



BADGERBUZZ

Discover events, resources, and activities for UW families

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A February Full of Play and Connection

February is all about connection, play, and planning ahead—and this issue of Badger Buzz is packed with resources and inspiration for UW families. Inside, you'll find information about affordable child care options, upcoming parenting and learning opportunities, and reminders to mark your calendar for popular summer programs and camps. We're also sharing chances to participate in research, a roundup of free and low-cost family events in the community, and some Valentine-inspired fun, including a simple craft, festive snack, and sweet book to enjoy together. 💕

Dates & Reminders

- **KidsKare** application available
- **CCTAP** application available
- 2/4 - **Raising Wisconsin's Children Conference**
- 2/4 - Spring **Baby Play Group** begins
- 2/10 - Deadline for **Single Parent & Returning Adult Scholarships**
- 2/12 - **Tantrums & Meltdowns Part 2**
- 2/26 - **The Power of Play**

KidsKare application available!

Discounted hourly
back-up care at



Spring KidsKare application available for back-up child care needs!

Need a flexible child care solution for when your regular provider is unavailable? Through a partnership with Little Chicks Learning Academy, our KidsKare program offers discounted back-up care for children ages six weeks through five (pre-kindergarten). Families can reserve hourly care up to two weeks in advance, and Saturday hours are also available. Applications for the spring semester are currently open, apply today!

UW Student Discount: 50 hours free or \$5/hr
UW Employee Discount: 30 hours at \$5/hr

[Learn more and apply!](#)

The Power of Play - Parent Class

Play is more than just fun—it is an essential way that children learn, communicate, and build foundational skills. Join us for our upcoming **virtual parenting class** where early childhood expert Dr. Laura Froyen will explore the surprising importance of independent and risky play and receive practical strategies to promote real-world play alongside screen time. Learn how to support meaningful play that helps your child grow, explore, and thrive!

[Register today!](#)

The Power of Play



Grandparents University registration!

Looking for a meaningful way to connect your children with their grandparents? **Grandparents University** offers a unique "college experience" where kids and their grandparents explore new subjects side-by-side. Pick from three sessions **this July** and build lifelong memories while sharing the university spirit across generations.

Registration Opens: February 24 (fills quickly!)

Children ages: 7 to 14 years

Cost: \$230-\$350

Open to: any family with at least 1 WAA member

[Learn more and register!](#)

Wisconsin Union Summer Camps

Make this summer unforgettable! This July, kids and teens can dive into art, outdoor adventures, and leadership with Wisconsin Union Summer Camps. Be sure to check out the brand-new Music and Show Choir camp with the Wisconsin Singers, or explore other camps for more hands-on activities and campus field trips. Mark your calendars—registration opens this February!

[Learn more!](#)



Play Dough Recipes

Free E-Book



Play Dough Recipes E-Book

Is the cold weather keeping your kids inside? Turn indoor time into a hands-on fun with a free e-book packed with easy, kid-friendly play dough recipes. Playing with play dough supports young children's fine motor development, creativity, sensory exploration, and early problem-solving skills—all while encouraging open-ended, imaginative play. This book offers simple ways to turn everyday materials into fun at home.

[Check out the e-book!](#)

Child Care Openings

The following open spots within the [UW-Madison Child Care and Education System](#) are current as of 1/29/26.

Child Development Lab

- 4K (part day): 2 openings

Eagle's Wing Child Care

- Ages 2–4 (half day): Openings available
- 4K (full day, MMSD): 2 openings

Waisman Early Childhood Program

- Age 3: 1 opening
- Preschool (ages 3.5–4): 4 openings

Bernie's Place

- Age 2: 1 full-time; 1 five-mornings/week
- Age 3: 2 full-time; 2 five-mornings/week

Creative Learning Preschool

- Youngest 3s (DOB 9/2022–2/2023): Full-time & part-time openings

Isthmus Montessori Academy

- 13–16 months: 2 openings

Little Chicks Learning Academy

- 1 opening (DOB April–Sept 2025)
- 1 opening (DOB Sept–Dec 2024)

Meeting House Nursery School

- Age 3 (PM program, 1–4 pm): 3–4 openings

Middleton Early Childhood Center

- Infant: 1 opening
- 12–21 months: 4 openings
- Ages 3.5–4: Several openings

The Playing Field East

- Toddler (age 1 by 9/1/25): 3 openings
- Age 2 (by 9/1/25): 1 opening
- Preschool (age 3 by 9/1/25): 2 openings

The Playing Field Midtown

- Infant/Toddler: 1 opening
- Ages 2–3: 1 opening

Preschool of the Arts

- 4K (school year): 4 openings
- Age 4 (summer only, June 1–August 28): 6 openings

UW Research Studies Seeking Children & Families

Help UW-Madison researchers explore child development, family well-being, and more. Opportunities vary and may involve surveys, activities, or visits, often with compensation for your time.

