

# Juneau Parent Bulletin

January, 2024

## Kids in the Kitchen

Enjoy making this simple ingredient Animal Face Toast recipe with your little one. This recipe is extremely fun and tasty!

### Ingredients (optional)

- 1 slice of sandwich bread
- 1 banana, sliced into desired shape
- 1-2 strawberries, sliced into desired shape
- Fresh blueberries
- 1 tablespoon of nut or seed butter
- Whipped cream cheese

### Instructions

- Toast bread
- Add necessary toppings to create your favorite animal face



For more exciting recipe ideas visit:  
[www.weelicious.com](http://www.weelicious.com).

“When we feel *felt*, we are not alone.  
What is shareable becomes *bearable*.”  
-Dr. Daniel Siegel

Juneau has a variety of weekly and monthly parenting connection, support, and play groups. See Bartlett Beginnings Opportunities and Community Events for options.

## Bartlett Beginnings Opportunities

Bartlett Beginnings offers a variety of weekly and monthly support and play groups for families with babies.

- **Bartlett Baby-Parent Time**  
Every Thursday from 12:00pm-1:30pm at Bartlett Regional Hospital
- **Parents of Toddler Group**  
Every Monday from 11:00am-12:00pm at the Gymnastics Academy
- **Dads & Kiddos Play Group**  
First Saturday of every month from 10:00am-12:00pm
- **Pregnancy & Infant Loss Support Group**  
Last Wednesday of every month from 6:00pm-7:00pm via Zoom
- **“Real Talk” Mothers’ Support Group**  
Last Wednesday of every month from 7:00pm-8:00pm via Zoom
- **Circle of Security Parenting Class**  
Relationship-based early intervention 6 week program designed to enhance attachment security between parents and children. Class meets every Tuesday from 6:00pm - 8:00pm starting January 30th.

For more details and to register visit <https://www.bartletthospital.org/services/birth-center/birthing-classes-and-new-parent-groups/> or contact Sara Gress at 907-796-8975 or [sgress@bartletthospital.org](mailto:sgress@bartletthospital.org). You can also visit [Bartlett Baby & Toddler Group Facebook Page](#) to keep updated on upcoming and new group meetings.

## YOU Can Make a Difference in a Child's Life!

Your generous donations allow the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program to provide free books to all participating children across SE Alaska. For \$30 a year, you can ensure that a child receives a free book in the mail every month for a whole year. Make your tax deductible donation today at <https://www.aeyc-sea.org/imagination-library.html>. A big thanks to volunteers Trish Custard and Cora Brunette for giving their time to enroll children!

## Pick.Click.Give



It's time to apply for your PFD. When you apply, please consider donating to SEAAEYC in support of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. It helps get free books to children in Southeast Alaska. Visit [Pick.Click.Give](http://Pick.Click.Give) to learn more!

## Community Events

### Weekly Story Time at Juneau Public Library

Weekly story time available to children of all ages.

Valley Library Storytime: Tuesdays at 11:00am

Douglas Library Storytime: Tuesdays at 3:30pm

Contact [m.j.grande@juneau.org](mailto:m.j.grande@juneau.org) or 907-586-0435 at the [Juneau Public Library](#) for more information.

### Stuffed Animal Sleep Over at the Library

Join Juneau Public Libraries for a Stuffed Animal Slumber Party! Bring a plushie pal for a pajama story time, a fun craft, and the opportunity to let your stuffed animal spend the night in the library! The stuffed animal is dropped off at the Downtown Library on Friday, January 12th 3:00pm - 6:00pm and picked up on Saturday, January 13th 12:00pm - 3:00pm. For more information, contact Lacey at [lacey.davis@juneau.org](mailto:lacey.davis@juneau.org) or visit [Juneau Public Library](#) for more information.



### REACH Inc. Parenting Connection Group

Group meets every Monday from 9:30am - 11:00am for children ages zero to three. For more information, please contact [rsullivan@reachak.org](mailto:rsullivan@reachak.org).

### Twin Group Play Session

SEAAEYC is hosting a twin group play session for families of twins under the age of 3 on Thursday mornings, twice a month. Join us from 9:30am - 11:00am at the SEAAEYC Playroom located at 3200 Hospital Dr, Suite 204 to share the joys and challenges of raising multiples.

### Parent & Tot Ice Skating Lesson

CBJ Parks & Recreation are offering a parent and tot (age 5 and under) lesson that focuses on the fun and basics of ice skating on January 14th and 28th from 2:45pm - 3:45pm. This class costs \$15.75 for 1 adult and 1 tot and includes skates (smallest size is 8T) and helmets. Register at [CBJ Parks and Recreation](#).



### Marie Drake Planetarium

Explore the universe with the planetarium's digital projector and 30ft dome on First Friday, January 5th. Stop by anytime between 5:30pm - 7:00pm. Bring your astronomy questions!

### Free Family Fun Night at the Turf

Join the fun at Dimond Park Field House on January 5th and 19th from 5:00pm to 6:30pm. Enjoy meeting other families and letting your little ones run and play with a number of toys available. Sponsored by [SEAAEYC](#) and [CBJ Parks and Recreation](#).

### Tlingit & Haida

Be a part of an eight-week parenting class to help strengthen families, build nurturing parenting and child-rearing practices, and promote wellness. Class starts on January 10th to February 28th from 5:00pm - 6:30pm every Wednesday. To register, please contact Bettyann Boyd at [bboyd@tlingitandhaida.gov](mailto:bboyd@tlingitandhaida.gov) or 907-463-7984.

