



# easterseals

## Easter Seals

### Rehabilitation Center

# ECL Monthly

## news & updates

January|2024

Notes	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																								
	1 Read a new book today. Sign "book".	2 Practice signing "all done" after meals.	3 Put or point to pictures in books.	4 Notice what your child is interested in. Say "I see" or "What's that?"	5 Read your child's name and say "Hi, [name]! How does your child get you to play again?"	6 Play "Tickle me!" How does your child get you to play again?	7 Teach following the direction "hold still" using diaper changes.	8 Take a bubble bath during lunch. "Pop" the bubbles. Pop poop.	9 Wear "Hi" to a police officer today.	10 Follow directions to turn the lights "off".	11 Make choices during lunch. "Milk or water?"	12 Sing your favorite song in front of a mirror. "Milk or water?"	13 Put stickers on body parts. "On your nose?"	14 Try a new flavor or texture of food today.	15 Wear a silly hat today and point to show people.	16 Close your eyes and smell your breakfast this morning.	17 Sing Head Shoulders Knees and Toes.	18 Make animal sounds when reading books.	19 Ask your child "Do you want?" How do they respond?	20 Find some rocks outside. Put them "in" a bucket.	21 Can your child follow directions to give someone a hug?	22 Take out your shoes and sign "shoes".	23 How many body parts does your child point to? Learn 1 more.	24 Give a compliment today. Gesture - thumbs up!	25 Opposite day. Talk about hot and cold or up and down.	26 Stay warm! Play dress up today.	27 Can you help make the bed? Put pillows "in" the bed.	28 Practice blowing into a horn or kazoo.	29 Pop bubble wrap using hands or feet. "Pop!"	30 Sign "All done" after brushing your teeth.	31 Put their clothes on they notice? Sign "Up" or "Down".

Early Communicator Calendar

Notes	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																								
	1 Read a new book today.	2 Practice saying "all done" after meals.	3 Can your child drink from a straw? Try it!	4 Let your child peel a banana. Say "banana".	5 Pretend you're a bird and fly around the living room.	6 Play "Tickle me!" Will your child say "again?"	7 Practice dressing. Pull socks halfway up and let your child finish.	8 Take a bubble bath. "Pop" the bubbles. Pop poop.	9 Sign or say "Thank you" to a police officer today.	10 Follow directions to turn the lights "off".	11 Make choices during lunch. "Milk or water?"	12 Sing your favorite song in front of a mirror. "Milk or water?"	13 Put stickers on body parts. "On your nose?"	14 Make but and yogurt dip. Help put but "in" the bowl.	15 Wear a silly hat today. Show people and say "hat!"	16 Close your eyes and smell your breakfast this morning.	17 Sing Head Shoulders Knees and Toes.	18 Make animal sounds when reading books.	19 Ask your child "Do you want?" How do they respond?	20 Find some rocks outside. Put them "in" a bucket.	21 Can your child follow directions to give someone a hug?	22 Take out your shoes and sign "shoes".	23 How many body parts does your child point to? Learn 1 more.	24 Give a compliment today. Tell someone "Good job!"	25 Opposite day. Talk about hot and cold or up and down.	26 Stay warm! Play dress up today.	27 Can you help make the bed? Put pillows "in" the bed.	28 Practice blowing into a horn or kazoo.	29 Pop bubble wrap using hands or feet. "Pop!"	30 Sign "All done" after brushing your teeth.	31 Put their clothes on they notice? Sign "Up" or "Down".

