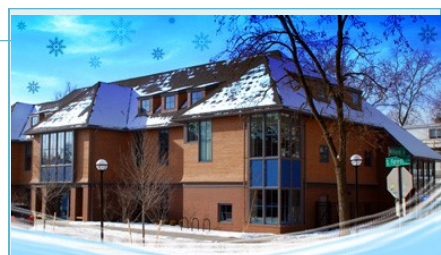




Winter 2020



# TOWSLEY CHILDREN'S HOUSE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



Dear Families,

As we begin the new year in January, we typically start to plan for the new school year. We are planning for the 2021-22 school year to start August 30, 2021. This year, it is difficult to plan so far ahead due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will provide information about tuition as well as the calendar once we are able.

In February, we will be asking all families to let us know about any plans to leave before August or stay with us into the new school year. If you plan to withdraw before August, please be aware that if you are interested in future re-enrollment your child's name will be placed on the wait list based on the date the withdrawal notification is submitted. The earlier you can tell us about a withdrawal the better. Our policy does require at least a 6 week written notice of withdrawal in order to receive a security deposit refund. Security deposit refunds will be returned within 60 days after leaving our program.

Notification of withdrawals allow us to plan when siblings of currently enrolled families can be offered a space. When I am notified that a child will be leaving I review information to determine if a space can become available for a younger child of a current family. To do this, I review the ages of children in the infant/toddler classrooms to see if anyone is old enough to transition to an older classroom. If so, I then consult with the teachers to find out if they know of any reason a child should not transition. The families of those children are also involved in this discussion. Once everyone is in agreement that a child is ready to transition to an older room, then a transition schedule is planned. I then notify current families of the opening based on their wait list application date to offer a space. If there isn't a fit for a currently enrolled sibling, I refer to the wait list to fill the space. We do our best to allow for a 4-6 week advance notice for transition, however, sometimes life surprises families so we only have a week or two notice. I will work with families if timing is an issue. A typical time for mid-year transitions is at the end of UM semesters as well as June or July.

It is unknown at this time when we will be able to expand enrollment or increase our hours. Families will need to continue to provide lunch through this school year, at least.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.  
Sincerely,  
Beth Ann

UM Towsley Children's House Center Director  
734-763-3400  
bablan@umich.edu

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Welcome ..... 1
- 20 years of service.....2
- Outdoor Winter Play.....3-5
- Winter Books ..... 6
- Lunch Ideas.....7
- Who's Who.....8
- Center Calendar.....9

### Important Dates:

- ◆ **Center Closed Winter Break**  
Tues., Dec. 22–Mon. Jan. 4
- ◆ **Center Closed Professional Development**  
Mon., January 4
- ◆ **Children Return**  
Tues., January 5th
- ◆ **Center Closed MLK Day (Professional Development)**  
Monday, Jan. 18th
- ◆ **Virtual Parent Teacher Conferences– During the Month of March**

# Congratulations

to  
Jasmine Boster  
on  
**20** years  
of service in our program



Jasmine holds a master's degree in early childhood education from Eastern Michigan University and a bachelor of science in human ecology from the Ohio State University. She also earned a State of Ohio pre-K teaching certificate. Jasmine began her career at the UM Children's Centers in August 2000 as a teacher then director at the Pound House Children's Center. She became the program director at Towsley Children's House in 2008. She has been the Psychology 307 instructor since 2000.

During her career, she was involved with merging Pound House Children's Center and the Children's Center for Working Families to become Towsley Children's House. This merger also involved moving from one facility to another while our current building was under construction. Once we moved into our new facility at our current location in 2010 she was instrumental in growing our enrollment and staffing to meet the capacity of the building. Jasmine's 20 years of experience is integral to the success of our program today and she is a valued leader and member of our Towsley Children's House community!

