

THANK YOU

Dr. Babbitt

For your many years of support to FRCSVC Parent Educators!

Winter Programming

FRCSVC has openings available for the following winter programs:

Baby & Me
 Triple P: Coping with Stress

Learn more on page 4



Scan Here

to visit our website and learn about our no-cost programs and services for all families with young children in Pierce, Polk & St. Croix Counties



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Take care of yourself. Take care of each other.

by Christopher Babbitt, Py.D.,LP

I'm honored to be writing this column to start off the new year of 2023 and be part of the Family Resource Center team for many years by providing reflective supervision required of the parent educators who do such important work with families. This supervision helps them take care of themselves as their work is often times stressful.

My background as a Child Clinical Psychologist has always had me grounded in the work of so many great professionals and theorists who have, over the years, come to understand the absolutely essential role that parents play in the development of their children's brains when they talk, play, read, or sing to their infants and young children. The role of attachment and bonding during the earliest days, weeks, and months, of a child's life could not be more critical for the development of a healthy brain and, therefore, a healthy child.

We've learned so much over the last few decades about the direct role attachment plays in the development of literally every aspect of a child's life. FRCSVC provides a critical link between young parents/caregivers and their newborn babies, as well as their older children. FRCSVC supports these families in countless ways by providing much needed resources and education, skill development opportunities, as well as chances to interact with other new moms going through the same adjustments and steep learning curve.

FRCSVC home visitors do everything they can to support and guide teens and young adults through the challenges of parenthood and we talk about many aspects of these parents' lives and the issues they are confronting during our supervision time. Sometimes, these are mental health related. This time of year can make for particularly difficult struggles, so I thought I'd offer some thoughts about how to get through what can be a very difficult stretch.

At this time of year, most of us are focused on finding ways to get through the winter. For some of us, this time of year brings on Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a mental health issue directly related to things such as the diminished amount of sunlight, shorter days, and colder temperatures. For these folks, the winter months, including, of course, the recent holidays, are another type of challenge and a very difficult one at that.

Continued on page 4

WHAT IS

seasonal affective disorder?

As Dr. Babbitt mentioned, Season Affective Disorder (SAD) is real, and it's normal!

Mayo Clinic describes SAD as a type of depression that's related to changes in seasons — SAD begins and ends at about the same times every year. If you're like most people with SAD, your symptoms start in the fall and continue into the winter months, sapping your energy and making you feel moody. These symptoms often resolve during the spring and summer months. Less often, SAD causes depression in the spring or early summer and resolves during the fall or winter months. Treatment for SAD may include light therapy (phototherapy), psychotherapy and medications.

Don't brush off that yearly feeling as simply a case of the "winter blues" or a seasonal funk that you have to tough out on your own. Take steps to keep your mood and motivation steady throughout the year.



FROM THE

Director's Desk

Dear Friends of FRCSCV,

Looking back on 2022, I want to express my appreciation to all the families who participated in our programs! It was wonderful to re-engage in-person and connect in home visiting, Play & Learn, ECE FAST, Five for Families and many special events. Together we are strengthening children, families, and our community!

As we launch our 2023 program year, I am appreciative and proud of the hard work, dedication to families, and the resilience demonstrated by FRCSCV Team Members. All Team Members participated in an exercise to identify their personal strengths. As a Team, the top strengths are: Adaptability, Positivity, Empathy, Input, and Relator. I witnessed evidence of all of these strengths as we navigated through the challenges of the pandemic, trainings, and new programming over the last few years.

The strength of Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley is due in large part to having a strong, engaged, committed Board of Directors. Thank you to 2022 Board President Barry Cain, Ellsworth School District Superintendent, for his leadership and counsel throughout 2022. It was a busy year. In addition to normal governance and program matters, FRCSCV purchased (and replaced the roof) on the building we have occupied on Main St. in Baldwin since 1998. The board bid farewell to three outgoing board members—Julie Foss, Nolato Contour Vice President; Jessica Klopp, MidWestOne Lead Credit Analyst Officer, and Alison Page, retired Western Wisconsin Health CEO. FRCSCV is stronger for their leadership and advocacy for children and families in their tenures with FRCSCV. Please join me in welcoming 2023 Board President, Amber Richardson. Amber, who resides in Amery, is an Account Manager, Advanced Simulation for GoEngineer. The Board welcomed new Board members Sarah Tyler-Peterson, a Certified Nurse Midwife with Western Wisconsin Health, and Eilidh Peterson, Western Wisconsin Health CEO. Welcome aboard Sarah and Eilidh!

