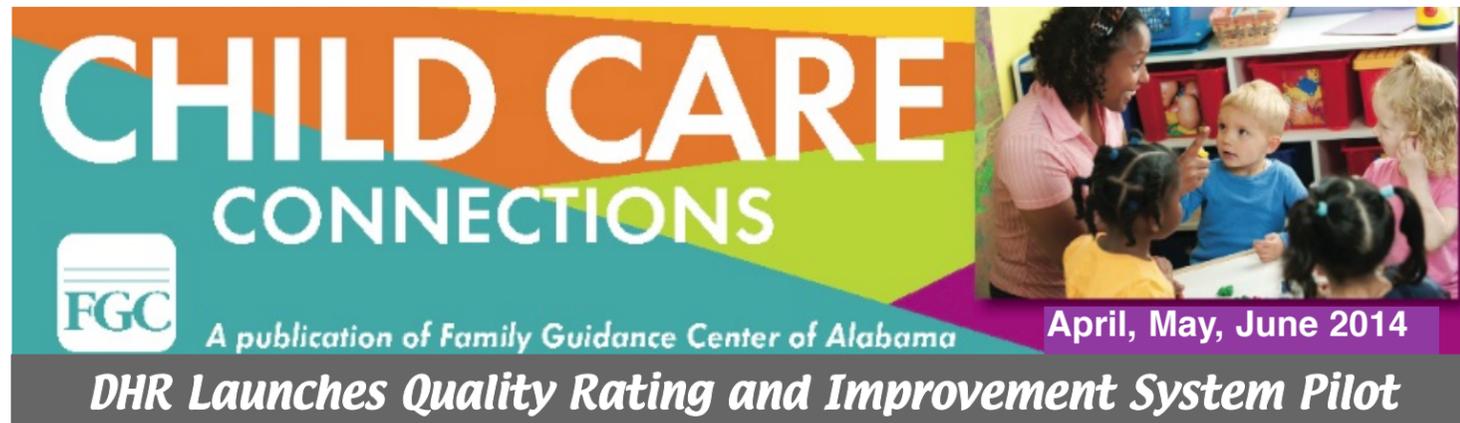




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April, May, June Newsletter/Calendar 2014

Gold Rush Gala AELG Re-Cap



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!!

Over the past two quarters, the Child Care Education and Training Departments in Dothan and Montgomery have completed the Alabama Early Learning Guidelines Course. The Dothan office had 5 participants to complete the course and the Montgomery office had 18 participants to complete it. Here are a few comments from our participants.

- "I really enjoyed each section of the AELG Course Training. I learned so much about caregiving. I think this course should be mandatory for every center."* -Fred Robinson, Center Director/Owner
- "I really enjoyed the classes (all 9). I think everybody that works in child care should attend classes like these. I learned so much! Thank you!"* -Margaret Rodgers, Center Teacher
- "I enjoyed how informational the course was at no cost, and how it prepares you to be a well-rounded director and/or teacher."* -Crystal Davis, Center Director
- "The course (for me) was a great way to "refresh" previously learned information on good child care and to learn some new things as well."* -Violetta Davis-Williams, Center Director

Continue to look for the next opportunity to take the Alabama Early Learning Guidelines Course in our future Newsletters!



The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) has launched the Alabama Quality STARS, Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) pilot. The Alabama Quality STARS pilot offers the opportunity for center programs, across the mixed delivery systems, to partner with DHR in the preliminary program rating process and to assess the effectiveness of the QRIS standards and the overall QRIS process. The Pilot will also allow DHR to learn more about how the QRIS rating process works for programs and what changes the Department can effect to make the QRIS an effective tool for improving quality, prior to full implementation.

Fifty child care programs are voluntarily participating in the pilot program. These programs participate in orientation sessions to gain more information about the Quality STARS process and the rating tools. The pilot programs receive onsite assessment visits to determine their Quality STAR level. Quality STARS uses valid and reliable assessment instruments, standardized assessment processes, and trained professionals to assess the level of quality in early child care and education programs. Alabama Quality STARS uses three assessment instruments. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) is designed for classrooms for children ages 2½ - 5 years. The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) is designed for classrooms for children from birth – 2 ½ years. The Program Administration Scale (PAS)

is designed to measure the management and leadership practices of early childcare programs.

