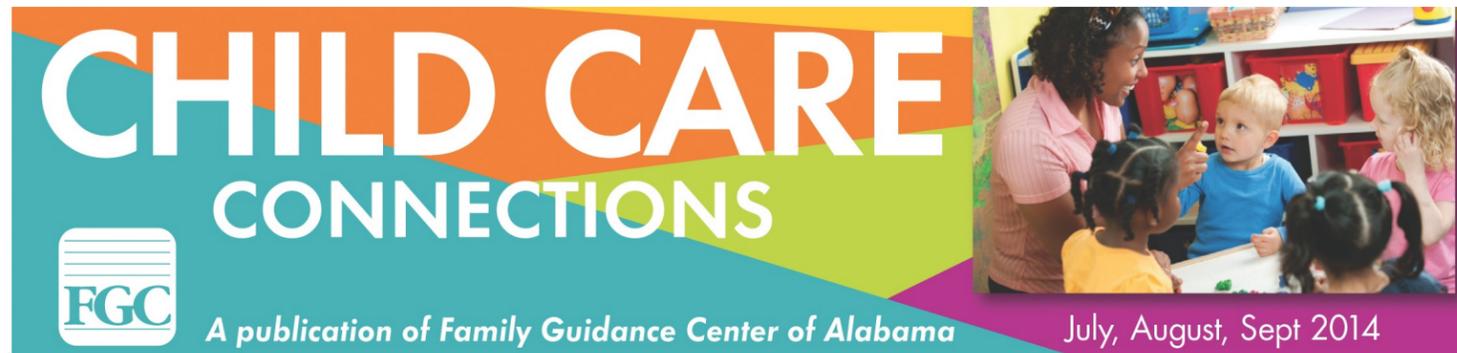




Family Guidance Center of Alabama
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July, August, Sept 2014

Sparkling Imagination and Play in Preschoolers: Why It Matters

Play is the foundation for all learning for young children, and giving children the time and a few basic toys can provide them with a variety of valuable learning opportunities. "Play is how children begin to understand and process their world," says Angie Rupan, Program Coordinator of Child Development Center in San Francisco. She also states, "Children's play unlocks their creativity and imagination, and develops reading, thinking and problem solving skills as well as further develops motor skills. It provides the base foundation for learning." When children play, it enhances language and vocabulary development, imagination and creativity, problem solving and mathematics, gross and fine motor development, and more.

When playing with other children or adults, vocabulary and language skills are fostered. Children will listen and learn the language they hear without even realizing it. Children will learn to use language to communicate meaning, as well as, picking up new words and hearing the grammatical structure of the English language. For example, playing with cars, trucks and trains, as well as, animals provides for many new vocabulary words as children learn the names of each, what they do, what they eat or where you can find them. Playing with a dollhouse or dolls allows children to reenact what happens in their everyday life, using the words and phrases they hear. You might even hear your own words come out of their mouths as they recreate events that have happened. Another reason to be mindful of the words you say around the children. Their little minds are like sponges!

In our fast paced and high-tech society, children have fewer and fewer opportunities to use and develop their creativity. Children who are not given frequent opportunities to play may have a difficult time entertaining themselves as they simply do not know what to do without instruction. By providing opportunities for open-ended play, children will automatically get their creative

juices flowing, and the possibilities become endless. For example, provide a few props such as dishes and play food, empty food boxes and a cash register or stuffed animals and a doctor's kit, and children will be transported into a different place! Watch and be amazed at what the children will come up with as they play! Children can solve complex problems that arise as they play and learn a few mathematical principals as well. Blocks and puzzles are excellent "basics" to provide children with many opportunities to foster these important skills. Playing with blocks provides for many problem solving scenarios. How can we make it balance? How tall can we make this tower? Can we build a castle? Children also learn some basic math concepts with the various shapes and sizes of the blocks. When trying to make puzzle pieces fit, children are gaining important math and problem solving experience. They are learning about sizes (is the piece too big for that spot?) and shapes (does the shape of the piece look the same as the hole?).

Gross motor skills involve the large muscles of the legs and arms while fine motor development is building the muscles of the hands that will be used for writing. Play can provide many opportunities to work on strengthening these muscles without children even being aware of it! Giving children beads and plastic tipped laces provide a fun way to work on fine motor muscle control. Lacing cards or child safe needles and burlap will also provide fun "sewing" projects for young children while enhancing their fine motor skills, which is a precursor for writing development. Kicking balls and walking on balance beams can help children become more coordinated while improving their gross motor development.

Play in preschool is of utmost importance. Children are hands-on learners and need ample time to play and explore their environment. As Mr. Rogers said, "Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is the work of children."

www.familyguidancecenter.org

July, August, September Newsletter/Calendar 2014

Gold Rush Gala



Family Guidance Center of Alabama will be holding its annual Gold Rush Gala on Friday, July 18 at 6:30 PM at the Alabama Activity Center on Dexter Avenue in downtown Montgomery. This western themed evening is the agency's largest fundraising event

and it promises to be lots of fun again this year. The evening will include dinner, a silent auction, musical entertainment, cash bar, and grand prize drawings totaling \$10,000!! Tickets are \$100 which admits two people and all the proceeds benefit the many programs and services of Family Guidance Center, which has been serving the community for over 55 years. Ask us about how you can get tickets by calling us at 270-4100 or 800-499-6597 or visit our website at www.familyguidancecenter.org.