First Words Calendar

Notes	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																								
	1 Read a new book today.	2 Say "I'm done" after meals.	3 Can your child drink from a straw? Try it!	4 Let your child peel a banana with a butter knife.	5 Pretend you're a bird or plane and fly around the living room.	6 Play "Tickle me!" Will your child say "again?"	7 Can your child get dressed on their own? Let them try.	8 Follow directions to the tap. "Put the duck under the water." On your head.	9 Say "Thank you" to a police officer today.	10 Follow directions to go to another room to turn the lights "off".	11 Talk about how your food tastes during lunch. It's hot, spicy, sticky.	12 Put on a show. Sing your favorite song for friends.	13 Put stickers on body parts. "On your nose?"	14 Make but and yogurt dip. Help put but "in" the bowl.	15 Wear a silly hat today. Show people and say "hat!"	16 Close your eyes and smell your breakfast this morning.	17 Sing Head Shoulders Knees and Toes.	18 Make animal sounds when reading books.	19 Ask your child "Do you want?" How do they respond?	20 Find some rocks outside. Put them "in" a bucket.	21 Can your child follow directions to give someone a hug?	22 Take out your shoes and sign "shoes".	23 How many body parts does your child point to? Learn 1 more.	24 Give a compliment today. Tell someone "Good job!"	25 Opposite day. Talk about hot and cold or up and down.	26 Stay warm! Play dress up today.	27 Can you help make the bed? Put pillows "in" the bed.	28 Practice blowing into a horn or kazoo.	29 Pop bubble wrap using hands or feet. "Pop!"	30 Sign "All done" after brushing your teeth.	31 Put their clothes on they notice? Sign "Up" or "Down".

Expanding Language Calendar

# Tried & True Tips from a Therapist

## by Kathryn Crane, OTR

# Co-regulation and How It Can Help Your Child

The holidays are over and you're trying to get your family back into a routine, but your child has been struggling these past couple of days. They're having tantrums, not sleeping well, and seem to not listen to what you're saying/asking. Sound familiar? This can be common, especially after the holidays when routines get disrupted, children are surrounded by more people than usual, and they're being presented with new and different

scenarios than normal (e.g., think new foods and/or people/environments).

Stress responses such as emotional outbursts, increased irritability, trouble sleeping, or withdrawal from others can be natural and most children don't yet have the coping skills to navigate through these emotions on their own. This is where you, the caregiver/parent come in to help them! In therapy, we often call this "co-regulation" which is the interactive process by which caring adults provide support and promote self-regulation through coaching, modeling, and feedback. In other words, it's not about temporarily calming a child down, but the process through which a child develops the ability to self-regulate in the long-term from the support their parent/caregiver provides them.



This can be difficult when your child is having a meltdown and all you want to say is, "CALM DOWN!" However, your child relies on you to be the calm and safe anchor for their dysregulated system and when they are flooded with big emotions. Therefore, co-regulation starts with regulating your own feelings then approaching your child in a calm and understanding manner.

Co-regulation techniques to try with your child when they're struggling with big emotions or are experiencing a meltdown:

1. **Try to stay calm and label feelings** – you might first need to take a breath and calm yourself down. Once you have calmed, address your child slowly and at their level using a calm voice. By doing this you're actually helping your child's brain label the sensations and emotions they are feeling, which over time, makes it easier for your child's brain to identify what is happening and leads to self-regulation quicker.
2. **Breathe together** – slow breathing is proven to be effective in reducing stress and anger. Start practicing a few slow, deep breaths and ask your child to sit beside you so they can feel the rhythm of your breath and join you. Try counting to 10 while inhaling then count down from 10 while exhaling.
3. **Calm their senses** – try to make the environment calmer by dimming the lights or turning off any background noise (e.g., TV or music). Allow your child to get comfortable either by grabbing a favorite stuffed animal or blanket. You can also create a "calming corner" in your house where the child can go when they are having big emotions. This can look like a play tent filled with pillows and blankets or even the corner of the living room with a few pillows they can sit on when overwhelmed. Offering a "safe space" for your child while they are in this heightened state, will help them to feel safe and begin to regulate their nervous system.
4. **Connect through touch** – physical touch is a powerful way to connect with your child. Always ask them first if you can rub their back, feet, or hands. By giving input to their body with touch, this can help them relax and slow

down their breathing.

Co-regulation is essential to building self-regulation which is pivotal for a child's mental health, healthy relationships, and overall well-being. By modeling how to remain calm in a situation/event, your child will learn to become more comfortable understanding the sensations in their body, labeling them, then become better equipped to develop skills to choose calming strategies.

