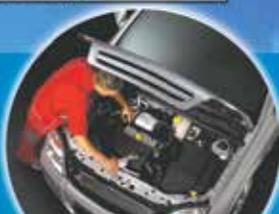
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## Fun Winter Activities for Kids with Special Needs

By Brianna Siciliano

Special needs children can have loads of fun in the winter! No matter what level your child is at, you can find creative, exciting activities that your child will love to do. Participating in winter activities—and taking loads of pictures and videos to document your child's activities—is a great way



to help your child grow both mentally and physically, and to create great memories to cherish forever! The winter season does not have to be a time to constantly worry; it can be a memorable, fun-filled time of the year!

Playing in the snow is an amazing sensory activity for special needs children. Once your child is bundled up nice and warm, he or she can enjoy everything that snow has to offer. Your child will love making snow angels, snowballs, snowmen (and snow families!), and forts. Making

these activities can be a long process, so make sure to take it easy on your child. Depending on how many inches of snow is on the ground, walking in the snow can take a lot of endurance. Make sure to take breaks and enjoy winter treats, including hot cocoa, marshmallows or cookies decorated as snowmen, and candy canes!

Another fun and safe snow activity is snow painting. By filling squirt bottles with water that has been dyed with food coloring, your child will be able to create artwork right on your snowy lawn! This activity is great for kids no matter what their mobility levels are; if your child is in a wheelchair, have him or her paint on the snow from your porch. Children will always remember fun memories like painting the snow.

If it is frigid outside and you want to keep your child entertained in the house, keep your child busy with cooking. Cooking keeps your child engaged and busy, and at the same time, your child will be helping you out! For fun that might turn out a bit messy (in the best way), make desserts with your child. Cooking fun and delicious desserts like chocolate coated pretzels, and topping the pretzels off with colorful sprinkles, will satisfy your child's desire to play with food.

Another great indoor activity with special needs children is creating arts and crafts based on their favorite aspects of winter. If your child is mesmerized by snowmen, it will be fun to recreate snowmen indoors with play doh. If your child loves snowflakes, help your child make snowflakes out of paper and decorate your home with these homemade snowflakes. If your child loves watching the snow fall, grab some crayons and paper and draw yourselves playing in the snow. Being creative indoors can be just as fun as being creative outdoors!

Whatever you do this winter with your special needs child, make sure to enjoy the moment. Wonderful memories last a lifetime, and seeing the smile on your child's face will make the winter weather worthwhile! ■

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### Quote of the day

"A word to the wise is enough and many words won't fill a bushel."  
Benjamin Franklin



## Today in 1706

Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston, Massachusetts.

- An American patriot, he had many jobs including printer, statesman, inventor, publisher, scientist, diplomat, and philanthropist.
- In 1732, he published Poor Richard's Almanac which was full of tips on weather, gardening, and contained witty sayings about friendship, money, and life.
- He was one of the writers of the Declaration of Independence.
- As an inventor, he proved that lightning was a form of electricity.

### Lightning Rod

Benjamin Franklin was one of the first scientists to conclusively prove that lightning was a form of electricity. He achieved this by flying a kite (that was attached to a wire and key) in a thunderstorm. It gave him an electric shock. Follow the string in his hand to find out which kite Benjamin is holding onto.



## Word of the day

**JANUARY 17**

**Almanac:** a calendar with astronomical data, weather forecasts; a book published annually containing information, usually statistical, on many subjects; from the Latin alminichiaka (calendar).

**Imagine...** Benjamin Franklin was known as a man of many talents. What other talent do you have or would you like to have?