"Lighting the Pathway to Child Care Quality"
Alabama's child care providers are a great resource to children and families. By participating in Alabama Quality STARS, providers have the opportunity to share information and resources about the quality of care happening in their program. A Quality STARS level demonstrates to parents and the community that the program is committed to excellence and is continually working toward greater achievements.

What is the difference between Alabama Quality STARS and licensing?
The standards set by Alabama Quality STARS go above and beyond the Alabama's licensing requirements. For example, Alabama Quality STARS requires smaller provider-child ratios than mandated by state licensing rules and higher education levels and professional development of staff. At each star level, Alabama Quality STARS programs are exceeding the Alabama licensing requirements.

For more information about Alabama Quality STARS contact DHR's Child Care Services Division at 334-242-1425.

The ECERS, ITERS, and PAS Environment Rating Scale manuals are available for check-out from the Montgomery and Dothan Resource Libraries at Family Guidance Center..

Week of the Young Child



The Family Guidance Center of Alabama is pleased to announce that Al Rasso, lovingly known as "Mr. Al" will be the guest presenter at Week of the Young Child this year! Mr. Al will be conducting both a teacher training and children's concerts in Montgomery and Dothan.

Mr. Al brings years of experience in the field of early childhood education. Mr. Al not only performs but also writes, produces and records his pop-styled educational music.

Since 1990, he has produced twelve releases including: *Mr. Al a carte* and *Rocking the Alphabet*. Two of his albums have won NAPPA Awards (National Association of Parenting Publications) – *Rock the Baby* and *Kids Wanna Rock*.

In the mid-seventies he realized his true calling lay in the education of young children and went into the classroom. In 1989 he returned to music with a twist – this music was for the teachers and their students' enjoyment and education. Thus.. "Mr. Al" was born.

We hope that you will join us for a very entertaining teacher training and children's concerts. The concerts are for children 3 - 5 years of age with their teachers and parents. Mr. Al will bring a smile to your face as he involves the audience in every part of the training.

See you for a Rockin' Good Time!!!

- Montgomery – Week of the Young Child Events**
- Monday, April 7th - Teacher Training 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm
- Tuesday, April 8th - Children's Concerts – 9:00 am – 9:45 am **OR** 10:00 am – 10:45 am
- Both Teacher Training and Children's Concerts will be held in Building D

- Dothan – Week of the Young Child Events**
- Tuesday, April 8th - Teacher Training 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Daleville Cultural Art Center, Daleville
- Wednesday, April 9th - Children's Concert – 10:00 am - 11:00 am First United Methodist Church, Dothan

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 yearly training hours to meet the DHR requirements through online courses. The courses are offered through 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.

Online Resources for Teachers

The internet is a valuable resource for educators, offering free curriculum ideas and activities for children of all ages. Listed below are a few websites that provide an array of new learning opportunities for your classroom.

www.productiveparenting.com
www.earlychildhoodnews.com
www.makinglearningfun.com
www.zerotothree.org
www.pbskids.org

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. 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, "How Online Training Can Help Your Center." It will be held April 16th, from 12pm - 12:30pm. Sign up quickly, as spots are limited!

On May 5th, from 6:30pm - 8:30pm, a Director's class will be held at Family Guidance Center in Montgomery on the *Environment Rating Scales*.

Button Activities

Infants: *Button Rollers*

Materials: Large, plastic bottles, buttons, glue, tape

Put a handful of buttons inside a large, clear plastic bottle. Glue and tape the cap securely in place. Place a baby on the floor with a button bottle in front of him/her. Encourage baby to make the bottle roll to hear the buttons rattle.

Toddlers: *Bottle Box*

Materials: Saltine cracker box, large, clear, plastic juice bottle, buttons, glue, tape

Place a handful of buttons in a large, clear, plastic juice bottle. Secure the lid with glue and tape. Place the bottle inside a saltine cracker box. Offer the box to a toddler. Observe to see how the child plays with the toy. Toddlers enjoy "in and out" activities.

