

# EXCEPTIONAL CONNECTIONS

## Maumee Educational Services Quarterly Newsletter

Tricia Samuel, Director of Educational Services  
December 22, 2017

Sue Adkins, Secretary of Educational Services  
Volume 5

Dear Parents,

I would like to extend to you well wishes for a happy and healthy holiday break and New Year! I hope that you all enjoy the holiday and have opportunities to spend time with family and friends.

Last year, we held quarterly parent meetings. This year, we will be holding two meetings, as attendance at last year's meetings was waning. On Tuesday, February 20, 2018, we will host our first Parent Meeting of the school year. This meeting will be held at the Maumee Library. At this meeting, information will be shared about the changes in the IEP and ETR forms and parents will be given the chance to network with other parents.

I would like to take a moment to thank parents for completing the survey regarding special education services when you registered your child for school. The information you provided has been helpful as I work with staff to continually monitor and improve our services.

Thank you also for those of you who have reached out and stopped by to have conversations with me about your children. I appreciate all of your thoughts, ideas, positive comments, questions, and concerns. I appreciate your dedication to your children and I look forward to continuing to meet and work with you in the future!

Sincerely,

*Tricia Samuel*

Director of Educational Services

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MaumeeEducationalServices

## Community Sponsored Activities over Break



### MAUMEE SCHOOLS FREE HOLIDAY SKATING

**FREE Admission and Skate Rental**

**Tuesday, December 26, 2017 2:00-8:30pm. or**

**Friday, December 29, 2017 from 2:00-8:00pm.**

*Web Coupon valid for students only*

*Please print coupon or display on a mobile device*



#### OHIO SKATE MAUMEE

1370 Conant St. Maumee, Ohio

419-893-4031 [ohioskatemaumee@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ohioskatemaumee@sbcglobal.net)

*This is not a Maumee City Schools sponsored event*

STEAM-BASED PROGRAMS  
FOR KIDS IN GRADES 1-8

INTRODUCING  
**no school?  
NO PROBLEM.**

**MAKE-MAKE SOME MUSIC** **12.28.17**  
3-4PM |  
Maumee  
Branch  
Auditorium

All hands on tech! Think you can make a piano out of gummy bears or play the drums on bananas? Learn how using our Makey-Makey kit and our laptops. This program is ideal for grades 3 and up, but younger kids can participate with a grown-up's help. Caregivers are also welcome to join in the fun.  
**Registration is required.**

School may be out, but the library is in! Join us during Maumee City Schools' in-service and vacation days for a series of STEAM-based programs that will stop boredom in its tracks. From ninja skills to robot building, our activities will provide a much needed break from screens of all kinds.

MAUMEE BRANCH LIBRARY | 501 RIVER RD. | MAUMEE, OH 43537 | 419.259.5360

## Spotlight on Preschool

Amy Lepkowski & Sara Lather

Our littlest Panthers have been really enjoying December!

A Yeti has been visiting their room, so they have made a Yeti journal to draw and write out observations about the Yeti's secret visits!

They have been working on some fun STEM projects, too! They built Christmas trees from solo cups. They also built a roof of a house and have been testing it to see if it will be strong enough to hold Santa and his reindeer! They then have been testing their predictions.

They have also been doing Christmas Yoga, enjoying pajama day and building gingerbread houses.

Wow - sounds like a lot of fun and learning going on in these classes!



## **Helping Children Enjoy Holiday Celebrations**

*Mark Bromley, School Psychologist*

*Do you dread each winter break — especially your child’s accompanying ADHD symptom flare-ups? Stay ahead of the curve with these 5 tips for helping your children enjoy holiday celebrations without behavior problems, safety issues, or family conflicts.*

*The holidays can be stressful for children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Traveling and visiting relatives may disrupt their day-to-day routines, and all the excitement can be overwhelming. Follow these real-family strategies to prevent holiday havoc, keep your kids feeling good, and create happier memories:*

### **Plan Ahead**

*During the holidays, routine and structure go out the window: A child might have to endure travel time by car, train, or plane; sitting politely at the dinner table for extended periods; less control of diet and sleep. Planning for these holiday side effects is helpful for a child with ADHD and his parents. Decide how the days will be spent — parties, decorating, visiting relatives, preparing holiday treats — and set up a schedule building flexibility into it in case your child needs downtime.*

### **Rehearse Calming Techniques**

*Some children with ADHD need to practice calming down at home before venturing out into holiday bedlam. Using techniques such as the “stop, relax, think” technique with a child can be helpful. You can teach your child to ask for help at the onset of conflict with a relative or friend. In time, just walking toward you may help your kid calm down.*

### **Schedule Time Wisely**

*Too many events can over-stimulate a child with ADHD. Decide which occasions are most important, and don’t overload the schedule. Include private playtime or an outing to a child-friendly restaurant with a friend, to provide some one-on-one fun for your child. Also, spending time together in a quiet corner of the house or taking a short walk can head off a tantrum in a child.*

### **Encourage Good Behavior**

*Praising your child’s good behavior reminds him of his strengths and increases his confidence that he can manage whatever the holiday throws at him. One parent mentioned to me that her child became the hit of the party when he read a book of riddles to family members. Another dad told me that his child amazed the crowd with his magic tricks. Reminding a child of his past successes will set him up to succeed this year.*

### **Involve Your Child in Activities**

*Build happy memories by enlisting your child to help cook the holiday meal with you, create decorations, or wrap packages. Such activities strengthen the bond between child and parents*

*Adapted from: Brady, C. (2017 Dec. 07) <https://www.additudemag.com/avoiding-holiday-havoc/>*

## Travel Time? Practice Time!

*Erin DiLorenzo, Speech-Language Pathologist*

Many families travel during the holidays, which can be a great opportunity to practice speech and language skills with children. Practicing in new or unexpected places (car, plane) or with different people (extended family, friends, etc.) can help grow skill carryover. Not travelling? Not a problem! Communication and language skills are used *everywhere*! Below are a few fun activities that build speech and language skills and help pass the time while travelling or while waiting for guests to arrive.

