



Learning through Exploration

MAKE EVERY DAY A 'PLAY DAY'

Being 'stuck' at home can make parents and educators alike concerned about missing out on valuable learning opportunities for children. However, learning can happen – *and is happening* – everywhere! Time and again, it's been proven that active learning through exploration, inquiry, and play spurs early childhood development. And when they're engaged in play as active participants and contributors, children thrive!

Play allows children to develop their physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and moral capabilities. In play, children and adults alike adopt a frame of mind that is particularly well suited for high-level reasoning, problem-solving, and other creative endeavors. During play, children create or notice problems and regularly adapt to them. In doing so, they are learning more about the world around them while developing their physical and social skills.

One of the most important things to realize about play is that it is not adult-driven. Even telling a child to play with a particular toy is not "play" in the educational sense. Play is enacted by the child based on his or her own interests – *it's self-chosen and self-directed.*

Play is closely related to exploration, which is the act of children examining, interacting, and experimenting with their environment. When we watch children explore, we are watching them convey their interests, curiosities, and chances

in appropriate "risky play" that increases physical activity, social skills, improved resilience, higher self-confidence, and better risk management skills.

We can all integrate exploration and play into our social-distancing lives by creating environments where there are many activities for children to do. Setting aside time and a variety of common, household materials for children to engage in the projects they choose is beneficial for both their mental health and physical development.



Find Fun in 'Found' Objects

Before you toss them, consider giving a second life to cartons and containers. Once cleaned, materials that were destined for the recycling bin or second-hand shop may become buildings, vehicles or even a wily wolf. Stumped creatively? Go to Pinterest, then go wild!

Early Learning at Home: EarlyON @ Family Day

One of the ways we are helping to provide early learning to families is through our EarlyON @ Family Day Facebook group. This group – *new as of mid-April* – already has over 1,000 users and is the brainchild of Family Day's EarlyON staff in collaboration with Lisa Shortall, our Manager of Training and Pedagogy. This partnership allows

Early Childhood Educators to provide robust, evidence-based early learning and parenting programs straight to you through your device of choice.

FIND THE FACEBOOK GROUP: Search for "EarlyON @ Family Day" on Facebook and request to join the group. We'd love to have you join us!

DID YOU KNOW... EarlyON Staff provide live programming every hour on the hour at 10am, 11am, 12 noon, 1pm, 2pm and 3pm. These programs include cooking activities, reading and literacy times, and other workshops geared towards young children. We hope to "see" you in the group!



Family Wellness at Home

While the transition from March Break to the 'new normal' went well for many families, we know that children are finding themselves unprepared to cope with the ongoing boredom, stress and loneliness this crisis has caused. Furthermore, as these difficult days continue, people of all ages may become more frustrated and less understanding of the ongoing situation.

You can find a running and growing list of childcare-focused resources on our website. Just go to familydaycare.com and click on the slider at the top of the page entitled, "**Family Wellness & Ideas for Keeping Active and Engaged at Home.**" Here you will find healthy parenting tips, ideas for talking to kids about COVID, and fun learning activities to keep your child engaged in active learning. We continue to update this page with additional resources, so you're encouraged to return to the page weekly... and be sure to share it with your friends!

One piece of chalk, 8 great games

Chalk comes in a multitude of colours but all you need is one piece to create games that will keep your kids engaged for hours. Find a safe spot on your walkway, driveway, or balcony, and prepare your kids to 'chalk up the fun!' Go to our website to learn about these chalk games and much, much more!

1. Hopscotch
2. Avoid the Shark
3. Chalk Bullseye
4. 4 Square
5. Chalk Maze
6. Alphabet Hop
7. Sidewalk Twister
8. Corners

CELEBRATING TALENT... **Slimy, yet Satisfying**

Julianne T., a creative, enthusiastic, and engaged RECE on our Lynnwood Heights Extended Day and School Age Program team, has come up with a new way to create child care opportunities for children and families. She has started a YouTube channel where she shares fun and informative videos to help fill the days at home.

Julianne has been supporting Family Day's Pedagogical Consultant as a Peer Mentee for the past three years. Her commitment, passion and dedication to children, families, communities, and fellow educators is evident through the many contributions she has made which have enriched programs across our agency.

By watching Julianne's engaging online videos, you can turn your living room into a mini-putt course, make fluffy slime, or

homemade playdough before cleaning up using proper hand hygiene!

Not only are these activities fun, they are also based in evidence-based learning. Crafts like fluffy slime (*check out the recipe below*) provide unique sensory experiences that children will love. Other videos lead viewers in a physical activity that reduces stress and boosts your immune system. Whether creating crafts or doing jumping jacks, children of all ages will gain the confidence to create other activities on their own. Julianne's videos are crafted to provide fun, educational moments in a child's day.

We are certainly fortunate to have Julianne on our team!

You can find Julianne's excellent YouTube channel linked on our Family Wellness & Ideas for Keeping Active and Engaged at Home page at familydaycare.com



FLUFFY SLIME MAKES FOR A GREAT TIME!

Fluffy slime creates unique and fun tactile experiences for children, young and old. Try stretching it, folding it, or squeezing it between your fingers! Everything you need to create this strange slime is likely already in your home or can be found in a quick visit to a grocery store or pharmacy.

You will need:

Shaving cream, white craft glue, baking soda, contact solution, and food colouring (optional). You will also need a large bowl, a mixing spoon, and measuring cups.

