

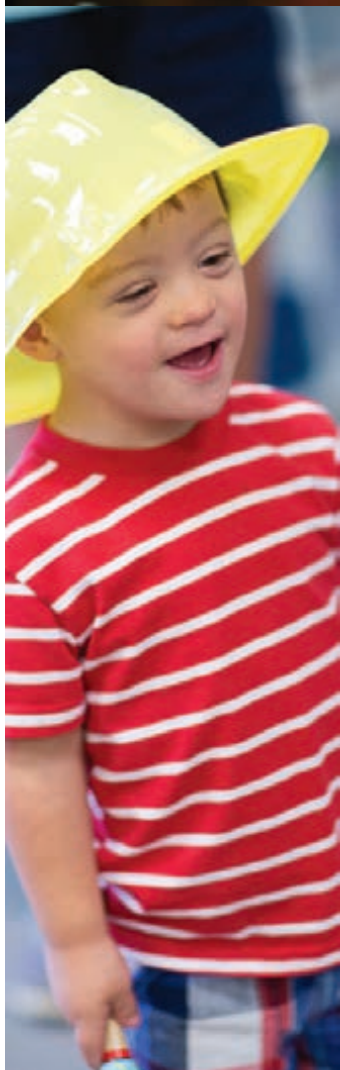


Families first

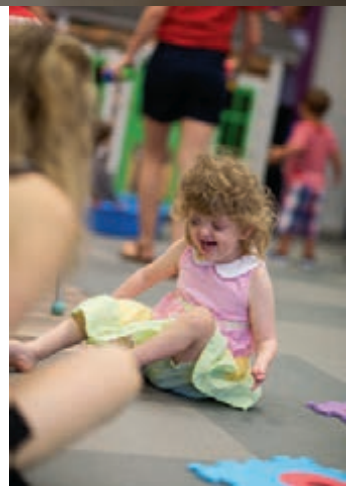
FALL/WINTER 2016

**GIGI'S
PLAYHOUSE
ALL ABOUT
THE EAR**
EXPLORING THE
DIGITAL WORLD

GiGi's PLAYHOUSE



GiGi's Gives
People with Down
Syndrome a Place
to Connect, Play
and Learn



When you walk in the door of GiGi's Playhouse – Down Syndrome Achievement Center, you're likely to hear

music and will be greeted with many genuine smiles. Just one year after volunteers and donors started dreaming of the possibilities, children and adults with Down syndrome now have a place in Raleigh that's designed just for them. It's a no-fee program providing positive support.

Children leap, laugh and listen to music during Leaps and Bounds, a popular program designed to help 3 to 5-year-olds with social, emotional and gross motor development through a variety of activities.

Siblings are welcome and encouraged to play and participate in group programs at GiGi's. It's a fun place for the whole family, and parents make connections as well. While children are playing, parents naturally fall into conversations about common interests, and a support network can quickly be formed for families.

Much More Than Play

At GiGi's, all children from babies to teens have a place and program option that's tailored for them. For example, program volunteers guide infants along with parents through activities to learn basic sign language, interactive play, cooperative games, physical activity, music and dance therapy are incorporated into many activities to help stimulate the children.

"It's very good to get children into group settings early so they can learn to make friends," said Nora Phillips, volunteer program leader for LMNOP. "This also gets them used to other adults at an early age."

Programs for teens promote friendships, social interaction, and communication through a variety of social activities, outings and games. Literacy and math are a big focus at GiGi's. Plus, GiGi U offers fun and educational programs that focus on confidence, career skills and interests, and health and wellness to help adults with Down syndrome achieve their highest potential.



Visit GiGi's

2887 Jones Franklin Rd
Raleigh 27606

Families are welcome to drop in during open hours. Everything is free of charge. Scheduled programs are listed on the calendar and advance registration is requested to help plan for volunteer needs.

"I really enjoy my volunteer time at GiGi's!
I'm able to come in after work or on the weekends,
and I'm here approximately three times a month."