**“Experience is not the best  
teacher— it is the only teacher.”**

**Bev Boss**

## Tips for raising cold season warriors:

### Fake it Till You Make It

Before I could help my kids, I had to repair my relationship with winter. There's a lot of research to suggest that the "fake it till you make it" [strategy works](#). Instead of being delusional, I prefer to think of it as harnessing the power of my imagination. This might not be for everyone one, but it definitely helped me rewire. In fact, I didn't even notice the cross over moment when I actually started blissing out on the season.

### Create a Cool Culture

Be THAT family. You know the one I'm talking about. They are on an epic adventure together and a lot of it seemingly takes place in the snow. Have FUN, create your own traditions. It's all possible.

*Pro-tip:* Winter training starts in the spring. The easiest way to get the kids out in the winter is to establish the habit in the warmer months.

### Dress for Success

The key is to create positive associations with the cold, but that's almost impossible if the kids are in pain or uncomfortable. During my daughter's first winter, I made the strategic error of buying gloves that didn't go up high enough or cinch at the wrist. Within minutes the snow got in, her hands were freezing and she was done. [Here is an intro to layering](#) (aka creating human burritos).

*Pro-tip:* For the extra littles, get yourself all ready and dressed first, then put all their clothes on. Trust me on this one. Still having trouble getting them out? Here are some tips on [getting them outside when they don't want to go!](#)

### Create the Context

Winter is not arbitrary, it plays a crucial role in the overall health of the ecosystem. The more familiarity children with concepts like hibernation, migration and eating seasonally, the more aligned they'll be with the season. It's emotional too. As we observe nature together, it gives us the chance to point out to our daughter the need for rest and renewal within our own lives.

*Pro-tip:* You can help children create context by [doing listening activities](#).

### Additional Resources

[The Norwegian Secret To Enjoying A Long Winter](#)

[How to Parent Like a Swede](#) via Rain or Shine Mama

[Playing Safe in Winter. How Cold is Too Cold?](#) via Play Outside Guide



# Five Outdoor Winter Activities

## 1. Shoveling Snow

Simple ideas are sometimes the best. Nothing inspires children like a “work project,” and snow can provide a wonderful outlet for extra energy. Shovel paths in the yard, or even a whole area of the yard so you can play a game. All you need are some sturdy child-sized shovels and enthusiasm. Add a wheelbarrow or wagon for hauling, and you'll have a wealth of cooperative and imaginative play!

## 2. Learn About Snowflakes

A life-long love of nature can start with something as simple as observing snowflakes. Catch falling flakes on black paper and study them with a magnifying glass (hint: Cold paper helps flakes last better, so keep some in the freezer ready for a snowfall). Learn about Wilson Bentley, the famous photographer of snowflakes (try *Snowflake Bentley*, by Jacqueline Briggs Martin). Or children may enjoy making their own out of coffee filters.

## 3. Nature Walk

The natural world of winter is amazing when observed with all the senses. Talk with the children about what they might see, hear, feel, smell, or taste in winter. Then, on your nature walk, ask them to point out interesting nature objects or phenomena. When you get back inside make a list of the things you noticed. Make pictures or find out more from books.

- Sights: Shapes of snow drifts, colors in the snow (you'd be amazed!)
  - Sounds: Sound of the whistling wind, the quiet of the snow falling, roar of a snowplow
  - Feel: The downy touch of snowflakes, soft (or spiky) pine needles or the rough bark of a tree
- Smell: Fresh-cut pine, wood smoke, cocoa!

## 4. Tracking

Teaching environmental responsibility and a love for the natural world starts very young. Identifying and following animal tracks in fresh snow is a great way to teach children the skills of scientific observation as well as providing a positive incentive to get outside when the snow might not be deep enough for other activities. Without needing any materials, following tracks can be as exciting as a game of hide-and-seek or playing detective! Which animals are active in your location during the winter months? You may be surprised at what you discover.

## 5. Winter Scavenger Hunt

Make colored ice cubes by adding a few drops of food coloring to water. Hide them around the play yard and let the children hunt for them.

