



Gigi's PLAYHOUSE™
Down Syndrome Awareness Centers

www.gigisplayhouse.org

GIGI'S NEWS

Loving a child with Down syndrome is contagious... Help us spread the love!

Hoffman Estates
1069 W Golf Rd • Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
847-885-PLAY • www.gigisplayhouse.org

Plainfield
10052 S. Bode Rd, Unit D • Plainfield, IL 60585
630-778-PLAY • www.gigisplayhousetoo.com

Now Serving **3** Locations

MAY 2008



On Your Mark, Get Set, GO!!!

We are off and running as we prepare for the **5K Fun Run and Walk** next month! With all 4 Playhouse locations involved, this is going to be the greatest 5K event ever! More than just a way to get some exercise, the Gigi's Playhouse annual event is a family event that promotes Down syndrome awareness and community involvement. Complete with a certified 5K run, a 1 mile walk, the popular *Dash for Down Syndrome*, Bounce Houses, ribbons, awards and more... this is the event to bring all your friends and family to!



Go Team Cael!

Here's a story from last year's event

We're so excited for the Inaugural Team Cael 5K run/1 mile walk. We're in it to win it and have super high expectations for this event.

This will actually be our second time at Gigi's 5k run/1 mile walk. We were there last year as part of Team Phoenix. We are friends with Phoenix's parents so when they asked us to join and do the walk we happily agreed. We were so impressed we decided we would do this every year to support Phoenix and such an incredible center. We were 24 weeks pregnant with Cael at the time and had no idea our life would actually be full of run/walks for Down syndrome.

Fast forward to September of 2007, we had our beautiful son Cael and a pediatrician told us that she was 50% sure that Cael had Down syndrome. It truly felt like we were dreaming. How could this happen to us? We personally knew a lot and knew of the potential for people with Down syndrome. Prior to Cael we would tell people that Down syndrome was no big deal and ever so confidently say "God



Look at mom's shirt — it says it all!

only gives special kids to special parents and we just are not special enough!" It was like throwing salt over our shoulders — our little insurance policy that we would never get a kid with Down syndrome.

We did not cry until 3 full days after the birth when our own trusted pediatrician burrito wrapped Cael, held him in his arms, and said "Well, I cannot tell you what your future will be like, but I can tell you that I am 95% confident that this boy has Down syndrome." We can't tell you the rest of the conversation because there were too many tears — we left with an order to have blood drawn the next day.

Three weeks later, the phone call came saying that Cael did indeed have Trisomy 21. There wasn't enough time to fully digest the news before the mail arrived and in it...our tax deductible letter thanking us for donating to Gigi's 5K/1 mile walk that summer. Oh the irony...

People often wonder if the news of Down syndrome was easier for us since we were so familiar with it. We imagine that starting with zero knowledge would be difficult. Even with our prior experiences, we still worried about our new life and did the typical "We are never going to be able to go on vacation" thinking. We came out of that pretty quickly though and are now excited about the future — especially the 5K Run/1 Mile walk this summer.

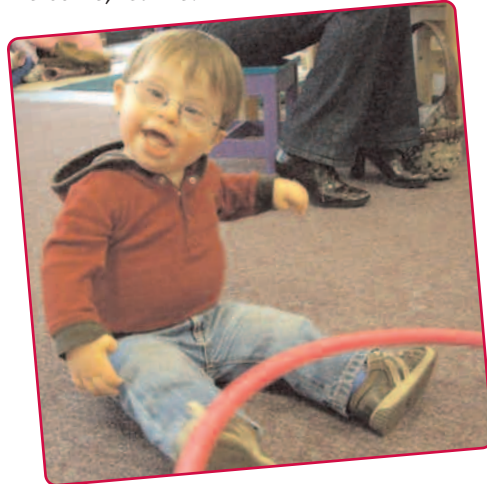
Team Cael is in it to win it. We hope to have the best t-shirts, the fastest runner and of course, have the most fun at the race. Our expectations for our premier event may be lofty but we plan to take those through Cael's life. Everyone tells us that high expectations are the key to success for Cael. And so off we go...
Go Team Cael!