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# Early Warning Signs of a Learning Disability in Young Children

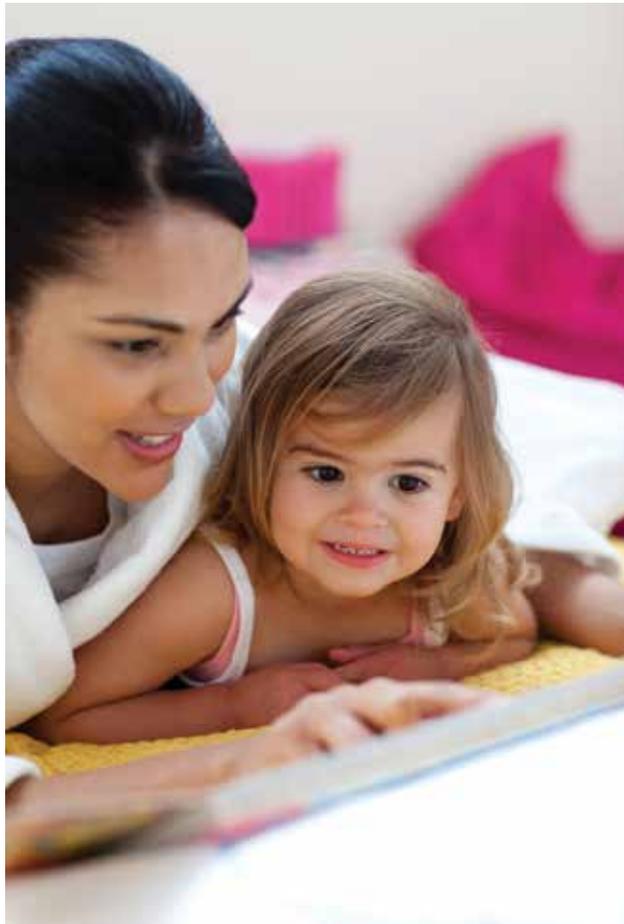
By Lance Halpern, Ed.S., LPC.

**D**uring the early years of a child's education starting with preschool, children learn at different rates and with different styles. But if your child has significant trouble with numbers, letters, or speech, they may have a learning disability. Learning disabilities are a category of disorders that affect how the brain processes information, making it difficult to grasp some concepts. A child with a learning disability may understand a story perfectly when it is read to them, but will struggle to answer questions about it afterward. Another child might easily recite the alphabet from A to Z, but be unable to name individual letters when they are pointed out. Still another child may have a hard time putting together puzzles, tying her shoes, or buttoning a sweater.

Children with learning disabilities usually have normal or above normal intelligence, but they have trouble expressing their knowledge. Because it is so difficult for children with learning disabilities to master certain tasks, they often experience frustration, anger, low self-esteem, and even depression. Your child may know just what they want to accomplish, to say or write or do, but getting there isn't a straight path.

Red flags that could indicate a learning disability in young children include:

- Delayed speech
- Pronunciation problems
- Difficulty learning new words
- Difficulty learning to read
- Trouble learning numbers or the alphabet
- Short attention span
- Difficulty following directions
- Poor grasp of a crayon or pen



Your child may know just what they want to accomplish, to say or write or do, but getting there isn't a straight path.

Diagnosing learning disabilities is controversial. Some experts believe they are over diagnosed, a handy catchall for a host of normal differences in learning styles. Diagnosing learning disabilities in preschoolers and very young children is particularly controversial because they learn at such vastly different rates. That doesn't mean you should ignore any concerns you have now. Careful diagnosis is important and early intervention can make a big difference in your child's academic future.

If you are worried about your child's competence with reading, writing, numbers, or speech, talk about it with people who are familiar with your child, such as your child's teacher. Teachers are usually adept at spotting the early warning signs of a learning disability. If your child's teacher hasn't already raised the issue with you, don't hesitate to bring up your concerns. The signs of a learning disability can be already strong at a young age and the advice to "wait and see" if your child is just suffering from a momentary setback, and will catch up in no time is truly inappropriate without the concern being formally evaluated and substantiated by a psychologist who is experienced in education matters and has documented familiarity within the school culture.

Learning disabilities are permanent and don't go away, but much can be done to help your child compensate for the disability and learn to work around the problem when identified as soon as possible. As a parent, one of the most important things you can do is support your child and assist with positive learning experiences. Don't try to be an expert on treating learning disabilities yourself. Your job is to provide encouragement, love, and patience and to seek out psychological experts who have the skills to help your child learn. ■

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You are the lucky winner of the December 2014 "Enjoy The Day At iPlay On Us Contest." Your iPlay America Family 4 pack (a value of \$100) is on its way to you!

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# Art Classes and Their Effects – Facts or Myths?

