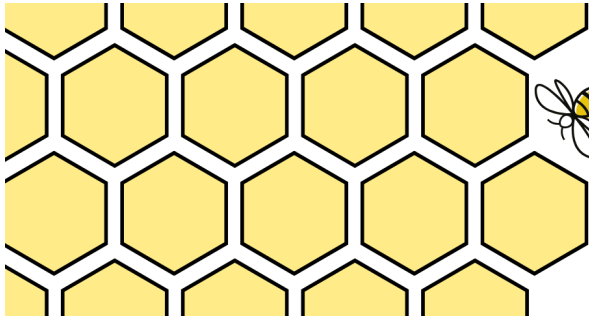


Tab 1



MAY NEWSLETTER
**READY TO GROW ST.
JOE**

Dear RTG Friends,

As the days grow brighter, spring unfolds, and summer quickly approaches, it's a perfect time to reflect on something both timely and essential for young children's development: **time in nature, every day**, with opportunities to play, explore, and investigate with time, curiosity, and wonder.

Consider this:

- Children spend up to 90% of their time indoors (*Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) – EPA*)
- By age 8, they average 7.5 hours a day on screens (*Kaiser Family Foundation*)
- Over 80% of children live in urban areas with limited access to green space (*United Nations and UNICEF*)

At the same time, many early care and learning programs face limited resources to create and sustain outdoor learning environments.

These realities matter. They impact children's health, development, learning, and overall well-being.

The good news? A growing body of research—from organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, Children & Nature Network, and World Health Organization—shows that **regular, diverse experiences in nature are powerful and essential for whole child development.**

Time outdoors in nature helps children:

- Build strong social, emotional, and physical skills
- Reduce stress and support overall health
- Spark creativity, curiosity, and imagination
- Strengthen collaboration and reduce conflict
- Develop empathy and a connection to the world around them

Nature-rich experiences also support:

- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Early science exploration and inquiry
- Language, literacy, and early math development
- Gross and fine motor development
- Construction, engineering, and spatial awareness

Our shared vision:

- Every child experiences nature every day
- Small, consistent experiences in nature-rich environments make a meaningful difference
- Early care and learning settings provide regular outdoor and nature-based learning opportunities
- Children grow up healthy, connected, and environmentally aware

Change begins with all of us—families, educators, and communities—working together.

At Ready to Grow St. Joe, we are delighted to support programs across St. Joseph County through **Gardening Grants** and **Quality Improvement Grants**, enhancing outdoor learning environments for young children, as well as with resources.

Let's continue to ensure that all children, especially those from birth to age eight, have consistent, meaningful access to nature to support their healthy development and lifelong well-being.

Visit the [RTG Website](#) for Gardening and Nature resources, and follow [RTG's Facebook](#) page for ongoing inspiration, ideas, and activities that bring nature into children's everyday experiences. A national initiative can be accessed here: [Nature for Children Every Day](#)

[Nature Research and Collaborations including diverse studies and relevant projects.](#)

Together, through awareness, intentionality, and thoughtful action, we can ensure that every child has the opportunity to explore, play, and grow in the beauty and richness of the outdoors.

With appreciation for all you do each day,
Terri

REGISTER TODAY

The Art of Living

Quarterly Series



Focused on Well-being to Support Health, Energy and Successful Mindset

May 14, 2026: Understanding Health Producing Food Choices Tailored to Your Body

August 6, 2026: Create Habits that Serve You Well! Secrets Revealed!

6:30-7:30pm via Zoom

1 Hour Training Certificate provided per session

Elisabeth Winet, FNP-C, MSN, MBA, Nurse Practitioner

READY TO GROW ST. JOE

EARLY CHILDHOOD QUALITY

May 14th Focus @ 6:30pm - 7:45pm: Understanding Health Producing Food Choices Tailored to Your Body!

This session explores how to make nourishing food choices that support individual health and well-being. Participants will consider how factors such as metabolism, lifestyle, preferences, and body cues influence nutritional needs, while gaining practical strategies to build balanced, sustainable eating habits. The session emphasizes listening to your body, making informed choices, and developing a positive, realistic approach to food and health.

