

# Brighter Beginnings Newsletter

## March 2018



February was a short but busy month for us at Brighter Beginnings! We had fun getting in touch with our emotions as we learned about "Feelings" and "The Zones of Regulation". This month our theme is "Community Helpers" and we will have the opportunity to learn about some of the jobs that members of our community do. We will also continue working in our "Story Lab" as we learn about the letters in our name along with writing in our individual journals. Finally, we will also be talking about preparing our hearts for Easter during this very special season of Lent.

Please note that there is a change in time for our Fire Fighter presentation on March 14. It will be at Madonna School from 1:00- 2:30 p.m.

Finally, we say farewell to Keely Hamlin, our SLP practicum student. We appreciated the time that she was able to spend in our classroom and we wish her all the best in the future!!

## Contact Information

To let us know of your child's illness/absence or to discuss your child's program, please contact Lise Pardell and Tracey Pineau:

Office Phone: (780) 467-7137

Email: [lisep@eics.ab.ca](mailto:lisep@eics.ab.ca)  
[traceyp@eics.ab.ca](mailto:traceyp@eics.ab.ca)

## Birthdays this Month:

A.M.: Gabby



## Important Dates:

March 7: FOP on Mindfulness 5:30-7:00 p.m.

March 14: Fire Fighter Presentation 1:00-2:30 p.m.

March 17: St. Patrick's Day

March 21: Career Day 9:00-11:00 a.m.

March 23: Day Off in Lieu (no classes)

March 26-April 2: Spring Break





# Occupational Therapy Corner

jennifer.szydlowski@eics.ab.ca



This month we will focus on crossing midline. Crossing the midline refers to the ability to reach across the middle of the body with the arms or legs and to cross over to the opposite side. Examples include being able to draw a horizontal line across a page without having to switch hands in the middle or sitting cross-legged on the floor.

Being able to cross the midline (an imaginary line down the center of the body) is an important developmental skill. It is needed for reading and writing, for being able to reach toward your foot to put on a sock or shoe with both hands, for participating in many sports and many other day-to-day activities. Your children have opportunities to cross midline every day when they make the sign of the cross.

Children who have difficulty reaching across their middle may actually get stuck in mid-reach and have to switch hands or they may compensate by turning their body to reach toward the opposite side. Poor midline crossing also makes it difficult to visually follow a moving object from one side to the other, and eventually to follow words from left to right while reading.

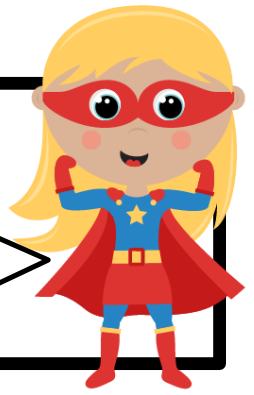
Here are a few activities that you can try at home:

- Bat balloons or bubbles with both hands on a bat, tennis racket or paper towel roll
- Roll balls to the right and left of centre, encouraging both hands on the ball
- Double drums or bongos (or two pots/containers turned upside down!): challenge your child to bang the right 'drum' with the left hand and the left 'drum' with the right hand
- Floor play - on all 4's, lying on tummies, or sitting and leaning on one hand - place the toys, games or puzzle pieces all around and encourage your child to use only one hand to play.
- Play sorting games that require reaching across the body: place objects to sort on the left side and containers to place them in on the right side.
- Steering wheel (found in many playgrounds): encouraging using the same hand to turn the wheel all the way around
- Make figure 8's and other motions with streamers or a flashlight in a darkened room; one hand at a time and crossing left and right
- Use dry erase markers on a large mirror or window to make horizontal lines (roads) across the surface, rainbows, diagonal lines from corner to corner or large sideways figure 8's; play X's & O's and have your little one make the grid
- Place stickers on one arm (or draw with washable markers or shaving cream on one arm) and have your child remove the stickers (or wash off the picture) with the opposite hand
- With a group of friends, play circle games to music while sitting cross legged on the floor, such as passing a balloon, ball, toy, or 'Hot Potato'.
- Play body awareness games like the Hokey Pokey and Simon Says
- Participate in activities at home such as dusting or wiping down the table after a meal

# Let's Talk About Speech and Language

Kelly Cassan: [kelly.cassan@eics.ab.ca](mailto:kelly.cassan@eics.ab.ca)

i can  
**TALK**  
you into  
ANYTHING.



This month we will be using a number of St. Patrick's Day and Easter activities and books! Some of the games and activities will include finding gold coins for a pot of gold, Jumpin' Jack board game, and an Easter egg hunt to work on following directions, sorting, and matching. We will also be learning about community helpers through books and activities. We will talk about objects community helpers need to do their jobs, how those objects are used, and who uses each one.

Early Language and AAC Target Vocabulary This Month:

March 5 - 9	I	want	no	like	March 12 - 16	help	it	you	more
March 19 - 23	up	on	in	where	April 5 - 9	me	watch	do	get

**Speech and Language Tip of the Month:** Read books frequently with your child to build his/her language skills.

- Talk with your child and ask him/her questions, make comments about the characters, objects, how they look, and their actions.
- Reduce the number of questions you ask; instead, try making comments about each page and wait for your child to reciprocate.
- Use simple books with few words or short sentences and colorful drawings on each page.
- Books that have repetition are great for developing vocabulary. It is a good idea to read the same book on several different occasions so your child can become familiar with the book and begin to predict what will happen.
- Use as many descriptors as possible when talking about pictures and illustrate their meanings with actions or gestures (e.g., Look at the **tall** [reach arms up high], **skinny** [place hands close together] tree **swaying** [make swaying motion] in the wind!).
- Make predictions about what will happen next or what would happen if...
- Go to the library and look at books appropriate to your child's age and interests. As he/she reads each book, ask questions like "Who is the main character?" "What do you like about this story?" "How do you think it will end?" "What was your favorite part?" Make sure you balance each question with one or two comments of your own to extend the conversation and model conversational skills. Many libraries have wonderful parent-child programs and activities.

If you would like to learn more about literacy skills in early childhood, attend our Literacy for All Family Oriented Programming session on April 11<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 am - 12:30 pm.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns!

Kelly Cassan, R.SLP, CCC-SLP

Phone: (780) 934-7936

Email: [Kelly.Cassan@eics.ab.ca](mailto:Kelly.Cassan@eics.ab.ca)

# Thought for the month...

Our thought for the month.....

## An Irish Prayer:

May God give you, For every storm, A rainbow,  
For every tear, A smile,  
For every care, A promise,  
And a blessing in each trial.  
For every problem life sends, A faithful friend to share,  
For every sigh, A sweet song,  
And an answer for each prayer.



If parents have ideas they would like to share  
or topics they are interested in for our  
"Thought of the Month," please email Lise  
and Tracey by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.