By Marlene Bohnyak, Owner/Instructor

## Most of the students that attend art classes already have excellent artistic skills...fact or myth?

**Myth!** Most of the students are quite average when they first come in. They do improve greatly and many of them do develop into fabulous artists as they tap in to their own creativity and combine that with newly acquired skills and techniques learned at our studio. We also have a substantial group of students of all ages (pre-schoolers through senior citizens) that have under-developed or weakened fine motor skills and muscle strength. They have been referred to us by Occupational or Physical Therapists so that they may further develop strength, dexterity and coordination of their hands. The gripping of pencils and paintbrushes, the molding and forming of shapes in clay, or the placement of mosaic tiles are all excellent ways to manipulate the fingers, wrists and lower arms to further increase strength and mobility. Best of all, the result is a great piece of art, a super reward for all the efforts made.

## Art is obviously a fun and creative activity for most, but it really isn't useful or helpful in any way...fact or myth?

**Myth!** Art is actually very closely tied into many academic subjects such as math, science, handwriting (a lost art) and language. When kids are enjoying cartooning, they are creating favorite characters and of course they love that. What they don't realize is that they are learning about proportions and fractions! When they are learning how to draw objects threedimensionally, they are learning perspective, and angles which combine math and science. In our Famous Artists class they are learning art history in a very engaging way that they can relate to.

By learning to plan, practice and then execute the final artwork, kids learn

about using a system of steps to achieve a better result. This systematic thinking can be applied to all other subjects and should yield improvements there too.

## Creative thinking can lead to higher learning and awareness...fact or myth?

**Fact!** When a child begins to create an artwork, a child has many issues to think about: WHAT should I draw? An animal, person, cartoon, or a cupcake? HOW big should I make it? Do I want to use the whole page, or leave some room for something else? WHAT colors should I use? Should I use crayon, marker, pastels, or paint? WHO will this drawing be about? A real person, animal or fantasy creature? WHEN is this drawing taking place—day or night? Summer or winter? WHY am I drawing this—for fun, a present to give someone or a school project? These questions lead to increased awareness and encourage further questions and solutions. They lead to understanding that art is a process rather than just a product.

The above questions may sound familiar to you from your English and writing classes long ago. Who, what, where, why and when: the fundamentals of writing! We apply these skills in our book making class, Cover 2 Cover, (ages 8 and older) where our students develop writing and illustration skills as they tell their own stories! Art also involves experimentation when using a particular paint, tape, or glue to discover the suitable materials for optimal results in creating the book. In this class they will learn to design and structure the book covering and its suitable binding technique. The result is a unique book or journal. Patience, planning and analysis were involved...and your child enjoyed it! **That is why art is a great experience from which to learn!** ■

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**Mixed Media** Ms. Marlene shares her passion with younger students and teens as they create and enjoy working in various mediums  
**Ages 6-8 Wednesdays Ages 10-14 Saturdays**

### Tween Sewing

Ms. Ellen returns and her sewing machines are revved up as she shares her incredible knowledge of garment construction, fashion design and accessories with our fashionistas!  
**Wed 7:00 - 8:30**  
**Ages 10 & up**

### Ladies Nite!

So much fun: get the gals together to paint & take home a finished artwork! Bring the wine and desserts! Great for fundraisers too!

### Scout Parties!

Kids earn their badges as they create and learn new skills!

### Birthday Parties!

Unique Projects - Creative Fun!

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**Saturdays**  
**12:00 - 1:30 pm**  
**Ages 10 - 14**  
**Learn how to Design!**  
Ms. Gail returns with her 30 years of passion, experience, inspiration, amazing talent, and flair to share with our fashionistas!

### 'Cover 2 Cover'

Kids learn to write & illustrate Books! Ms. Natalie will bring out the best in your child's creative writing ability!  
**Fridays 4:30 - 6:00 Ages 8 -14**

### Cool Jools!

Beading, knotting, wire and fabric will inspire our students to create funky and unique fashion accessories! Students will also turn recycled items into fabulously cool jewelry!

