



Reflections from MY Desk

Welcome to the New Year 2007!

As you know, with every new year comes new opportunities! The following are a few of the new opportunities for child care providers that you will want to know about and take advantage of!

🌲 Child Care Providers can sign up for direct deposit of your check directly in your own bank account. Direct deposit is a real time saver. You no longer have to rush to make it to the bank in time to deposit your check. Direct deposit will take the worry out of having lost or stolen checks from mail or post office boxes. You will also have the ability to confirm for

yourself when your check is deposited to your account.

🌲 Although it is not brand new, I would also like to encourage providers to take advantage of the FACTS PLUS web site. You can open an account and view your personal information about payment and children served.

🌲 MountainHeart offices are gearing up for the new 2007 tax season and will once again be offering free tax preparation services through the VITA program. Check with staff to find out if you can receive additional money back through the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Child Care Tax Credit, Education Credit and other possible tax deductions/credits.

🌲 MountainHeart Training Team staff are looking at new ways to enrich training opportunities for your professional development in 2007. New, advanced four hour training sessions are being developed, tailored to your specific requests. We are also working on a project to bring providers and parents together as partners for the good of the whole child.

🌲 Mark your calendars for the Annual 2007 MountainHeart Conference on June the 9th. This year, Summersville will be the new site and the creative arts will be the new conference theme. You will not want to miss this training extravaganza! Discover the Arts With MountainHeart!
Happy New 2007!

Margie

Provider Conference Art Contest

MountainHeart is holding an art contest for the logo design for the next Annual Provider Conference. We would like to ask all Child Care Providers to have their children participate by drawing the logo.

Please follow the guidelines listed below:

- ♥ Entries by children in child care only
- ♥ Theme: "Discover the Arts with MountainHeart"
- ♥ Flat Medium
- ♥ 8.5" x 11" Surface
- ♥ Prize is \$25.00 gift certificate to winning designer, and free registration to child's provider.

Please turn the artwork in to your local MountainHeart office or mail to:

MountainHeart
Attn: Mike Stafford
P.O. Box 966
Beckley, WV 25801

Thanks and Good Luck to all entrants!



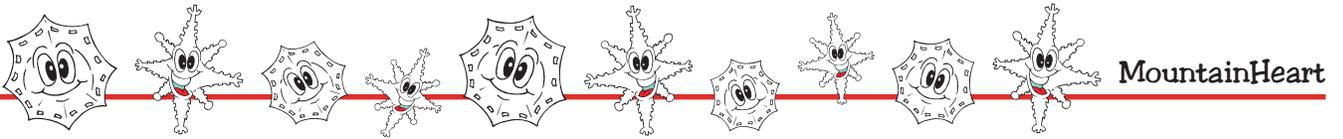
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Published by

MOUNTAINHEART
Community Services, Inc.
Child Care Resource & Referral Division

Mark Your Calendars
June 9, 2007
MountainHeart's
Annual Provider
Conference
More Info Coming Soon!



Direct Deposit Now Available to Providers

Beginning January 1, 2007, the Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Children and Families will offer providers the ability to deposit child care payments directly to a bank account.

In order for your check to be deposited directly to your bank account, you must fill out a Direct Deposit Authorization application based on your ID number in the FACTS computer system. You can download the application online at www.wvsao.gov or www.wvfacts.org. In addition to filling out an application, you will need to attach a blank check from your bank and mark it "VOID".



The completed application should be returned to the following address:

WV State Auditors Office
Electronic Payments Division
Building 1, Room W-125
Charleston, WV 25305

It will take about seven (7) business days to process the application and your first direct deposit should be received within 60 days of that date, so the sooner you apply, the sooner your check will go directly to your bank. If you need to make changes to your direct deposit accounts, such as changing banks or accounts, please call the State Auditors Office at 1-800-500-4079 or 1-304-558-2251.

Once your check is deposited to your account, you will no longer receive a pay stub with an itemized statement; but you can view your payment information online at the FACTS PLUS web site. FACTS PLUS (Provider Look-Up and Update System) is a secure internet site that allows providers to view details about payments and children served. This online information is available 24 hours a day. You can use any computer that has Internet Explorer Browser 6.0 or higher, and you do not have to own a computer. Public computer access is available in many local libraries, community centers, etc. You will need to have a FACTS Plus Account, which is free of charge. For more information about FACTS PLUS, please visit the FACTS PLUS web site at:

<https://www.wvfacts.org/factsplusnet/>

To open a new FACTS PLUS account, please click on "New Account."

Roma's Real World Integrating the Senses for Success



The way we learn about the world is through our senses. Countless bits of sensory information enter our brains at every moment, from every place in our bodies. The senses consist not only of touch, hearing, vision, taste, smell; but the vestibular and proprioceptive senses, which detect the pull of gravity and the movement in relation to the earth and the space around us.

