

Community and Provider Spotlights

The spotlight in **Sumter County** shines brightly on Geiger Town Hall and North Sumter School providers. Thank you for being great relative providers and sharing what you learn in class with others in your community. We appreciate you taking the time out of your busy life to learn about children's topics and learn how to prepare crafts to share with your children at home and the children in your community. Thank you for putting others first! Happy New Year Geiger Town Hall and North Sumter School providers!

The **Houston County** Kids and Kin Program would like to give a special welcome to the newly formed group of providers in Gordon, Alabama. Thank you Gordon Senior Center for allowing the Kids and Kin Program to be a part of your community.

The **Geneva County** spotlight shines on

Mrs. Merle Phillips. She is a loving and spirited relative care provider. Mrs. Merle has been a dedicated member of Kids and Kin for almost two years. She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the table and we thank her for her commitment to the program. Thank you, Mrs. Merle, for being a vital asset to the Kids and Kin Program. It is people like you that make this program a great success.

Macon County spotlights Elizabeth Doodoo and Debra Blowe. Ms. Doodoo began participating in Kids and Kin last year and is enrolled in VCP this year. She enjoyed the program so much that she recruited her friend, Ms. Debra Blowe. They are both dedicated participants, rarely missing a training. They are working hard to complete VCP by spring of next year. Thank you ladies for your commitment to the Kids and Kin Program!



Heart Shaped Crayons for Valentine's Day Gifts

Things you need:

- Adult supervision
- Silicone heart molds (either cup cake or candy molds will work)
- Crayons (you can use old broken crayons)
- Little baggies to put them in when they are cool

Steps:

- Peel and break crayons into thirds (or use broken crayons)
- Place 3 or 4 pieces of crayons into each mold.
- Bake at 250 to 275 degrees for about 10 minutes. Do not heat oven hotter than 300 degrees for this project.
- Carefully remove from oven and let cool until they are set.
- When they are cool, pop them out and place in baggies!
- Decorate the baggies too, if you would like!

Idea: Try using camouflage colors or sports team colors too!



Why do Babies Like Boxes Best?

Whether it is birthday time or holiday time you may have found that the babies in your family enjoy playing with boxes just as much, if not more, than the toy that came inside the box.

Why does the baby enjoy the wrapping paper and box so much? The answer lies in the child's development. While the toy is interesting and colorful for an adult to look at, the baby doesn't know what to do with it yet. The box and paper the child has just experienced touching offers endless opportunities to explore with all of his or her senses. It also provides an opportunity to experiment and explore. She can listen to the sound of the crinkle of the paper and the box is a container that can be filled, dumped and turned over to bang on!

When you watch how your baby plays, you can watch their development and see how they use their senses to explore objects. If you would like to encourage your child to ex-

plore with their senses, you might fill a basket with items that appeal to touch, smell, and sound.

Common items you might include in the basket are plastic containers with lids that open and close, plastic measuring cups with handles, plastic measuring spoons, a wide mouthed plastic jug with a variety of items that can be put inside and then dumped out, a small pillow or wooden spoons. Just make sure the items are not too small and there are no loose items that a child might choke on.

As your baby grows, she will play along side, and sometimes with other children and grownups. She will continue to explore and learn. The opportunities are as endless as the child's imagination!



P B & J Cookies



Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 3/4 cup peanut butter
- 1 stick butter, softened
- 1/3 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup jam

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
3. Beat peanut butter and butter with a mixer on medium speed until smooth. Add sugars and beat until pale and fluffy.
4. Add egg and vanilla, beat until mixed well. Reduce speed to low. Add dry ingredients and mix until combined.
5. Scoop level tablespoons of dough and form into balls. Roll each ball in granulated sugar and transfer to parchment-lined baking sheets, about 2 inches apart.
6. Bake until cookies are puffy, about 10 minutes. Remove from oven and make indentations in the center of each cookie by pressing with the handle of a wooden spoon.
7. Return to oven and bake until edges are golden, 6 to 7 minutes more.
8. Transfer cookie sheets to wire racks and let cool completely.
9. Spoon about 1/2 teaspoon jam into each indentation. Store in a single layer for up to 1 week.

Tips to Help Boost Children's Self Confidence

Success later in life is built upon a child's self confidence. Positive self confidence gives children the courage to try new things and the ability to accept challenges. It also helps them trust their own abilities.

Here are a few tips to help you bolster a child's confidence:

- Be sure your compliments are sincere and are not over generalized.
- Acknowledge and accept all of your child's emotions. This helps them feel safe and secure and willing to share their feelings.
- Spotlight specific actions rather than saying, "good job!"
- Help them picture themselves winning a game or improving a skill. This will help them realize their potential to win and improve.
- Ask them what they like about themselves and write down the responses on little pieces of paper. When they are feeling blue read some of the notes to them to remind them of their good qualities and talents.
- Challenge your grandchildren to teach you something that they know. They will feel good about the skills they have to offer.
- Share a pastime of yours with your grandchild. This can help them feel loved and valuable to you.





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Kids and Kin is Growing!

We are excited to announce that the Kids and Kin Program has been given the opportunity by the Alabama Department of Human Resources to expand to serve all 67 counties in Alabama. This expansion from our current 34 counties to 67 counties is underway and we are presently hiring staff to provide services in the new counties.

Focus groups will be scheduled soon in all of our new counties. Most recently, we have conducted an initial focus group meeting in Coosa County, Jackson County and Russell County. We are excited that classes began in December in both Coosa and Russell County and will begin in Jackson County in January. Please see the calendar insert for training dates and the telephone number of the Child Care Partner for each county.

Congratulations to the providers who attended these focus groups! We look forward to seeing you in the upcoming trainings!

For more information about Kids and Kin in your county, please call 800-499-6597 ext. 211 or email kward@familyguidancecenter.org.