HOFFMAN ESTATES LOCATION

Welcome New Site Coordinator, Carrie

Prior to coming on board at GiGi's, Carrie Miller served as Event Program Manager and Coordinator within the spectrum of non-profit, recreation and leisure services. Carrie is also an entrepreneur and is passionate about all the behind the scenes planning of personal empowerment seminars, music, performing arts productions and themed celebrations.
Welcome, Carrie!



What an Easter Party!



Many of our GiGi's friends hopped into the Hoffman Estates Playhouse for some Easter Fun on March 22. There was lots of excitement including breakfast with the Easter Bunny, and an eggciting Easter Egg Hunt.



Open Play
Open to All
 Join us every Thursday from 12:30-2pm to celebrate our kids together! We have pizza and juice, music, toys and fun!

KidsClub!

Had a blast participating in creative movement with scarves, playing charades, doing limbo and singing etc. Next month, we will complete a spring project planting seeds in pots (among other fun activities). We've been having an excellent turnout! Hope you will join in the fun next time!

Crawlers!

We crawl together from 9-9:45am on the 2nd Saturday of the month. This group is facilitated by a PT who makes the obstacle courses so much fun that the kids don't even know they are getting stronger while they play!



2+ Under The Place To Be!

This fabulous group meets each month from 10-11:30am. We talk, play and enjoy our kids together. Bring the whole family!



FridayFriends at LaserQuest!

Connect with old and new friends at LaserQuest Schaumburg on Friday, May 30th, 7-9pm. LaserQuest is located at 860 North Roselle Road in Hoffman Estates. Space is limited to 30 people, so please call **847.885.7529** to RSVP.

HOFFMAN ESTATES CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<h1>May</h1>				1 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-8pm  	2	3 Literacy 9-10am 
				4	5	6 Literacy 4-7pm 
11 Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup 11am-1pm Mother's Day 	12	13 Literacy Noon-2pm 	14 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-8pm 	15 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-8pm  	16	17
18	19	20 Literacy 4-7pm 	21 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-8pm 	22 Open Play 12:30-2pm Literacy 5-8pm  	23	24 Literacy 9-10am 
25 Polish Group 11am-1pm 	Memorial Day 	26 Literacy Noon-2pm 	27 Literacy 10am-2pm Literacy 6-8pm Literacy Nite 6:30-8:30pm 	28 Open Play 12:30-2pm 	29 Friday Friends 7-9pm 	30 Kids Club 10-11:30am 
31						

Open Play: Every Thursday!
 Everyone is welcome! Stop by for pizza, pop and fun! We have volunteers to assist with the kids so the parents can hang out! It's awesome!

Literacy Program: GiGi's Playhouse provides FREE private tutoring to children with Down syndrome. Customized materials are provided for each individual student. The program also assists teachers and parents on how to tutor their children.

Friday Friends: Ages 18 and up only. Party with the gang! Equal numbers of peers with Down syndrome as without. Karaoke, dances, laser tag, bowling, prom, movie nights, friends and fun!

2 and under group: Families with kids 2 and under get together to play, and have fun while the parents network with each other!

Hop, Skip and Jumpers: For 3-5 year olds, this program will help promote friendships, good social skills and interactive play through fun creative activities!

Hispanic Group: Spanish speaking families gather for food, fun, friendship and education.

Polish Play Group: Polish speaking families gather for an afternoon of fun and friendship.

Reserved: Playhouse may be reserved for private play groups, parties or support groups

GiGi's Crawlers: This group focuses on crawling skills as well as fine motor skills, social interaction with peers in a semi-structured environment. Children need to be crawling and are accompanied by a parent/adult.

GiGi's Walkers: This group focuses on post walking skills with peers to prepare children for school activities (balance beam, kicking, throwing, jumping, etc.) Children need to be walking and must be accompanied by a parent/adult.

The Playhouse can be reserved for any Down syndrome related event.

When it is available it may also be used by other groups with special needs.

DON'T FORGET

Literacy Nite!

The Last Wednesday of every month!
 Join us to make books for the literacy program! Volunteers needed!!

