

Provider Spotlights

Crenshaw County is super excited to spotlight Ms. Gwendolyn Cook. Ms. Cook has been a relative care provider in the Kids and Kin Program for 3 years. Ms. Cook appreciates the educational classes the program provides. She finds the information very helpful in caring for her 4 nephews and 2 nieces, whom she loves and enjoys spending time with. Ms. Cook enjoys bargain hunting, trying new foods and volunteering at the concession stand during games. Ms. Cook's hobbies are baking and embroidery. She is currently enrolled in the Fall Incentive program. Thank you, Ms. Cook, we are thrilled to have you participating in our program.



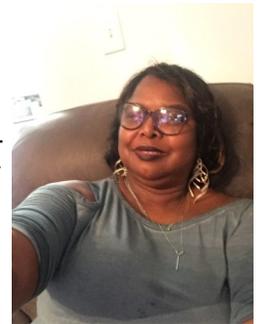
Russell County is honored to spotlight Dr. Annie D. Wright Clemons. Dr. Clemons has been a part of the Kids and Kin Program for 3 years and has faithfully attended trainings in person and on zoom. After graduating from high school and enrolling in the Job Corp program, she



decided to pursue her passion in education. She received her Bachelors and Masters in Elementary Education and then went on to receive her Doctorate degree in Counseling Psychology. Dr. Clemons dedicated forty-five years to Education. She is the mother of 4 beautiful children (1 deceased), grandmother of 4 talented grands (1 deceased), and great-grandmother of 5 energetic little ones. She loves spending time with her family, and has many hobbies which include fishing, reading, gardening, being active with church activities and traveling. Dr. Clemons says the program has helped her stay abreast of all the new literature that can be used to enhance children's well-being and education. She also says, "It's amazing how things have changed since I raised my children and even since I retired five years ago. I have enjoyed the fellow-

ship of the other caregivers and presenters at the trainings."

Elmore County is elated to spotlight Connie Belyeu. Mrs. Belyeu has been married for 36 years. She is the mother of 3, grandmother of 6 month and 9-month-old boys, and the god-mother of a precious 2-year-old girl. She has been attending the Kids and Kin Program for a year and is now participating in the Voluntary Certification Program. Connie feels that her child development knowledge has increased since attending the program. In her spare time, she loves canning food with her aunt, she also loves shopping and is a savvy bargain hunter. She says she has always been old-school when it comes to raising children, but due to the Kids and Kin program she has learned new techniques and tips to use with her grandchildren. She feels everyone should attend the program, because the information share is so beneficial in helping to raise and work with the younger generation.



Clarke County is delighted to spotlight Victoria Johnson Curry. Victoria is a new participant in the Kids and Kin Voluntary Certification Program. She is the nicest, most helpful and welcoming, person one could meet. Victoria is hard working and is dedicated to making the lives of the children she cares for better. Victoria is highly intelligent, but she is always eager to obtain additional knowledge from the training's classes, which she implements when caring for not only her nieces and nephews, but the children in her community. In her free time, she loves to swim and she absolutely loves cleaning and beautifying her home. It has been an absolute pleasure getting to know Victoria, and the Clarke County group is so thankful and grateful to have Victoria as a participant!



Get Outside and Play!

As summer approaches, there are many commodities that are in short supply that may impact your summer fun. Some outdoor recreational products that flew off the shelves last year, like puzzles and bicycles, may still be hard to come by. That's why this spring and summer, we've provided some out-of-the-box ideas that encourage you to bring the boxes you already have, outside for some family recreational fun. Not only is cardboard versatile and easy to work with, it can be a green way to play because once you are done with your project or game, you can recycle the paper or cardboard pieces used. Below are a variety of outdoor activities for children of all ages that creatively use cardboard.



Take to the Air: Did you know that you can make a frisbee, boomerang or airplane out of either cardboard or paper plates. Children can be creative while having fun.

Instructions for frisbee found on: Craftsbyamanda.com

Instructions for boomerang found on: auntannie.com/Geometric/MiniBoomerang

Instructions for airplane found on: Sheknows.com/parenting/articles/1038413/cereal-box-airplane-craft



Carnival Play: Create fun carnival games that are fun for children of all ages. Ring toss, bean bag toss and corn hole can all be made out of cardboard. Amaze friends with a cardboard maze made out of those boxes you have collected from online shopping. Take turns and see who can get through it the fastest.

