



March 2022

# The Play Times

## Tip Sheet + Resources

Playtime staff and trained volunteers protect your children's rights to learn and play by partnering with shelters, schools, and other organizations across the Washington, D.C., region. We create bright, safe spaces with fun activities for children and give parents a break. Play reduces stress, increases confidence and resiliency, and contributes to healthy brain development.

## Upcoming Events

This March, Playtime is celebrating Women's History Month! Women's History Month is a celebration of women's contributions to history, arts, music, culture, government and society. March also includes International Women's Day, recognized worldwide on March 8. Below are some free events and movies for you and your family to check out this month to join us in celebrating women.

### Events

- Visit the **#IFTHENSHECAN Exhibit** around the National Mall, featuring 120 life-size figures of women in STEM, designed to encourage young girls to pursue STEM careers. — Open March 5-27.
- Join National Women's History Museum and author Sulma Arzu-Brown virtually as she reads her children's book, "Bad Hair Does Not Exist," in both English and Spanish. — March 16, 12 -12:45 p.m. <https://bit.ly/3HUSW0z>

### Streaming on Tubi

- Wonder Women! the Untold True Story of American Superheroines (Documentary, age 12+)
- Michelle Obama: Hope Becomes Change (Documentary, age 13+)
- Anita: Speaking Truth to Power (Documentary, age 13+)
- Annie (age 10+)
- Zapped (age 8+)

### Streaming on Kanopy, (library card needed)

- Jane's Journey (Documentary, age 9+)
- Women's Power: Female Leadership Around the World (Documentary, age 9+)
- Women in Space (Documentary, age 9+)



## Introducing Lan and the Curriculum Corner

Playtime Project uses a curriculum focused on strengthening three important skills for children: problem-solving, social-emotional learning, and optimism for the future. While many of you know your Playtime site managers and the weekly volunteers who put our programs into action, Playtime's curriculum and impact specialist, Lan Nguyen, is the driving force behind our intentional programming! Lan has a degree in curriculum and instruction for special education and has over 10 years of experience as a special education teacher, making her the perfect person to help develop engaging, age-appropriate, healing activities for our play programs. To learn more about Lan and her experience you can check out Playtime's website!

## March Curriculum

This month's curriculum highlight is **Code Your Name**. This is a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) beading activity where children write out their names using binary code to make a bracelet! Binary code is the language computers use, so not only is this activity fun, but it can help them start learning tech skills for a future career in IT or computer programming.

## What is Pandemic Fatigue?

The World Health Organization defines pandemic fatigue as being “demotivated” and exhausted with the demands of life during the pandemic. The collective loss and grief have taken a toll, from loss of loved ones and jobs, to loss of experiences, like birthdays and other celebrations with your friends and loved ones. While this is a natural feeling, it’s important to note that pandemic fatigue can actually make the pandemic last longer if we’re not careful! Back in 2020, our short-term survival skills made it easier to stay alert to COVID safety, but two years later we’re all really tired, which makes us more likely to let our guard down.

### Signs of COVID Fatigue and Burnout

- Increased anxiety
- Feeling tired
- Lack of motivation
- Snapping at loved ones
- Feeling cynical and emotionally exhausted
- Feeling depressed and isolated

### Ways to Combat COVID Fatigue

- Focus on your closest relationships
- Limit your news intake to specific times of the day
- Practice deep breathing and little ways to meditate
- Be compassionate to yourself and others

## Parent Workshop: An Overview of Special Education

The world of special education is unfamiliar to most people and can be very confusing for families. It’s almost like learning a new language!

To help you navigate this process, Early Stages is offering a virtual parent workshop, *An Overview of Special Education* on **March 24th at 12:00 pm EDT**. In this session, parents will be guided through the DCPS special education process from referral to implementation of services for eligible children.

Register here: <https://bit.ly/3KjwFeu>

## Playtime Project Housewarming

Are you moving soon and in need of some household items? Playtime is partnering with Project Housewarming, to provide move in essentials including, pots and pans, dishes, silverware, microwaves, bath towels, bathroom rugs, vacuums, a toolkit, and more! Playtime is also able to provide gift cards, toys, and other items to make settling into your new place easier! This partnership is for a limited time and only while supplies last. If you are interested or want to see the full list of available items, please contact your Playtime Site Manager.

## Is Your Child Getting What They Need from School?

Many parents are concerned about COVID “learning loss” as well as pandemic “school push-out.” This means unequal access to quality masks, COVID tests, and technology when asked to quarantine at home. Families are also concerned about whether students have stayed on track over the past two years or are receiving enough support for their children’s individualized education plans (IEPs) during gaps in schooling. According to EmpowerK12, a non-profit organization that helps schools, educators, and education stakeholders to boldly accelerate learning:

- In DC, on average, students across grades K-8 ended the year with lower math and reading achievement compared to pre-pandemic.
- Academic achievement was lower for all student groups in spring 2020-21.
- Students designated as at-risk, Black, and Latinx students were disproportionately impacted.

If you are having any concerns about your child getting their needs met at school, please reach out to your Site Manager, the resources below, or Playtime’s Advocacy Director, Allan Rogers, [allan@playtimeproject.org](mailto:allan@playtimeproject.org).

These resources are here to help:

1.) **Homelessness Liaisons:** Reach out for transportation assistance, uniforms or other support at your child’s school:

<https://bit.ly/3Halbbb>

2.) **Advocates for Justice and Education:** Get help with your child’s IEP: [www.aje-dc.org](http://www.aje-dc.org)

3.) **DC Education Ombudsman:** Help resolving conflict with schools: <https://bit.ly/3IhvImf>

## D.C. Moms Cash Program Info

In January 2022, Mayor Bowser announced Strong Families, Strong Futures DC, a new direct cash assistance program, which will provide \$900 per month for one year to 132 new and expectant mothers in Wards 5, 7, and 8. The program will be run by Martha’s Table, a DC nonprofit that works to increase access to essential family resources. The program will support new and expecting mothers residing in Wards 5, 7 and 8 who have yearly household earnings below 250% of the federal poverty level (for a family of four, that would be less than \$27,750 — scan the QR code below to learn more). This program will include mothers who are raising a child 3 months of age or younger and/or who are pregnant in their second or third trimester.

Recruitment for this program began in February 2022. **For more information about Strong Families, Strong Futures DC, including how to enroll, contact Ra’Chelle Dennis, Family Engagement Specialist, at [rdennis@marthastable.org](mailto:rdennis@marthastable.org).**