In October we welcomed Parent Educator Shawna Wilde to our team. She is facilitating parent education and family support programming. Shawna lives in Baldwin with her husband and three children.

This month we are excited to kick off our new Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Current and past parent/caregiver participants in our programs will serve in a formal capacity to advise on special events, help with advocacy for children and families, and review program evaluations. We will introduce you to the PAC in our next Family Matters Newsletter.

In cooperation with our three county partners, 20+ people will participate in 24 hours of training for a new Parent Café program called Recovering Together Café. The training will be conducted by Be Strong Families, whose mission is to create transformative change by developing and sustaining conversations that nurture the spirit of family, promote well-being, and prevent violence. FRCSCV Parent Educators, County staff members, Community Partners and Parent Partners will participate in this training. It is the goal of this partnership to offer Recovering Together Cafés as a parenting support program beginning this spring.

A special thank you to all who so generously responded to our year-end appeal. Know you are making a difference for local families. One final request. Mark your calendar for Sunday, April 23, for our annual 'Reach for the Stars' fundraising gala at Tattersall Distilling and Event Center.

Keep Warm. Stay in touch.

FRCSCV Executive Director

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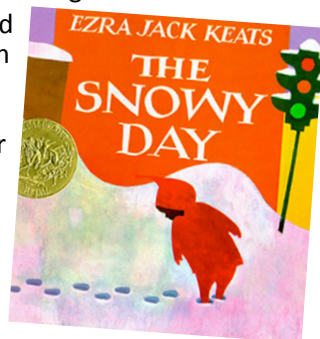
BOOKS ARE
magic

The Snowy Day, by Ezra Jack Keats

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats is a children's picture book from 1962. This book is a great winter book for the young and old. It is a story of a young boy that goes out on an adventure after the first snowfall. He wears his red snowsuit and makes paths with his feet by changing direction of feet, dragging feet, and adding a stick line. It adds so many fun snow activities such as snowmen, snow angels and sliding. In the end there is the lesson on snow melting.



by Marla Butler,
Parent Educator Lead



This book is great way to expand indoor and outdoor activities. Bring your snow inside in a tub. Freeze ice cubes with food coloring and add those to the snow. Make different size snowballs and see how long it takes for each one to melt. If you don't like the wet mess indoors, make some white play dough (to imitate snow) and build some snowmen or snow creatures. Put some salt, flour or sugar in a pie tin or on a cookie sheet as snow and have them play with their little people in it or drive their cars. For heading outdoors, imitate the actions in the book. Build a snowman. Fill spray bottles with water and food coloring and spray the snow. Find washable paint, paint brushes, add a little water and have fun painting the snow!

About the Book: The Snowy Day is a 1962 children's picture book by American author and illustrator Ezra Jack Keats. It features Peter, an African American boy, who explores his neighborhood after the season's first snowfall. Keats' illustrations helped pave the way for more inclusive and diverse children's literature. Keats received the 1963 Caldecott Medal for his collage artwork, which made The Snowy Day the first picture book with an African American protagonist to win a major children's award. Source: Wikipedia

LET IT
snow!

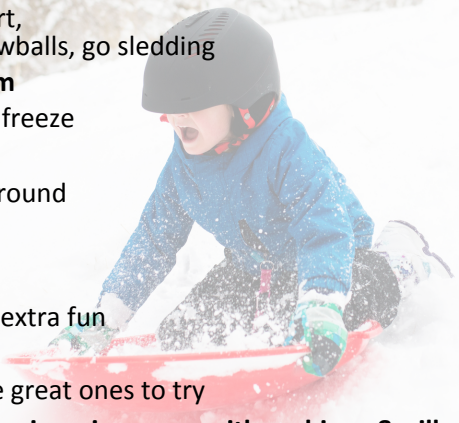
Work on your physical and mental health this winter by trying these inexpensive ways to move your body at home!

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- **Go for a walk or jog**
- **Play in the snow**
Make a snowman, snow fort, or snow angels. Throw snowballs, go sledding
- **Blow bubbles & chase them**
If it's cold enough they will freeze
- **Go to a playground**
Play tag or kick/roll a ball around

INDOOR FUN

- **Have a dance party!**
Add glow sticks to make it extra fun
- **Play games and move!**
Simon Says & Charades are great ones to try
- **Set up an obstacle course or jumping areas with cushions & pillows**
- **Use painter's tape to make a hopscotch pattern on the floor**
- **Engage in play with toys,**
Move cars & trucks around & push strollers
- **Have fun & enjoy the season!**



STAY MENTALLY HEALTHY
this winter

Source: [HealthyPlace.com](https://www.healthyplace.com)

As we know, it's dark early and cold these days!

