

VIRGINIA  
INFANT & TODDLER SPECIALIST

NETWORK

“Achieving Excellence in Early Care”

[www.va-itsnetwork.org](http://www.va-itsnetwork.org)



## Laughter and Little Ones

### The Importance of Laughter

Many have heard the saying, “Laughter is the best medicine!” This is true for infants and toddlers too! It is an early step to socialization and communication. Babies may begin to laugh out loud as early as three months old, while others may take a little longer. While it is exciting and rewarding to hear the sounds of those early giggles, it is beneficial to babies as well. They love hearing their own voice and seeing how others react to the sounds they make. Physical and social emotional benefits are listed below.

#### Physical

- Improves sleep
- Releases endorphins--laughing feels good
- Relaxes muscles
- Improves digestion
- Increases smiling
- Strengthens immune system

## Social Emotional

- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Helps develop the ability to see things from another person's perspective
- Builds resilience
- Teaches sympathy when toddlers laugh to cheer up a sad friend
- Helps build self-esteem



### Encouraging Laughter in Infants and Toddlers

Inspire giggles and laughter by talking to infants and toddlers often. A stream of communication including laughter should be heard throughout the day as this is how children learn a language.

### Babies

- Play “This Little Piggy” and gently tickle
- Play “Peek-a-boo” and change your facial expression each time you show your face
- Smile and laugh and they will more than likely imitate you

### Toddlers

- Speak and sing in rhyme and nonsense words
- Make funny faces and encourage the toddlers to imitate your expressions
- Play “I’m Gonna Get You” while crawling after the toddlers and cuddle them when you catch them
- Dancing around with goofy moves

Hearing the laughter of infants and toddlers is one of the joys of being a child care professional. Don't forget the importance of laughter and make it a priority to fill their days with giggles and laughs!



## Resources

A Look at the Many Benefits of Laughter and How to Make Kids Laugh At Any Age

<https://kidskingdom.ca/kanata/unleash-power-of-laughter-with-your-child/>

Meet a Scientist with a Most Delightful Job: He Studies Baby Laughter

<https://ideas.ted.com/meet-a-scientist-with-a-most-delightful-job-he-studies-baby-laughter/>

When Do Babies Start Laughing?

<https://www.whattoexpect.com/first-year/first-laugh/>

Click here to request on-site services online now!



## Resource Spotlight

### Early Childhood Activities from Redleaf Press



**Sign up for free weekly activities sent right to your mobile phone!**

**Mondays: Infant-Toddlers**

**Wednesdays: Preschool**

**Fridays: School Age (up to 8 years old)**



Click [here](#) to sign up for free weekly activities!

## Upcoming PD Opportunity



Institutes for early care professionals who serve infants and toddlers!

# Celebrating SUCCESSFUL BABIES & TOTS 2022

February 26

Fredericksburg: The Fredericksburg Expo & Conference Center

March 12

Roanoke: Holiday Inn Tanglewood-Roanoke



These exciting professional development institutes will focus on how caregivers can facilitate infant and toddler success through relationship building and language development to increase positive interactions while preventing and managing challenging behaviors.

These exciting professional development institutes will focus on:

- How early childhood professionals can help infants and toddlers manage their emotions and respond to challenging behaviors
- Ideas and approaches for child care professionals to build strong relationships with infants and toddlers that support social and emotional development and strengthen the connection with families

Participants will receive:

- Training certificate
- Resource materials that include children's books and toys, as well as provider resources, related to the institute topic
- Lunch during the activity session

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For more information or to register on-line, please visit [www.va-itsnetwork.org](http://www.va-itsnetwork.org)

With other questions, call (757) 378-3168. Training hours will be awarded.

This project was supported by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Grant # 93.575, with funds made available to Virginia from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[Click here to register for CBT 2022](#)

## Did you know...?

Virginia's Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) Pilot Has Launched in the Greater

## Richmond Region

Virginia's Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) Pilot launched in the Greater Richmond Region. **ECMHC** is an intervention strategy that aims to promote young children's social emotional development and mental health well-being as well as to help prevent young children's suspension and expulsion from early learning programs.



# WONDER WHY???

Shiloh is hitting friends every day since returning to care

Eva keeps biting her friends

Jaden always plays alone

Are the children I care for happy?



### ECMHC Consultants will:

- Team with the educator(s) at eligible\* programs using an individualized plan for following the priorities and goals identified most beneficial to the learning environment
- Assist in accessing FREE key social-emotional resources as available
- Support the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the learning setting

If you need extra support to address challenging behaviors, have concerns about a child's social-emotional well-being, and/or regularly remove a child from the learning environment, please contact us.

**Call:** (757)208-0288

**Email:** [eashaj@cdr.org](mailto:eashaj@cdr.org)

**FAQs:** <https://tinyurl.com/ECMHC-FAQs>



SCAN ME

**Sign Up @:** <https://bit.ly/3vH6Z5r>

\*The Virginia Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) program is able to provide services to programs in the Counties of **Chesterfield, Henrico, Hanover, Goochland, Powhatan, Charles City, New Kent**, and the cities of **Richmond** and **Colonial Heights**. Programs receiving public funds such as but not limited to: *VPI, Early Head Start, Head Start, and Child Care Subsidy* will be given priority access to services.



A The LCMHC program is being offered through a new partnership between the Virginia Department of Education (VDOL), the Virginia Infant & Toddler Specialist Network (ITSN), and the University of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (UVA-CASTL). This project was supported by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Grant #93,575, with funds made available to Virginia from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and by funding provided through the federal Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GELLER) fund and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA).

## Virginia Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC) Pilot Program Frequently Asked Questions

The [FAQs](#) provide answers to frequently asked questions about Virginia's ECMHC Pilot Program. It includes information about the ECMHC program model, benefits, format and eligibility criteria.

### VQB5 - Virginia's Unified Measurement and Improvement System

#### Updated Overview of VQB5 Documents

The VDOE has recently updated the Overview of VQB5 document to reflect the progress that has already been made during Practice Year 1. This two-page overview provides a summary of the Who, What, When, and How questions for the new Unified Virginia Quality Birth to Five System (VQB5). To learn more about VQB5, check out the new [VQB5 Overview](#), which is also available in [Spanish](#).



*A nonprofit agency changing the lives of babies, toddlers & their families*

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