



# Child Care Connect



# The Provider's Professional Post

Volume 5, Issue 4

A Program of Appalachian Community Action & Development Agency

May 2010

## T.E.A.M. News

The T.E.A.M., Together Educators Achieve More Association will be expanding. Please check the training calendar in June for location, date and time.

The T.E.A.M. would like to welcome all early educators to attend meetings.

## April Sings

April loved to sing and it pleased her kids as well,  
Whenever they'd get rowdy she'd stop and sing a spell.

"Bah, bah, bah, nah, nah, nah," they'd stop and sing a while,  
Just like a nanny and her kids, it always made them smile.

Sing April, sing, it will always serve you well,

Whenever you get all stressed out, just stop and sing a spell.

Carol Honeycutt

Dedicated to April McNew who loves music and loves children.

## Celebrating Child Care Providers: Provider Appreciation Day and Every Day

Being a child care provider is not an easy job, but it certainly is one of the most important. It is also one of the lowest paying and least celebrated. There are nearly 2.3 million child care providers who care for children under age 5 in the U.S. The average wage for providers is close to the national poverty level. These wages certainly do not reflect the importance or the demands of a child care provider's work.

Further, even though child care providers work hard and have a very important job, sometimes the nature of the job means that they don't have access to health care or other important benefits. As a profession, they don't always get the respect they deserve. And, working with children all day, even though it is rewarding for many child care providers, is also isolating work with little adult contact.

You already know that your relationship with your child's provider is key to good child care. It is really important that you and your provider have good, open communication. That way you can express your feelings and views, ask questions, and get to know just how the child care program is working with your child. In turn, your caregiver should be available to listen and support you when you need it. You should always feel well informed and welcome to observe and contribute to your child's program. When you think about the training, skills, and responsibilities good child care providers have, it is important to acknowledge their roles and support them with positive feedback. Child care providers, like all workers, need to be recognized for the work they do. As a parent, you are in the best position to do this.

Source:childcareaware.org

## Training Classes

**Please pay attention to classes in your area. We have a full schedule this year and we will be unable to repeat classes!**

The new year has begun, please remit your \$30.00 material fee per person for 2010! This fee does not cover the cost of CPR and First Aid, Preventing Bloodborne Pathogens, MAT Training or Make n' Take Classes.

## CDA

Are you interested in obtaining your Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)?

We are now offering classes. Please call for more information. We are currently taking names and placing them on a list for this class.



## For More Information Contact:

Karen Boglarsky, Coordinator

Carol Honeycutt, Creative Research Technician

Shana Day  
Screening Technician

276-386-9881

Toll Free in Virginia,  
1-877-CCC-KIDS

Visit our office:

1378 West Jackson Street  
Gate City, Virginia 24251

Mailing Address:

190 Beech Street, Suite 103  
Gate City,  
Virginia 24251

Website: [appcaa.org](http://appcaa.org)

## 40 Developmental Assets

### #40

### Positive View of Personal Future

The child finds the world interesting and enjoyable, and feels that he or she has a positive place in it.

# May Training Calendar 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6 Professionalism 6:30PM-9:00PM Child Care Network Bristol, VA	7	8
9	10 Helping Children with Disasters 6:30PM -9:00PM CCC Training Facility	11 Helping Children with Disasters 6:30PM-9:00 PM Full of Life Coeburn VA	12	13 Helping Children with Disasters 6:30PM-9:00 PM Pitter Patter Pathways Marion, VA	14 Helping Children with Disasters 6:30PM-9:00 PM Pitter Patter Pathways Marion, VA	15
16	17 Helping Children with Disasters 6:30PM-9:00 PM Full of Life Coeburn VA	18 Helping Children with Disasters 6:30PM-9:00 PM Full of Life Coeburn VA	19	20 Helping Children with Disasters 6:30PM-9:00 PM Child Care Network Bristol VA	21	22
23	24 Building Collaborative Relationships with Families 6:15PM -9:00PM Galax, VA	25 Building Collaborative Relationships with Families/ Understanding Temperament 6:15PM -9:00PM Galax, VA	26	27 Helping Children with Disasters 6:30PM-9:00 PM Child Care Network Bristol, VA	28	29
30	31					

Child Care Connect 276-386-9881  
 Child Care Network 276-644-9480  
 Pitter Patter Pathways, 276-783-8427  
 Full of Life, 276-395-2720  
 Galax, Contact Michelle Gallimore DSS @ 276-236-8111