Nora Phillips, a preschool teacher and program leader for LMNOP



A Place to Connect

GiGi's offers a much-needed place for Triangle families, and the response since opening in June 2016 has been above and beyond the initial expectations of Jeanhee Hoffman, board president of GiGi's Playhouse Raleigh. "The community has really embraced GiGi's," said Hoffman. "We had more than 300 people come for the opening event and 24 babies at one of our first LMNOP programs!"

Jeanhee's dream was to bring this resource to Raleigh to help individuals just like her brother Sam, who is in his 40s and a participant in GiGi U at another location.

GiGi's is named after the daughter of founder Nancy Gianni, who was recently named a 2016 CNN Hero. Gianni wanted to give kids and adults with Down syndrome a place where they could be leaders and to provide families with a place where they could find resources, network and celebrate their children. GiGi's is now a network of Down syndrome achievement centers with more than 30 locations. The organization focuses on helping individuals with Down syndrome in order to address a larger vision of global acceptance for people of all abilities.

Volunteer Driven

One way that GiGi's in Raleigh has been able to make everything free for families is by training volunteers for just about every role possible. Interested volunteers are trained and screened at different levels based on their possible roles.

Physical therapists, occupational therapists and experienced teachers are especially needed as volunteers, but no advance experience is required to pitch in and help in many ways at GiGi's.

To get involved, complete the volunteer form online or call 919-307-3952.

gigisplayhouse.org/raleigh



THE EAR

what's going on in there?

Unless you're a trained Ear, Nose and Throat doctor, you probably don't have a great perspective on what's going on in your child's ear. So how are you supposed to know when to be concerned or what to do when your kids are fussing about their ears? Should you clean them? Are they infected?

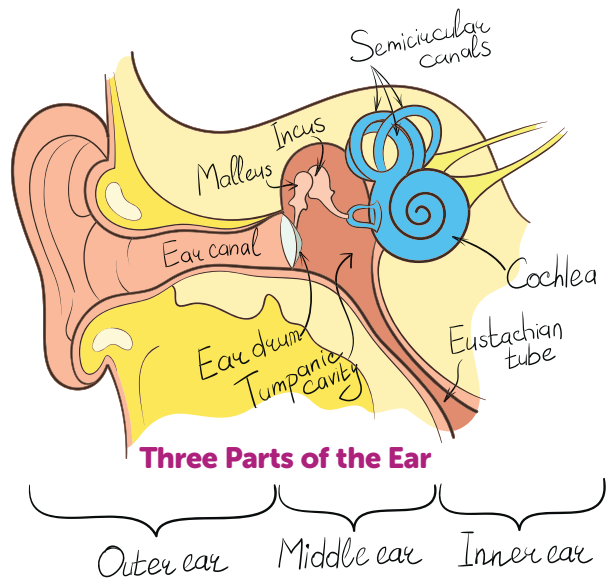
Mike Ferguson, MD, director, WakeMed Physician Practices – Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) walks us through the ins and outs of the ear, proper care and common problems.

To start, it's important to know that all kids should be screened at birth for hearing while they're at the hospital. If they don't pass the screening, they'll be referred to an ENT for help.

As they get older, a child could have problems with chronic fluid behind their ears, which could also affect speech development. Even if they passed a newborn screening, other problems can develop at age 1 to 2. Sometimes it's hard for parents to notice if a young child can't hear very well.

If your child is unable to communicate what is bothering them, it might be tough to know what's going on. Signs of problems with ears include crying, not nursing or taking a bottle, not sleeping or a fever. Talk to your pediatrician if your child has any of these symptoms. If needed, they can refer you to





LISTEN UP!

Three of the smallest bones in the body are in the ear. They vibrate and send a signal to the inner ear. The space between (the middle ear) needs air and ventilation. The Eustachian tube is the ventilation system for the ear. Yawning and chewing allow it to open up and let air in.

an ENT for persistent problems such as recurring infections or other concerns.

