



FAMILY
DAY

FOCUS

LATE FALL
ISSUE 2020



GET OUT, AND STAY OUT!

Explore your local neighbourhood

Carrie has a message for you: get outside! It's worth it! The mother – who attends Thornhill EarlyON's outdoor education programs – lives very close to Yonge St. in the heart of Toronto. If she can find opportunities for outdoor play, then so can you!

Parents like Carrie are overjoyed to take part in Thornhill EarlyON's outdoor education programming, which in pre-pandemic times encouraged parents and children to take part in games, crafts, and other activities once every season. The program is designed to provide inspiration that parents can then integrate into their own day-to-day play.

Carrie says that taking her four-year-old daughter Ava to Thornhill EarlyON has created a dramatic change in them both. She's noticed that Ava is now more visibly interested in science and "the Circle of Life." In warmer months, she was active in the garden, planting tomatoes and watching them grow. At the end of the day, outdoor play has infused Ava with a sense of adventure and curiosity that we want to see in all children.

But what if you don't have a garden to grow tomatoes in, or an EarlyON centre nearby? You may be able to look closer to home. Thanks to a 2013 City of Toronto Parks Plan, you probably have a park or parkette near your neighbourhood to explore.



Play games that focus on movement, go on a scavenger hunt, and generally spend more time outdoors. Even taking a walk every day is a good idea and will help children get into the habit of going outside.

If you feel comfortable doing so, seriously consider heading outdoors this winter and getting those muscles moving! It may have better results than you thought it could have.

How to Stay Warm this Winter

An awesome antidote to lockdowns is outside play. And like the saying goes, "there's no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing." Feel free to print off our "Tips" poster on the final page of this newsletter.



OPEN DOORS
EarlyON's outdoor
learning adventures

TIPS FOR DRESSING IN WINTER MONTHS



Cool Weather (Late fall / Early spring)

Base Layer: Long sleeve shirt and pant layer made of synthetic fabric (not cotton, which absorbs sweat and can make you cold)

Outer Layer: Lined, wind-resistant, waterproof jacket and snow/splash pants

Warm, waterproof boots or rain boots

Cold Weather (Early winter / Late winter)

Base Layer: Long sleeve top and long johns bottom made of synthetic, wool or silk fabric (not cotton) and non-cotton socks (wool is best)

Insulating Layer: Sweatshirt and sweatpants, or fleece jacket/pullover and fleece pants

Outer Layer: water-resistant snow suit, non-cotton hat/ toque, tube neck warmer and water-resistant mittens

Warm, waterproof boots

Extreme Cold Weather (Mid-winter)

Follow the 'Cold Weather' tips but add one or two additional layers on top and bottom



MESSAGE FROM DIANE DALEY, CEO

A Year Like No Other

We are well into the fall/winter season and this year many of us have had a new and valued appreciation for the great outdoors and enjoying nature. Family Day staff across our programs have certainly taken advantage of opportunities to be outdoors. This fall, we have strengthened our commitment to outdoor education and, as demonstrated on our social media feeds, staff are working hard to keep children happy and engaged outdoors in nature. It all certainly looks like fun! Health experts remind us about the benefits of the outdoors for everyone. They include fresh air, physical activity, connecting with nature and, of course, the benefits to our mental health. Highlighted in this edition of FOCUS you can find out more about Family Day's commitment to outdoor education, including hearing about how we have engaged families on this journey.

During December, we often begin to reflect on the year that is ending and 2020 has most certainly been a year like no other. The year has provided many opportunities to see different perspectives both in our own communities and across the globe. Our Federal Government has recognized the importance of childcare as being essential to the Canadian economy. They have also signaled that a commitment to a national childcare strategy is on the horizon. Across the globe, a conversation about systemic discrimination has been in the spotlight. All of these conversations are positive steps in creating social change. We look forward to better understanding, specifically, what concrete actions each of these perspectives will bring.

Throughout the pandemic, Family Day staff have remained committed. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, our staff have transitioned to new routines, and many of us are learning new ways to use technology – *working virtually and, most importantly, doing our part to reduce the spread of the virus*. Thanks to the management team for their leadership and also a special thank you to all staff members especially those who work frontline in programs with children and families. As our essential workers, your commitment is most appreciated.

As we move into the festive season, may we each embrace the opportunity to keep our seasonal activities practical and simple, with a new appreciation of what is most special to each of us.

Wishing everyone a wonderful holiday season and all the best for 2021.

Diane Daley, Family Day CEO



Come Together – Make Gingerbread

We like to send you a fun recipe in every issue of FOCUS. This issue, we have a special holiday treat!

This classic cut-out gingerbread cookie recipe is easy to make with children.

Perfect for decorating, this year encourage your kids to decorate some of the cookies to represent members of your family whom you won't be able to see during the holidays. While your children decorate cookies in

Auntie Fran's likeness according to each of their abilities, take the time to listen as they tell you what makes Auntie Fran so special to them. Of course, take a picture of the finished cookies and send it to Auntie Fran before following up with a call to her from the whole family.

What could be more delicious than a great conversation with a loved one?!

Keep the recipe – print out and save page 4



United, Family Day staff rally in support of the United Way. \$12,276.75 raised!

Every year, Family Day runs an agency-wide United Way Pledge Campaign, to support an organization that positively impacts the lives of many. 2020's campaign was more important than most, as the pandemic has prevented the United Way from holding its regular drives and events.