- I Spy or I'm Thinking of...: Take turns picking something for others to guess. "I spy something (color)," or "I'm thinking of something (color)." You can change it up by using a detail or feature instead of color (category, function, size, shape, location, parts), or adding a detail or feature for every wrong guess made. When someone guesses correctly, it becomes their turn. For children practicing speech sounds, choose items that have their target sound.
- Category Games: Pick a category and take turns naming something that fits in that category. The person who names the last item in the category wins! Mix it up by using Holiday or travel themed categories (Holiday Songs, Things you find at Grandma's house, Things in an airport, Things you'd find at the North Pole, Things you need for a long car trip, etc.).  
Students working on speech sounds can add this as an extra challenge (get a bonus for naming something with their speech sound- the next person has to name two things; or can use words with their speech sound as part of the category, like "Holiday foods that have an R.")
- Board Games: Playing board games together is a great way to practice social communication skills, like turn-taking, following directions, and paying attention to others.

After the Holidays, writing thank you notes for gifts or experiences received is a nice way for kids to show appreciation for others. This activity practices language, social awareness (thinking about the gift *and* the person who gave it), speech if they say/read it out loud, and writing.

### Parent Meeting

*Connect with other parents. Receive information about Maumee City Schools Educational Services. This is open to any parent in the district, but will be specific to parents/guardians of children with special needs.*

**Maumee Branch of the Lucas County Library (501 River Road)**

**Tuesday, February 20, 2018 from 6:30pm-7:30pm**



MODEL SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE

## Backpack Awareness

Although School backpack awareness day occurred in September, it is important to remember throughout the year to help students ease the backpack burden. Occupational Therapy has been working to educate students, parents, and schools about the potentially serious health effects from school backpacks that are too heavy or worn improperly.

Interesting facts:

- More than 40 million students in United States carry school backpacks
- More than 7,000 emergency room visits have occurred in a school year related to backpacks. Approximately half of those injuries occurred in children between 5 to 14 years old
- It's recommended that a loaded backpack weigh no more than 15% of a student's body weight (for a student weighing a 100 lbs., the backpack should weigh no more than 15 lbs)
- The average student is carrying a backpack weighing almost a fourth of their body weight
- In one study, 6 out of 10 students ages 9 to 20 reported chronic back pain related to heavy backpacks.
- The way backpacks are worn has an impact. Lower positioning of the backpack approximates the body's center of gravity and has the least effect on posture
- In a study on the effect of backpack education on student behavior and health, nearly 8 out of 10 middle school students who changed how they loaded and wore their backpacks reported less pain and strain in their necks, backs, and shoulders

Parents can take steps to help children load and wear backpacks the right way:

- Never let a child carry more than 15% of their body weight
- Load heaviest items closest to the child's back (the back of the pack)
- Arrange books and materials so they won't slide around
- Check what your child carries to school and brings home
- Make sure the items are necessary to the day's activities
- On days the backpack is too loaded, your child can hand carry a book or item

Wearing a backpack:

- Both shoulder straps should always be worn.
- Adjust the straps so that the pack fits snugly to the child's back.
- Wear the waist belt if the pack has one. This helps evenly distribute the pack's weight.
- The bottom of the pack should rest in the curve of the lower back. It should never rest more than four inches below the child's waistline.

## Playing with your child...

While children do need time to play alone and with other children without adult intervention, research shows that playtime with parents is also important.

Children love time with parents! It makes them feel special. Try to find time to spend playing with your kids on a regular basis. If you can find both individual time as well as group time with all of the kids in the home. If you are a single parent or have an only child, you could invite family or friends over to play.

In pretend play, let the child develop the theme for the activity. Get into their world. Let them go with it. Ask questions. Play along. Let their imaginations take you on an amazing journey! Be silly along with them and have fun. However, as the adult, make sure you avoid over-stimulation - know when it is time to stop.

### Play Possibilities:

- Play outdoors: Throw balls. Push kids on swings. Make a snowman. Go on a hike around the neighborhood. Shovel together.
- Play games: Card games, board games, word games, silly and wacky kids games. Help them learn to take turns, how to win and how to lose. Praise them. Encourage them. Laugh with them.
- Get involved in a craft project together. Build a jigsaw puzzle as a family. Bake cookies. Paint a picture.
- Listen to music together. Sing along. Play rhythm instruments along with music. Get out the guitar or keyboard and make music.
- Read a book together. Ask questions. Ask them to change the story or make up a new one.
- Watch a movie together. Find out what they liked – how they felt. Discover the child's interests. Comment on and discuss any bothersome content either words or actions.

Help kids when they show the need it or ask for it. Use it as a time to teach:

- patience
- problem solving
- social skills
- creativity

Playing with kids builds a bond that will last forever. It lets the child know he or she is loved and appreciated. It opens the door for sharing problems and concerns when the need arises. It helps you get to know and understand the uniqueness of each of your children. It is also a great stress reducer for you!