We have an old survival instinct to stuff ourselves with comfort foods, curl up in a blanket, and hibernate. How do we stay mentally healthy? These tips are designed for winter mental health.

- Listen to your body. Winter's low light causes the brain to prepare for sleep more than it does in the summer months. Try going to bed 20-30 minutes earlier than usual. You might consider working in a power nap of about 30 minutes during the day.
- Feed your winter hunger wisely. Stock up on nutritious foods. Eat nuts, yogurt, sweet potatoes, crackers and hummus dip, and other healthy foods instead of junk food. You'll boost both mental and physical health.
- Move! It's fun to curl up in a blanket and read or watch movies, but our bodies still need movement for wellbeing. Set a timer to buzz every hour, and when it does, get up and walk around, stretch, climb stairs, or dance wildly. It's a powerful mental health enhancer.

Try these, and see if they help create positive thoughts, healthy emotions, and the energy to resist hibernation. They could boost your mental health over the winter.

Visit [healthyplace.com/other-info/mental-health-newsletter/tips-for-staying-mentally-healthy-during-the-winter](https://www.healthyplace.com/other-info/mental-health-newsletter/tips-for-staying-mentally-healthy-during-the-winter) for more tips on taking care of your mental health.

GIFTS MADE IN

honor or memory

Honor and memorial gifts are a thoughtful way to pay tribute to someone special while supporting local families. Family Resource Center St. Croix Valley is pleased to recognize the following individuals.

2022 GIFTS RECEIVED

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Mary Frey <i>In honor of</i> Eloise Toulson's birthday</p> | <p>James & Nada Merth <i>In memory of</i> Ethan Ranallo</p> |
| <p>John & Candice Varco <i>In honor of</i> Barbara Nelson's Birthday</p> | <p>David Strandberg & Susan Ash <i>In honor of</i> Mary Sue Ash</p> |
| <p>Diane & Allen Hoogheem <i>In honor of</i> Barbara Nelson's Birthday</p> | <p>Mark Vanasse & Agnes Ring <i>In honor of</i> first grandchild, Nora Mae</p> |
| <p>Judith Edgar <i>In honor of</i> Barbara Nelson's Birthday</p> | <p>Sherry & Rich Berg <i>In honor of</i> Hanson Family Christmas</p> |
| <p>Marjorie Dusek <i>In honor of</i> Barbara Nelson's Birthday</p> | <p>Dan & Patty Draxler <i>In honor of</i> Hanson Family Christmas</p> |
| <p>Debra & Robert Wild <i>In honor of</i> Barbara Nelson's Birthday</p> | <p>Debbie & Greg Lokrantz <i>In honor of</i> Hanson Family Christmas</p> |
| <p>Beverly Lightfoot <i>In memory of</i> Mark Lightfoot</p> | <p>Don & Patty Hanson <i>In honor of</i> Hanson Family Christmas</p> |



Tolerance and understanding go a long way to helping us get through times with difficult family members. Sometimes, just taking a deep breath rather than taking on a negative family member makes more sense than starting an argument, for example.

This time of year, with its bitter cold, strong winds, snowstorms, and other weather challenges puts extra pressure on us physically and mentally. Trying to keep to an exercise program can be a major help during this time of year. This does not have to be an elaborate process and does not need to cost anything at all. A simple walk can be great exercise and help to lower stress levels. Sleeping as best you can and keeping to a sleep schedule also helps. Eating well can also help.

Perhaps one of the more important things we can do at this challenging time of year is to forgive ourselves if we are not quite up to the task some days. We may need time to ourselves to regroup and try again if we gain weight or overdo some things. We are in the end, of course, all human beings, and as such are fallible and impulsive sometimes. We make mistakes sometimes. Do the wrong things sometimes. Learning to forgive ourselves can be a powerful tool to help keep the ship moving forward.

It's also important not to forget that we have all been through extraordinary times over the last few years. The pandemic still rages, the political situation is still very unsettled, and the economy seems confusing and contradictory. It's been a rough go, for sure. But, in the end, we have more control over our own lives than it might seem. We can do things specifically to counteract the stress, set a better tone, reflect a better attitude.

As one of my favorite sayings about life goes: We cannot control the wind, but we can adjust the sails. This is so true. It's important that we don't take on the responsibility of changing the world. Let's focus on ourselves, our loved ones, and those we are closest to. Let's be supportive and helpful. And, perhaps most of all, let's commit ourselves to raising happy and healthy children by being the best version of ourselves we can be. Not perfect, not without fault, but simply by helping others where we can, and doing our small but critically important part to make sure the next generation of children enter the world as well prepared as they can be.