We are proud to announce that Family Day's 2020 pledge campaign was a great success, with \$12,276.75 raised.

"I have been very encouraged by the stories I have been hearing from staff and staff alumni about the United Way," commented Diane Daley, Family Day's CEO. "It's clear to me that, together, we are creating a positive impact in the lives of countless children in our community!"

Mollie Zebedee, RECE, a Program Manager at Family Day, volunteered to lead the campaign and she was very encouraged by the response. "Employee pledges raised \$7,226.75;

the GetUP challenge raised \$2,920; and all other donations including the dance-a-thon and alumni donations raised an additional \$2,130 for a total of \$12,276.75. I think this is pretty amazing considering everything," Mollie said before adding, "we need to celebrate that people were still giving during this difficult year."

Although our campaign has officially wrapped up, you have until December 31st to have your gift matched dollar-for-dollar by clicking here. **Your \$25 gift will provide a \$50 impact** and your donation of \$100 will automatically double to \$200, but only until the end of the year. If you make a donation, under the "Workplace Name" section of the form, please enter **Family Day Care Services**.

If you make a donation, under the "Workplace Name" section of the form, please enter Family Day Care Services. "Donations of any size are greatly appreciated," said Mollie. "Just make a donation!"

How to play, the 'Winter Way'

Three things to keep in mind before your kids drive you out of your mind: children's head, hands, and feet need to stay warm if they're to stay outside for more than a few minutes.

Move it, move it!

The more kids move the more they stay warm. Think of teaching them a game like "red light, green light" which has kids starting and stopping and starting and stopping over and over... and over again. Scavenger hunts, orienteering, making a snowman, sledding, and good old-fashioned fort building and snowball fights are all great ways to ensure your child's particip-action includes loads of action. A caution: *If you're going to create a new game, keep it simple. No one – least of all a child – likes to stand around in the cold getting cold.*

Snack attack

Children get dehydrated more quickly than adults so keep snacks at the ready during cold, winter months. If possible, avoid granola bars or energy bars (basically anything that freezes into bricks). Instead, consider trail mix, freeze-dried fruit, as well as bits'n'bites, all of which are available in bulk.

Walk the talk, literally!

If you go for daily walks, do outside chores, or play some road hockey, your children are more likely to go outside more often and for longer. Everyone can do with more exercise; why should kids have all the fun?!

The more they run, the more YOU sleep

Having spent 20 or 30 minutes or more outside running around building this or playing with that, your child will be happy, healthy, and very, very sleepy. And just think, if your son or daughter sleeps better, chances are you will, too.



**FAMILY
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United Way
Greater Toronto

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facebook.com/FamilyDayCareServices



@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!



FAMILY
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GINGERBREAD

INGREDIENTS

GINGERBREAD COOKIES RECIPE

3-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon ground ginger
3/4 teaspoon baking soda
3/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup unsalted butter, softened
to room temperature
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1 large egg
1/2 cup unsulfured molasses
1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract

*Optional: Zest of one small orange
Optional toppings: Simple icing
(see below), sprinkles, etc.*

SIMPLE ICING RECIPE

2 cups powdered sugar
2-3 tablespoons milk
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract



DIRECTIONS

TO MAKE THE GINGERBREAD COOKIES

1. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together flour, cinnamon, ginger, baking soda, cloves, salt and nutmeg. Set aside.
2. In an electric stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or alternately, you can use a hand mixer and a large mixing bowl), beat the butter and sugar together for 2 minutes on medium-high speed until light and fluffy. Add in eggs, molasses and vanilla, and beat on medium speed until combined. Reduce mixer speed to low, and gradually add the flour mixture until just combined.
3. Divide the dough into two equal portions, and form them each into a ball. Then gently use your hands to flatten each ball into a 1-inch thick disk, wrap tightly in plastic wrap, and chill in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours or, even better, overnight.
4. Once the dough is thoroughly chilled and you're ready to bake the cookies, heat the oven to 350°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper; set aside.
5. Unwrap the dough and place it on a large, lightly-floured hard surface. Use a floured rolling pin to roll the dough evenly until it is approximately 1/8-inch thick. Then use cookie cutters to cut out your desired shapes, re-rolling the

dough as needed to cut out more. Transfer to parchment-covered baking sheets.

6. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, or until the cookies are crisp around the edges and on top. Remove from oven and let cool for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to finish cooling.
7. Once the cookies are room temperature, feel free to decorate them as desired with the icing (see below) plus any extra sprinkles or candies. Serve and enjoy immediately, or store in a sealed container for up to 4 days.

TO MAKE THE SIMPLE ICING

1. Whisk all ingredients together in a bowl until smooth. If your icing is too thin, add in a little more powdered sugar. Similarly, if your icing is too thick, add in a tiny bit of milk.
2. Use a piping bag, or a Ziplock bag (with the corner snipped off), or a plastic squeeze bottle to pipe the icing onto the cookies.

Consider this: Shop at a bulk store for tubes of coloured icing, candies and sprinkles. Children love being involved in making decisions. Depending on their ages, consider giving them a budget to keep the cost down and the creativity up, up, UP!

*Source: Recipe slightly adapted from
Elise Bauer of SimplyRecipes.com*



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FAMILY DAY OUTDOORS
LEARNING ADVENTURES

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