Smart Beginnings Appalachian Region,  
Natural Tunnel State Park and Scott County  
Tourism will be Hosting a

# Geocaching Event



At  
Natural Tunnel State Park, Duffield, Virginia  
at the Cove Ridge Center  
On  
May 22, 2010 at 10:00 AM

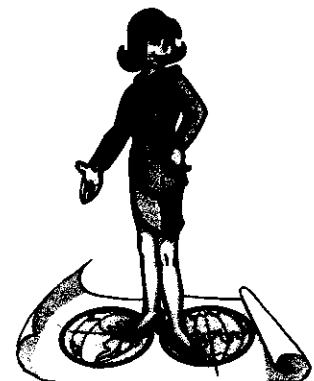
The First 10 people to complete the Scavenger Hunt  
will win a prize!



For more information contact: Karen Davidson or  
Molly Campbell at 276-386-6441  
Come join the Fun!



Smart Beginnings, A Partnership Coalition of  
Appalachian Community Action and  
Development Agency



# Lee County Infant and Toddler Health Fair

May 21st 10am-2pm

Between IGA & Family Dollar

Jonesville

## Free Health and Safety Information

- \* Nutrition
- \* Home/Car/Summer Safety
- \* Immunizations
- \* Dental
- \* Growth and Development
- \* and More

Free Prizes and Face Painting

**Sponsored by: Lee County Health Department,  
Infant & Toddler Connection of DiLenowisco,  
Lee County School System, Lee County Head Start,  
Stone Mountain Health Services, Frontier Health,  
Lee County Sheriffs Department, and other participating agencies**

## The Value of Trees to a Community

The following are some statistics on just how important trees are in a community setting.

"The net cooling effect of a young, healthy tree is equivalent to ten room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day."  
*U.S.D.A.*

"Landscaping can reduce air conditioning costs by up to 50 percent, by shading the windows and walls of a home." *American Public Power Association*

"If you plant a tree today on the west side of your home, in 5 years your energy bills should be 3% less. In 15 years the savings will be nearly 12%." *Dr. E. Greg McPherson, Center for Urban Forest Research*

"A mature tree can often have an appraised value of between \$1,000 and \$10,000." *Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers*

"In one study, 83% of realtors believe that mature trees have a "strong or moderate impact" on the salability of homes listed for under \$150,000; on homes over \$250,000, this perception increases to 98%." *Arbor National Mortgage & American Forests*

"Landscaping, especially with trees, can increase property values as much as 20 percent." *Management Information Services/ICMA*

"One acre of forest absorbs six tons of carbon dioxide and puts out four tons of oxygen. This is enough to meet the annual needs of 18 people." *U.S.D.A.*

"There are about 60 to 200 million spaces along our city streets where trees could be planted. This translates to the potential to absorb 33 million more tons of CO2 every year, and saving \$4 billion in energy costs." *National Wildlife Federation*

"Trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning needs by 30 percent and can save 20 - 50 percent in energy used for heating." *USDA Forest Service*

"Trees can be a stimulus to economic development, attracting new business and tourism. Commercial retail areas are more attractive to shoppers, apartments rent more quickly, tenants stay longer, and space in a wooded setting is more valuable to sell or rent." *The Arbor Day Foundation*

"Healthy, mature trees add an average of 10 percent to a property's value." *USDA Forest Service*

"The planting of trees means improved water quality, resulting in less runoff and erosion. This allows more recharging of the ground water supply. Wooded areas help prevent the transport of sediment and chemicals into streams." *USDA Forest Service*

"In laboratory research, visual exposure to settings with trees has produced significant recovery from stress within five minutes, as indicated by changes in blood pressure and muscle tension." *Dr. Roger S. Ulrich Texas A&M University*

"Nationally, the 60 million street trees have an average value of \$525 per tree." *Management Information Services*

To help locate New York City's heritage trees, the City Department of Parks and Recreation conducted a program called the "Great Tree Search." New Yorkers looked for trees of unusual size and age, those linked with historic landmarks, and trees of unusual species or location. On Arbor Day, they held a big party to celebrate New York City's Great Trees.