**seaeyc**

Southeast Alaska Association for  
the Education of Young Children



**BEST BEGINNINGS**  
Alaska's Early Childhood Investment



Juneau  
**Partnerships**  
For Families & Children



**United Way**  
United Way of Southeast Alaska  
Partner Agency

# How Pretend Play Helps Your Child's Developing Brain

## What is pretend play?

Pretend play is sometimes called dramatic play, make believe, or imaginative play. It's a time when you let your little one use their imagination to make up what's going on. Children will usually start doing pretend play when they are a toddler, between the ages of 2 and 3. It's around this age that executive function skills, like working memory and problem solving, become stronger. These skills help to make pretend play possible. Pretend play is something children will continue to do throughout the first part of childhood!

## What are the benefits of pretend play?

This type of play is so fun for kids—and there's so many benefits! Your child's brain is constantly learning and developing at this age, so it's a great time to take advantage of their neuroplasticity. Pretend play can help with:

- **Creativity:** During pretend play, children are constantly inventing stories and making up new situations. This exercises their creativity, and allows them to think in different ways!
- **Social-emotional skills:** In pretend play, children may be playing a character, or playing with others (real or imaginative). This gives them the chance to think about emotions that others may be having, which helps with empathy and problem-solving. If they're playing with another child, they also practice skills like taking turns and sharing.
- **Communication:** While playing pretend, children are always communicating in some way. They may be talking to their dolls, telling a story, or pretending to be someone else. All of these are great way to use and develop their communication skills!
- **Self-regulation:** When children play make believe, they often experience many emotions. By experiencing these feelings, they also learn how to control them. Additionally, if they are doing pretend play with other children, they learn how to control their emotions in a group.
- **Problem solving:** Problem solving is an important executive function skill that helps children with everything from school to relationships. In pretend play, children may encounter real or imagined problems—either way, they need to use their skills to find a solution. Additionally, by challenging themselves with a new situation and figuring it out, children build their confidence.

## How can you encourage pretend play?

There's no wrong or right way to do it, and often children will use their imagination and make believe in a variety of situations! Some ways to encourage this behavior include:

- **Let your child choose:** Have them choose how they want to play! That's the best way to support their creativity and confidence.
- **Telling stories:** Try telling your children stories so they will begin to think of their own. This can come from stories you know, books you read them, or just asking them more about something they have just read or watched.
- **Dressing up:** If you've dressed up for Halloween or a party of some sort, you know that when you're in costume you just start to feel like someone else! Costumes (even simple ones, like an old hat or sweater) can help with make believe.
- **Ask questions:** When children are playing with a toy, ask them questions to get them thinking creatively. If they are playing with a car, you can ask them where the car is going. If they're playing with a doll, you can ask them what the doll is doing.
- **Using open-ended toys:** Children can engage in pretend play with a variety of toys. Open-ended toys are typically the best—these are toys like dolls and balls that don't have a set of rules with them. Instead,

children can get creative and figure out how they want to play with these toys.

- **Engaging in group play:** When children play with others, their creativity multiplies! Whether it's on the playground or at a birthday party, playing in a group can be a great opportunity for pretend play.

Read the full article at [www.pathways.org](http://www.pathways.org).

Did you know that the benefits of pretend play are all cornerstones of kindergarten readiness?

It is never too early to prepare your child for kindergarten. To find out more about getting your child ready, visit SEAAEYC's [Kindergarten Readiness Page](http://www.seaeyc.org/Kindergarten-Readiness-Page).



## Pretend Play Activity Turn a Box Into Anything!

A simple cardboard box can be a very useful prop for pretend play. Children can turn a box into anything they desire, which encourages creativity and play time. For example, a box can become a boat, bear cave, airplane, racecar, house, washing/dryer machine, astronaut helmet, or rocket ship. Once you give your child a box, simply observe and see what creative ideas come to their mind, then jump in for some fun. Find more ideas for pretend play at [www.craftykidsathome.com](http://www.craftykidsathome.com).



Do you have a child under the age of 3? Are you looking for fun activities and ways to meet other parents? Then Parents As Teachers is for you! **This free home visiting program is open to all families in Juneau who are pregnant or parenting children under the age of 3.** Check out <https://www.aeyc-sea.org/parents-as-teachers.html> to learn more about the program and to sign up!

## Imagination Library: Books to Love The Very Hungry Caterpillar Eats Breakfast

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Eats Breakfast by Eric Carle is an interactive book featuring the notorious and ravenous caterpillar and his love for delicious breakfast foods. This colorful book introduces foods from your child's most important meal of the day.

### Make a Caterpillar with Breakfast Foods!

A fun activity you can try with your little one, is making the very hungry caterpillar using apples, strawberries, and raisins. This will not only be exciting for your little one, but also encourage them to try new foods. Find other ideas at [www.kitchenfunwithmy3sons.com](http://www.kitchenfunwithmy3sons.com).



Be sure to visit [www.aeyc-sea.org](http://www.aeyc-sea.org) to get in touch with partner agencies and find out what services, classes, and resources they offer, or call 907-789-1235.



Alerts about this bulletin are emailed to families with children enrolled in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. Find this bulletin and many other family resources at [www.aeyc-sea.org](http://www.aeyc-sea.org). The Juneau Parent Bulletin is created by SEAAEYC in coordination with the Juneau Partnerships for Families and Children. SEAAEYC | 3200 Hospital Dr. Ste. 204, Juneau, AK | 907-789-1235 | [www.aeyc-sea.org](http://www.aeyc-sea.org) | Follow us on:   