Winter is here... send the kids inside our cozy studio to enjoy the **FUN AND CREATIVITY!** please visit our website for

- ✓ Winter Schedule of Classes
- ✓ Registration Forms
- ✓ Our Selection of Parties
- ✓ Artworks Created by Our Campers, Students and Staff
- ✓ Sunday Art Workshop Info
- ✓ Lots of Great Pictures at our Studio

[artisanstudio9.com](http://artisanstudio9.com)

### Cartoonimé

**Ages 10-14**  
**Saturdays**  
**10 - 11:30 am**  
Great projects as kids learn to create these highly stylized or classic characters!

Next  
**Sunday**  
**Art Workshop**  
**January 25th!**



# Snowy Activities that Everyone Will Love

By Brianna Siciliano

**S**now only falls a few times a year, some years more than others. Sometimes we look at snow as a setback from our daily lives, as if snow is taking away excitement from our plans. In reality, it's the total opposite! Spending a day in the snow can (and will) bring joy, adventure, and playful fun. Make this winter a memorable one by making new snow traditions that everyone in your family will love!

It's always fun to do things like sledding, building snow angels, building snowmen, and having snowball fights. It would be even more fun if your family took the time to build their own forts in the snow and have snowball fights from there! Everyone involved will feel notice their competitive sides bursting out from within, and your family will fight a snow battle that they'll never forget.

Another fun activity to complete in the snow is creating and running through snow mazes and/or snow obstacle courses. Have someone shovel a path as a snow maze, and set some fake traps, and let the kids run loose through the maze to see who finishes first.

The winner can have a warm mug of hot chocolate with extra marshmallows! If mazes are not your family's cup of tea, create an obstacle course with different aspects of snow. Create

the course as creative as possible! An example obstacle course could start out with participants sledding down a hill, then making five snow angels in a row, and finishing off the course with a snowman!

A cute idea for kids to play in the snow is a game of tic-tac-snow! With a stick (or a finger), create the tic-tac-toe layout in the snow, and give the two players different objects to use. Your daughter can use rocks as her symbols and your son can use sticks, for example. The more creative you are, the more memorable the experience will be!

Snowy days can be filled with joy if you spend the day the right way! Enjoy all the snow days to come, and remember to have fun! ■

## 2015 Hidden Word Search

Find the secret message inside this puzzle.  
(Hint: it is 6 words.)

- |             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| BRICK       | JAMESBURG  |
| BRUNSWICK   | MANALAPAN  |
| CRANBURY    | MARLBORO   |
| EAST        | OLD BRIDGE |
| FARMINGDALE | RIVER      |
| FREEHOLD    | SAYERVILLE |
| HOWELL      | TOMS       |
| JACKSON     | WALL       |

H	A	O	B	P	P	Y	N	E	W	Y	J	E	A	R
C	E	N	R	T	R	A	L	N	E	F	A	W	J	E
R	S	E	U	O	Y	X	A	M	C	A	C	J	U	C
E	J	H	N	X	B	A	F	N	U	R	K	A	P	P
U	G	P	S	S	N	L	F	A	R	M	S	M	A	D
W	K	Y	W	J	R	T	R	P	O	I	O	E	P	A
E	L	L	I	V	R	E	Y	A	S	N	N	S	B	D
Y	B	Y	C	O	H	R	M	L	M	G	C	B	D	L
A	G	X	K	O	U	V	I	A	E	D	Z	U	L	L
G	F	F	W	B	K	X	N	N	P	A	T	R	O	A
I	C	E	N	T	R	C	R	A	G	L	N	G	H	W
A	L	A	S	K	O	I	I	M	O	E	O	O	E	O
L	R	A	F	F	V	M	D	R	R	L	I	W	E	N
C	E	Y	W	E	K	V	S	G	B	Q	D	H	R	Y
Z	D	D	R	L	J	L	J	T	E	X	P	N	F	P



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# January is National Eye Care Month

By Brianna Siciliano

**S**tart the new year off the right way by visiting your optometrist or ophthalmologist and making sure your eyes are getting the best care that they need. Our eyes are very valuable, and sometimes we take our eye sight for granted. Imagine participating in all of your activities without seeing a thing; imagine a day where you couldn't see what you were cooking, what your children looked like, what activities your children were participating in, or what

clothes you were picking out for the day. Life would be completely different, wouldn't it? Making sure that your eyesight and your children's eyesight is the best it can be is very, very important.