Research shows that 15-25% of the children in each classroom have some type of sensory integration dysfunction. This translates into 1 out of 4 children per classroom have some type of sensory integration disorder. If intervention occurs at an early age, Sensory Integration Dysfunction can be managed so that the individual learns how to interact and adapt to his/her environment more effectively.

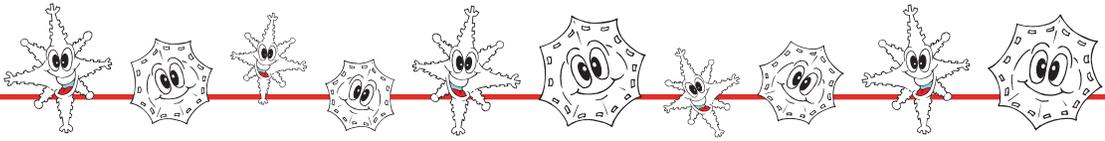
What are some signs of Sensory Integration Dysfunction?

- ♥ Over sensitive to touch, movement, sight, or sound
- ♥ Under sensitive to touch, movement, sight, or sound
- ♥ Easily distracted
- ♥ Social and/or emotional problems
- ♥ Activity level that unusually high or unusually low
- ♥ Physical clumsiness or apparent carelessness
- ♥ Difficulty making transition
- ♥ Inability to unwind or calm down
- ♥ Poor self concept
- ♥ Delay in speech, language, or motor skills
- ♥ Delay in academic achievement

A specific program will need to be developed to meet the needs of children with sensory integration dysfunction. Children will need one on one support as he/she learns the basic routines and requirements of the class and as staff learn specific strategies to help children function in their classrooms. Listed below are some strategies that may help children with sensory integration needs:

1. Begin by trying to understand what the child's major interest seem to be and develop activities that address those areas.
2. Substitute another activity that is more appropriate for the child sensory tolerance, motor skills, or perceptual readiness.
3. Break down the task into simplified steps.
4. Give out materials as they are being used.
5. Model correct language, incorporating the child's idea when responding to the child.
6. Allow the child to answer questions at his/her level, praising and encouraging any attempts he/she makes.

If you have questions about Sensory Integration Disorder please call Roma Lester at 1-800-834-7082 or 1-304-682-8271.



Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

MountainHeart is gearing up for another tax season with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA). The VITA Program offers FREE tax help to low- to moderate-income (generally, \$39,000 and below) people who cannot prepare their own tax returns.

Certified volunteers receive training to help prepare basic tax returns in communities across the country.

VITA sites are available at each MountainHeart office as well as many community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls, and other convenient locations.

All MountainHeart offices offer E-File to help speed the process of filing your income tax return. If desired, we can also have your refund deposited to or your tax payment withdrawn from your checking or savings



account. This can save you time in getting your refund back or the trouble of writing a check to mail in to pay any taxes that you might owe.

You may also be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) if

you meet the right qualifications. Your local VITA volunteer will be able to tell you if you qualify for EITC.

For more information contact your local MountainHeart Child Care Office!!

Kopperston Office
1-800-834-7082 or 682-8271

Beckley Office
1-888-799-9217 or 253-7654

Princeton Office
1-800-738-8531 or 425-3669

Summersville Office
1-866-872-9204 or 872-9200

Lewisburg Office
1-866-223-7127 or 647-3800

Rapid Refund Warning!!

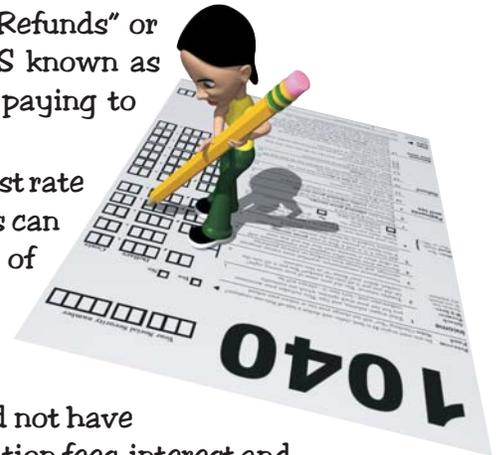
Paid tax preparers often advertise "Fast Cash Refunds", "Instant Refunds" or Rapid Refunds." Don't Be Fooled! These quick refunds are LOANS known as Refund Anticipation Loans (RALs). When you get a RAL, you are paying to borrow against your own refund with interest.

