

From our February, 2012 Newsletter

SHARE THE LOVE: VALENTINE'S ACTIVITIES

Valentine's Day is a great time for giving those we care about and those who need a little love some warm fuzzies. Here are a few fun ideas:

Make Valentine's for Veterans and deliver them to the local VA Hospital, 385 Tremont Avenue, East Orange. Cut and paste valentines, with glued on hearts and a "thank you" or "you're my hero" message. How about red, white and blue valentines, maybe with glitter stars and cut-out stripes?



Making valentines lets kids practice cutting skills, builds hand strength, encourages the development of fine motor skills as children write letters or pick up small stickers, and trains them in the use of classroom tools like crayons and glue.

Bake a Valentine's Treat!

Kids love to bake, and everyone loves cookies. Baking builds lots of OT skills: strengthening from stirring, tactile experiences from playing with dough, direction following, sequences, temporal concepts, and fine-motor development.

Cookies needn't be heart-shaped. Even slice and bake cookies are fun (and easy) for kids to cut under your supervision, and then decorate. If kids need an activity while cookies are baking and cooling, have them decorate paper bags with Valentine's or "Thank you" messages. Then spread a little love to siblings, teachers, firemen, garbage collectors, the crossing guard, the coach, and the postman!

****Here's a great practical tip: **Always keep a roll of slice and bake plain cookies and some decorating goodies (like sprinkles, chips or decorating gels) on hand. You'll always be prepared when a playdate needs a change of activity, or a cranky child needs a diversion!**

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Play

Valentine's Bingo with your kids with Candy Conversation Hearts. You can use a regular bingo set, or make Valentine's Bingo cards.

For pre-schoolers, you can make cards using hearts and shapes of different colors; they'll learn colors and shapes through placing their candy hearts on the "red heart" "pink heart" "purple heart" "star with a heart" "heart inside a circle".

For older kids, boxes can contain words to be spelled (perhaps "heart" "love" "kiss" "smooch" "buddy" "pal"), or pictures of favorite movie stars/teen idols!