Children should have their eyes checked from the day that they're born by their pediatrician or family doctor. As a parent, it is important to look out for signs that might mean your child may have vision problems. These signs include:

- constant eye rubbing
- extreme light sensitivity
- poor focusing
- trouble following an object with their eyes
- chronic redness of the eyes
- chronic tearing of the eyes
- a white pupil instead of black
- abnormal alignment or movement of the eyes (after 6 months of age)
- unable to see objects from a distance
- having trouble reading the blackboard/whiteboard
- squinting
- difficulty reading
- sitting too close to the television

If you notice any eye problems in your child (or in yourself!), have your child examined right away so that the problem does not become permanent. When caught earlier, eye conditions can often be corrected.

It doesn't hurt to get your eyes—or your children's eyes—checked periodically. Eye care is not something to put off; make sure your eyes, and your family members' eyes, are getting the best possible care that they deserve. ■



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# Paint Your Own Pottery Studios Near You!

By Brianna Siciliano

**P**aint your own pottery is a fabulous activity for kids (and adults) of all ages! Children have incredible imaginations, and they are very passionate in everything they do. Painting pottery is a wonderful way for children's imaginations to run loose. The pottery painting process requires painters to select a pottery piece from hundreds of available options (including mugs, plates, animals, desserts, and all kinds of objects), paint their pottery in any color and design that is desired, and pick up the piece of pottery a few days later (time span depends on the studio) so the studio has a chance to fire the painted pottery—allowing the pottery's design to last forever.

A Stroke of Creativity, conveniently located in Monroe Township, is a perfect studio for everyone—no matter what situation you or your family is in. This art studio is a place for people to share experiences, struggles, and successes with one another while bringing beautiful painted ceramics to life! With over 500 designs and 6,000 ceramic pieces to choose from, everyone can find something to create. A Stroke of Creativity is perfect for every family, special needs families included! Pricing of the ceramics are very affordable, be-



ginning at \$4.50 a piece. To find out more about A Stroke of Creativity, and to schedule the perfect time to bring your family by, visit their website, [www.astrokeofcreativity.com](http://www.astrokeofcreativity.com), or call 732-446-4268.

If you are looking for a studio near Freehold, Color Me Mine is the best studio for you! Conveniently located in the Freehold Raceway Mall, Color Me Mine is a studio that brings out the artist in anyone, no matter if you are 5, 25, 55, or 105! With categories from dinnerware, gardening, pets, kids, and interior decor, there are hundreds of pieces of pottery to choose from. Color Me Mine is extremely kid friendly, allowing painters to do things such as paint your baby's feet or children's hands on platters, clocks, or coffee mugs. With their To-Go program, the Color Me Mine staff can come anywhere you'd like! Just call for details! The price for the studio's pottery ranges from \$7 to \$50, plus an additional studio fee of \$7 to \$10. To find out more, visit [freehold.colormemine.com](http://freehold.colormemine.com) or call 732-780-7811.

Painting pottery is a great way for children to be creative and imaginative. Don't allow your family to miss out on the valuable memories that can come from painting pottery! ■

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# How Can I Help My Child Develop Healthy Self-Esteem?

By Brianna Siciliano

As children grow older, they become more and more observant. They listen to what other people around them—especially their peers—have to say. Kids pick up on all sorts of actions, beliefs, knowledge, and images, and unfortunately, sometimes these are not positive. How children feel about themselves can depend on many factors, including standards that have been set for themselves, the environment their time is spent in, and experiences that they have grown up through. Although some of these factors are out of your control as your child's parent, others can be influenced by you!

If and when you hear your child make a negative comment about herself, call your child out. Let your son or daughter know that he/she is a beautiful and special blessing, and how great he/she is in different areas. Point out things that your child should be proud of, for example their hard work in a certain activity or sport, their good grades, or their great relationships with others. Different people excel in different categories! Make sure your child knows how great he or she is!