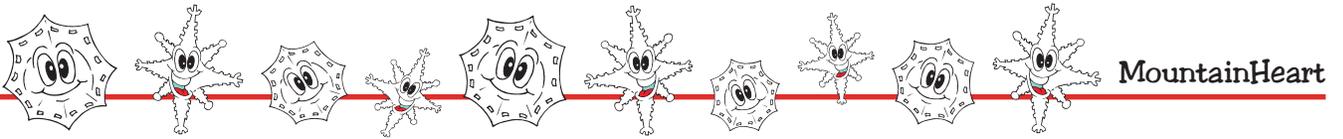
The problem with RALs is the high cost to the taxpayer. The interest rate for a RAL can sometimes translate into a triple digit interest rate. This can put a severe financial burden on the taxpayer due to a large portion of their refund going to the bank and/or the paid preparer.

For a lot of taxpayers, income tax refunds will be used to get caught up on overdue bills or other necessary expenses, such as vehicle maintenance, down payments, etc., that they otherwise would not have the money for. When one-half or more of their refund goes for preparation fees, interest and other miscellaneous charges, it can cause further financial burden for the individual as well as family members.

Other problems can occur with Refund Anticipation Loans that can be detrimental to the taxpayer. One such problem is the possibility that the income tax return would be completed with an error that would show the taxpayer getting a large refund when they don't actually qualify for any refund. If a RAL is received by the taxpayer only to later find out there was an error on the tax return, the taxpayer would be required to repay the RAL back to the bank. If the money were already spent, as many times is the case, taxpayers may end up in more debt than they were originally.

An alternative to RALs is to make use of the VITA Program and E-File your return, both of which are FREE. This can take approximately 7-14 working days as long as no problems with your return are found by the IRS. Remember, having your refund direct deposited to a checking or savings account is the fastest way to get your refund from the IRS.





LOL Laughing Out Loud



**We're out of icecubes.
We'll feed him again tomorrow.**

Celebrating Connections 2007

West Virginia's 10th Annual Early Childhood Conference

**February 21-23, 2007
Charleston Civic Center**

Keynote Speakers Include:

T. Berry Brazelton, John Archambault,
and David Plummer

One-Day Institutes on Wednesday

**For more information call 1-888-983-2827
or www.wvearlychildhood.org**

LA East Preschool Fitness & Day Care



BECKLEY, WV

Jennifer Lopez is the director of LA East Preschool Fitness & Day Care. She received her certification as a Child Development Specialist (A.C.D.S.) from the Bureau of Apprenticeship Training and the U.S. Department of Labor. She has also completed The WV Infant/Toddler Training and Certification Program (WVIT). Jennifer has also attended various training sessions on Early Childhood Development throughout the state.

What makes this Day Care different?

LA East is the first ever Child Care Center in Southern WV to offer the Kid-Fit Physical Education classes for Preschoolers. Kid-Fit teaches preschoolers aerobics, stretching exercises, gross motor skills, and healthy eating habits. The use of Kinderview, allows parents to see their children when they cannot be with them. An internet viewing system lets parents and other authorized users to safely view real-time images of their children throughout the day.

LA East Preschool Fitness and Day Care also offers a hands-on curriculum for children in their care. "Our philosophy is to work with the family to promote healthy, optimal development of each child. We believe that parents play the most important role in their child's life. Day care is not a replacement for parents, but an extension of them and parents have a right to expect the best of care for their children when they are not with them."

"Children learn through hands-on experiences and play situations. We provide a safe and healthy environment for children which encourages independent exploration and experimentation within a variety of stimulating learning centers. As Child Care Professionals, we seek to provide a warm, nurturing environment for all children in our care. We recognize that each child is a unique individual and we offer first hand experiences, together with adult guidance, in order that each child be encouraged to develop at his/her own pace."



Training Sessions On Behavior Management

Title: The Classroom Story
Description: Participants will learn how to set up a theater for learning through daily scheduling, classroom management strategies, and room arrangement that will anticipate and prevent challenging behaviors in the child care setting.
Registration: Space is limited to 20 participants. Please call Reba or Jamie at 1-866-872-9204 to Pre-Register.



March 8, 2007
The Corner at MountainHeart Conference Room
Beckley, West Virginia
5:30 pm to 8:00 pm

Child Care Center Director's Training

All directors who wish to have staff participate in the WV Infant & Toddler trainings being held in Greenbrier County in April 2007 must attend the 10 hour Director's training at least once.

Trainings will be held at the Greenbrier County WorkForce Building in Lewisburg on March 20, 2007 and March 27, 2007 from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Please call Jamie or Reba at 1-866-872-9204 to register.



Please note that you must be fully registered on the STARS Career Pathway to attend this training.