This is really the mission of FRSCV, it seems to me. To do whatever we can to make sure that families with young children in the region have a leg up; an advantage of sorts, as they navigate their way in this crazy world we all live in.



WINTER PROGRAMS WITH AVAILABLE REGISTRATION

VIRTUAL BABY & ME ONGOING PROGRAM

TRIPLE P - VIRTUAL CLASS (POSITIVE PARENTING PROGRAM) JANUARY 30TH

TRIPLE P - VIRTUAL CLASS (POSITIVE PARENTING PROGRAM) FEBRUARY 28TH



FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER ST. CROIX VALLEY'S BABY & ME NO-COST, VIRTUAL PROGRAM



COPING WITH STRESS TRIPLE P POSITIVE PARENTING PROGRAM VIRTUAL INFORMED WORKSHOP

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greatest hits gala



SAVE THE DATE!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR APRIL 23

FRCCSCV is celebrating their 25th Anniversary this year! Mark your calendar and join us for the 18th Annual Reach for the Stars, Greatest Hits Gala!

The fundraiser will be held at Tattersall Distilling and Event Center in River Falls, WI.

Watch for more information coming soon to frccscv.org.

VISIT YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY

this winter

In addition to FRCCSCV programs this winter, your local library has a variety of events that they organize monthly.

Have you heard of IFLS? At iflsweb.org you will be able to find the library that is local to you. You can search by viewing a map or locate the library by name and it will show the library, building address, email and web address. You can simply click on the web address and check out what is happening at the library in the area!

A few fun upcoming dates to keep in mind:

- February 4th - Take your child to the library day**
- February 14th - National read to your child day**

These days may be a fun trip out and way to celebrate reading with your children.

Be sure to check the library site for actual observance days (ex: February 4th falls on a Saturday, they may celebrate before or after)

Yes, I would like to make a difference!

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Thank you! Your gift supports FRCCV's mission to strengthen families with young children in Pierce, Polk & St. Croix Counties.

Donations can be mailed to: Family Resource Center, 857 Main Street, Baldwin, WI.

parent educator

FRCCSCV would like to develop deeper relationships and connections with local vibrant, growing Hispanic communities. We are looking for a bilingual Parent Educator to work with the Spanish-speaking population. This role involves establishing trusting relationships with families with young children working together to strengthen parent-child relationships, improve parental skills, creating connected, confident, empowered families. The Parent Educator is responsible for assisting program participants in establishing goals and a plan for accomplishment of those goals, as well as the assessment of the normal growth and development of the child.

To Apply: To obtain the full job description please send an email to, Agnes Ring, Executive Director at executivedirector@frccscv.org with Bilingual Parent Educator in the subject line. Applications will be reviewed as they are received. Applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

BOREDOM-BUSTING WINTER ACTIVITIES FOR

toddlers

Source: happiestbaby.com

Winter can be a particularly challenging time for keeping little kids entertained. With a few supplies that you probably already have around your house, you can turn a boring, cold winter day into a fun adventure filled with activities that activate your child's imagination.



STICKY SNOWMAN

Image and activity via Happy Toddler Playtime

Grab your orange and black foam sheets paper and scissors. Cut out a carrot nose, a top hat and a smile mouth for your snowman.

Unroll some contact paper and draw the outline of a snowman using a black sharpie on the back of the sticky wall (not the side with paper backing). Tape your contact paper snowman up on a wall or window with the sticky side facing out.

Set out cotton balls, buttons, snowflakes and google eyes, nose, hat and mouth in a way your little one can easily access it. Add the eyes, hat, nose and mouth first before adding the cotton ball snow. Once the cotton balls go on the sticky wall it will be harder to stick anything else up. Next add the buttons.

This activity is great for Colour Recognition, Language and Vocabulary Development, Hand-Eye Coordination, Fine Motor Skills, Problem Solving, Emotional Development, Trial & Error, Visual Perception, Cognitive Development, Imaginative and Sensory Play.



SNOW PAINTING WINTER ACTIVITY

Image and activity via Brilliant Little Minds

This snow painting project is perfect for young toddlers. Plus, it makes for pretty, wintry décor!

- You will need:
- Glitter Pom Pom balls
 - Clothes pins
 - Colored paper
 - Hot glue gun (if you want to secure the pom poms to the clothes pins)
 - Blue & white paint

Attach your pom pom to your clothes pin. You can hot glue them to each clothes pin or you can just pinch the pom pom.

Dip your snowball in to the paint of your choice and dot away.



Family Resource Center

St. Croix Valley

Serving Families in Pierce, Polk and St. Croix Counties

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