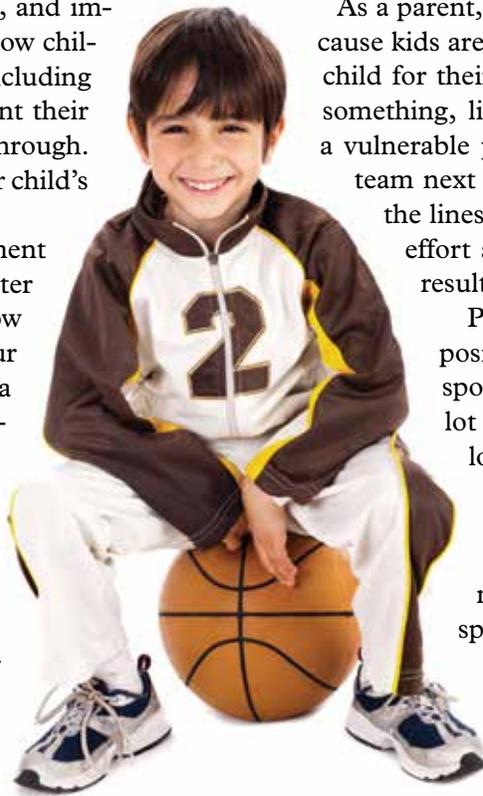
To boost your his or her self-esteem, it is important to help your child recognize and modify the negative thoughts about him or herself. Being reminded of their importance, and having their incredible abilities pointed out, is a major confidence boost to children. Saying something as simple as, "You have been doing a great job in school lately! All of

your hard work is paying off. I'm very proud of you!" will let your child know that they are noticed and valued.

As a parent, it is extremely important to be careful of what you say because kids are very sensitive to parents' words. Remember to praise your child for their effort and their successes. When a child doesn't achieve something, like for example making the soccer team, he or she is in a vulnerable place. Instead of saying something like, "You'll make the team next time, you just need to work harder," say something along the lines of, "You didn't make the team, but you put in some great effort and I'm proud of you!" This will have a much better end result for your child's self-esteem.

Parents can also help by being positive role models, giving positive and accurate feedback, and being affectionate and spontaneous. Children look up to their parents and learn a lot from their home environment; if a child sees their mother loving her body, then the child will want to love their own body, too!

Kids should grow up feeling special and great, not normal or average. With your help, your child can feel like a million bucks. Make sure your children know how loved, special, and beautiful they are! ■



## Hidden Message Winter Word Find

H	V	K	A	P	P	Y	Y	S	W	H	O	L	I	S
D	A	A	W	Y	S	N	E	E	R	I	E	Z	N	L
K	R	W	C	A	X	Z	A	L	M	H	N	O	O	Q
B	N	C	R	A	N	F	R	D	E	E	W	T	I	J
S	D	Y	J	C	T	Z	S	N	Q	B	U	W	E	R
F	A	M	I	L	Y	I	A	A	X	I	S	O	F	R
S	A	N	T	A	Y	J	O	C	N	N	Q	F	G	D
S	T	N	E	S	E	R	P	N	W	W	O	A	O	G
P	A	R	D	N	Q	F	D	W	D	W	D	Q	K	S
O	R	R	Z	V	U	I	M	R	E	V	A	K	O	P
P	E	B	Y	H	G	A	M	S	K	Z	I	Z	J	Y
Y	Z	K	G	D	N	G	C	N	K	I	L	R	U	W
I	J	W	W	O	Y	A	Q	B	K	A	D	L	O	C
U	M	L	E	Y	X	Q	X	F	M	F	O	E	I	L
S	D	T	N	Y	B	T	Z	E	Z	M	Q	R	L	E