Presented by Elisabeth Winet, FNP-C, MSN, MBA — Nurse Practitioner

Virtual | Free | 1 hour training certificate provided.

[Register Here](#) | Zoom

Save the Date: August 6, 2026 Focus: Create Habits that Serve You Well! Secrets Revealed!

[2026 South Bend Quality Improvement \(SBQI\) Grant Impact Report](#)

Friendly Reminder: SBQI Grant Final Report are due June 1,2026: [HERE](#)



BUMBLE BEE BREATHS

Why use breathing techniques in your classroom?
Using breathing techniques paired with routines in the classroom introduces mindfulness and normalizes the practice. This can have a long term impact on classrooms, students, and teachers.

Use this strategy to support a child or your classroom as they refocus and calm.

BREATHE IN

Breathe in slowly and deeply through the nose.



BZZZZZ OUT

Exhale by putting your lips together and buzzing like a bee. You could also hum like a humming bird.



Bumble Bee Breath (Bhramari Pranayama) 

Bumble Bee Breath is a simple, calming breathing technique that involves inhaling deeply and exhaling with a gentle humming sound—like a bumblebee. This soothing practice can help reduce stress and promote relaxation for both children and adults.

How to Practice:

- Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose
- Exhale while making a soft humming sound
- Repeat 6–10 times

Benefits:

- Calms the mind and body through vibration and sound
- Helps reduce stress and anxiety
- Supports regulation of the nervous system

A wonderful, easy strategy to incorporate into your day with children ... whether during transitions, after active play, or anytime a moment of calm is needed. 🐝💛



Webinar #2: For a Stronger Workforce

Policies for Working Families

 **Thursday, May 7**

 **11:00 a.m. EST / 10:00 a.m. CST**

Join the second webinar in the *For a Stronger Workforce* series. This initiative is designed to support Indiana employers in recruiting and retaining quality employees by strengthening support for working families. Child care continues to be one of the greatest barriers to workforce participation across the state. This session will highlight policies and strategies that help address these challenges while building a stronger, more stable workforce. Register [HERE](#).



Provider Appreciation Day® – May 8 🎉

Provider Appreciation Day® (PAD) is just around the corner on May 8—an opportunity to celebrate the incredible early care and learning providers who uplift children, families, and communities every single day. It’s a meaningful time to elevate your program’s voice, share your impact, and champion the importance of a strong, thriving child care system. ❤️ [Here are some ready-to-use resources.](#)

Christ Child Society Diaper Drop

Save the date!

Wednesday, May 13
9:00 to 2:00

Pick up a box of diapers (or two) on your next trip to the store.

Benefitting local families through
our partner organizations.

Sizes 3,4,5,6,
needed!



A dry baby
is a
happy baby

The **Christ Child Society of South Bend** is sponsoring a Diaper Drop. Please bring diapers of any size to Christ Child Society or ECDC-ND.

*Drop off at [Christ Child Society](#) Wednesday, May 13th.

* Option Drop off at ECDC-ND is through Friday, May 8th and place them in the collection box. [ECDC-ND](#) (Early Childhood Development Center, Notre Dame)

Let's Start a Garden: Spring is a great time to garden!

Please see the RTG [Gardening & Nature Resources](#) which includes the “**Let’s Start a Garden**” Unity Gardens Presentations, Gardening + Nature Resource Lists, Curriculum Guide, and the “Why Garden with Young Children” booklet. A few **resources Below**:

[Children’s Environmental Kinship Guide Outline](#)

[Children’s Environmental Kinship Guide](#)

[Resource: Family Engagement In & Around the Garden](#)

[“Let’s Start a Garden!” Mini-Grant Report](#)





Get free seeds, start your garden, and grow with your community!
The SJCL Seed Library provides free seeds to encourage home gardening, biodiversity, and sustainable food practices. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just getting started, this is a low-stakes way to explore growing your own food, herbs, or flowers—**no library card required!**

It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!