Kids & Ear Tubes

As a parent, you might be wondering just exactly what ear tubes are and why some kids need them. "Some kids just have really short Eustachian tubes so the middle ear doesn't get ventilated or aerated properly," said Dr. Ferguson. "This can cause fluid to collect behind the ear drum, which prevents proper vibration and can create hearing loss or an infection that builds up causing a rupture of the ear drum." Kids with repetitive infections need ear tubes to provide a temporary window into the middle ear to prevent the build up.

Injured Eardrum

All too often, the eardrum can be injured either by cleaning with a cotton swab or kids playing with sharp objects. Other possible

injuries include a traumatic perforation. For example, a child might land really hard on water or another object in a specific way that causes pressure and ruptures the eardrum.

Symptoms of an eardrum injury include immediate pain and possible hearing loss. While many eardrum injuries will heal without specific treatment, it can take several weeks to over a month. It's important to see an ENT anytime you think there has been an injury.

Beware of Ear Buds & Loud Noises

The noise exposure from the use of ear buds is too high for children. "Using over-the-ear headphones and keeping the volume lower is really best for everyone," said Dr. Ferguson. "As a parent, I can tell you that using over-the-ear headphones has another perk – they're much easier to find!"

Short bursts of exposure to loud noises are not as big of a deal as persistent and repeated exposure, especially for toddlers. Precaution should be taken to prevent overexposure to loud noises at events such as auto races or air shows.

Some children have more severe reactions to loud noises. Even things such as noisy toys and toilets flushing might bother them.



Cleaning Ears

Many people believe that they should clean the inside of the ear with a cotton swab. Dr. Ferguson warns against this and says it causes more harm than good. He describes the ear as self-cleaning. Cleaning the outside of and behind is fine but avoid the temptation to clean inside the ear.

Parents can easily perforate a child's eardrum when they think they're harmlessly cleaning the ear. Even if you're extra careful, a child can quickly move or jerk their head.

The ear canal isn't a straight pipe – it is a curved tunnel. You can create other problems when you think you're cleaning an ear. "People think they need to clean the wax out, but they are essentially pushing it in, which can cause other problems as the wax builds up and becomes harder," said Dr. Ferguson. "Unnecessary ear wax will work its own way out so there is no reason to stick anything inside the ear."

The best rule for ear care is to never clean what you can't see; don't put anything inside the ear, said Dr. Ferguson. "Really, cleaning inside the ears is not required or recommended for children or adults."

Ear Wax 101

Wax is not dirt. "It's being secreted from the glands in the ear and creates a protective barrier for the ear," said Dr. Ferguson. "It helps with water repelling, slows the ability of bacteria to grow, and can prevent chronic issues with itchy ears." Wax will work itself out. If you can see it, you can simply brush it out with a soft cloth. If you can't see it, leave it alone.

Swimmer's Ear

Infections of the external ear (the canal) are frequently caused by swimming. Water causes skin cells to become saturated and leads to cracking of natural protection so bacteria can get in there. This is even more likely in lakes and natural bodies of water. For some, this can cause significant pain and swelling. If this is a problem for your child, talk to your pediatrician. "You can also try some simple homeopathic things such as using equal parts white vinegar and rubbing alcohol in a medicine dropper after swimming," said Dr. Ferguson. "Never clean them with cotton swabs because you're more likely to create an environment for infection."



Some kids really don't like water in the ears, and that's no fun for parents. Dr. Ferguson recommends using swim plugs. They're inexpensive and effective at keeping a lot of water out. If your child has more significant problems, an ENT could make custom molds for their ears.

If a child has severe swimmers ear that doesn't resolve on its own after a couple days, your pediatrician might prescribe drops or refer you to an ENT.



Meet the Expert

Dr. Michael Ferguson is an expert ear nose and throat (ENT) doctor, with clinical interests ranging from pediatric ear nose and throat to sinus disease, thyroid surgery and cancers of the head and neck. He loves helping his ear, nose and throat patients of all ages and is also an excellent teacher, and is the recipient of the Kaiser Permanente Excellence in Teaching Award. He is the director of WakeMed Physician Practices - ENT, Head and Neck Surgery Program.