The Brains, Emotions, and Sleep Together (BEST) Study

Dates: Ongoing

Time commitment: About 12 hours over 4 visits, plus sleep data collection at home, and up to 2 overnight sleep study visits

Compensation: Up to \$800 over multiple study sessions

Eligibility: Girls ages 8–11. Girls with braces and girls receiving treatment for anxiety or other emotional issues are not eligible to participate.

Description: The purpose of this study is to better understand the link between anxiety and sleep. Your child can earn a \$10 gift card for completing a brief online study screening survey at

our website (below). The study involves multiple sessions that include a clinical interview, questionnaires, mood ratings, a learning study, biological samples, an MRI brain scan, and the collection of sleep data using electrodes on the scalp both at home and in our sleep lab.
Contact: Lisa Williams, Senior Scientist at beststudy@psychiatry.wisc.edu or (608) 263-2338

[Learn more here - BEST Study website](#)

The SAFE Study

Dates: Ongoing through August 2026

Time commitment: Approximately one hour

Compensation: \$45 per visit for longitudinal study, \$25 for one-time visit; parking at UW Hospital will be reimbursed

Eligibility: Parents and their children of all ages. Eligible patients must not be on immunosuppressive medications

Description: The flu virus evolves from year to year and can be different in different locations. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has requested that researchers at UW–Madison conduct a study to help increase our understanding of the flu virus and people's immunity to it across the United States. The goal of this research is to collect blood samples from participants across the country to better understand how the influenza (flu) virus changes across time and to develop vaccinations that do a better job of covering influenza virus strains from year to year. Patients that enroll are asked to fill out a one-page survey about medical and flu history and do a blood draw two times per year (winter/summer).

Contact: Shelly Zimbric, Project Manager at safe@medicine.wisc.edu or (608) 265-8799

[Learn more here - SAFE Study website](#)

SPRINT Research Study

Dates: Ongoing

Time commitment: Four sessions of approximately 45- 60 minutes, 30 minutes for a virtual session with your child, and any additional time needed to complete the questionnaire sent to your email address for each session.

Compensation: Visit 1- \$25. Visit 2- \$50. Visit 3- \$50. Visit 4- \$75

Eligibility: Children ages 6 months - 24 months who are diagnosed with hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy, cerebral palsy, and/or was born premature at less than 28 weeks of gestational age or healthy children of the same age with no prior history of a brain and or cardiac illness early in life.

Description: Our research focuses on the long-term cognitive development of children, including healthy infants and those who had a perinatal brain injury. As part of this research study, your child will complete a virtual game and assessments. Parents will be asked to fill out questionnaires. This is a great opportunity to learn about your child's growth and development!

Contact: Melisa Carrasco McCaul, Principal Investigator at SPRINT@neurology.wisc.edu

[Learn more here - SPRINT Study website](#)

February Family-Friendly Events

Special Events

Groove & Glide - Westmorland

February 6, 6:00 - 8:00 PM
Westmorland Park

Kids in the Rotunda: Drum Power

Recurring Events

Children's African Story Hour

February 3, 10, 17, 24
5:30 - 6:30 PM
University Apartments Community Center
Room 135

February 7, 9:30 AM, 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM
Overture Center

Drop-In Valentine Studio

February 7, 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM
Alicia Ashman Library

Family Art Club: Valentine's Day Cards

February 7, 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM
Monroe Street Library

Saturday Storytime: Winter Olympics

February 7, 10:00 - 10:30 AM
Middleton Public Library

Family Winter Prom

February 7, 5:30 - 8:00 PM
Monona Terrace

Open Play at 4-C

February 11, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
4-C, 5 Odana Ct, Madison, WI 53719

