

JANUARY 2026

CURRENT EVENTS AND UPDATES

- This month's newsletter will be highlighting Winter break tips and activities
- January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month
- Clinic will be closed -January 1st & January 2nd
- Happy New Year
- Exciting things are happening at Tots to Teens! Check us out on Facebook and Instagram to stay connected.



Tots to Teens
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VIRTUAL CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Topic: Parental Burnout

We are a safe, understanding space to share experiences, encourage and connect with others. All parents and caregivers are welcome.

- ✓ Meet other parents
- ✓ Get your questions answered
- ✓ Discuss important information

To Register contact
authorizations@totstoteenstherapy.com



Winter Sensory Activities and Ideas

Sensory play is something that all kids like to engage in, here are several tips to get the most out of this winter

- **If your child prefers to stay indoors,** have a special container of new and fun things to do just on snow days. This special, plastic storage container might include movies, music, books, and toys that are used only on bad weather days. You might even include special snacks or treats as well. Make sure that the container's items and activities are only used on days when the schedule changes abruptly. Take out only one item at a time to avoid over-stimulation.
- **For kids with sensory systems that don't mind the cold temperatures** and the extra layers of clothing, go out and play in the snow (weather permitting). Snow play has an endless list of activities. With fellow neighborhood kids out playing too, social skills can be practiced and developed as well. Sledding is not only physically challenging by pulling a sled while trudging up a snowy hill helps to work on balance and coordination. This is an OT exercise in disguise! For younger children, practice counting snowballs, then work on gross motor skills by stomping on the snowballs. And who can forget making snow angels? Make a whole angel family and practice identifying emotions by finger drawing different facial expressions.
- **Routines and schedules are the mantra** for those with autism and their families. In fact, they are so important to a child on the spectrum, any change in their daily habits can cause much anxiety or stress.
- **Talk about the possibility of school closing before it happens.** As soon as it looks like a bad weather closing is a possibility, begin to talk with your child. Talk up the fun activities that can be done instead of going to school. When the actual snow day occurs, knowing that alternative activities exist will most likely keep your child's anxieties to a minimum.



Winter Activities

- **Frozen treasure hunt** - This activity requires a little prep, but has the potential to keep your child busy for a while. In advance, fill a plastic bin with water. Place seasonal items into the water, such as cranberries, pine tree clippings, pinecones, plastic snowflakes and/or small holiday toys that won't be harmed by water or ice. Set the dish in the freezer overnight to create a large ice block. Once ready to play, take it out of the freezer and run some warm water over the bottom to loosen the ice before popping it out into a larger plastic bin or durable baking dish. Give your child tools like eye droppers, turkey basters, medicine syringes, spoons and toy hammers to use to try to "dig" for their finds in the ice. To switch it up, you can also give them dolls and animals to "skate" across the ice, or offer some salt to pour on for a mini science experiment.
- **Fake snow** - Baking soda and hair conditioner - that's it! Combine 2 ½ cups of pure baking soda with ½ cup of conditioner in a bowl. Add more baking soda if you don't want it to be as wet. Mold it into snowballs or make a mini snowman. Fairly foolproof. A little messy and a lot of fun. Can also bring in some holiday toys or arctic animals like polar bears and penguins. Have some trucks on hand? Use them as snow plows! Wash hands when finished and watch the kids closely to make sure they don't rub their eyes. You can also store this in a baggy for up to five days.
- **Make snowflakes** - Using coffee filters, create paper snowflakes. Fold them in fourths and cut small shapes from the folds to make snowflakes. Drizzle on glue and sprinkle with glitter for a sparkly effect. Once dry, use scotch tape to hang on windows and around the room. You can also make edible snowflakes by folding flour tortillas in fourths and then using scissors to cut shapes out of the folds, just like when you cut a paper snowflake. Brush with melted butter, sprinkle on some cinnamon sugar and bake at 350 degrees until crispy.
- **Winter squish bags** - Start with a sealable plastic bag. Gallon bags work best for this, though smaller sizes will still do. Draw on your winter or holiday design, then fill it with a bit of hair gel and items like pom poms, plastic snowflakes, googly eyes, buttons, glitter or dry beans that kids can use to push around the bag to bring it to life. Once finished filling the bag, make sure to let the air out and seal it at the top with tape so nothing can escape. As an added perk, these bags are great for keeping kids busy in the car on road trips!



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New List of our Favorite Therapy Products



Our therapists are excited to share their list of items that support your child's development at home.

Parent Resources, Oral Therapy, Toys, Games and Books that we love.



Kayla's Korner

- As the new year approaches, please be advised that deductibles reset for most insurance plans. We kindly ask that you notify us as soon as possible of any insurance changes.
- Additionally, as we enter the winter season, weather conditions may be unpredictable. Please note that we follow Prince William County Government for all weather-related closures.
- As a reminder, please use ocean friends to cancel and reschedule sessions as needed.

Check your Insurance Benefit Coverage

- Notify billing asap of any change in insurance, policy carrier etc
- Remember new year means most plans deductible reset, oftentimes co pays may go up
- Always read your policy, or call your carrier to confirm coverage



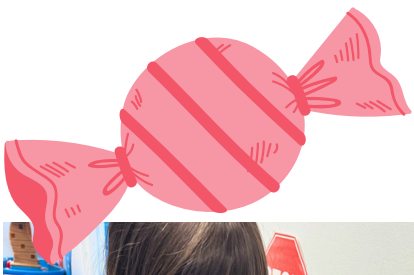
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DECEMBER HAPPENINGS

Sensory Santa





Candyland



Candyland