After a tornado destroyed more than 800 trees in Cardington, Ohio, citizens organized a tree restoration committee which solicited donations and memorials. Volunteers who learned of the tree planting through local newspaper articles appeared on Arbor Day to wrap trunks, water, mulch, and stake 40 large trees which were planted along major streets.

*Source: [www.arboday.org/trees/benefits.cfm](http://www.arboday.org/trees/benefits.cfm) -*

## Healthy Eggs: Are Eggs Healthy?

For more than 5,000 years, humans have enjoyed what may be one of nature's most convenient and nutritious foods – the egg. Today per-person consumption averages around 300 eggs a year.

**Why eggs are healthy:** Eggs provide high protein content for relatively low cost. They're also relatively low in calories – one medium-sized egg contains just 78 calories.

Eggs contain vitamins B12, C, D, E, and K, as well as the minerals iron and zinc. They're also a rich source of choline, important for brain functioning and health.

It's no joke that egg yolks offer infection-fighting vitamin A and phosphatidylcholine, a nutrient that protects the liver and arteries and that can actually prevent the oxidation of cholesterol.

In spite of the egg's reputation for increasing cholesterol, research has shown that adults can consume at least two eggs per day without increasing their serum cholesterol level.

**What's the difference between organic eggs and standard supermarket fare?** If you're concerned about toxic, persistent pesticides – which are stored in fats – organic is a wise choice.

When it comes to buying eggs, the best-regulated are labeled "Certified organic." Organically raised chickens do not receive antibiotics, and their feed is also antibiotic-free, as well as being vegetarian and organic. Commercial hens are fed processed grains, which are often bioengineered corn. These grains are treated with antibiotics and pesticides to encourage growth and prevent infection in the birds.

When the chicken ingests this feed, these chemicals may end up in the egg's yolk.

Source: [fitandhealthy.com/healthy-eggs-are-eggs-health](http://fitandhealthy.com/healthy-eggs-are-eggs-health)

## Spring Cleaning Tips

Daylight savings has come and gone, soon enough Spring will have sprung. If you've been putting off doing your Spring cleaning because you don't have 25 uninterrupted hours to devote to it, don't worry.

Start with the basics and once those are finished, you can move on to things like waxing the floors and dusting the ceiling fan (who looks up there anyway?) Following is a list that will only take a few hours but make a big difference in feeling like you've accomplished something. Implementing some of these quick cleaning tips will help jump start your spring cleaning efforts.

1. Change out the batteries in your smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector. This is a very important task that needs to be done twice a year. It takes 5 minutes but will save your life.
2. Clean your windows. Spray them with window cleaner (easy homemade cleaning solution: 1 part hot water, one part white vinegar) and then wipe them down with old newspaper. Seriously, it really does prevent streaks.
3. Disinfect all garbage cans by spraying all-purpose cleaner on the inside and outside, then wiping down with a clean cloth.
4. Clean your microwave. This is a simple task that usually doesn't get accomplished with enough frequency: Heat up a mug of water with a few lemon slices in it for 3 minutes. Let stand for another 3 minutes. Wipe down walls of microwave with a clean, damp cloth.
5. Wash all pillows and bedding—most pillows can be machine-washed and this eliminates bacteria and mold.

Source: [FamilyCorner.com](http://FamilyCorner.com)

## The Many Uses for Vinegar

Vinegar is not just for fish and chips anymore; in fact, the uses of vinegar are endless. Vinegar has many uses around the home that most people are probably unaware of. Every household should keep a bottle of vinegar in stock because it will eventually come in handy. There are many common uses of vinegar around the house and here are a few examples:

**Clean your computer** - Vinegar has several elements which make it a good cleanser. It has a well-known ability to disinfect. You can clean your computer, printer, fax machine, and other office gear with vinegar and water. Turn off all the components and mix equal parts of vinegar and water in a bucket. Wet a cloth in the solution and ring it out. Make sure that the cloth is not dripping wet, as you do not want water to fall into the interior of your keyboard or computer. This could damage your electronics. Wipe all the surfaces of your electronics and get them shining clean. Use cotton swabs around small or tough to reach areas, for example, in between the keys of the keyboard.

**Clean your window blinds** - Vinegar can also be used to clean your window blinds. These tough-to-reach spots are often left as is, but they no longer need to be. As you did with your computer, clean blinds with a solution consisting of equal parts vinegar and water. Put on a white cotton glove and dip your fingers in the solution and slide your fingers across the blinds, with fingers on each side of the slats. Be sure to get both sides of each blind. Keep a bucket of clean water near by to rinse off your glove occasionally.

