

Alphabet Soup

January, 2009

Nourishing ways to fill children's days.

broadreach
family & community services

Welcome to a New and Exciting Year at Broadreach!

See inside for:

- * New Year's Resolutions for the Family
- * Recipe of the Month
- * A Minute a Day Rhyming Fun
- * And more!

Do you and your child have a New Year's resolution? Looking for a way to include the whole family?

Treat yourself and your family to the commitment of reading together on a daily basis. Spending at least 15-20 minutes per day reading with your child can make a big difference when they begin school.



Why is reading important?

A child's reading skills are important to their success in school and work. In addition, reading can be a fun and imaginative activity for children, which opens doors to all kinds of new worlds for them. Reading and writing are important ways we use language to communicate.

How can we make reading part of our family's lifestyle?

Parents play a critical role in helping their children develop not only the ability to read, but also an enjoyment of reading.

Turn off the tube. Start by [limiting your family's television](#) viewing time.

- **Teach by example.** If you have books, newspapers and magazines around your house, and your child *sees you reading*, then your child will learn that you value reading.
- **Read together.** Reading with your child is a great activity. It not only teaches your child that reading is important to you, but it also offers a chance to talk about the book, and often other discussions will come up. Books can really open the lines of communication between parent and child.
- **Hit the library.** Try finding library books about current issues or interests in your family's or child's life, and then reading them together. For example, read a book about going to the dentist prior to your child's next dental exam, or get some books about seashore life after a trip to the beach. If your child is interested in animals, ask your librarian to recommend a good animal story for your child.

There are many ways to include reading in your child's life, starting in babyhood, and continuing through the teen years. Focus on literacy activities that your child enjoys, so that reading is a treat, not a chore.

Source: University of Michigan Health System

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Let It
SNOW

Slow Cooker Chicken and Dumplings

This is an easy slow cooker recipe that cooks while you are at work! It is wonderful on a cold, snowy day and even your pickiest eater will love it.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 (10.75 ounce) cans condensed cream of chicken soup
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 2 (10 ounce) packages refrigerated biscuit dough, torn into pieces



DIRECTIONS

1. Place the chicken, butter, soup, and onion in a slow cooker, and fill with enough water to cover.
2. Cover, and cook for 5 to 6 hours on High. About 30 minutes before serving, place the torn biscuit dough in the slow cooker. Cook until the dough is no longer raw in the center. Makes 8 servings.

Snowman Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 package hot chocolate mix
- 3 chocolate kisses
- 15 mini marshmallows
- 1 candy cane



Plans for a child's sledding party this winter? The snowman soup is a great addition to any winter celebration. Put the chocolate kisses and marshmallows in colored plastic wrap. Place the hot cocoa envelope, candy cane and wrapped marshmallow package into a mug. When children are ready to warm up inside they can create their own warm treat. As children stir their hot chocolate they can recite this fun winter poem.

Directions:

- Empty contents of hot chocolate packet into a mug of hot water
- Add chocolate kisses and mini marshmallows
- Use candy cane to stir
- (make sure liquid has cooled or add milk before giving to child.)

Anxious for a great new year?
Always glad to hear it
With freezing weather drawing near
You'll need to warm the spirit
So here's a little Snowman Soup Complete
with stirring stick
Add hot water, sip it slow
It's sure to do the trick!

Leap into Learning!



Supporting Preschoolers in Reading and Language Success (SPIRALS) is a special initiative that is enhancing learning for preschoolers and their teachers in early childhood classrooms across Waldo and Knox County!

Parents need only spend one minute a day to help their children improve their literacy skills. It only takes one minute to sing short songs like "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."

Here are some one minute fun activities you can do with your child:

- 1) Choose a letter of the day and look for it in any printed materials (around the house, labels at the grocery store, street signs). To make it more fun: Use a magnifying glass to search for the letter of the day.
- 2) Use the letter of the day to begin words that make up a silly sentence (example, cats can cuddle). For more fun and learning: Write down the silly sentence that you create with your child.
- 3) While waiting for a bagel or bread to toast, have your child look for the letter "c" on any items on the kitchen counter or table. Count as many as possible before the toaster pops.
- 4) Sing your child's favorite song or learn a new song (see below)



Snow is Falling all Around

(Sung to: "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star")

Snow is falling all around,
Falling, falling, to the ground.
I catch snowflakes on my tongue.
Building snowmen is such fun.
Snow is falling all around
Falling, falling, to the ground.



Source: upi.com & everythingpreschool.com

RING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH DAILY EXERCISE ACTIVITY

Get Moving Together

Finding the time and energy to exercise as a busy parent can be a daunting task because you are very rarely without your children. Unfortunately, very few parents realize that they can exercise with their children, instead of trying to separate the physical from the practical. Regardless of the age or number of children in your family, there are many ways to get you and your kids moving every day.



Create excitement for physical fitness with your children by letting them track their progress on a family activity calendar. For every activity completed, let your children mark their progress on the calendar with a sticker and earn points towards specific rewards. For example, for every five stickers earned, your child can choose a family outing that gets everyone moving such as ice skating, sledding or a crisp winter hike.

Not everyone is drawn to organized sports such as soccer or baseball. Check with your local YMCA or Recreation Department to look for less-competitive activities your child will enjoy -- like dancing, tumbling, [swimming](#), or martial arts. Have patience, it may take some trial and error before your child finds an activity that they are most comfortable with and these interests may change over time.

No time to get to the "Y"?

Use household chores as a way of getting your child up and moving! Play your child's favorite dance music and make a race out of cleaning up a specified area of your home (a bedroom, living room, etc.) Set a timer and see how long it takes for everything to be put away. Children are often excited to see if they can beat their previous time the next time around. Shoveling snow, building a snowman, or taking your dog for a walk are even more great ways to get some exercise. The important thing is to get your child up and moving, and as you can see, there are a variety of ways to accomplish that!

Bean Bag Toss

Create your own bean bag toss using empty coffee cans or cardboard boxes. Have your child decorate the containers with construction paper, feathers, beads, buttons, paint or other items from your arts and crafts cabinet. If you don't have bean bags, create your own. Roll up a pair of colored socks into a ball or crumple aluminum foil into the shape of a bean bag square or ball. Mark the area where your child should stand with a piece of masking tape or string. Have your child toss their bean bag into the container. Move your start area further back for more of a challenge. Incorporate letters or numbers by using multiple containers and marking them with shapes, colors or numbers. A bean bag toss is a great way to get your kids on their feet and on the move!

Dance Freeze

Here is a fun, non-competitive way for your children to participate in physical activity using music. Grab the cd player and your child's favorite tunes. Have your child dance to the music while you randomly press pause or stop. Have them freeze. Repeat as often as you wish. Encourage your child to enjoy music and movement. This activity is also a great tool to teach children to follow directions.