## Spotlight Story - Kasen Salfiti



by Erin Salfiti

In November of 2021 when Kasen was discharged from the NICU at 2 months old, we were very weary and nervous about the daunting road ahead for him. At 10 days old, he contracted E.Coli bacterial meningitis and started having seizures. Less than 2 weeks after being admitted, he would need an emergency craniotomy to drain some of the pus surrounding his brain in order for the antibiotics to be able to work. When he came out of surgery the neurosurgeon and neonatologist listed off all of the possible complications from having this illness could bring: hearing and vision loss, speech delays, cerebral palsy, and

delays in fine motor movements. Kasen had significant brain loss on each of the brain lobe areas, so they said he would likely have one or more of these conditions. The doctor's kept us in a positive mindset saying that babies are especially resilient when it comes to brain injuries and can build new pathways. I felt like it was a miracle to even be leaving the hospital at all with my baby, but I still worried if we were going to be able to provide the right care he would need. This is where our angels on Earth, ECI, came in! Luisa started seeing Kasen when he was 4 months old and she blew us away with her knowledge. We had been to an outside therapy center a few times before and I was convinced there wasn't much you could do with a newborn. I was so wrong! Luisa had a slew of exercises and was ready to work our little guy and get him stronger. One of my favorite things about ECI is the education aspect. As an educator myself, I know how important it is to have a partnership in learning between the educator, the student, and their family. I was able to learn so much from Luisa during my time on maternity leave. When I went back to work, she would text me pictures or videos of exercises or activities to do with Kasen to keep working on skills towards his goals. We weren't first time parents, but our kids

couldn't be any more different so these strategies were so helpful. Having this communication is such an asset for all of us. After about a year, other services with Christina, Kelly, and Kevin were added. This is when we really saw the impact of their work with Kasen. I have also loved watching the relationship between Kasen and his therapist grow. Luisa has always pushed him out of his comfort zone and even before he was talking, he would let her know he was not pleased but he always pushed through. He always looks forward to his time with his therapists and knows his routine with them. At daycare, he greets them at the door and takes them over to his special area, because he knows it's time to work (or play!). Each one of them has also always included Kasen's big sister, Jordan, in his sessions when they have been at our house. They really make it a family learning experience. Kasen has narrowed his learning gaps with his motor skills and language with the help of his therapist. His Pediatric Developmental Specialist and neurologist have been with him since the NICU and they are always in awe of the progress that he has made. The picture that you see on his MRI and the toddler that is in front of them tell two completely different stories. I know he would not be where he is today if it weren't for his ECI team. It truly takes a village and we are so grateful for the time we've had with them.

## In Need of February and March Spotlight Families



Is Your Child The  
*next*  
ECI  
*SuperStar?*

We'd love to share your child's  
ECI journey!  
If you'd like to be featured in the  
**"ECI Spotlight Story"**  
segment, click below.

[I'm a SuperStar!](#)







The Easter Seals ECI Holiday Cheer program provides assistance to families enrolled in our ECI program that have been identified by their ECI team as needing help with gifts. These families do not receive help through any other programs such as Elf Louise or Blue Santa. The program started out small about 17 years ago and was completely supported by Easter Seals staff. As the program grew over the years, community partners, such as HEB, local clubs, and individual donors, have graciously provided the support needed to help the program become what it is today.

This year, the Easter Seals Holiday Cheer program served 55 families totaling 140 children.



This year's cheer was made possible by generous donations from HEB Corporate, HEB Partner Solutions Engineering, the Sonterra Tennis Club, Marathon Made CrossFit Gym, the Clark Aristocats, Easter Seals Family & Friends, and Easter Seals Staff. Many thanks to all who make Holiday Cheer possible.



**Tickets for the 7th Annual Calendar Raffle will go on sale in February!**

Stay tuned for a chance to support Easter Seals ECI.  
Great prizes raffled off DAILY in March.

**January Awareness Observations**

**Month-Long**



- Glaucoma
- National Mentoring Month
- Volunteer Blood Donor Month

#### Days

- January 1 - Global Family Day
- January 1 - World Day of Peace
- January 4 - World Braille Day
- January 15 - Intestinal Malrotation and Volvulus
- January 30 - CTE (Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy)



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**TEXAS**  
Health and Human  
Services

*Early Childhood Intervention*

Easter Seals Rehabilitation Center  
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