Visit A Branch
All of our branches have been supplied with seeds.

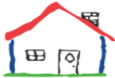
Select your seeds
Choose a few varieties you'd like to plant.

Plant them!
Use our seed guide to plant them and grow something amazing!

Get 'em while they're hot! (Well... before they sprout.) Seeds are available Late March through June, or until they've all found a home. Take just what you need to get started, no need to hoard them like a squirrel in autumn!

Get free seeds, start your garden, and grow with your community!

The [St. Joe County Seed Library](#), located at the St. Joseph County Public Library, provides free seeds to encourage home gardening, biodiversity, and sustainable food practices. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just getting started, this is a low-stakes way to explore growing your own food, herbs, or flowers—**no library card required!**



The CASIE Center presents:

Mandated Reporter Training
for Early Educators & Program Leadership

Recognizing & Reporting Child Abuse Training (Mandated Reporter)

Ready to Grow St. Joe and the CASIE Center hosted Recognizing & Reporting Child Abuse Training (Mandated Reporter) in English on April 20th, with 30+ attendees and in Spanish on April 27th with 56 attendees.

April was Child Abuse Prevention Month and we are reminded that this work must continue year-round. In 2025, over 21,000 Indiana children experienced abuse or neglect, with the youngest most at risk—an increase after years of decline. Prevention matters. Strong, caring relationships and supportive environments are among the most powerful ways to support children and families.

Your role as early educators and program leaders is critical in creating safe, nurturing environments and recognizing when children may need additional support and/or protection. **Access [Parenting Tips Toolkit | PCASJC](#) from Prevent Child Abuse SJC.**

English Session [recording](#) | Spanish session [recording](#) | Click [here](#) to complete a short quiz after watching the recording and earn a 1-hour training certificate.

Unity Garden's Upcoming Events

[Yoga in the Garden](#) at Unity Gardens | [Registration \(optional\)](#)

Join for weekly yoga in the garden! Held every Monday evening from 6-7pm starting May 18th until Oct 12th.

[Kids Summer Garden Club](#) at Unity Gardens | [Registration \(optional\)](#)

Join Unity Garden Saturdays 11am-12pm from June 27-July 28th. Children will learn about plant anatomy, types of gardens, animals in the garden, and garden olympics.

[Lunch 'N Learns](#) at Unity Gardens | [Registration \(optional\)](#) Saturdays at noon in August.



Mental Health Awareness of Michiana

🎉 **SAVE THE DATE** for free fun! 😊 **6th Annual Family Fun Fest**

☀️ Kid-friendly activities, food trucks, resources and more make this annual event a blast

COMING SOON!

the *6th Annual*
FAMILY FUN FEST
A Celebration of Wellness & Community
FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2026
Howard Park - South Bend, IN
4 - 6:30 PM

Lots of kid-friendly activities, food trucks, Michiana resources and more make this annual event a blast!

MHAM Mental Health Awareness of Michiana | An affiliate of MHA Mental Health America | in partnership with Public Library ST. JOE COUNTY

📅 **Friday, May 30th**

🕒 **4 - 6:30 p.m.**

📍 **Howard Park, South Bend, IN**

🎉 **Free events, food trucks, kids' activities, and more!**

✨ **Dolly Parton's Imagination Library** sends free, high-quality books straight to children from birth to age five—no matter the family's income. Sign up today and start building a home library magic ✨

Visit [here](#) to sign up today!

📖 Explore the 2026 Blue Ribbon Selections for each age group [here](#).