**Unclog and deodorize drains** - If you have ever smelled pure vinegar, you know that it is extremely strong stuff. Its pungent smell indicates a level of strength that is high enough to unclog drains in a sink or tub. Of all the many uses of vinegar, this one is really handy. Pour a half a cup of baking soda and then one cup of vinegar down the drain through a funnel. The mixture will foam up considerably and will unclog your drain. When there is no more foam, flush the drain with hot tap water. After five minutes, flush the drain again with cold water. This will also deodorize your drains. If you want to speed up a slow drain, pour a half of a cup of salt followed by two cups of boiling vinegar down the drain. Flush with hot water, then cold water and your drain will be much faster.

Source: [www.LifeScript.com](http://www.LifeScript.com)

## Health on Tap: The Value of Tap Water

The availability of tap water is an important part of daily life in the United States.

Safe drinking water plays a vital role in daily life and public health. Each year, this awareness week highlights the value of tap water and the need to reinvest in water infrastructure. The theme this year is "Only Tap Water Delivers." How often do you think about your tap water? If you're like most people, probably not often, although tap water delivers so many benefits:

- Public health protection and quality of life
- Fire protection
- Support for the economy

### Water for Life

Clean drinking water is one of the world's most precious resources. Before the 1900s, we really didn't have an effective means for mass disinfection of drinking water. Consequently, waterborne diseases, such as typhoid and cholera, were common and deadly in the United States. Unfortunately, this is still the situation that exists in much of the world today. An estimated 1.1 billion persons still lack access to an improved potable water source, and approximately 3 million people in developing regions of the world die each year from infectious diseases related to unsafe water and inadequate sanitation. Clean drinking water is one of the world's most precious resources. During the past century, much of the improved health and prosperity of the U.S. population can be attributed to improvements in water quality. In fact, the provision of safe drinking water and drinking water fluoridation have been called two of the greatest public health achievements in the 20th century. Today, we generally assume our tap water is safe and healthy and we take for granted that safe water is always available to drink, to wash our clothes, to water our lawns, and to use for many other tasks that improve the overall quality of life we enjoy. Yet, water service interruptions do occur, reminding us of the value of water resources and services. Similarly, waterborne diseases also occur in this country. An estimated 4 million to 33 million cases of gastrointestinal illness associated with public drinking water systems occur annually. However, these estimates are imprecise and do not include illness in the estimated 45 million people served by small or individual water systems or illness other than gastrointestinal illness. New challenges, including the emergence of chlorine-resistant pathogens, chemical contamination of water sources, aging water distribution system infrastructure, and increasing water reuse demand that we remain vigilant in protecting all aspects of our water supply.

Source for this page: USA.Gov Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Simple Steps to Conserve Water:

While approximately three quarters of the earth is covered by water, only a small proportion of it is available as fresh water. Of the available fresh water supplies, nearly 70% is withdrawn and used for irrigation to produce food. At present, 1.1 billion people have little choice but to use potentially harmful sources of water, and 2.6 billion people – half the developing world – lack access to adequate sanitation. By 2025, an estimated 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with an absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world population may be under stress conditions.

Managing our water resources is a growing concern in the United States. Communities across the country are beginning to be challenged by water supply and infrastructure problems. According to a study, the average daily indoor water use per person in America was 59.8 gallons. We use more than ten times the minimum daily per capita water consumption recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) for drinking, cooking, and personal and domestic hygiene (20 liters or 5.3 gallons per day). Even more concerning, this is just the amount of water we use inside the home and does not include outdoor water use for lawns and gardens, which adds an additional 100 gallons per person per day.

**Water your yard wisely.** Some estimates indicate that more than 50% of the water used for residential and commercial irrigation is wasted due to evaporation, runoff, or over-watering. Water early in the morning or late at night when it is cooler to reduce excess evaporation and don't over-water. Test your lawn by stepping on the grass; if it springs back, it doesn't need watering.

**Fix leaks.** Faucets leaking one drop of water per second can waste up to 7 gallons of water each day and leaky toilets can waste up to 200 gallons of water each day.