Instructions for ring toss found on: nymetroparents.com/article/directions-to-make-cardboard-ring-toss-game

Instructions for bean bag toss found on: craftionary.net/creative-bean-bag-crafts

Instructions for cornhole can be found on: mariebostwick.com/diy-corn-hole-game

Instructions for maze can be found on: hallmarkchannel.com/home-and-family/how-to/diy-maze-for-kids



Race Around for Fun and Games: Add some extra “feet” to make your next foot race a little more challenging. Big foot races are a fun way to even the playing field when racing. Two of the most popular ways to race are slipping on shoe boxes or creating giant cardboard feet attached to flip flops. Supersize the many games we play indoors for the great outdoors with cardboard. Think outdoor word games like Scrabble and Boggle and building games like Jenga.

Instructions for cardboard feet found on: getyourholidayon.com/hilarious-bigfoot-game

Instructions for yard Scrabble & Boggle found on: fromthecarriagehouse.com/2013/08/yard-scrabble-boggle.html

Instructions for soda box Jenga found on: teaandtheology.com/a-fun-way-to-play-jenga

How to Help Children Build Resilience in Uncertain Times



As parents and caregivers, we want to protect our children from witnessing the fear and uncertainty brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. We wish we could take away the disruption to their education, activities and relationships. And, we wish they were not exposed to suffering. We cannot control these circumstances, but we *can* work to strengthen our relationships during this time while building our children's resilience. Below are some of the feelings many of us are experiencing, paired with the chance they offer us to model and teach lifelong resilience skills.

“I feel like I am failing”: **Learning self-forgiveness:** Perfection is not an option here. Know that if you forgive yourself and focus on the good in yourself now through self-compassion, your child or adolescent will learn to be a bit gentler with themselves. That is lifelong protection.

“My kids are frustrated, and so am I”: **Learning to empathize:** One of the most respectful things we can do is genuinely understand someone else's point of view. The best way for children to gain this perspective is by benefiting from it firsthand. You build their empathy for others by working to understand their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

“I don't know how to handle how I feel”: **Processing and releasing emotions:** A time of uncertainty with heightened emotions is the time to show that emotions are not to be ignored. Our children must learn from us that having emotions is good, talking about them is necessary and being honest with them is healing.

“I want to pull my hair out”: **Creating a safe haven within our homes:** You can love children and still sometimes want to tear your hair out. We all have bad days when the stress load is high, and it's high now. We cannot control the outside world, but we can create sanctuaries within our homes. With peace in our homes, we can better handle the outside world.

“I don't know how to respond”: **Being clear and honest with yourself and others:** Say what you do know. Admit what you don't.

“I feel helpless”: **Finding what you can do:** Few things create discomfort more than feeling like there is too much to do or nothing you can do at all. And few things restore comfort more than tackling what you can. Model the importance of one of the most calming words: “Yet.” “I'll NEVER _____!” can transform into “I haven't _____ yet.” Don't accept failure or disappointment as permanent but instead view setbacks as opportunities to try *yet* again.

“I can't do everything”: **Learning to let go:** Stay healthy, strong, and compassionate. Take care of those who are vulnerable. Let family members know they are precious. Do what it takes to keep a roof over your head and food on the table. Everything else can wait.

“I miss my family and friends”: **Relationships strengthen us:** This is a generational defining moment. If this generation learns that when times get tough, people unify, it will be the generation who can lead us into a better shared future, one in which we hold those we love nearer and offer those who are vulnerable the extra support they deserve.

“Will things ever be the same?”: **Hope:** Resilience is about more than bouncing back. It is about adapting, growing and becoming stronger; being ready for the next challenge, but also being prepared to savor all the good life has to offer. I hope that by the time you read this, the most difficult times will have passed. But, I also hope that these lessons endure.



ALABAMA

Coming This Summer!

During the months of June and July our workshop topic will be “Legends of Alabama, Exploring the People, Music and Stories that Make Alabama Great.” Our summer workshops are designed to enhance learning and fun for both the provider and the children in their care. There will be two trainings each month with a theme, music, and hands-on learning activities which are designed to provide quality learning experiences for both the adult and the child! Dates and times are listed on the Kids and Kin Activity Calendar. For more information, please contact your Child Care Partner.



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Taste Testing Without Smell



Some foods taste better than others, but what gives us the ability to experience all of the unique flavors? This simple experiment shows that there is more to taste than you might think. You will need a small piece of peeled potato and a small piece of peeled apple, about the same size.

Instructions: After an adult peels the potato and apple, close your eyes and mix up the pieces so you don't know which is which. Hold your nose and eat each piece. Can you tell the difference?



Holding your nose while eating the potato and the apple makes it hard to tell the difference between the two. Your nose and mouth are connected through the same airway which means that we taste and smell at the same time.

Your sense of taste can recognize salty, sweet, bitter, and sour but when you combine this with your sense of smell you can distinguish many other tastes. Take away your sense of smell and you limit your brain's ability to tell the difference between certain foods.