Did you know? Reading just 15 minutes a day adds up to 27,345 minutes (456 hours / 19 days!) by age five. Reading aloud is one of the most powerful ways to spark early learning and set children up for lifelong reading success 🧡

Mindful May

List 3 things that you are looking forward to this month	Do one thing slower than usual today like eating lunch or walk	Take 5 deep breaths before you open your emails	Take a break without multitasking	Take a short mindful walk focusing on your breath	Send a quick positive message to a friend
MAY 7 Six Seconds Global Webinar 6sec.org/events FREE!	Acknowledge on thing you did well today	Declutter one small space. Notice how you feel with that.	Stand up and stretch or walk each hour	Close your eyes and visualize a your calm place	Make yourself a refreshing drink with ice
	Write a kind note to yourself	Try a short guided meditation	Get out your colored pens and doodle	Sit quietly in sunshine for 5 minutes. How do you feel?	Write down 3 things your are grateful for today.
Journal your feelings. See how many feeling words you can write	Take a few minutes today to listen to nature	MAY 21 Coaching Connections 6sec.org/events FREE!	Listen to your favorite song. How does it make you feel?	Let go of one thing that didn't go to plan today.	Create a ta-da list instead of a to do list for this week
Practice the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique.	Take your time to savour your food. Enjoy each bite.		Do something today that makes you feel joy.	Lay down and do a body scan, gently bring your attention to each part of your body.	Visualize a situation going exactly how you want it to work.

Mindful May is here!
 A whole month of small, simple practices to help you slow down, tune in, and take care of your inner world—one moment at a time.

Tiny actions → powerful shifts

Which one are you trying first?



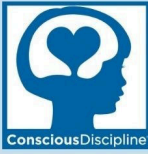
***Nurturing Resilience & Building Brains with Conscious Discipline
2026 Summer Celebration!***

☀️ Who:

- *Educators, program leaders, and staff participating in the 2025–2026 Conscious Discipline Cohorts*
- *Participants in the upcoming 2026–2027 Cohort 2 programs*
- *Members of the CDF Cohort*
- *Others engaged in Conscious Discipline trainings and experiences (virtual and in-person)*

🎉 CD Friends, Food, Swag, Fun—and You!

♥️ Please RSVP early to reserve your spot: [HERE](#)



Nurturing Resilience and Building Brains

with Conscious Discipline®




2026–27 In-Person Professional Development Opportunities (July–October) Nurturing Resilience and Building Brains with Conscious Discipline

We're pleased to share our 2026–27 in-person professional development schedule (July–October)—open to participants from St. Joseph County and beyond!

Please register early to reserve your seat. These sessions are designed for entire teams—early educators, paraprofessionals, float staff, and program/school leaders—to learn and grow together. Each session includes:

- Complimentary breakfast and lunch
- 6 hours of professional development (with certificate)
- Engaging, relationship-centered learning
- Raffle prizes, New and Old Friends & Fun!

We look forward to learning alongside you as we continue building strong, connected school communities filled with relationship-centered practices. Time to Register! Grab Your Spot!


 **July 7, 13, 30 | 1:00-3:00 PM (ZOOM)**

Conscious Discipline 101: For those new to CD or would like a refresher.

 Virtual Open to all in St. Joseph County and Other Counties too!

 **Saturday, August 15 | 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM**

Co-regulation & the Five Steps of Self-Regulation (Pre-School Training)- Same content delivered August 15 and 17

 In-person Open to all in St. Joseph County and Other Counties too!

OR

 **Monday, August 17 | 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM**

Co-regulation & the Five Steps of Self-Regulation (Pre-School Training)- Same content delivered August 15 and 17


 In-person Open to all in St. Joseph County and Other Counties too!

 **Saturday, October 24 | 8:30 AM – 3:30 PM**

Co-Regulation & Baby Doll Circle Time (Infant/Toddler/Twos Training)

 In-person Open to all in St. Joseph County and Other Counties too!

Talk with Your Baby is embarking on a new initiative called the *Dozen Diaper Depot* in which parents can come to their 1045 West Washington location once a month on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from noon-2pm and receive a free dozen of diapers! Please help us spread the word, thanks!