**Turn off faucets.** Washing dishes by hand with the tap running can use 30 gallons of water, compared to 5 gallons if you fill the sink instead. Bathroom faucets generally flow at about 2 gallons per minute. Simply by turning off the tap while brushing your teeth or shaving, you can save more than 500 gallons of water per month.

**Choose to shower rather than bath.** A bath tub requires about 70 gallons of water to fill, while a five-minute shower requires about 10 to 25 gallons.

**Use water-efficient fixtures.** If all US households installed water-efficient appliances, we would save more than 3 trillion gallons of water and more than \$17 billion each year. One high-efficiency toilet in the home would save a family of four about \$1,000 over 10 years.

**Make it a full load.** Run washing machines and dishwashers with full loads, rather than with multiple small loads, and consider water and energy efficiency when purchasing new machines. High-efficiency washing machines can use less than 27 gallons of water per load, compared to average washing machines that use almost 41 gallons per load. High-efficiency dishwashers use 6-10 gallons of water per load (some as little as 3.7 gallons), compared to average dishwashers that use 9-12 gallons per load.

## What is Rett Syndrome?

Rett syndrome is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects girls almost exclusively. It is characterized by normal early growth and development followed by a slowing of development, loss of purposeful use of the hands, distinctive hand movements, slowed brain and head growth, problems with walking, seizures, and intellectual disability.

The course of Rett syndrome, including the age of onset and the severity of symptoms, varies from child to child. Before the symptoms begin, however, the child generally appears to grow and develop normally, although there are often subtle abnormalities even in early infancy, such as loss of muscle tone (hypotonia), difficulty feeding, and jerkiness in limb movements. Then, gradually, mental and physical symptoms appear. As the syndrome progresses, the child loses purposeful use of her hands and the ability to speak. Other early symptoms may include problems crawling or walking and diminished eye contact. The loss of functional use of the hands is followed by compulsive hand movements such as wringing and washing. The onset of this period of regression is sometimes sudden.

Apraxia, the inability to perform motor functions, is perhaps the most severely disabling feature of Rett syndrome, interfering with every body movement, including eye gaze and speech.

Children with Rett syndrome often exhibit autistic-like behaviors in the early stages. Other symptoms may include walking on the toes, sleep problems, a wide-based gait, teeth grinding and difficulty chewing, slowed growth, seizures, cognitive disabilities, and breathing difficulties while awake such as hyperventilation, apnea (breath holding), and air swallowing.

There is no cure for Rett syndrome. Treatment for the disorder is symptomatic — focusing on the management of symptoms — and supportive, requiring a multidisciplinary approach. Medication may be needed for breathing irregularities and motor difficulties, and anticonvulsant drugs may be used to control seizures. There should be regular monitoring for scoliosis and possible heart abnormalities. Occupational therapy can help children develop skills needed for performing self-directed activities (such as dressing, feeding, and practicing arts and crafts), while physical therapy and hydrotherapy may prolong mobility. Some children may require special equipment and aids such as braces to arrest scoliosis, splints to modify hand movements, and nutritional programs to help them maintain adequate weight. Special academic, social, vocational, and support services may be required in some cases.

[www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders)

## Medicine Cabinet Clean Out

Your medicine cabinet is not meant to be a storage area for all the medicines that your child has ever been prescribed. For whatever reason, parents often have leftover or half-used prescriptions in their medicine cabinet.

In addition to old medications, scan your medicine cabinets to make sure you are keeping your kids safe from old advice. That likely means getting rid of:

**Syrup of ipecac** - The American Academy of Pediatrics no longer recommends that parents keep it in their homes.

**Mercury thermometers** - Since they can break, exposing your child to the mercury and mercury vapors.

**Hydrogen peroxide** - A recommendation to get rid of hydrogen peroxide may surprise many parents, but keep in mind that many experts believe that hydrogen peroxide isn't any more helpful than regular soap and water when cleaning a simple wound, and that hydrogen peroxide may actually be damaging to healthy skin cells.

**Baby aspirin** - You only have to get rid of aspirin or baby aspirin if it's part of your child's medicine cabinet. Remember that because of the risk of Reye syndrome, you shouldn't usually give your child, or even your teenager, aspirin.

**Leftover Medicines:** In general, you usually shouldn't have any leftover prescription medicine after your child finishes medical treatment for an illness such as an ear infection or strep throat. If you do, either you didn't give your child all the medicine or the pharmacy gave you too much. Either way, you should likely get rid of the extra medicine so that you aren't tempted to give it to your child later, when you won't be sure if your child really needs it.