Art for Little Ones

February 12, 10:30 - 11:30 AM
Lakeview Library

Warner Family Fun Night

February 13, 5:30 - 7:30 PM
Warner Park Community Recreation Center

Groove & Glide - Vilas

February 13, 6:00 - 8:00 PM
Vilas Park

Kids in the Rotunda: NOLA Tribute

February 14, 9:30 AM, 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM
Overture Center

Family Nature Program: Winter Birds

February 15, 1:30 - 3:30 PM
UW Arboretum Visitor Center

Little Scientists

February 16, 10:00 - 11:00 AM
Monona Public Library

Black Heritage Celebration

February 19, 5:00 - 8:00 PM
Madison Children's Museum

Toddler Dance Party

February 19, 10:00 - 10:30 am
Sequoia Library

Kids in the Rotunda: L.E.X.

February 21, 9:30 AM, 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM
Overture Center

Curious Critters Storytime

February 23, 9:30 - 10:15 AM
Aldo Leopold Nature Center

Music Time with Tim

February 4, 11, 18, 25
11:00 - 11:30 AM
Madison Children's Museum



Baby Storytime

February 4, 11, 18, 25
11:15 - 11:45 AM
Pinney Library

Music Avenue

February 4, 18
10:00 - 10:30 AM
Meadowridge Library

Read & Breathe: Mindful All-Age Storytime

February 4, 11, 18, 25
10:30 - 11:15 AM
Alicia Ashman Library

MCM Free Thursday Evenings

February 5, 12, 19, 26
4:00 - 8:00 PM
Madison Children's Museum



Baby Gym

February 5, 12, 26
10:00 - 10:30 AM
Sequoia Library

Early Explorers Play Group

February 6, 13, 20, 27
9:30 - 10:30 AM
Madison Children's Museum

Kids in the Rotunda: Mark Hayward

February 28, 9:30 AM, 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM
Overture Center

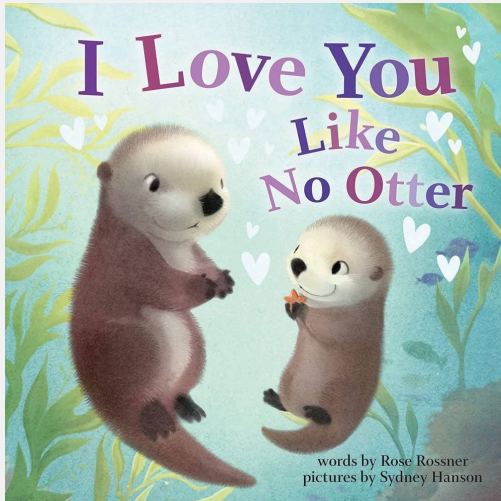
Bird & Nature Adventures: Maple Syruping

February 28, 10:00 - 11:30 AM
Aldo Leopold Nature Center

Bilingual Multi-Age Story Time

February 16, 23
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
Goodman South Madison Library

Book of the Month



I Love You Like No Otter

I Love You Like No Otter is a playful, pun-filled story that celebrates love in all its silly, sweet forms. With charming illustrations and clever animal wordplay, it's a cozy, laugh-out-loud read-aloud book that's sure to spark giggles, connection, and warm hearts.

[Read Aloud Storytime](#)

Craft of the Month



Cardboard Lacing Hearts

Cardboard Lacing Hearts are a simple, hands-on craft that helps little hands build coordination and fine motor skills. Children weave yarn through pre-punched holes in a cardboard heart, creating a sweet keepsake while practicing focus and control.

[Learn More](#)

Chef's Corner: Rice Krispies Valentine Treat

These festive Rice Krispies Valentine Treats are a quick, no-bake way to add a little sweetness to your Valentine's Day celebrations. With gooey marshmallows, crunchy cereal, and pops of colorful candy, they're as fun to make as they are to eat.

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp butter
- 4 cups mini marshmallows
- 6 cups Rice Krispies cereal
- 1/2 cup M&Ms (or other candy)

Instructions:

1. Melt butter over medium heat, then add marshmallows and stir continuously until marshmallows are melted.
2. Remove from heat and stir in cereal. Stir in chocolate candy and quickly remove mixture from pan so that chocolate doesn't melt.
3. Press mixture into a greased pan. Wet fingers and press down to smooth out treats.
4. Allow rice krispies to cool completely, then use a heart-shaped cookie cutter to create Valentine treats.

Recipe from plowingthroughlife.com



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