The poster is for the 'Dozen Diaper Depot' event. It features a dark blue background with white and yellow text. At the top left is an illustration of a white diaper. At the top right are logos for 'UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME' and 'rclegnd.edu/programs/talk-with-your-baby'. The main title 'DOZEN DIAPER DEPOT' is in large, bold, white letters with a yellow outline. Below it, the event details are listed: '2nd Wednesday of the month, 12-2 pm' and '1045 W Washington St South Bend'. To the right, a white box contains 'Diaper Sizes Available: Newborn (nb) to 7' and 'Pull-up sizes available: 2t/3t to 4-5t'. Below the English text is the Spanish version: 'HABLA CON TU BEBÉ DOZENA DE PAÑALES EN EL PUNTO DE RECOGIDA' and 'Segundo miércoles del mes, 12-2 pm' and '1045 W Washington St, South Bend'. To the right of the Spanish text is another illustration of a white diaper and a white box with 'Tallas de pañales disponibles: Recién nacido (nb) a 7' and 'Tallas de braguitas de entrenamiento disponibles: 2t/3t a 4-5t'.

Kids to Parks Day

Saturday, May 16
12:00pm - 3:00pm
St. Patrick's County Park: Brown Barn
Fee: Free!

Kids to Parks Day is a national day of outdoor play that connects kids and families with their public lands and green spaces. Join us for a day of hands-on activities featuring fishing, canoeing, disc golf, orienteering, and more! New this year, make seed flings with native seeds generously provided by Stantec Native Plant Nursery! *This program is free thanks to a generous grant from the St. Joseph County...*



For more information about Kids to Parks Day [here](#).



**William J. Shaw
Center for Children
and Families**

[Do you work with pregnant patients?](#)

We want to hear from you! Researchers at Notre Dame are asking for perinatal care providers (including OB/GYNs, ultrasound technicians, nurses, midwives, doulas, etc.) to share their experiences by completing a survey and optional interview. Scan the QR code to help inform perinatal care!

[Are you a mom with a 1-year-old?](#)

The PAL Lab at Notre Dame is inviting mothers and their toddlers to join a study about family emotions, everyday interactions, and mental health. Complete 2 study visits, be paid for your time, and go home with a 'Junior Scientist' Certificate for your toddler! Childcare, snacks, and transportation assistance provided. Scan the QR code to learn more!

[First baby on the way? We've got something for you!](#)

Join the PAL Lab at Notre Dame for a free class designed for brand-new parents, offered at the St. Joe Public Library once a month. Enjoy one in-person visit, be paid for completing surveys, and discover what to expect as you step into parenthood. Scan the QR code to get all the details!

[What was it like talking with your doctors during pregnancy?](#)

We want to hear your story! Researchers at Notre Dame are asking for people who are currently pregnant or gave birth in the past 2 years to complete a survey and optional interview. Scan the QR code to start!



[39 fun ways kids can play outside this spring](#)

[50 fun family activities you can do in 15 minutes](#)

From our friends @ [Active for Life](#)



CONNECT WITH US!

By Email

- Please reach out with questions and to share your ideas and suggestions. We are always eager to know what is working for you in your early childhood setting as well as what would be helpful to you in your work and efforts. Your input and feedback is valued and truly appreciated.
- If this newsletter was forwarded to you by a friend or colleague, let us know you would like to be added to our mailing list - Terri Kosik



On the RTG Facebook Page

- Check our [Facebook page](#) regularly for updates as well as LIKE/FOLLOW the page to extend our RTG engagement.

On the RTG Website

- On the [Ready to Grow St Joe website](#), find 1) Events, 2) News and 3) Resources: Employment Opportunities, EC Resources and Resources for Families.
Ready to Grow St. Joe is a collection of early childhood stakeholders committed to ensuring that all children in St. Joseph County, birth to eight, have the foundation to thrive in school and in life. We work through our members to engage the community, build systems, and empower families, with efforts focused on Quality Early Learning, Health & Wellness, and Family Support.

RTG YouTube Channel

-  **Stay Connected on RTG YouTube Channel!**
- Catch recordings of our gardening and Conscious Discipline sessions—whether you missed them or want to revisit your favorite moments.  [Subscribe here](#)

Terri Kosik, Director Ready to Grow St. Joe | Early Childhood Coalition

574-298-3353 | tkosik@saintmarys.edu | [RTG Website](#) | [RTG Facebook](#)