If you have leftover medicines because your pediatrician told you to stop giving it to your child, like if your child has outgrown his allergies or asthma, then be sure to get rid of these medications once they have expired.

**Getting Rid of Medicines:** Once you decide which medicines to get rid of, you should have a plan on what to do with them.

Should you throw them in the trash or simply flush them down the toilet? No way! Ask your pharmacist or local hazardous waste disposal site about safe disposal options in your area instead. Kids can get into medicines you throw into the trash, and medicines you flush end up in our groundwater.

Almost everything in your medicine cabinet, including sunscreen and over-the-counter medications, have expiration dates, and should be replaced once they are outdated.

You should regularly restock commonly used over-the-counter medicines, including a pain and fever reducer (like Tylenol and/or Motrin), antihistamine (Benadryl), cough and cold medicines, and medicines for itching. In addition to expired medicines, get rid of any medicines that haven't been stored properly and any empty prescription bottles.







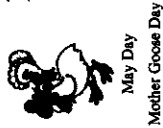





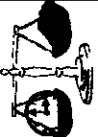




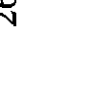
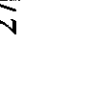



Source: About.com



# Child Care Connect



# May 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 World Laughter Day	 Mothers Day	 National Teachers Day	 Cinco de Mayo Cinco de Mayo	 Nurses Day	 Child Care Provider Day	 May Day Mother Goose Day
 Windmill Day	 World Telecommunications	 International Museum Day	 National Employee Health and Fitness	 Frog Jumping Day	 Weight's and Measures Day	 Armed Forces Day
 World Turtle Day Neighbor Day	 Brother's Day	 Cookie Monster's Birthday	 National Employee Health and Fitness	 Weight's and Measures Day	 Weight's and Measures Day	 Armed Forces Day
 Memorial Day						

## Monthly Observances...

- American Wetlands Month
- National Photo Month
- National Salad Month
- National Vinegar Month
- Young Achievers of Tomorrow Month
- National Family Month
- Clean Air Month
- Heal the Children Month

## Weekly Observances ...

- Be Kind to Animals Week 2-8
- Children's Mental Health Week 2-8
- Kids Win Week 2-8
- Drinking Water Week 2-8
- National Family Week 2-8
- Teachers Appreciation Week 2-8
- Reading is Fun Week 10-16
- National Transportation Week 16-22
- National Backyard Games Week 17-24



## Dutch Spinach Salad

- 6 Cups fresh spinach, torn into bite-sized pieces
- 1/4 Cup chopped onion
- 4 slices bacon, diced
- 1/4 Cup wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 1/4 Tsp. salt
- 1/4 Tsp. ground black pepper

Place spinach and onion in a large serving bowl; set aside. In a skillet, sauté bacon until crisp; remove from heat. Stir in vinegar, sugar, salt and black pepper. Bring to a boil. Slowly pour hot dressing over spinach and onion; toss and serve at once. You may drain bacon grease and use olive oil instead.

## German Cole Slaw

- 1-1/2 Lb. Green cabbage, finely shredded (5 cups)
- 1 medium onion, chopped fine
- 1 medium green pepper, chopped fine
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup cider or white distilled vinegar
- 1/2 cup salad oil
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp. celery seed

In a large bowl, place cabbage, onion and green pepper. In a small saucepan, combine sugar, vinegar and oil; bring to boil. Immediately pour over vegetables. Add salt, black pepper and celery seed; mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 12 hours or longer.

## Warm Chicken Salad with Raspberry Vinegar

- 2 filets skinless chicken breasts
- 12 baby spinach leaves
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 3 Tbsp. pine nuts
- 1-1/2 Tbsp. raspberry red wine vinegar
- 1/2 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
- 1 Cup small lettuce leaves, torn (pepper to taste)

Cut chicken into fine strips. Wash and dry spinach leaves, discarding any hard stalks. Heat 2 Tbsp. of olive oil in a skillet. Stir-fry chicken for several minutes. Add spinach and cook for about 1 minute, or until barely wilted. Add pine nuts and cook for 1 more minute. Spoon the contents of the pan onto serving plates. Pour the vinegars into the pan with the remaining 1 Tbsp. of oil. Season with pepper. Lightly toss with the torn lettuce leaves. Pour over the mixture on the plates and serve immediately.

