

A Double Dose of Change!

Happy New Year! We hope you all were able to relax and enjoy the holiday season with your friends and families. We certainly did (in extremely cold climates by the way!) and are recharged for another great year in 2009!

January was a busy month for everyone getting back into the swing of things – and even more so this year with all the excitement that built up around the Inaugural activities happening right in our back yard! We hope somewhere in the madness you remembered to set some ambitious New Years resolutions for your families! No? Well it's not too late! Share a sit-down dinner as a family, use your commute time in the car to talk with your kids (from your headset!), have a family game night or talk with your children about what your life was like when you were their age. No matter what you decide, resolve to make 2009 a year of family sharing and celebration!

Valentine's Day is just around the corner. According to the American Greeting Card Association, an estimated 1 billion greeting cards are purchased each year. This year, why not skip the greeting cards and take time from your busy schedule to have some fun with the special people in your life. In honor of Valentine's Day, this edition of *Changing Colors* has a fun craft to share with your child and recipes for a special sweet treat to enjoy as a family. You will also find our "frequently asked questions" section, our Winter birthday list, a reminder of our inclement weather policy and Bridgid's favorite toys and activities.

As always, if you have an idea that you would like to see featured in our newsletter – let us know! You can e-mail us directly at therapy@spectrumpediatrics.com.



Tricks of the Trade

In this edition, Bridgid Hendrixson, CCC-SLP, shares her favorites for speech therapy!

Strong Hands: Reusing materials and recycling are great ways for children to take care of our environment. Visit www.planetpals.com for exciting and developmentally appropriate activities, picture



symbols for labeling bins, and online stories. Through recycling, language concepts such as sequencing, organizing, and categorizing can be supported. Sing along to a personal favorite “We Recycle” (to the tune of “Frere Jacques”):

- We recycle (repeat 2x). You can too (repeat 2x).
- Cans and plastic bottles (repeat 2x). Paper too (repeat 2x).

Strong Body: Before targeting speech sounds, I recommend getting the body ready. That means, start with bouncing on a hippity hop, spinning on a sit ‘n spin, or doing some warm-up jumping jacks. Activities that support core strengthening (think Pilates for children) also support posture for speech. When sitting at a table, children should have their feet firmly on the floor with hips, knees, and feet positioned at a 90° angle. Try covering phone books with wrapping paper for foot boosters.



Strong Mouth: When it’s time for “mouth muscles” children choose from a variety of activities that can be alerting or calming; strengthening or stimulating; or just plain silly! I recommend having a portable mirror, cotton balls for blowing, frozen fruit chews for jaw alignment, humming while balancing a mini pretzel rod between the lips, lotion, lip balm, and vibrating tools. While oral motor therapy may not always be appropriate for your child’s needs, it can often be integrated into a language experience or even a means to introduce new foods textures.

Strong Mind: Brain Gym is a form of educational kinesiology (www.braingym.com) with 26 movements that aid in a child’s ability to get the left and right sides of the brain talking, centering, and focused. My favorite includes drawing a large lazy eight (8) on paper for children to drive a toy car using both hands along the path.



Strong Opinion: To keep the success of a speech/language activity high, always provide choices within activities. Providing choices allows for the child to have an opinion, stay motivated, and engaged! I always carry a sign that reads, “First, Then” to help us plan our sessions. I also use schedules and use the signs, “1st, turn, which?, next, more, all done, and good work.” Check out www.aslpro.com for these signs.

The Puffy Heart

From www.crafts.kaboose.com

What you’ll need:

- Pink and white tissue paper, cut into 1” squares
- White craft glue
- Scissors
- Piece of card stock or construction paper
- Pencil with an eraser

What you’ll need:

- Cut out a heart shape from the construction paper or card stock
- Put white craft glue into the center of the heart, shaped like a heart



Using the eraser end of a pencil, place the eraser into the center of a white tissue paper square. Twist the tissue paper square around the

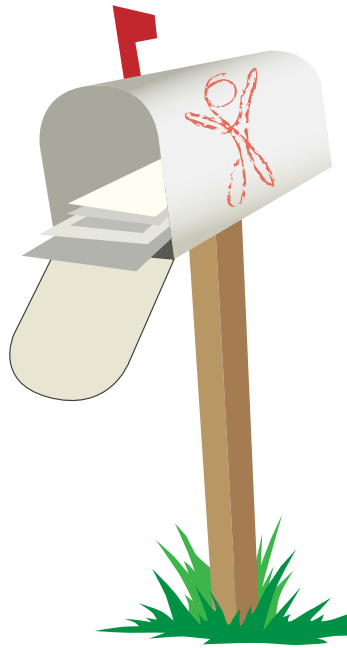
eraser and dot it onto the glue. Continue this process until entire middle of the heart is covered with white tissue paper.