Get Your Running Shoes On

June 8th is our 5K Fun Run and Walk!



register at www.gigisplayhouse.org

Bag Toss Tournament

Our **First Annual Doubles Bag Toss (Cornhole) Tournament** will be held at 1pm on Sunday, May 18th at Waubonsie Valley High School, Gold Campus, in Aurora, IL. All participants must register, you can request a registration form and pledge sheet at gigistoo@yahoo.com. Since this is a fundraiser, each participant will collect pledges, but a minimum of \$50 is required to play. You will be playing with

a partner. You may choose your partner or one will be provided for you the day of the event. Each team of two will play 5 games to determine their qualification for the championship game. Prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place will be awarded! There are only 96 spots available (48 teams) so get registered TODAY! Come join us for a light lunch, cornhole and enjoy a relaxing day in May! We hope see you there!

Tournament Volunteers

May 18th (with rain date June 1st) held at Waubonsie Valley Gold Campus. We **need volunteers** for the day of the event and to find **sponsors** and **prizes**.

Golf Outing

End of July/Beginning of August (exact date and location to be determined). We need a few volunteers to be on the planning committee and about 15 volunteers the day of. We will need people to get hole sponsors, find golfers, and get raffle items and auction prizes.

Evening Open Play



Come play with us at our Evening Open Play this month on Friday, May 30th!

We will have pizza, fun with our friends, and make a craft. Please RSVP to glatka@gigisplayhouse.org Hope to see you there!

5K Event June 8th

We need volunteers, sponsors, runners and walkers! To register, go to www.gigisplayhouse.org. We have posters available for you to pass out at your local gyms, grocery stores, and to your friends!!



Charity Bike Ride

September (exact date to be determined). We will need volunteers the day of and 1-2 volunteers to help plan the event.



GiGi's is Looking to Move!

GiGi's Playhouse Plainfield is looking to move. We have over 100 families visiting the playhouse every month. These families are consumers too and they will buy coffee and sandwiches, get haircuts for their

families, etc. In addition, we have events that draw attention to the retail area for the day and actually provide free advertising for the local businesses. If you know of any property owners that are willing to discuss their property with GiGi's, please call **630.778.PLAY**.

Assistance, Please

We also are in need of immediate assistance in writing our Plainfield page of the newsletter. The person will need to put the information together and do some basic editing.

Volunteer Opportunities

We need your help with some upcoming volunteer opportunities. We want to add some more groups and events in addition to our current groups, and to do that we need to raise enough money. The golf outing and the 5K will

be our biggest fundraisers of the year and they are going to happen within a few months of each other. If you or anyone you know can help with the following events, please contact Wendy Eurich at weurich@gigisplayhouse.org.

donated services

The promotional materials for GiGi's 5K Run were designed by **Larry Roth at Larry's World of Design**.

Please contact Larry for your print needs at: 773.880.0182

PLAINFIELD CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<h1>May</h1>				1 Literacy Program 4-6:30pm <i>By appointment</i>	2 Teen-Tastic 7-9pm 	3 Literacy Program 9:30-10am 2 & Under 9:30-11am Literacy Program 11:15-11:45am <i>By appointment</i> 3-4 Year Old Playgroup 11am-Noon 
4	5	6 Literacy Program 3-6pm <i>By appointment</i> 	7 Literacy Program 4-5pm <i>By appointment</i> 	8 Literacy Program 4-6:30pm <i>By appointment</i> 	9	10 Pre-Walkers 9-10am Walkers 10-11am RSVP 630.423.4035 Literacy Program 9:30-10am Literacy Program 11:15-11:45am <i>By appointment</i> Daddy & Me 3-4:30pm
11 Mother's Day 	12	13 Literacy Program 3-6pm <i>By appointment</i> 	14 Literacy Program 4-5pm <i>By appointment</i> 	15 Literacy Program 4-6:30pm <i>By appointment</i> 	16	17 Literacy Program 9:30-10am Literacy Program 11:15-11:45am <i>By appointment</i> Playhouse Pals 1-3pm 
18 Bag Toss Tournament Waubonsie High Gold Campus 1pm	19	20 Literacy Program 3-6pm <i>By appointment</i> 	21 Literacy Program 4-5pm <i>By appointment</i> 	22 Literacy Program 4-6:30pm <i>By appointment</i> 	23	24 Pre-Crawlers 9-10am Crawlers 10-11am RSVP 630.423.4035 Literacy Program 9:30-10 am Literacy Program 11:15-11:45am <i>By appointment</i>
25 Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Playgroup 11am-1pm 	26 Memorial Day 	27 Literacy Program 3-6pm <i>By appointment</i> 	28 Literacy Program 4-5pm <i>By appointment</i> 	29 Literacy Program 4-6:30pm <i>By appointment</i>	30 Evening Open Play 6-8pm 	31 Literacy Program 9:30-10am Literacy Program 11:15-11:45am <i>By appointment</i>