Weighing In:

Take a Family Approach

When concerns are raised about a child's weight, it can be overwhelming for parents. Basic changes can seem overly challenging, and sometimes weight gain or loss can be a real mystery. In many cases, a child's current and future health is at stake so it's important for the whole family to make the time and ask for help.

Dr. Samareh Hill, a pediatrician at WakeMed Physician Practices – Pediatric Health & Wellness, helps families unravel the mystery of what could be affecting a child's weight. "It's not always obvious what's causing a significant gain or loss," said Dr. Hill. "Sometimes we need to look closely at a child's entire medical history and lifestyle to determine if there is a genetic concern or another likely cause for a child's unhealthy weight."

A number of things can be at the root of some weight problems for children. "Divorce, relocation and traumatic events might be contributing factors," said Dr. Hill. "Medications for psychological conditions can also be a cause, so it's important to work with a medical team and look at the big picture."

A child's behavior can be influenced by the whole family. It helps when everyone is engaged and committed to making changes. When Dr. Hill meets with families who have concerns about a child's health and weight, she takes a personalized approach to each child and family.

Dr. Hill also emphasizes that everyone in the family should make changes together. The holidays are a good example. "A child shouldn't be singled out and treated differently when it comes to food-related house rules or treats."

She offers some tips that all families can benefit from following, especially as we approach the holidays and set resolutions for a new year.

Healthy Weight & Holiday Temptation Tips

- Focus on more than just healthy food at home. School lunches, snacks at parties and on-the-go meals can really add up and frequently include all the wrong things.
- Never skip breakfast. Start the day with a good source of protein and fiber. A balanced meal of eggs, oatmeal and fruit are excellent choices.
- Keep healthy on-the-go snacks in all the right places – in the car, handbags, travel bags, at work, at sports events, etc.
- Try lots of taste tests to work in a variety of vegetables and fruit. It can take 20 to 30 tastes to like something. Have fun and let the kids pick something new that they want to try from the farmers market or produce aisle.
- Cleanse the palate by removing sugary sweets altogether for a while so your family's tastes can adjust to naturally sweet things such as carrots.
- Choose nutrient-rich foods each day, including as many colors of fruits and vegetables as possible.
- Remember that an underweight child might be very unhealthy if they're not getting enough nutrients from the right foods.
- Limit treats and focus on choosing one favorite versus one of each when there are many options.
- At holiday meals, allow time for food to settle and limit any second helpings to one or two items and choose vegetables or fruit.
- Before parties and other events, avoid the temptation to skip a meal and save up for a bigger meal. Eat a healthy breakfast and lunch with plenty of protein and fiber so you're not starving for the big event.
- When you have lots of leftovers, everyone is tempted to have a little more. Instead, put it all away for another day and bring out a few things at a time. When possible, freeze any excessive amounts for a future treat.
- Before meals, keep appetizers to a minimum. Stick to something healthy like apple slices or veggies and hummus.

Dr. Hill's Healthy Hummus

Ingredients:

1 can garbanzo beans, drained
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon tahini (find in ethnic section in grocery stores)
1 clove of garlic
1/2 tsp salt

Blend it all together until smooth like peanut butter. (Best with a good blender like a vitamix). You can thin it out with some water if needed.

Serve with sliced cucumbers, carrots, bell peppers and any other veggies your family enjoys.



Meet the Expert

Dr. Samareh Hill is a board certified pediatrician with WakeMed Physician Practices – Pediatric Health & Wellness Services. Her professional interests include research on general pediatrics and obesity, as well as developing public programs and interventions aimed at preventing childhood and adolescent obesity.

Fire Safety and Burn Prevention

Every year, many children lose their lives or are severely injured at home from fire and burns. Parents should be aware of fire hazards and talk frequently with their children about fire dangers and safety.