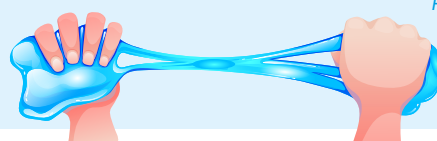


1. Mix 3 cups of shaving cream with half a cup of white glue until you have a thick foam.
2. Add your food colouring to the foam. You may also want to add glitter, sparkles, or foam balls, too!

3. Mix in 1 teaspoon of baking soda until the slime starts to thicken.

4. Mix in a tablespoon of contact solution before kneading the slime by hand. Add more solution if the slime is too sticky.

For more detailed instructions, look for Julianne's video Fluffy Slime Recipe on her YouTube channel!



Staying Connected

This unprecedented time has touched the lives of each of us. Almost overnight, our entire world as we once knew it has changed. Physical distancing, hand washing and self-isolation are all new behaviours critical to our health and safety, in order to reduce our risks of contracting and spreading COVID-19. I am also learning to internalize these new behaviors, as my family and I work from home and do our part to reduce the spread of the virus.

The provincial government has ordered a shutdown of non-essential services, resulting in the mandated closures of licensed child care programs and EarlyON centres. Physical distancing is critical to flattening the curve and slowing the spread of infection. Canada's Chief Public Health Officer reports that this strategy is working, but requires more time to have the impact we need to see. This time of uncertainty has caused a significant level of stress and hardship across communities. Family Day is aware that the closures of early learning programs have created barriers for families. Now, more than ever, social supports for children and families are very important to promote a sense of well-being and positive mental health.



MESSAGE FROM
DIANE DALEY, CEO



Over the past six weeks, many Family Day staff have worked hard to stay connected with families. We have transitioned to offering programs virtually. Our online programs have supported us in staying connected with families, as we offer early learning programs on YouTube, Facebook Live and StoryPark. It has been wonderful to see familiar faces of educators promote a sense of continuity through songs, stories and play-based activities.

In this new environment when physical distancing is our new normal (*for the time being*), we encourage you to join in and enjoy these programs and stay connected with us virtually. You can check out our website at familydaycare.com for updates and helpful resources. We all look forward to connecting in person once it is safe to do so.

Stay Safe!

DID YOU KNOW? **DID YOU KNOW?** DID YOU KNOW?

Canada Child Benefit (CCB) Payment Increase

Individuals who received the CCB for April, 2020 and still have an eligible child in their care in May, 2020 will get up to \$300 extra per child as part of their regular May, 2020 payment. If you more information go to our website or google "**Canada child benefit payment increase**" for clear, credible information directly from the federal government's website: canada.ca



Looking forward to the day
when we can be together again

RE-OPENING FAMILY DAY

As weeks of social and physical distancing turn into months, senior staff at Family Day have been hard at work developing a comprehensive plan to re-open our child care, early learning, extended day, school age, home child care, summer camp and family support programs, including EarlyON.

Working in conjunction with public health officials and various governments, we are working to reduce the risk to our staff, families, and communities when we resume our programs.

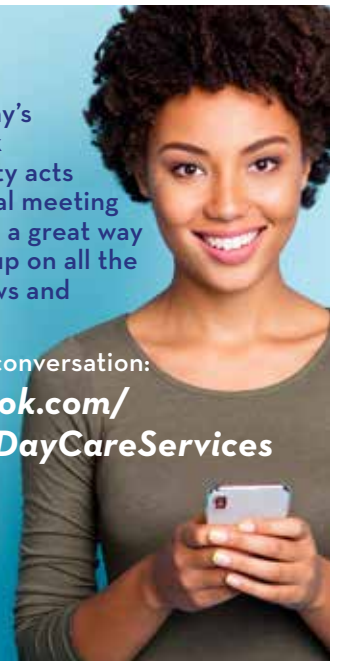
We assure you that we are doing everything possible to have the necessary health & safety measures in place. Thank you for your patience.



Family Day's Facebook community acts as a virtual meeting place and a great way to catch up on all the latest news and events.

Join the conversation:

[facebook.com/
FamilyDayCareServices](https://facebook.com/FamilyDayCareServices)



No kidding, today's the day to visit a museum

Although their doors are closed, you can enter the world's greatest museums and art galleries 24-7 through their on-line portals. Simply by typing in the name of a gallery or museum into Facebook or Instagram will open your eyes and mind to a whole new world of learning.

When visiting kidsinmuseums.org.uk, you can access many sites including one for the Roald Dahl Museum. He wrote lots of great books including *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and you'll learn how to tell even better stories by getting nose in nature or fired up by food!

The Most Delicious Mine

Toronto's prestigious Royal Ontario Museum has a great section on their website for 'At Home Activities' for kids of all ages. Go to rom.on.ca to learn how chocolate chip cookies can help you explore the mining process by extracting valuable chocolate chip ore in a sustainable way.





**FAMILY
DAY**



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Greater Toronto

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familydaycare.com

 facebook.com/FamilyDayCareServices
 [@FamilyDayGTA](https://twitter.com/FamilyDayGTA)

Our Programs

- Licensed Home Child Care
- Child Care Centres
- School Age Programs
- Resource Programs
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- Homework Plus

FOCUS Newsletter

Design and production:
WISHART.NET

For countless families, Family Day is the only way!