Preschoolers: *Button Colors*

Materials: Egg carton, large button, color stickers

Place a color sticker in each cup of an egg carton. Put a large button in a cup. Close the lid. Offer the carton to a child; encourage him/her to shake the carton. Stop shaking the carton and open the lid. Ask the child to name the color in the cup where the button is sitting. Child can play alone or take turns with a friend.

Schoolagers: *Button Pictures*

Materials: Art paper, colored buttons of various sizes and shapes, glue, art supplies

Offer paper, buttons and art supplies for schoolagers to glue materials for a specific picture or a collage of materials. Display the pictures for all to see.



Infant Quality Tip

Building Self-Esteem in Infants

Self-esteem is the collection of beliefs or feelings we have about ourselves, our "self-perceptions." But infants are so tiny and helpless - How can they possibly develop self-esteem? Before an infant is born, all of his/her needs were met instantaneously in the womb. A baby's self-esteem begins to form as soon as he is born and you can help build self-esteem by meeting the basic needs of each infant. You can help build an infant's self-esteem by showing pleasure and interest when interacting with them. Talking, singing, smiling, laughing and cuddling with infants are also ways to help build self-esteem. It is your job to guide and encourage babies as their world expands. You can show them how to do new things, and you can steer them away from things which might be of harm. By allowing babies to explore the world around them, you allow confidence to build which is an important factor in the development of self-esteem.



Book Club - Montgomery

Is a Book Club in Your Future?

Book clubs are a great way to meet new colleagues while enjoying refreshments and discussing a book that will enhance your child care program. In April, we will begin the book, *How to Handle the Hard to Handle Parent*, by Marilyn Applebaum. The class will meet for 1.5 hours weekly for 6 weeks, with reading done at home. Join us on Tuesday, April 8th, for a preview and light snack at FGC from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. Call to reserve your space; there will only be 12 book club members. Books will be provided to participants.



Toddler Quality Tip

Sniffing and Sneezing Toddlers

Ah! Spring is here and the flowers are blooming. Bees are buzzing and pollen is everywhere, and, toddlers are sniffing and sneezing. Keeping in mind that we are not Doctors and we certainly cannot diagnose, here are a few tips about seasonal allergy symptoms in toddlers.

Doctors call it the "allergic salute" when a child has a tendency to wiggle, wipe or push his nose up almost constantly, in an effort to stop post-nasal drip and relieve discomfort and itch.

If allergies are present, the mucous that drains from a toddler's nose will be clear and thin. If infection is suspected, the mucous is more likely to be thick, and yellow or green in color.

If the symptoms include itchy, red, watery eyes, ("allergic conjunctivitis") blue or purple under the eyes and irritated skin, the toddler could have "allergic shiners."



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

April 28, 2014 – Confederate Memorial Day

May 26, 2014 – Memorial Day

June 2, 2014 – Jefferson Davis' Birthday

CDA Update

Not sure if getting a CDA is worth the time and effort? It is a commitment, it is work intensive, and it takes time. Christine Gordon, FGC - Dothan Resource Specialist says, "Being a CDA for almost twenty years, I can say without doubt the time and effort has been worth it! So many things have changed since I began; today there are scholarships available, on-line trainings, streamlined processing and an appreciation by parents and educators for the quality CDAs provide the children." Visit the Council for Professional Recognition website at www.cdacouncil.org to view a webinar aired in January: "Crossing Boundaries and Building Bridges-Leadership Lessons for All of Us." It may give you food for thought about what kind of leader you are for children and families.

Sensational Saturday Re-Cap



The Education and Training Departments in both Dothan and Montgomery would like to thank the over 425 participants who attended this year's Sensational Saturday Conferences. David Kisor did a wonderful job keeping the audiences entertained while also giving important information about the importance of social and emotional development for children with caring adults during his first session.

David's second session focused on the importance of music for infants and toddler, and how music helps prepare the way to build positive motivation and self-regulation skills in toddlers.

Comments from some of the participants

"Awesome"

"Great – both sessions – wonderful information"

"Never a dull moment – Please get him back – had a wonderful time"

"GREAT JOB!"

Be sure to visit the resource libraries to check out David's books and CD's.

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.