Use Smoke Alarms

- Always have smoke alarms that work.
- Put smoke alarms in or near rooms where people sleep.
- Have smoke alarms on every level of your home.
- Place them high on the wall or on the ceiling.
- Test smoke alarms each month.
- Change batteries once a year or sooner if the alarm chirps.
- Do not take out the batteries to stop the alarm sound.
- Get your family out when you hear the alarm.
- If your alarms are 10 years old or older, get new ones.

Make a Home Escape Map

- Make a plan with your family to get out fast if there is a fire.
- Draw a map of your home.
- Show the rooms, doors, and windows that go outside.
- Know two ways out of every room. Mark them on the map.
- Have a safe place to meet outside, in front of and away from your home.
- Go over the map and plan with your family.
- Practice a family fire drill twice a year. (Do not practice going out windows.)

NOTE: Sleeping children may not hear the smoke alarm. They will need your help to wake up and get out. Plan ahead for this.



Get Out if There Is a Fire

- Get your family out fast when you hear the smoke alarm.
- Get out if you see or smell smoke.
- Grab your cell phone if it's nearby.
- Help your children get out.
- Go to your family meeting place outside.
- Go outside and stay outside!
- Call the fire department from outside.

NOTE: If you can't get out because of smoke, close the door. Stay low by a window where the firefighters can find you quickly. Air that is low or near the floor is safer to breathe.

Teach Your Children to:

- Go outside quickly if they hear the smoke alarm or if there is a fire.
- Go to the family meeting place.
- Get out and stay out.

Prevent Fire & Burn Injuries

- Keep hot things away from children.
- Lock up all matches and lighters.
- Stay in the kitchen when you cook.
- Don't let children use the stove or microwave oven.
- Test hot food before giving it to a child.
- Don't carry a hot drink when you are also carrying a child.
- Keep hot drinks and food away from the edge of counters and tables.
- Set your water heater at 120°F.
- Test the water before your child gets into the tub.
- Blow out candles when adults leave the room.

Teach Your Children to:

- Stay away from hot things. Stay 3 feet or about 3 giant steps away.
- Stay away from matches and lighters.
- Tell a grownup when they need help or spot something hot.

Cool a Burn

- If you burn your skin, cool it with cool water for 3 to 5 minutes (Do this right away.)
- Do not put ice, butter or lotion on the burn.
- See your doctor or call 911 if the burn looks bad.

Source: Safe Kids Worldwide
www.safekids.org

SAFE
KIDS

Meet Your Local Firefighters

Your local fire department most likely offers educational opportunities for the community, and you might even be able to arrange a group tour. It's helpful for children to interact with firefighters and learn more about how they can help them if there is a fire.



Apex Deputy Fire Marshal David Dillon said, "We prefer to put out fires through education – that's my job focus." Dillon spends most of his time focused on fire risk reduction through building inspections and community education.



"We want to connect with families and help children learn how to play it safe so they never need us to put out a fire," said Dillon. "Our programs focus on both prevention and firefighter recognition, which involves meeting the children in street clothes and then getting dressed while explaining why and how a firefighter might look different when we show up to help put out a fire."

Dillon emphasizes the importance of talking to children about the dangers of smoking, playing with matches and unattended cooking. He also encourages families to make sure they have proper smoke detectors and teaches about where and how to best install them. If families can't afford the detectors, your local fire department can provide them at no cost.



Winter & Holiday Hazards

Dillon says that seasonal fires can be a big concern, especially around the holidays. He offers a few tips to prevent common fire causes.

- **Candles** – use flameless, battery-operated candles whenever possible (make sure children can't get to the batteries)
- **Trees and Greenery** – keep these away from your fireplace
- **Lights** – Make sure any lights you use are listed by a third party (for example, UL) and are appropriately marked for indoor or outdoor use. Toss old or frayed decorating or tree lights!
- **Chimney** – A professional chimney sweep should inspect all chimneys annually before use.
- **Gas Logs** – They should never smell. Make sure you have a properly installed carbon monoxide detector at least 15 feet away from the source.
- **Turkey Fryers** – Only use them outdoors. Read the instructions carefully; do not overfill with oil. They can immediately catch aflame and cause a violent fire.