So, put on your favorite western outfit and come on out to have a great time and support a wonderful organization on July 18. We are going to have a great time! See you there!!

Re-Caps

Week of the Young Child – Re-Cap

The Education and Training Program in both Dothan and Montgomery would like to thank the child care providers who attended the two hour teacher training, *Use Your Brain, Move Your Body*, presented by Mr. Al (Al Rasso). Mr. Al also entertained 600 children along with parents and teachers at the three concerts. Mr. Al certainly has a way to get the children engaged and moving with his lively presentations! Family Guidance Center staff always enjoy seeing the children at this special event.

Special Needs Conference – Re-cap

On Saturday, May 17, 2014, the Education and Training Program in Montgomery held their Supporting Children with Special Needs Conference. The focus of the conference was *Caring for Children with Autism*. Tommy Bates, Family Guidance Center and Mary Jo Logan, UCP, were the presenters for the conference. The sessions for the conference were *Recognizing Signs of Autism Spectrum Disorder & the New Diagnostic Language*, *Techniques That Help When Working with Children on the Autism Spectrum*, and *Getting Parents on Board*. We had 47 child care providers and parents attend the conference.

For providers in the Dothan Region, The Opening Doors for Children with Special Needs will be held on September 9, 2014. The focus of this conference will be *Caring for Children with Special Needs*. Please check your calendar for the time and location of this training.

Online Training Opportunities

In January, The Education and Training Department was excited to announce a new training opportunity for child care providers and directors. You can now earn a portion of your training hours to meet the DHR requirements through online courses. The courses are offered through Family Guidance Center's partnership with ProSolutions Training and cover a variety of training topics. You will be able to select from the list of classes that you feel will help you professionally with up to date information on current trends in early childhood.



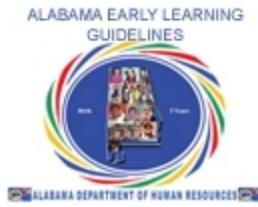
There are three easy steps to qualify to enroll in an online learning class:

1. You will need to attend an orientation session or meet with the FGC online training specialist to get full details
2. You will need to verify that you have worked a full year in child care
3. You will need to verify that you have taken at least 3 face to face classes at FGC (minimum of 6 hours)



If you are interested in this training opportunity please call the Training Department for additional information. For the Montgomery area, please call 334-270-4100, ext 235. Please call 334-712-7777, ext 227 for the Dothan area. Please ask to speak to the Online Training Specialist, or, if necessary, please leave your name, phone number and a brief message and your call will be returned.

We look forward to working with you on this training opportunity.



The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines professional development course, through a partnership between the Alabama Department of Human Resources, Alabama Public Television, the Alabama State Department of Education, and Family Guidance Center of Alabama will be offered online again this quarter. The course will begin July 23, 2014 and will end September 12, 2014.

The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines were developed by DHR to promote continuity of high quality care and learning for young children ages 0-5. The AELG online course will consist of training sessions with readings, activities, and online discussions that will be a guide for understanding child development and learning, and for implementing best practices in order to prepare children for success in school and in life.

Participants who complete the course will receive 18 workshop training hours and a Training Award Credential issued by the Alabama Department of Human Resources. **(If you have received this credential through the AELG face-to-face training, you will not receive credit for this online version of the course.)**

REGISTRATION: To REGISTER for the course, contact (Montgomery – Training Department 334-270-4100 ext 235 or Dothan – Training Department 334-712-7777 ext 227). Registration deadline is July 7, 2014. Course participants must have an individual working email address and access to an internet connection. Class size is limited.

Connecting to the FGC Website

To access calendar and training information go to www.familyguidancecenter.org - on the right hand side of the home page you will see a purple box. Locate the file that you want to open and double click.



Update for Directors

Every other month, the FGC Training Department offers a thirty-minute teleconference for Directors. One hour credit is given. This is a convenient way to gain insight and to connect with other Directors in your area. Without leaving your center, you can learn about new trends in child care and engage in discussion about ways to improve your center and staff dynamics.

Our next teleconference is entitled, *“Quality Begins With You!”* It will be held August 27th, from 12pm - 12:30pm.

This quarter, both Dothan and Montgomery locations will be offering two 2-hour trainings for directors. These trainings are the **Especially for Directors** series and are held for Owners, Directors and Assistant Directors of day care centers. Please check your calendars for the dates, times and locations of these upcoming directors trainings.

Snack Bags Activities

Infants: Crinkle bags

Materials: Chip bag, tape

Tape the opening securely closed on an empty chip bag. Offer the bag to a baby. Observe his/her reaction to the sounds the bag makes as they squeeze, shake, or pat the bag.