All Events are **Free**, unless noted. To RSVP, call **630.778.PLAY** Bring a friend who doesn't have Down syndrome.

2 & under playgroup

Families with children 2 and under get together and play while the parents network with each other. Siblings always welcome.

3-4 year old playgroup

Families with children ages 3-4 get together and play while the parents network with each other. Siblings always welcome.

Pre-crawlers/Crawlers

This group focuses on crawling skills as well as fine motor skills, social interaction with peers in a semi-structured environment. Pre-crawlers is for children who are just starting to crawl and the Crawlers is for children who are crawling on all fours. Children must be accompanied by a parent/adult.

Pre-walkers/Walkers

This group focuses on post walking skills with peers to prepare children for school activities (balance beam, kicking, throwing, jumping, etc.) The pre-walkers is for children who are just starting to walk independently and the Walkers group is

for children who are walking independently. Children must be accompanied by a parent/adult.

Teen-Tastic

This group meets from 7-9pm. We order pizza for dinner and have lots of fun watching movies and playing games with each other. 6th-12th grades.

Hispanic Group

Spanish speaking families gather for food, fun, friendship and education.

Signing Time Group

Learn sign language by signing along to the songs from the TV series. All ages are welcome.

Daddy and Me

Dads get out with the kids and get together with other dads. All ages.

Open Play

Open to everyone.

Playhouse Pals

For families with children in 1st-3rd grades.

Birthday Party

All ages.





















10052 South Bode Road, Unit D
Plainfield, Illinois 60585

phone **630.778.7529**
fax **630.778.7519**



www.gigisplayhouse.org

new MCHENRY CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
May				1	2	3 Hop, Skip & Jumpers 10-11:30am 
				4 Nuestros Angeles Hispanic Group 11am-1pm 	5 Literacy 4:30-6:30pm 	6 Open Play 9am-Noon Literacy 2-3pm 
11 Mother's Day 	12 Literacy 4:30-6:30pm 	13 Open Play 9am-Noon Literacy 2-3pm 	14 Signing Time 9:30-10:30am 	15	16 Kid's Club (6-12 year olds) 6-8pm 	17 Walkers 10-11:30am 
18 Daddy & Me 11am-1pm 	19 Literacy 4:30-6:30pm 	20 Open Play 9am-Noon Literacy 2-3pm 	21 2 + Under 10-11:30am	22	23 Friday Friends (18+) 7pm 	24 Open Play 10-11:30am 
25 Literacy 4:30-6:30pm Memorial Day 	26 Open Play 9am-Noon Literacy 2-3pm 	27 Open Play 9am-Noon Literacy 2-3pm 	28	29	30	31



What a Playhouse!

The McHenry Playhouse has gathered momentum and is going strong! Look at the new carpeting — the kids are already having a blast!!

The McHenry group had the opportunity to share what GiGi's Playhouse is at The Expo in McHenry. They received donations and met numerous local businesses that are excited to support the

Playhouse in the future. Look in next month's newsletter for pictures from the Grand Opening! McHenry even has their own Calendar now!! Contact the Playhouse for more info at **815.385.PLAY**

Thanks Lora White!

There was a great turn-out to Early Communication seminar that was held last month. Here are some of the tips she gave to the group:

Strategies to Enhance Language and Communication

Respond to a young child's communicative attempts. We begin to communicate with our environment with our first cry at birth. No matter how young your child is, he/she is communicating with you! Respond to the communication and build on it!