Many families use space heaters in the winter, which can create a fire hazard. "Give your heaters space," said Dillon. "There should be three feet of clearance all around the space heater, and extension cords aren't good to use with heaters." Make sure your space heaters are listed by a third party (for example, UL) and never use old ones that you find in attics or at garage sales.

Digital World **DANGERS**

Parents usually teach their children about the danger of strangers, but it's easy to overlook some unsafe things that children can encounter in the constantly changing digital world.

Three big concerns include cyberbullying, predators and pornography. Parents can help protect children by teaching basic concepts of how to use digital devices in a healthy, safe and responsible way.

The American Academy of Pediatrics provides the following tips to help parents manage the digital landscape they're exploring with their children.

- **Treat media as you would any other environment in your child's life.** The same parenting guidelines apply in both real and virtual environments. Set limits; kids need and expect them. Know your children's friends, both online and off. Know what platforms, software, and apps your children are using, where they are going on the web, and what they are doing online.
- **Set limits and encourage playtime.** Tech use, like all other activities, should have reasonable limits. Unstructured and offline play stimulates creativity. Make unplugged playtime a daily priority, especially for very young children. And don't forget to join your children in unplugged play whenever you're able.
- **Families who play together, learn together.** Family participation is also great for media activities—it encourages social interactions, bonding, and learning. Play a video game with your kids. It's a good way to demonstrate good sportsmanship and gaming etiquette. And, you can introduce and share your own life experiences and perspectives—and guidance—as you play the game.
- **Be a good role model.** Teach and model kindness and good manners online. And, because children are great mimics, limit your own media use. In fact, you'll be more available for and connected with your children if you're interacting, hugging and playing with them rather than simply staring at a screen.
- **Know the value of face-to-face communication.** Very young children learn best through two-way communication. Engaging in back-and-forth "talk time" is critical for language development. Conversations can be face-to-face or, if necessary, by video chat, with a traveling parent or far-away grandparent. Research has shown that it's that "back-and-forth conversation" that improves language skills—much more so than "passive" listening or one-way interaction with a screen.
- **Create tech-free zones.** Keep family mealtimes and other family and social gatherings tech-free. Recharge devices overnight—outside your child's bedroom to help children avoid the temptation to use them when they should be sleeping. These changes encourage more family time, healthier eating habits, and better sleep, all critical for children's wellness.
- **Don't use technology as an emotional pacifier.** Media can be very effective in keeping kids calm and quiet, but it should not be the only way they learn to calm down. Children need to be taught how to identify and handle strong emotions, come up with activities to manage boredom, or calm down through breathing, talking about ways to solve the problem, and finding other strategies for channeling emotions.



- **Apps for kids.** Do your homework. More than 80,000 apps are labeled as educational, but little research has demonstrated their actual quality. Products pitched as "interactive" should require more than "pushing and swiping." Look to organizations like Common Sense Media (www.commonsensemedia.org) for reviews about age-appropriate apps, games and programs to guide you in making the best choices for your children.
- **It's OK for your teen to be online.** Online relationships are part of typical adolescent development. Social media can support teens as they explore and discover more about themselves and their place in the grown-up world. Just be sure your teen is behaving appropriately in both the real and online worlds. Many teens need to be reminded that a platform's privacy settings do not make things actually "private" and that images, thoughts, and behaviors teens share online will instantly become a part of their digital footprint indefinitely. Keep lines of communication open and let them know you're there if they have questions or concerns.
- **Remember: Kids will be kids.** Kids will make mistakes using media. Try to handle errors with empathy and turn a mistake into a teachable moment. But some indiscretions, such as sexting, bullying, or posting self-harm images, may be a red flag that hints at trouble ahead. Parents should take a closer look at your child's behaviors and, if needed, enlist supportive professional help, including from your pediatrician.



Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

Visit the American Academy of Pediatrics website at aap.org for the latest, age-specific recommendations.



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Fun Videos with a Serious Message

Ivy Pointer, MD, a mother of three and a pediatric intensivist at WakeMed Children's, has found a way to explore the digital world with her children while spreading fun, healthy messages to other families through her video blog (vlog) – YoungIV.org.

Dr. Pointer, also known as "Young I.V.", writes raps and makes videos about different parenting topics. It started with a hospital project, then she "caught the bug" with "Can't Touch Us" when her whole family had the stomach flu.

"Families really responded to our silly videos," said Dr. Pointer. "I received a lot of positive feedback that it was a good way to get information out, and it just kind of took off from there." Dr. Pointer keeps the online videos fun and light, while providing a real dose of education about things pediatricians want families to know.



"My overall messages align with what the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends," said Dr. Pointer. "I have a lot of fun and try to focus on timely topics such as flu shots or seasonal safety tips."

Dr. Pointer says parents tell her that their kids love the videos so she decided to create one directed more at kids for back-to-school. "The information is good for parents, and the silly nature appeals to kids," said Dr. Pointer. "It's good for families to learn and play together online – there are so many teaching moments as you explore the digital world."

While Dr. Pointer clearly likes to have fun, some of her videos focus on more serious topics. "I try to balance it out and address really important topics such as child abuse," said Dr. Pointer. "I've always been interested in child advocacy, and I'm on a mission to promote healthy kids, weave in my own parenting perspective and capture the attention of people who aren't necessarily going to just go online and read about an important topic."

Dr. Pointer is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Communications and Media.

Dr. Pointer's Online Tips

- Know when your kids are online and supervise what they are doing.
- Stay alert to online activity and use your best judgment.
- If something seems suspicious, pay attention and step in.
- Be careful what you read and believe.
- Talk to your pediatrician and make sure your resources are reliable.
- Make sure there is moderation for everyone - don't spend all day on the screen.
- Get outside and play as much as possible.

Healthy Resources

HealthyChildren.org
WakeMedVoices.org

J. Duncan Phillips, MD, Surgeon-in-Chief/Director,
WakeMed Pediatric Surgery

Mark Piehl, MD, MPH, Pediatric Intensivist,
WakeMed Children's Hospital

Ivy Pointer, MD, Pediatric Intensivist,
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How You Can Help

Ongoing support for the growing health care needs of the patients at WakeMed Children's is made possible through the generous donations of readers like you to the WakeMed Foundation.

To learn how you can support the expansion of WakeMed Children's services, please visit the WakeMed Foundation at www.wakemedfoundation.org or call 919-350-7656.



Children's

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Love Light & Trim the Tree with Twinkle

Monday, December 5

6 to 8:30 pm (Tree Lighting at 6 pm)
WakeMed Raleigh Campus Courtyard
3000 New Bern Avenue, Raleigh



Two great events combined into one fantastic evening! Join us for the annual Love Light Tree Ceremony followed by Trim the Tree with Twinkle. This festive event will feature singing, holiday crafts, ornament making and a special visit from Santa. Plus, help spread holiday cheer to pediatric patients by decorating a tree that will be displayed in the WakeMed Children's Hospital.

Free parking in the P1 Green Visitor Deck. Take the sky bridge to the Main

Visitor Lobby to access the Courtyard. Both events are free! No registration required.

CASL Kick 4 a Cause

Sunday, January 22

WRAL Soccer Park
7700 Perry Creek Road, Raleigh
Benefiting WakeMed
Child Life Services

A four on four single-day soccer tournament for players of all ages. All proceeds benefit Child Life Services at WakeMed. \$180 for youth and adult co-ed teams. All teams are accepted into the tournament, and each team is guaranteed four games.

For tournament details or to register, visit www.CASLnc.com