Adapted from Community Playthings : Ten Outdoor Winter Activities

Click [here](#) to see full article.

# OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

**Ann Arbor and its surrounding areas are home to some great winter locations to enjoy a walk, snowshoe or cross country ski. You will find parks with snow-covered trees, icy ponds and rivers and wildlife.**

**These are some great places to stay socially distant and get much needed fresh air and physical activity during the winter.**

\*\*Check with the parks ,prior to your visit, to get the latest Covid-19 related restrictions.

**Lower Huron Metropark**. Cut into untouched snow and pave your way along flat terrain. Follow the scenic beauty of the Huron River, or seek out the serenity of more wooded areas. The park also offers two natural ponds.

40151 East Huron River Drive  
Belleville, MI 48111  
(734) 697-9181

**Hudson Mills Metropark** offers twelve miles of trails, six of which are groomed year-round. Enjoy trails for all skill levels, and take in views of the Huron River. If you're there on a weekend, stop in the Ski Touring/Activity Center, which offers a heated lounge, food service, and restrooms. On weekends you can also rent equipment by the half day.

Also, if you're a fan of ice fishing, Hudson Mills' location on the Huron River offers a prime opportunity for catching smallmouth and largemouth bass.

Hudson Mills Metro park  
8801 N. Territorial Road  
Dexter, MI 48130  
(734) 426-8211.

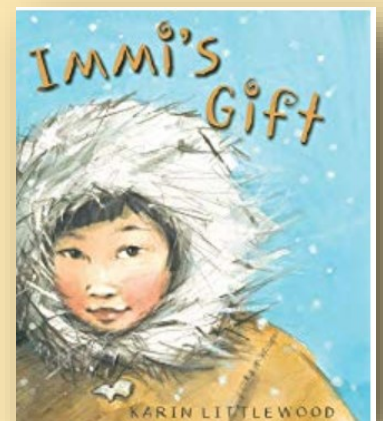
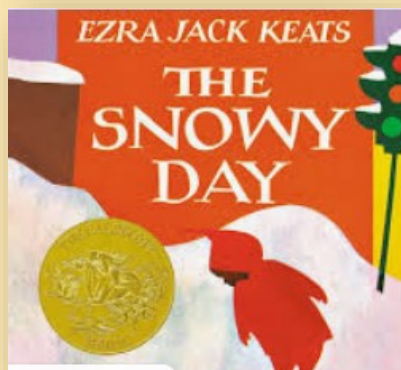
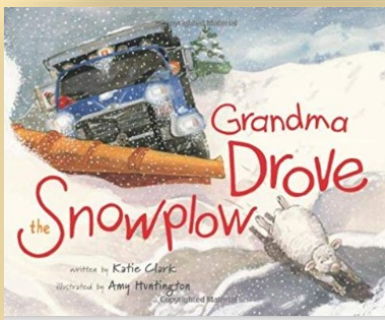
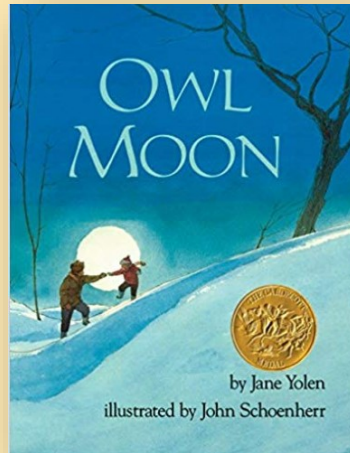
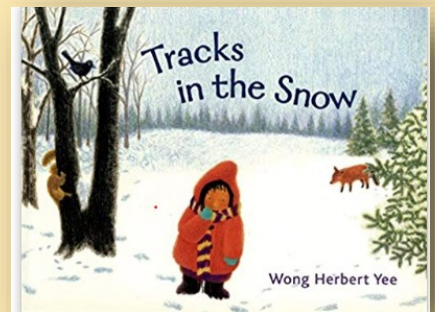
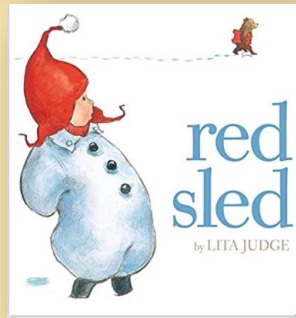
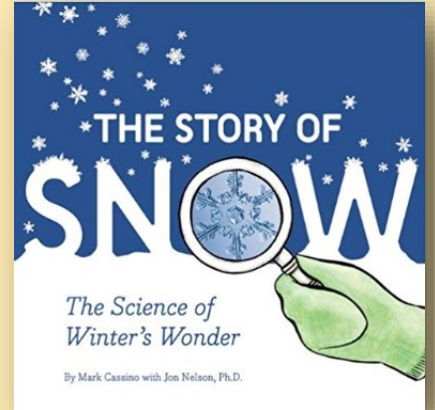
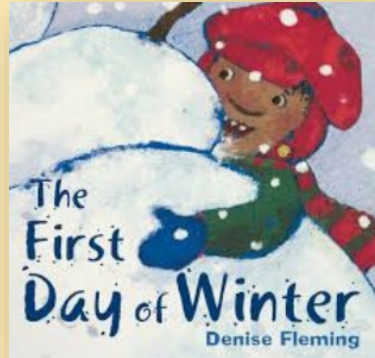
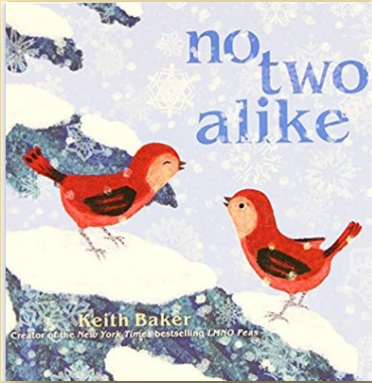