New Infant Toddler Training

MountainHeart is pleased to offer the new WVIT (West Virginia Infant and Toddler) Training. This program will replace the One Step at a Time training.

The training will consist of ten classes plus two on-site technical assistance visits. In order to receive a certificate for completing the course, participants must complete all classes and course work.

***Please note the corrections in location & dates.** The class will be held at the Nicholas County WorkForce Conference Room from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm on the following dates:

January 10, 16, 23 & 29
 February 1, 8, 15, 20 & 27
 March 6



For more information about the WVIT program contact Patricia Smith at 1-888-799-9217.

Please note that you must be fully registered on the STARS Career Pathway to attend this training.

Trails Van Schedule

The TRAILS van will be at the following trainings:

County	January	February	March
Braxton	No Training This Month	No Training This Month	3/20 1:45 pm - 2:30 pm
Fayette	1/29 11:30 am - 1:00 pm	2/12 11:30 am - 1:00 pm	3/20 11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Greenbrier	No Training This Month	2/27 11:30 am - 1:00 pm	3/19 3:00 pm - 3:30 pm
McDowell	No Training This Month	2/8 11:30 am - 12:30 pm	3/7 11:30 am - 12:30 pm
Mercer	Van will not be @ training in January	2/6 1:30 am - 2:00 pm	3/14 2:15 pm - 3:00 pm
Monroe	No Training This Month	No Training This Month	No Training This Month
Nicholas	1/30 11:30 am - 12:30 pm	2/7 11:30 am - 12:30 pm	3/9 2:45 pm - 3:15 pm
Pocahontas	No Training This Month	2/8 11:30 am - 1:00 pm	No Training This Month
Raleigh	1/29 3:00 pm - 3:30 pm	2/19 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm	3/26 3:00 pm - 3:30 pm
Summers	No Training This Month	2/15 12:00 pm - 12:30 pm	3/14 11:30 am - 1:00 pm
Webster	No Training This Month	No Training This Month	3/28 4:15 pm - 5:00 pm
Wyoming	No Training This Month	2/5 11:30 am - 12:30 pm	No Training This Month

* Please remember this schedule is just an added service, we will still be visiting all homes and centers as usual.

IF PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE CANCELLED IN YOUR COUNTY DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER, THERE WILL BE NO TRAINING THAT DAY.

MountainHeart is a program funded under an agreement with the DHHR Office of Children and Family Policy, Bureau for Children and Families, Early Care and Education Division.

Children are our future...and our future looks promising.

MountainHeart South Child Care Resource and Referral Training Schedule WV STARS Certified Trainers: Shonda Zastawniak and Dianna Thompson January 2007

Core Competency Training Titles for January

Topic 1 - Building Bridges And Making Connections

Core Competency - 2 Hrs. of Professionalism (Tier II)

Summary - Participants will focus on the development of program management skills to achieve high quality child care programs through a team approach.

Topic 2 - Parent Handbook: What do you need to know before developing your parent handbook?

Core Competency - 1 Hr. Program Management and 1 Hr. Professionalism (Tier I)

Summary - Participants of this training will learn the benefits of providing parents with a handbook prior to enrollment. Ideas to be discussed include but are not limited to, fees, illness policy, late pickup, scheduling, and other parent issues.

FAYETTE (Fayette County DHHR)

January 29, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2

NICHOLAS (Summersville WORKFORCE)

January 30, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2

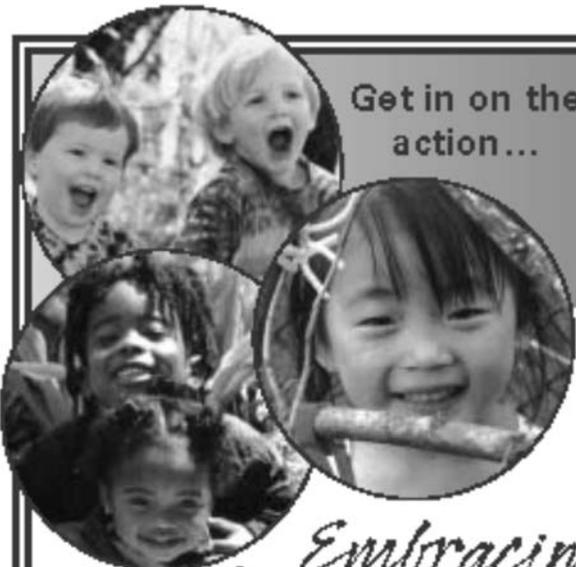
MERCER (Princeton WORKFORCE)

January 30, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 2
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 1

RALEIGH (MountainHeart Child Care Services)

January 29, 2007	3:00 pm to 5:00 pm	Topic 2
	6:00 pm to 8:00 pm	Topic 1

For training reservations or more information, please call Reba or Jamie at 1-866-872-9204.