Describe, label, comment on immediate and ongoing activities.

Use simple language, 2-3 word phrases. Remember the child's processing system may be slower. Too much language will overload the system.

Play routine peek-a-boo so the child will learn turn taking which is an important foundation for conversational skills. Repetition is important in the young child's lan-

guage development. Use music to engage the child in interaction.

Where the child is more responsive, increase the time the child is in that environment — bath time, riding in the car, listening to a favorite tape. Remember to respond to the communication to encourage more turn taking in the child's communicative exchange with you.

As the child reaches the one word level (signing, picture boards or speech) use expansion and modeling to increase the level of language development.

The child says 'milk' and the caregiver says 'more milk or the child says 'daddy car' and the caregiver says daddy's blue car.' Modeling is important in language development. Model but don't constantly questions the child or ask them to repeat.

Work to establish 'communicative intent'. This is the realization by

the young child that his/her communication (verbal, non-verbal) gets his wants and needs met.

Work to establish imitation skills

— gross motor such as stomping feet, hand clapping then non-speech sounds such as animal sounds, and then speech sounds /m/, /b/, /p/.

Speak slowly, don't overload the child with too much language. He will become disinterested

or begin to feel it requires too much work to engage in communication with you.

Wait for a response from a child. Pause after you initiate communication with your child. Too often, we fill the space with our words and do not give the child the time he/she needs to vocalize, babble, sign, etc. He/she might decide he has no need to communicate because mom and dad talk non stop to him — depriving the child of necessary practice and repetition that he/she needs to develop communication skills.



Help GiGi's & Get a Free Frosty!

On May 8th, 2008 from 5-8pm take your family and friends to dinner at any of the following Wendy's!! Proceeds will go to your local GiGi's Playhouse and you will get a free frosty!!! Tell everyone you know — what a fun way to bring all 4 Play-houses together and benefit your

local Playhouse!! Visit any of the following locations on May 8th!!

PLAINFIELD
13407 S. Route 59
Plainfield, IL 60544
815.439.1269

HOFFMAN ESTATES
29 Golf Rd.
Hoffman Estates, IL 60194
847.885.4637

McHENRY
2433 Richmond Rd.
McHenry, IL 60050
815.385.0154

NILES
7243 N. Harlem Ave.
Niles, IL 60714
847.647.0474



Taste of GiGi's Chicago!

Chicago's board is set, and we're closing in fast on a location. In the meantime, mark your calendars for **August 16th** for the first annual Taste of GiGi's fundraiser, and for **November 8th** for our second annual Game Night.

TRIKES

Our first Trikes class was so much fun. Facilitated by a physical therapist, each child completed an obstacle course including a ride up and down a ramp.

Waterpark Discounts

We have CoCoKeys packages at a discounted price. Please call **847-885-7529**





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Hoffman Estates, IL 60169

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SAVE THE DATE
JUNE 8, 2008
GET YOUR TEAMS TOGETHER!
5th Annual 5K FunRun & Walk! Register now
at: www.gigisplayhouse.org
or call **847.885.7529**

now
3 Locations
Hoffman Estates
Plainfield
McHenry

Register Now!!

It's less than 1 month away! Go to www.gigisplayhouse.org to register yourself, your family and your friends for the 5th Annual 5K Fun Run and Walk! We need sponsors and volunteers too! Call your local Playhouse to get involved! We need YOU!



Read All About It!

The Literacy program is going strong at all the Playhouses and at our new Westmont Satellite! They even have 12 new tutors at the Westmont location! Are you interested in tutoring? We need tutors in McHenry, Plainfield, and Hoffman estates. Call your local Playhouse for more info.



Sophia

Sophia Spizzirri and her family were thrilled to see Trisomy 21 in the spotlight at the Museum of Science and Industry's Genetics Exhibit! With millions of visitors each year, the exhibit shows genetics and teaches how some of the hottest issues in science affect each of our lives. This exhibit brings genetics to life, translates complex technologies and raises questions and issues about current and future role of genetics. Sophia sure liked pointing it out!