CANDLES  
FAMILY  
NEW  
SNOW  
WINTER

COLD  
FOOD  
PRESENTS  
SNOWMAN  
YEARS

DREIDEL  
KWANZA  
SANTA  
VACATION

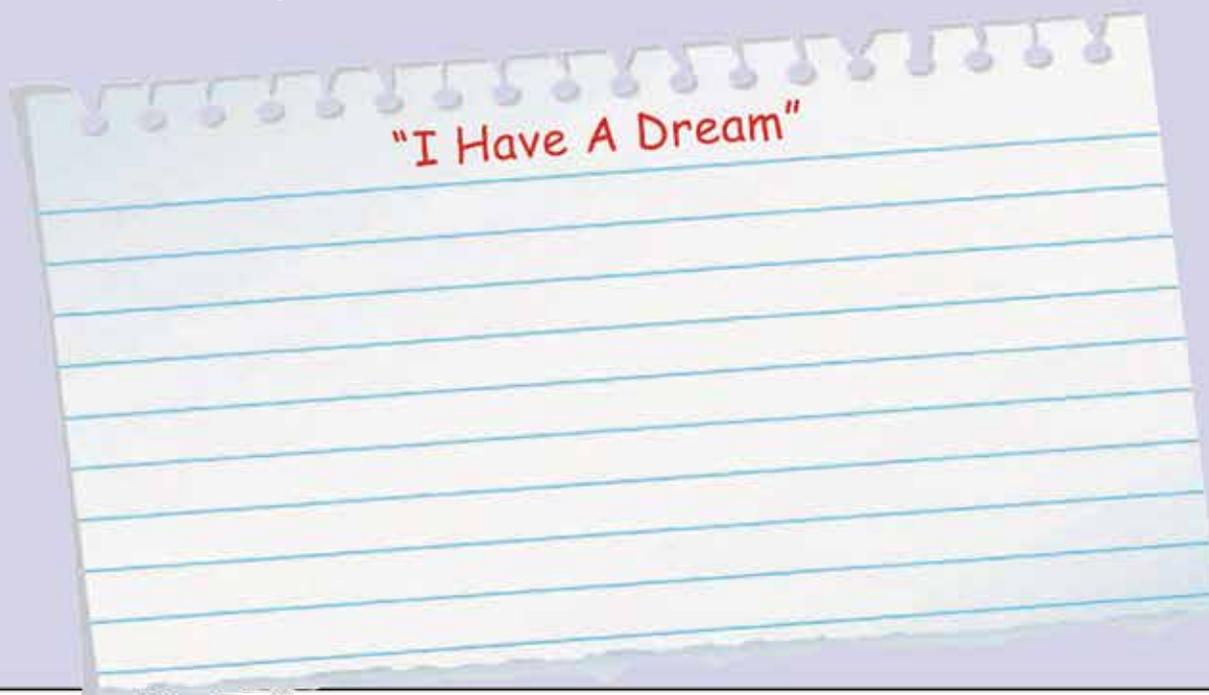
Can you guess what is the hidden message?

## Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is January 19th.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a leader of the civil rights movement. His famous speech—"I Have A Dream"—spoke about his dreams that black people and white people would begin to live together peacefully with equal rights.

### WRITING LESSON:

What dreams do you have for your future? Create your very own "I Have a Dream" speech based on any experiences or injustices you may have encountered in your lifetime.

An advertisement for "The Speech Tree" center. The background is a photograph of a group of seven diverse children running happily through a field of yellow wildflowers under a blue sky. On the left, there is a stylized tree logo with green leaves and a brown trunk. In the center, the text "THE SPEECH TREE" is written in large, blue, serif capital letters. To the right of the tree, the text "SPEECH, LANGUAGE, AND FEEDING THERAPY FOR CHILDREN" is written in smaller, blue, sans-serif capital letters. A yellow starburst graphic on the right contains the text "Now Offering ABA Services!". In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for "NJ's favorite kids' docs™ from New Jersey Family" featuring a blue stethoscope icon.

**THE SPEECH TREE**

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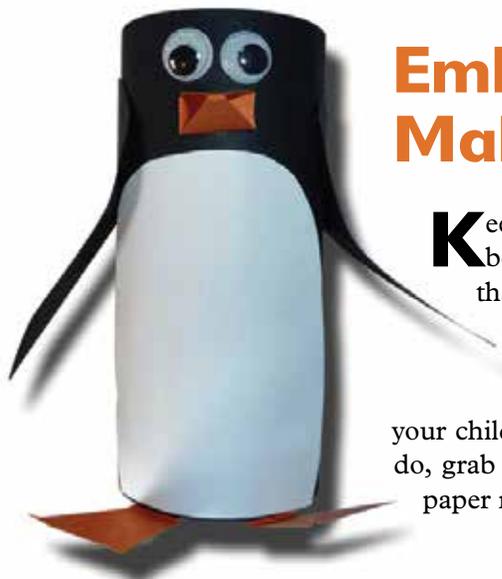
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## Embrace the Winter Weather and Make Toilet Paper Roll Penguins

By Brianna Siciliano

Keeping busy on cold, winter days can be difficult. Kids have so much energy that they need to burn off, and sitting around all day watching television and playing games does not satisfy their hunger for fun. The next time your children are looking for something fun to do, grab some supplies and make a few toilet paper roll penguins!