Get in on the
action...

SECA 2007

March 29-31, 2007
Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront
Jacksonville, FL

Featuring

- ✦ Pam Schiller
- ✦ Judy Collins
- ✦ Anne Mitchell
- ✦ Sue Bredekamp
- ✦ Ellen Frede
- ✦ Thelma Harms
- ✦ Kathy Thornburg
- ✦ Jose-Luis Orozco
- ✦ The Children's Dance Foundation of Birmingham

For more information go to
www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org
and click on "Conference"

*Embracing
the VOY of Southern
Children & Families*

Registration packets will be mailed to all SECA members in September 2006.

MountainHeart South Child Care Resource and Referral Training Schedule WV STARS Certified Trainers: Shonda Zastawniak and Dianna Thompson February 2007

Core Competency Training Titles for February

Topic 1 - Building Bridges And Making Connections

Core Competency - 2 Hrs. of Professionalism (Tier II)

Summary - Participants will focus on the development of program management skills to achieve high quality child care programs through a team approach.

Topic 2 - Parent Handbook: What do you need to know before developing your parent handbook?

Core Competency - 1 Hr. Program Management and 1 Hr. Professionalism (Tier I)

Summary - Participants of this training will learn the benefits of providing parents with a handbook prior to enrollment. Ideas to be discussed include but are not limited to, fees, illness policy, late pickup, scheduling, and other parent issues.

BRAXTON

See Trainings listed for Nicholas or Webster Counties

FAYETTE (Fayette County DHHR)

February 12, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	1:00 pm to 3:00 pm	Topic 2

GREENBRIER (Lewisburg WORKFORCE)

February 27, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2
February 20, 2007	12:00 pm to 2:00 pm	Topic 2
	2:30 pm to 4:30 pm	Topic 1

MCDOWELL (McDowell County DHHR)

February 8, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2

MERCER (Princeton WORKFORCE)

February 6, 2007	12:00 pm to 2:00 pm	Topic 2
	3:00 pm to 5:00 pm	Topic 1

MERCER (Princeton Library)

February 1, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2
February 15, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2

MONROE

See Trainings listed for Greenbrier or Mercer Counties

NICHOLAS (Summersville WORKFORCE)

February 7, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2

POCAHONTAS (McClintic Library)

February 8, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2

RALEIGH (MountainHeart Child Care Services)

February 6, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2
February 13, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2
February 19, 2007	12:00 pm to 2:00 pm	Topic 2
	3:00 pm to 5:00 pm	Topic 1

SUMMERS (Summers County DHHR)

February 15, 2007	12:00 pm to 2:00 pm	Topic 1
	2:30 pm to 4:30 pm	Topic 2

WEBSTER

See Trainings listed for Braxton or Nicholas Counties

WYOMING (Wyoming County DHHR In Pineville)

February 5, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2

**For training reservations or more information,
please call Reba or Jamie at 1-866-872-9204.**

Components of Quality Care and Education Training

MountainHeart will be offering specialized training for Developmental Appropriate Practices. These Modules have been developed to meet the requirements of the West Virginia Early Learning Standards Framework (WV ELSF). The training sessions are recommended for all people who work with 2½-5 year old children in all settings.

Remember, all modules must be completed to receive a certificate. The modules will be broken

into eight sessions. If you are interested in these modules or have questions about the Components of Quality Care and Education modules, please call Roma Lester at 1-800-834-7082 or Dianna Thompson at 1-866-872-9204.



MountainHeart South Child Care Resource and Referral Training Schedule WV STARS Certified Trainers: Shonda Zastawniak and Dianna Thompson March 2007

Core Competency Training Titles for March

Topic 1 - A New Look at an Old Topic - Readiness to Learn

Core Competency - 2 Hrs. Program Management (Tier II)

Summary - What do families, child care givers, and communities need to know about early childhood education? Participants will review new curriculum ideas for the development of social-emotional skill and the connection to early learning.

Topic 2 - Maria Montessori - Theories Of Development

Core Competency - 2 Hrs. Child Growth and Development (Tier II)

Summary - Participants will explore the ideas and beliefs of child development theorist Maria Montessori. Participants will review teaching strategies and environments that reflect Maria Montessori theory.