**Rolling Hills Park**, is open year-round and offers various activities to enjoy during the winter months. In winter, the park features a sledding hill, a half mile of cleared walking trail, three miles of groomed cross-country ski trails. (weather permitting). Winter equipment is available for rent. Please remember this is a sledding hill, no snowboards or downhill skis allowed. Please check the website for any changes to their policies during the pandemic.

Rolling Hills Park  
7660 Stony Creek Rd.  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197



# Get Cozy and Read: Winter Book Suggestions





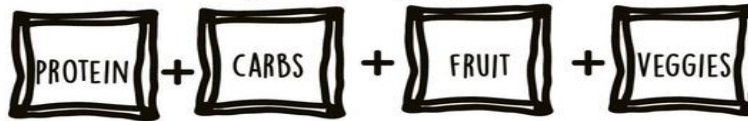
# Little Bites for Lunch : Bento Boxes

Bento boxes are a great way to make lunch prep easier and provide kids with a variety of foods. The small compartments provide space for bite-sized portions that are delivered in an environmentally friendly way.



## bento lunchbox

*cheat sheet*



- |               |                     |               |               |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|
| ◆ Chicken     | ◆ Whole Grain Pasta | ◆ Apples      | ◆ Tomato      |
| ◆ Turkey      | ◆ Whole Wheat Bread | ◆ Oranges     | ◆ Spinach     |
| ◆ Beef        | ◆ Mini Bagel        | ◆ Berries     | ◆ Cucumber    |
| ◆ Deli Meat   | ◆ Tortilla Chips    | ◆ Banana      | ◆ Salad       |
| ◆ Eggs        | ◆ Rice              | ◆ Peaches     | ◆ Broccoli    |
| ◆ Cheese      | ◆ Quinoa            | ◆ Pears       | ◆ Bell Pepper |
| ◆ Yogurt      | ◆ Pita Bread        | ◆ Mango       | ◆ Cauliflower |
| ◆ Chick Peas  | ◆ Granola           | ◆ Pineapple   | ◆ Mushroom    |
| ◆ Edamame     |                     | ◆ Melon       |               |
| ◆ Black Beans |                     | ◆ Dates       |               |
| ◆ Tuna        |                     | ◆ Raisins     |               |
|               |                     | ◆ Apple Sauce |               |