**To make a toilet paper roll penguin, you will need:**

- An empty toilet paper roll
- Black, white, and orange construction paper
- 2 googly eyes
- Scissors
- Glue
- Tape (optional; you can use glue instead if you prefer)

The begin creating your toilet paper roll penguin, wrap the toilet paper roll in black construction paper and secure the construction paper with either tape or glue. Tuck any extra paper inside the toilet paper roll on both ends. You might want to tape the excess paper inside the roll, to prevent the extra paper from popping out.

Next, cut out two wings from black construction paper and tape (or glue) the wigs onto each side of the toilet paper roll. Fold the wings so that they stick out a little bit from the penguin's sides. What fun is a penguin who has wings constantly to their sides? After finishing up the wings, move onto the penguin's white belly. Cut out an oval shape from your white construction paper and glue the oval belly right onto the penguin's body. Make sure you don't place the belly too high or too low! Once you have finished the wings and belly, cut out a small triangle from a piece of orange construction paper to act as the penguin's beak. Glue the triangle onto the penguin's body.

Continuing on, glue the two googly eyes onto your penguin's face. You might have to press down for a few seconds so the eyes don't droop down. After the eyes are completed, the last step needed to bring your toilet paper roll penguin to life is to cut out two little orange feet for your penguin to walk on!

Once your child is finished making his/her penguin, it might be fun to watch movies like "Mr. Popper's Penguins" and "Happy Feet" to finish up your penguin-filled day! ■

# Ways to Maximize Family Time

By Brianna Siciliano

Day by day we spend hours in traffic and in the company of co-workers, and sometimes it feels like we never get to spend any time with our family. We say ‘family comes first,’ but there is hardly any time in our busy days to spend with the most important people in our lives: our family. There are many ways to maximize family time, and here are a few!

A great way to spend more time together as a family is to cook as a team! Everyone needs to eat, and food needs to be prepared and cooked in order to eat. Well, preparing and cooking meals with your spouse and/or children might be a fun thing to do! Leave the chopping, knife skills, and appliance use to the adults, and allow the kids to help gather all the ingredients and (safe) tools necessary. While making your meals, everyone involved will be able to have conversations that would not be possible if everyone in your household were preoccupied by different activities.

Another great way to spend more time together is by reserving a day in the week, preferably a day like a Sunday, for family time. Turn off the technology for at least a few hours and enjoy your day together. You’ll be able to catch up on everyone’s lives, interact in conversations, and make memorable memories. Family days do not have to be spent on the couch; they can be spent doing various activities. You might want to spend your family days by creating different crafts—and as each week comes by, your family can dedicate your valuable time and energy on a certain craft.



It might also be fun to make family time active time! It is very important to get active and move your body, therefore bonding while exercising is a great way to pass time. Does someone in your family excel in a certain sport? Set aside time for everyone to come together and play that sport—for example, if your son loves basketball, gather up some family members and play a few games against one another. If no sports stand out to your family, go on walks together a few times a week. These walks can be anywhere, for example in the mall, at a local park, around your neighborhood, in a nearby city, or on a track (indoor or outdoor). While bonding as a family, you will get everyone’s heart pumping and blood flowing.

Making a family bucket list could be beneficial for family time as well! Sit down with your spouse and children and list activities and goals that your family would love to participate in and achieve. While making this list, include realistic short-term and long-term goals, like for example going on vacation to a certain destination, going on a picnic and watching the sunset, or swimming with dolphins. After creating your bucket list as a team, start planning out ways to achieve your goals item by item.

No matter what you do throughout your days, make sure you spend some time with the people who matter most: your family. Every second counts, so spend your seconds wisely! ■

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