BRAXTON (Sutton City Hall)

March 20, 2007	12:00 pm to 2:00 pm	Topic 1
	2:30 pm to 4:30 pm	Topic 2

FAYETTE (Fayette County DHHR)

March 20, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2

GREENBRIER (Lewisburg WORKFORCE)

March 13, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2
March 19, 2007	2:00 pm to 4:00 pm	Topic 2
	5:00 pm to 7:00 pm	Topic 1

MCDOWELL (Welch Library)

March 7, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2

MERCER (Princeton WORKFORCE)

March 14, 2007	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2
	3:00 pm to 5:00 pm	Topic 1
March 21, 2007	12:00 pm to 2:00 pm	Topic 1
	3:00 pm to 5:00 pm	Topic 2

MERCER (Princeton Library)

March 8, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2

MONROE

See Trainings listed for Greenbrier or Mercer Counties

NICHOLAS (Summersville WORKFORCE)

March 9, 2007	1:00 pm to 3:00 pm	Topic 1
	4:00 pm to 6:00 pm	Topic 2

POCAHONTAS

See Trainings listed for Greenbrier or Nicholas Counties

RALEIGH (MountainHeart Child Care Services)

March 6, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2
March 12, 2007	12:00 pm to 2:00 pm	Topic 2
	3:00 pm to 5:00 pm	Topic 1
March 26, 2007	3:00 pm to 5:00 pm	Topic 1
	6:00 pm to 8:00 pm	Topic 2

SUMMERS (Summers County DHHR)

March 14, 2007	10:00 am to 12:00 pm	Topic 1
	12:30 pm to 2:30 pm	Topic 2

WEBSTER - Note: Different Location This Quarter (MountainCap Child Development Center, Cowen)

March 28, 2007	2:30 pm to 4:30 pm	Topic 1
	5:00 pm to 7:00 pm	Topic 2

WYOMING

See Trainings listed for McDowell, Mercer or Raleigh Counties

**For training reservations or more information,
please call Reba or Jamie at 1-866-872-9204.**

IMPORTANT NOTICE

MountainHeart Training Sessions are provided for the professional development of all child care providers. To allow All Participants the opportunity to focus fully on the subject matter, we ask that you do not bring infants or children to the sessions.



We regret we are unable to provide child care during training. Thank you for honoring our policy in this matter.

RECALLED ITEMS

Baby Cookie Monster Plush Toys

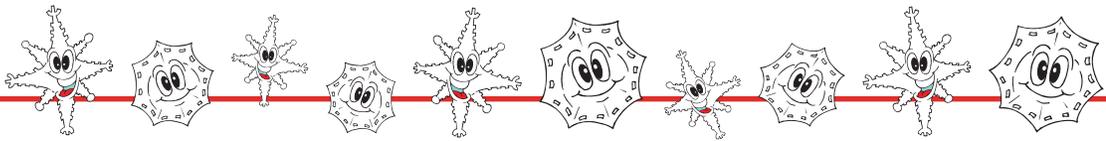
<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml07/07009.html>

RC2 Recalls Toy Keys Due to Choking Hazard

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml07/07023.html>

Various Firms Recall Flashing Pacifiers for Choking, Aspiration and Strangulation Hazards

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml07/07024.html>



CPSC Warns of Fire and Other Hazards Related to Holiday Decorating



WASHINGTON, D.C. - Holiday decorating is often depicted in movies by characters who hang countless strings of lights and suffer falls from ladders or rooftops for comic effect. Unfortunately, these types of incidents are grounded in reality and, unlike in the movies, they are often no laughing matter. In fact, each year it is estimated that about 12,500 people go to hospital emergency rooms for falls, cuts, shocks and burns related to holiday decorating, according to U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) statistics.

"Holiday decorating incidents often involve faulty holiday lights, candles and dried-out Christmas trees," said Acting CPSC Chairman Nancy Nord. "Follow the CPSC's safety tips to keep your holidays fun and festive, as suffering a serious injury is not on anyone's list."

Christmas trees are involved in about 300 fires annually. This results in an average of 20 deaths, 40 injuries and about \$8 million in property damage and loss. In addition, there are nearly 15,000 candle-related fires each year, which result in 170 deaths and \$327 million in property loss.

To help prevent these types of incidents, CPSC monitors holiday lights and other decorations sold at stores and on the Internet. CPSC works with the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection to identify and prevent unsafe holiday light sets that pose fire risks from being distributed in the U.S.

Here are a few safety tips to follow:

Trees and Decorations: When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree is more resistant to burning.

When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers. The bottom of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.

When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms dry out live trees rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic, and do not block doorways.

Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.

In homes with small children, take special care to avoid sharp or breakable decorations, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children who could swallow or inhale small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.

To avoid eye and skin irritation, wear gloves when decorating with spun glass "angel hair."

To avoid lung irritation, follow container directions carefully while decorating with artificial snow sprays.

Lights: Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a nationally-recognized testing laboratory, such as UL or ETL/TTSNA. Use only newer lights that have thicker wiring and are required to have safety fuses to prevent the wires from overheating.

Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Throw out damaged sets.

If using an extension cord, make sure it is rated for the intended use. Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.

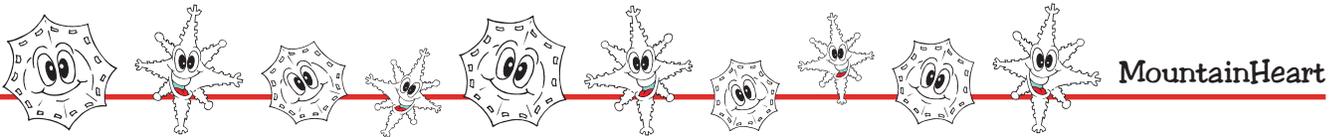
When using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use and plug them into only ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protected receptacles.

Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.

Candles: Keep burning candles within sight. Keep lighted candles away from items that can burn easily, such as trees, other evergreens, decorations, curtains and furniture. Always use non-flammable holders and keep away from children and pets. Extinguish all candles before you go to bed or leave the house.

To see more of this release on CPSC's web site, including a link to a video clip on holiday decoration safety, please go to: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml07/07046.html>





Let's Keep Them Moving

By Patricia Smith

There is a crisis in our country. In fact, there is a crisis right here in our state. Today 17% of children in the United States are overweight. This has tripled in the past 2 decades. Nearly two-thirds of Americans are overweight or obese. One out of every eight deaths is caused by an illness directly related to obesity or being overweight. Type II diabetes, previously considered an adult disease, has increased dramatically in children and adolescents.

What are the main reasons for these startling statistics? Many children are eating too much and moving too little. The solution is simple; first increase physical activity, secondly incorporate healthier eating habits, and thirdly improve health literacy.

The winter season is upon us and outdoor activities are limited. Does that mean we should wait until spring to be active? Of course not! We just need to be a little creative. Here are a few suggestions to keep them moving throughout these long cold winter months.

- ♥ Arrange your furniture against the walls to create more open space. Invite the children to help. Make the task fun. Allow them to use their imaginations. They could pretend to be construction workers, Santa elves, Snow White's dwarfs, etc.
- ♥ Ask children to gallop in a circle, rather than back and forth.
- ♥ Stretching, bending, shaking, turning, rocking, swaying, twisting, and dodging are essential non-motor skills.
- ♥ Let children walk in place. Be creative. Change direction, use their arms in various positions, increase/decrease speed, etc.
- ♥ Always remember safety first. To help avoid the inevitable collisions ask the children to space themselves out evenly at the beginning of each activity. Tell the children to imagine a giant bubble surrounding them and to move carefully to avoid bursting the bubble.

We find ways to build library corners filled with wonderful children's books and create math centers filled with manipulatives, posters, and puzzles. My challenge to you is to create a space for physical activities. Let's keep them moving to help fight obesity in our children.

Please do not hesitate to call your TRAILS staff at 1-888-799-9217 or 1-866-223-7127 for further resources or information.

Sources: "But We Don't Have Room!"
by Rae Pica

www.surgeongeneral.gov

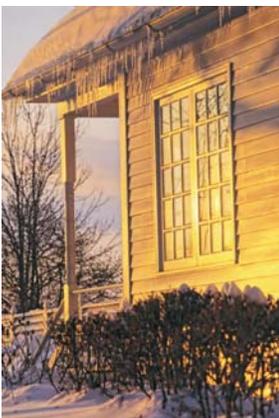


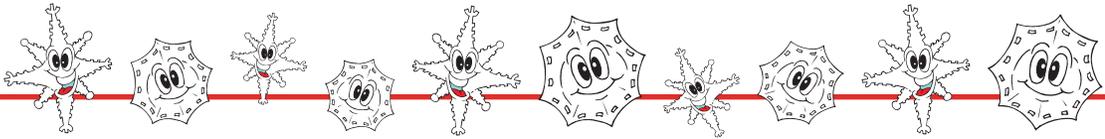
Great Way To Spend A Snowy Afternoon

Read A Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats, then create a SNOWY DAY PICTURE

Materials: Light blue construction paper, glue stick, black crayon, a mixture of Epsom salts and water (approx. 1 teaspoon to 1/3 cup water per child) with brushes. Have pre-made shapes cut out, a very simple outline of the child (check out the book cover).

Description: Provide light blue paper for the children. Show them how to draw a wavy line with a black crayon across the paper for the snow, then glue the shape of the child on. Have the children embellish the picture with something they remember from the book: The child, Peter, is hitting a tree with a stick, dragging a stick in the snow, throwing a snowball, etc. When their picture is completed, have them brush a mixture of Epsom salts and water across their picture. When it dries, it will glisten lightly, as if in a snowy haze.