## Beef Tortillas

- 10 flour tortillas
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1/2 small red onion, minced
- 1 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon coriander
- 1 1/2 cups tomato sauce

Salt to taste

## TOPPINGS

- 1/2 small head iceberg lettuce, shredded
- 1 cup Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
- 1 small yellow or red bell pepper, sliced
- 1 cup canned black beans, rinsed

Heat the oven to 250. Place the tortillas, one at a time, in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat and warm for 1 minute, flipping once or twice, until soft. Wrap them in a dish towel and keep them warm in the oven.

To make the beef filling, heat the oil in the skillet over medium. Add the onion and saute for 3 minutes or until soft.

Add the ground beef and cook, stirring to break up the meat, until it's no longer pink (about 4 minutes). Pour off the liquid.

Add the garlic, chili powder, cumin, coriander, salt, and tomato sauce. Cook, stirring occasionally, over low heat for 10 minutes. (If the sauce is too thick, add a few tablespoons of water.)

Meanwhile, place your toppings in separate small bowls and set them on the table. Choose four or more toppings, depending on your family's tastes.

Place the warm tortillas in a basket and the beef filling in a bowl. Allow each person to layer ingredients into his or her own tortilla, then fold them up. Serves 4 to 6.

**Kids' Steps:** Kids can help prepare the toppings. Soft vegetables can be cut with plastic picnic knives. Other items, such as grated cheese and salsa, can simply be arranged in small bowls

Source: FamilyFun.com

## Signs of Spring



Five little ladybugs napping in a tree

Awake to the sound of a bumblebee,

A little bunny's feet going

hop, hop, hop,

A shower of raindrops

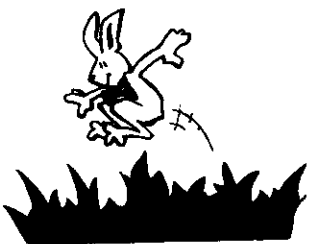
plop, plop, plop

And a happy little bird singing

loud and clear.

The ladybugs said,

"Spring must be here!"



# Extension Activities for children age 3 and above

Read over the rhyme several times, pointing at each word as you read it.

When they feel ready, let the children say the rhyme with you as you read it.

Make up your own hand motions and act out the rhyme as you say it.

Say the rhyme, leaving off the last word for the children to fill in.

Discuss the rhyming words.

Say the rhyme and let the children clap with each rhyming word.

Ask the children "What does the word "sign" mean in the poem, "*Signs of Spring*"?"

Ask the children, "What clues or signs did the ladybugs have that spring is here?"

Name some things that gives you clues or signs that it is spring time.

Ask the children, "What sounds does a bumblebee make?"

Ask them, "What sounds do bird's make when they sing?"

## Science

### Help a Bird Make a Nest

This activity introduces children to the scientific method by encouraging them to make a hypothesis, do the research, make observations and compare the concluding results with their original hypothesis.

Coat hanger

Yarn

Ribbon pieces

String

Cloth scraps

Mesh material (Recycle bags that onion or potatoes are in.

Masking tape

What You Do:

Ask your children how they think birds make their nests?

What makes good nesting material?

Where do they get the materials?

What size pieces can they carry?

Pull the coat hanger into an oval or a rectangle shape. You don't need to dismantle the hanger or bend the hook.

Cover the hanger with mesh material. Tape or tie the mesh to the hanger frame.

Have children help you gather yarn, ribbon pieces, string and cloth scraps in a basket. Use bright colors to attract different birds! Put the coat hanger with the mesh on it in a tray and place the nest materials beside it. Now children can choose a piece of cloth or ribbon and thread it through the mesh, leaving about half of the piece on either side of the mesh. Repeat. When the coat hanger mesh is full of ribbon, yarn, string and cloth scraps, have children take it outside. Using the hook end, hang it in a tree for the birds to gather material for their nests.

Ask children what they think will happen to the colorful pieces.

Which ones might the birds like best?

What will the nests look like?

How far away might the birds take them?

Have them draw some of their ideas or write them down.

Several weeks later, take a walk around the neighborhood and see if any of the materials can be seen in the nests in the trees nearby.

Do they look the way your children expected them to?