- Repeat the process from step #3 with pink tissue paper for the border of the heart.
- Glue a hangar or attach a self-adhesive magnet to the back and put it on your refrigerator to enjoy!

SPECTRUM MAILBOX

Do you have any ideas on how to wean a child from a pacifier? We know its time to get rid of it, but want to be sure we aren't being "mean" in doing so?

Sincerely, Mom in Alexandria, VA



A: Thanks for the great and important question! This is a common inquiry we get from many parents. If you and your family are ready to say "bye bye" to the binky, here are a few tips that have worked for other parents. It's initially a good idea to start this transition away from the pacifier by limiting its use to only "naptime" or "bedtime." Let your child know that pacifiers are used only when its time to go to sleep and that they stay in the crib or the bed. Many parents have then found the following methods effective with saying "goodbye" for good to the binky.

You can gradually trim the tip so the child is unable to get enough to really suck on. When its nap time, parents still hand the child the pacifier. Parents report that it didn't look or feel the same so the child was then not as interested. This method makes parents feel like this transition is less of a punishment to the child and more of a replacement.

The Pacifier Fairy: Parents talk to their child about how it is time for the "pacifier fairy" to come for a visit and how they get a treat from the fairy in place of the pacifier. Many parents use a toy or object that the child selects specifically which increases motivation and is a direct association for the replacement of the pacifier.



Another parent bought a few helium balloons and tied each of the pacifiers to the strings and then let the child let them go. They told the child that the pacifiers needed to go to the babies in heaven.

I hope these ideas help to make this transition a little easier on you and your family. Let us know how things go!

—**The Spectrum Pediatrics Team**

You can email your questions to therapy@spectrumpediatrics.com or mail them to our office at 218 N. Lee St., Alexandria, VA 22314. We will publish a question and a therapist's response in each newsletter.

Inclement Weather Policy

It is the policy of Spectrum Pediatrics to ensure the safety of all contractors, staff and clients when inclement weather is anticipated or arrives.

If conditions are unsafe before a scheduled appointment or conditions decline throughout the day, a decision will be made as soon as possible to inform all parties of appropriate procedures. In case of overnight weather, the decision will be made whether or not to close by 7:00 a.m.

Should Spectrum Pediatrics close, there will be no therapy appointments for that day.

You may call our office at 703-299-0051 in the event of inclement weather—a voice recording will let you know if Spectrum Pediatrics is closed for the day. We will make every attempt to reach you by phone as well.

Appointments that are canceled due to inclement weather will not be rescheduled.

Winter Birthdays

Abby Price
Ali Samson
Allie Trevor
Andrew Tyler
Devin
Ellee
Ethan
Geoff
Jack
John
Kate
Liam
Mara
Maureen
Noah

Valentine's Day Treats

The quickest way to the heart is through the stomach! Show your little ones you care with these easy to make sweet treats:

Puppy Chow

9 c. Chex cereal
1 c. chocolate chips
½ c. peanut butter
¼ c. butter
¼ tsp. vanilla
1 ½ c. powder sugar

Put the cereal in a large bowl. Melt chocolate, peanut butter and butter together then pour over cereal. Put mixture into a large plastic bag with the powdered sugar. Shake bag until cereal is coated in powdered sugar (this is a fun job for the kids).

Spread mixture on wax paper to cool or pour back into a big bowl and enjoy!

Cupid's Lemony Love Potion

12oz can pink lemonade
1 c. raspberry sherbet
12 cans of 7-Up or other lemon-lime soda

In a pitcher mix lemonade concentrate with the recommended amount of water. In a separate pitcher combine sherbet with 1 cup of lemonade mixture. Add soda, stir and serve!