1 Death, 19 Injuries Blamed On Magnets

By MIKE STOBBE,
AP Medical Writer

At least one U.S. child has died and 19 others have needed surgery since 2003 after swallowing magnets used in toys, the government reported Thursday.

Most of those cases were believed to involve tiny but strong "rare earth" magnets that can link together in children's digestive tracts, squeezing and even perforating the intestines, the researchers said.

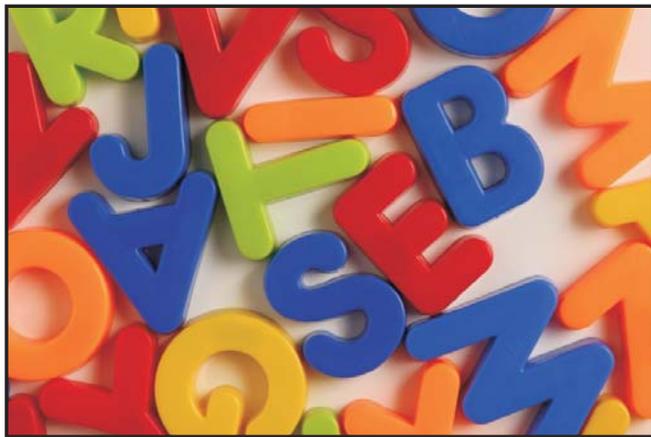
The magnets, made from neodymium iron boron or other compounds, have become common in the U.S. toy market in the past five years because they have become cheaper to produce, said Jonathan Midgett, the study's lead author and an engineering psychologist with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

They are used in building sets, action figures and dolls.

"Most people who have never had them in their hands are shocked at how strong these tiny things are," Midgett said.

Kenny Sweet, a 20-month-old boy from Redmond, Wash., died in two days after he began complaining of stomach aches and vomiting. An autopsy found nine small magnets stacked together. They had caused a twisting of the bowel and a blood infection.

The magnets had come off a building set belonging to Kenny's 10-year-old brother, according to his family's lawyers. Mega Brands Inc. recalled 3.8 million Magnetix building sets, added warning labels and agreed to pay \$13.5 million to settle lawsuits.



Last month, Mattel Inc. recalled more than 4 million Polly Pocket play sets, dolls with small magnets in their hands, feet, clothing and other accessories.

Last month, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group for the first time included the magnets on its annual holiday warning about dangerous toys.

Midgett said federal and industry officials hope to have a warning label ready within six months for toys containing magnets.

Source: Internet

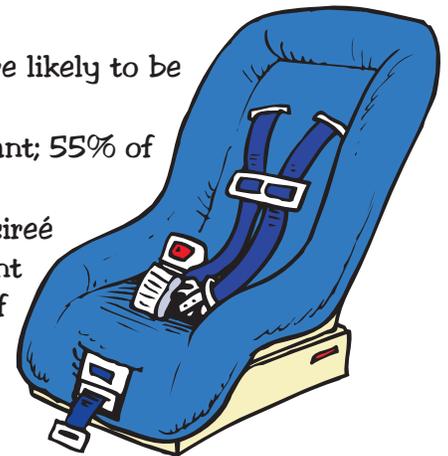
To Grandmother's House We Go...Safely!

Did you know that 90% of all self-installed child safety restraint systems (child car seats) are installed incorrectly?

If your child's car seat is installed incorrectly, he or she is 42% more likely to be injured or even killed if you are in a car crash.

In 2001, 2,197 children (ages 0-14 years old) died as a vehicle occupant; 55% of those were either unrestrained or restrained incorrectly.

If you have any questions about your car seat you may contact Desiree Martin at 1-888-799-9217 or for more information on child safety restraint systems, you can contact your local fire or police department and ask if they have a Certified Child Safety Restraint Technician on hand. You can also visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration online at www.nhtsa.org.



We Would Like To Wish Everyone
A Very Merry Christmas and
A Happy & Prosperous New Year!



We Look Forward To
Serving You In 2007



Check out the following website for information on the West Virginia Infant/Toddler Training (WVIT)
<http://www.wvdhhr.org/bcf/ece/earlycare/itdp.asp>

MountainHeart Child Care Services
C/O MountainHeart Community Services

P.O. Box 1509
Oceana, WV 24870

Children are our future...
and our future looks promising!

**Important Child Care
Information Enclosed!**

MHCCS is funded through a grant from DHHR, Bureau for Children and Families, Division of Early Care and Education. MHCCS was established in 1992. WV Birth to Three is funded through a grant from DHHR, Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health. WV Birth to Three Regions VI & VII were established in 2003.