Source:education.com

## Art

### Litter Bugs by Terri Bose

You can turn everyday garbage into these fun little litter bugs!  
A great project to display in your classroom.

What You Need: Trash (Newspaper, String, Straws, Bottle Tops, Caps) White craft glue or low temp glue gun  
What you do" Crumple up a piece of newspaper. Wrap another piece around it. Wrap with string and tie off to hold newspaper in a ball. Add straws, bottle tops, caps... anything to make it look like a litter bug. Secure with glue and display!

### Recycled Sea Creature by Terri Bose

Cardboard tubes transform little creatures from the deep!

What You Need

Empty Paper Towel Tube

White Craft Glue

Paint and Brush

Two Wiggle Eyes -- 20mm

Scissors

Hole Punch

Construction Paper

What you do

To make octopus legs, squid or anemone tendrils cut strips down one half of a paper towel tube.

Bend or curl the pieces around a fat marker. Trim. Paint.

Glue on wiggle eyes.

Punch out holes from construction paper and glue on to decorate.

### Homemade Sidewalk Paint

Here's what you'll need...

2 cup corn starch

2 cup water

8 drops of food coloring in different colors

Small containers (one for each color)

Paint brush(es)

Here's how you make it..

In a small container mix the cornstarch and water. Add food coloring. Repeat to make as many colors as you can. If you want white paint don't add any food coloring!

You'll notice when you paint it looks a little watery, but when it dries the colors will be vibrant.

If you are using this paint outside on a warm sunny day it will dry almost immediately. Hose it off, or just use a wet rag. Since this paint is made with natural ingredients it will not harm your plants, grass, or any of your outdoor drains. Happy Painting!

Note: This paint dries quickly and needs stirred often.



## Sensory

### Color in a Bag

1 cup cornstarch

1/2 cup sugar

4 cups cold water

Food coloring

2 gallon-size ziplock bags

Duct tape

Over medium heat, combine the cornstarch, sugar, and water in a saucepan, stirring continuously.

Once the mixture begins to thicken, remove the pan from the heat and stir for another minute or so until it thickens to a pudding like consistency. Let it cool for 30 minutes. Spoon the mixture into two bowls, stir a few drops of food coloring into each then divide the colors between the ziplock bags. Seal the bags with duct tape and let your child mix and mash the colors (they'll keep for up to a week).

### Snowball Soap Surprise

#### Materials

cheese grater

4 (4.5-ounce) bars of Ivory soap

8 tiny plastic toys

Grate the bars by hand with a cheese grater. Pour the soap pieces into a large bowl. With your hands, mix in about a half cup of lukewarm water, a little bit at a time, until the mixture is squishy and claylike. For each snowball, scoop up a heaping handful of soap and mold it into a ball. Poke a deep hole in the center with your finger, insert a toy, and refill the hole. Lay the finished snowballs on a cookie sheet and let them dry thoroughly.

Makes 8

### Touch

A texture matching game gives your preschooler the opportunity to compare different textures and match them with others that are similar. A homemade set, with scraps of various materials such as fabrics, sand paper, bubble wrap and smooth paper glued to squares of cardboard will work just as well as any set you can buy, and allow you more freedom to select different materials.

When your child is playing with this, it is helpful to use descriptive words such as soft, bumpy, smooth or scratchy to help your child identify the differences.

Challenge your children to identify objects by feeling them, without looking at them. Put objects, such as crayons, blocks, small cars or combs, one at a time into a sock. Have your child reach in and try to guess what the object is.

## Rebus / Finger Plays

### "Planting Flowers"

First you take the seed

(pretend to pick up a seed with fingers)

And you plant it in the ground.

(pretend to "plant" it in your other hand (open)

Next a rain cloud comes

(roll up hand with "seed")

And waters all around.

(use fingers of other hand to shower "rain")

Next the sun shines brightly,

(keep "seed" hand rolled up)

Without a sound,

(move other hand over "seed" hand, like sun's rays)

And in just a few days

(open "seed" hand up like a flower)

A flower is found!


"Sleepy



Caterpillar"

"Let's go to  sleep",

(clasp hands by head like you're sleeping)

The  caterpillars said,

(wiggle fingers)

As they tucked themselves into their  cocoon  beds.

(fold fingers into a fist)

They will awaken by and by,

And each 1 one will be

(open closed hand, one finger at a time)

A lovely  butterfly!