

**March 2025**



**Project Community Connect  
Tuesday, April 22  
1 – 4 PM**

**Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center  
1 Civic Center Plaza, Mankato**

*Free Community Resource Event!*  
Access resources. Learn about services.  
Connect to get help.

- Visit 70+ service providers
- Free bag lunch
- Resources include children/ youth, disability, haircuts, housing, medical/dental & more
- City of Mankato will provide free transit rides

**Visit [www.MankatoUnitedWay.org/PCC](http://www.MankatoUnitedWay.org/PCC).**

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## **The Magic of Reading to Your Child**

Reading to your child is one of the best ways to foster a love of learning. It builds their vocabulary, enhances listening skills, and strengthens your bond. Choose books with engaging stories and pictures, ask questions, and encourage interaction. Even a few minutes a day can boost language development and early literacy skills. Reading together also sparks imagination and curiosity. Make it part of your daily routine—before bed, after meals, or anytime you can cuddle up with a good book. The joy of reading starts early, setting the stage for a lifetime of learning!

*- Articles provided by Early Learning Department:  
Mankato Area Public Schools*

## **How to Make a Cozy Corner for Your Toddler or Preschooler**

Every child needs a quiet place to relax, calm down, or enjoy a good book. A cozy corner is a small, safe space where toddlers and preschoolers can take a break when they feel overwhelmed. Here's how you can create one in your home.

### **Find the Right Spot**

Choose a quiet place away from noisy toys, the TV, or busy areas of the house. A corner in the bedroom, a reading nook, or even a small tent can work well.

### **Make It Soft and Comfy**

Comfort is important! Add soft seating like a bean bag, floor pillows, or a thick rug. Cozy blankets and stuffed animals make the space feel extra warm and inviting.

### **Use Soft Lighting and Calm Colors**

Bright lights can feel too harsh, so try a small lamp, fairy lights, or a nightlight to give the space a gentle glow. Using soft colors like light blue, green, or pastel shades can make the area feel peaceful.

### **Add Quiet Activities**

Keep a few books, stuffed animals, or sensory-friendly toys in the cozy corner. A small basket with fidget toys, sensory bottles, or a weighted stuffed animal can help your child feel calm and safe.

### **Let Your Child Make It Their Own**

Allow your child to choose a favorite toy, blanket, or even a small picture to keep in their space. This makes it feel special and personal. The cozy corner should be a flexible space where your child can relax, read, or just enjoy some quiet time.

Creating a cozy corner gives your little one a safe place to recharge and feel comfortable whenever they need it.

# COMMUNITY EVENTS



**Read & Play:** Mondays and Tuesdays in April, 10 AM at **North Mankato Taylor Library**. Children ages 1-5 and their parents/guardians are welcome for educational play, games, stories, crafts, and more! No registration required.

**Early Literacy Story Time:** Tuesdays and Wednesdays in April, 10:30–11 AM at **Blue Earth County Library, Mankato**. Fun, educational stories for children while encouraging them to begin the habit of lifelong learning. Hands-on activities for kids.

**Newborn Discovery:** Wednesdays, 9–10:30 AM at **Centers for Learning, Mankato**. An inclusive and informative class designed specifically for newborns aged 0-12 weeks and their parents or caregivers. FREE

**Family Open Gym & Playtime:** Fridays, April 11 and 25 from 9:30–11:30 AM, and Thursdays April 10 and 24 from 5:30–7:00 PM at **Center for Learning, Mankato**. Parents and their children Birth-Age 5 are welcome! Family Open Gym and Playtime is great for large muscle development. Riding toys, balls, and more will be available. FREE

**Family Free Fridays:** Last Friday of every month throughout the year, 4–8 PM at **River Hills Mall, Mankato**. Enjoy two free carousel rides for riders 12 and under.

**Romp & Rhyme Story Time:** Janesville Public Library holds Romp and Rhyme story times on Thursdays, 4–5 PM and Montgomery Public Library holds Romp and Rhyme story times from 10–11 AM for ages 0-6. From puppets to pumping music, from bubble machines to banging bands, these are not your average story times. FREE

**Family Open Gym:** 1st and 3rd Friday of each month, 6–8 PM at **St. Peter Community Center**. Basketball, soccer, hula hoops, jump ropes, and family time! Creative Play Place “gym” time will also be open; upstairs off the track in Room #310B. All equipment is provided. FREE

**Creative Play Place:** Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 9–11 AM. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5–7 PM at **St. Peter Community Center**. A free space for families and their children to play and connect. Opportunities include: movement and large motor activities, development of fine motor skills, and creative activities. FREE

4/12: **Reel in the Fun Fish Tails Story Time**, Sat. Apr. 12, 10 AM at **Lake Crystal City Hall**. Join the Lake Crystal Public Library for a fun “Fish Tails” story time held in the community room at City Hall. A story is read by the librarian and then followed up with fun crafts and games. Preschool to Grade 3. FREE

4/26: **Healthy Kids Day**, Sat. Apr. 26 9:30–11:30 AM at the **Mankato Family YMCA**. Get ready for summer with healthy, fun activities for kids and adults! Bring your friends and family, and create a stronger, healthier community for everyone! FREE.

4/26–27: **Barnyard Babies Animal Weekend**, Apr. 26–27, 11 AM–3 PM at **Farmamerica, Waseca**. The barnyard is going to be full of life this summer! Come meet and interact with animals that are going to call Farmamerica home. Featured animals: chicks, lambs, piglets, calves, baby goats, and more. Children & adults: \$5. Members & Season Passholders: FREE.

***Have a free/affordable event for children or families in Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Nicollet or Waseca counties? Send to [MankatoUW@mankatounitedway.org](mailto:MankatoUW@mankatounitedway.org)!***