### Additional Ideas

[Toddler Lunch Ideas](#)

[Lunch Box Idea](#)

[Nut Free](#)

[Sandwich Free](#)

### Towsley Reminders

- ◆ Send items ready to eat.
- ◆ Food packed should not need to be heated or refrigerated
- ◆ Please cut all items appropriate size for your child's age to avoid choking
- ◆ Nut-free center

<https://frostedevents.com/bento-box-lunch-ideas-cheat-sheet/>

## Thermos Lunch Tip

**Keep Foods Cold:** Freeze Thermos overnight. Once cold food is packed and sealed you can place in lunch bag with a freezer pack.

**Keep Foods Warm:** Warm thermos with hot water then pour out. Heat food and place into warm thermos.



[Video Link](#)



## **WHO'S WHO AT TOWSLEY**

### **Infant/Toddler Classrooms**

**Sprouts:** Leslie Thompson, Sandra Canalas, and Sheila Hall

**Sassafras:** Sonja Whitehouse, Samantha Huff, and Hollyn Formosa

**Magnolia:** Angelique Rudolph, Darius Cobb, Megan Brown and Kim Hull

### **Preschool Classrooms**

**Willow:** Serena Simmons, Jessica Polonchan, and Asmaa Naser

**Oak:** Heather Cole, Karen Ong and Courtney Rouse

**Sycamore:** Kellie Chestler-Root, Amanda Matthews, and Amber Bruckner

**Maple:** Kamaria Hayes, Emily White and Marie Gaab

**Evergreen:** Elizabeth Powers, Clara Aldrich and Candace Pankey

### **Support Staff**

**Cathy Hendrix:** Administrative Assistant

**Katie Meyer:** Resource Teacher

**Korinn Kulinski:** Resource Teacher

**Denise Pelky:** Program Teacher

**Andrew Moeller:** Program Associate Teacher

**Mary McCarthy:** Program Associate Teacher

**Sarah Mauck:** Program Associate Teacher

**Derek Whitten:** Program Teacher

**Hannah Powers:** Substitute Teacher

### **Administration**

**Beth Ann Blanchard:** Center Director

**Jasmine Boster:** Program Director and Psych. 307 Instructor





## 2020-2021 Calendar



**First Official Day of School**.....Monday, August 31

**CLOSED – Labor Day Holiday**.....**Monday, September 7**

October.....Parent Teacher Conferences throughout month

**CLOSED - Thanksgiving Holiday** .....Thursday-Friday, November 26-27

Last Day for Children (before Winter break) .....Monday, December 21

**CLOSED** Staff Professional Development.....Monday, January 4

THE CENTER WILL BE **CLOSED** FROM  
**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22nd THROUGH MONDAY, JANUARY 4th**  
PLEASE ARRANGE ALTERNATE CHILDCARE FOR THIS TIME.



Children Return from Winter break .....Tuesday, January 5

**CLOSED - Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Professional Development)**.....**Monday, January 18**

March.....Parent Teacher Conferences throughout month



**CLOSED TO CHILDREN (Professional Development)** .....**Monday, May 3**

**CLOSED -Memorial Day Holiday**.....**Monday, May 31**

**CLOSED - Independence Day Holiday**.....**Monday, July 5**

**Last day of 2020-2021 school year** .....Friday, August 20



**CENTER CLOSED**.....**August 23-27**

First day of **2021-2022** School year .....**Monday, August 30**

**CLOSED - Labor Day Holiday**.....**Monday, September 6**