Toddlers: Shakers

Materials: Snack bags, scissors, tape, toilet tissue tube, lively music

Cut snack bags into narrow strips. Tape strips securely around one end of a toilet tissue tube to make the shakers. Offer the shakers to toddlers. Encourage them to shake to the beat of lively music.



Preschoolers: Snack Bag Book

Materials: Variety of snack bags, stapler

Collect a variety of potato, corn, tortilla, pretzel or cookie bags. Tape the openings closed. Stack the bags on top of each other. Staple the bags securely together on one side. Offer the book to a child. Observe how many of the bags they can name.



Schoolagers: Snack Poster

Materials: Variety of snack bags, glue, markers, poster board

Each child chooses his/her favorite snack bag and glues the bag onto poster board. Each child draws or writes a story about how he/she believes the snack is made on the poster board. Display for others to read.

Infant Quality Tip

Babies Are Children Too



Infancy is a unique and wondrous time of life. The first 3 years of a child's life are the most critical time of growth and development and high-quality care is extremely important during this time. During this period of life, the infant's brain, mind and personality take shape that are influenced by everyday experiences of learning and nurturing provided by parents and caregivers. This development is dramatic, rapid and important. It lays the foundation for later cognitive accomplishments, social skills, self-esteem, respect for others and more. Parents and caregivers offer the critical inputs for infant development – food and physical safety, comfort and reassurance, learning toys and challenges, language and social feedback. In infant care settings, it is the quality of the relationship that determines the quality of care. You can build on the quality of the relationship between you and the babies in your care by talking to them, reading books, singing songs, listening to their cries and being responsive to their every need.

The Providers' Perspective - Video

The Education and Training Programs in Dothan and Montgomery are in the process of creating a video from the child care providers' perspective. This video highlights the benefits of attending professional development and using the Resource Libraries to enhance developmentally appropriate curriculum planning for the children in your care.



We look forward to presenting the video in our trainings in the next few weeks.

Toddler Quality Tip

Fun in the Sun



Yes, it's "summertime" here in Alabama. "Hot and muggy" describes most of the days in summer. Children are outside longer and sometimes they get hot, but are too busy "playing" to notice the heat.

The word for the summer is, hydrate. Our Alabama heat drains all of us of essential fluids that our bodies need. Children play hard and they "dry out." "Children are much more prone to dehydration than adults because their bodies don't cool down as efficiently."

Keep water handy for those hot muggy summer days. Let toddlers keep sippy cups with water in them nearby, inside or out. Take jugs of cool water and small cups outdoors.

Flavored waters, Gatorade and popsicles are good for hydration, too, but water is best!

CDA Update

We have recently joined in partnership with ProSolutions Training to offer providers additional training opportunities. ProSolutions offers on-line courses in English & Spanish that will meet the CDA requirements for the initial credential or for CDA renewal. Early Childhood Training on Demand offers courses that are accepted by the Council for Professional Recognition. Early Childhood Training on Demand does not require internet access, is accepted by the State DHR for training hours, and is convenient. Please contact the Family Guidance Center training office that serves your county to find out what child development courses are available through these promising partnerships.

Science Saturday - Montgomery

Make plans to join the Child Care Education and Training Program in Montgomery on Saturday, September 20th for a fun 4-hour Science Saturday for preschool teachers! During this training, we will discuss the importance of hands-on science in the preschool classroom, as well as, doing several hands-on science activities throughout the training.

We will have Steve Spangler Science materials available for purchase before and after the training.

Sign up begins on August 15th! Since this training is hands-on there will be limited seating.



New Information

Training Express

The Child Care Education and Training Program staff in Montgomery and Dothan are always ready to support caregivers by providing technical assistance or bringing training sessions you request to your site. Sessions, with topics based on your needs, can be planned for 1 or 2 hours either during the day or evening. To schedule these sessions, please call the office you normally contact to register for training.



DATES OUR OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED

July 4, 2014 – 4th of July
September 1, 2014 – Labor Day

Registration For Classes

Registration Procedures

- Registration is on a first come, first served basis.
- To attend any class please call the number listed below and on the calendar grid.
- Cancellation calls are accepted prior to the training. **Please remember that if you are not able to attend, by calling you will allow someone else to use that slot.**

Registration Guidelines

- To register in Montgomery please call 334.270.4100 ext. 235 or 1.800.499.6597 if long distance. To register in Dothan please call 334.712.7777 ext. 227 or 1.800.290.0933 if long distance.
- At either location, you may leave a voice mail message after office hours on the appropriate extension.
- Walk-ins will be accommodated as seating allows.

Registration Notes

SINCE CHILD CARE IS NOT AVAILABLE, PLEASE MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUR CHILDREN.

Family Guidance Center's training is open to all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, handicapping disability, age, sex, political beliefs or religions. If your attendance is hindered by transportation, language, location or any other reason, you may contact the Montgomery office at 334.270.4100 or 1.800.499.6597 or the Dothan office at 334.712.7777 or 1.800.290.0933 to discuss the matter. As resources are available, attempts will be made to overcome obstacles that hinder attendance. Funding provided by Alabama Department of Human Resources.