

## Provider Spotlights

**Dallas County** is delighted to shine its spotlight on Ms.



Susie Jackson. Ms. Jackson has been a relative care provider with the Kids and Kin Program for two years. She is the loving mother of two beautiful children and the fun-loving auntie of a niece and nephew. Ms. Jackson is a proud graduate of Dallas County High School and is currently pursuing her dream of styling hair. Because of her giving spirit you will always find her helping others with their children. Her motto is, "It takes a village to raise a child". So, thank you Susie, it

is providers like you who make your communities and our program stronger.

**Coosa County** is privileged to spotlight Mr. Chauncey McCoy. Chauncey was introduced to the Kids and Kin Program while spending time with his kids at the Goodwater Library during our summer program; he found the trainings very informative and has continued attending ever since. Mr. McCoy is an engaged 33-year-old uncle who was raised to be a true "family man." He is the proud father of two girls, ages 11 and 8. He is also a very active uncle of three nephews and three nieces, ranging in age from 2 to 15. When not working, drawing, writing songs or playing basketball, he is spending time with the kids. His love of learning keeps him attending the program not only for himself,



but for all of the children he cares for and spends time with. Thank you, Chauncey, for being an active provider in the Kids and Kin Program.

**Escambia County** is honored to spotlight Mrs. Glenda

Lynette Dale Gantt. Mrs. Gantt is a 14-year Registered Nurse Supervisor retiree. She loved her job as a public health nurse of 27 years as Supervisor of the Life Care Program. Mrs. Gantt is married to Samuel T. Gantt, is the mother of two children and a very proud grandmother. Her grands thoroughly enjoy the books and educational prizes provided by the program.



"We have surely tapped into this under told and untapped gold mine called Kids and Kin!" She's so grateful to her two friends, Phyllis Redmon Sims and Barbara Curry for introducing her to this invaluable fount of new and reinforced knowledge. She has been faithfully taking advantage of the classes and utilizes the information both directly and indirectly as she teaches Sunday School in her church, Baptist Hill, and volunteers in her community. Mrs. Gantt's hobbies are reading, singing and gardening. Thank you Glenda for being such an advocate of our program.

**Conecuh County** is pleased to spotlight Ms. Corine Manually. Corine is a new relative care provider in the program. Ms. Manually has five grandchildren, whom she cares for and loves on daily. She has a passion for interior design and gardening, and enjoys baking for her family. Corine has formed a real bond with her CCP Judy Wells, and loves the fact that she has someone with whom she feels really listens to her as she talks about the joys and challenges of caring for grandchildren. Thank you, Corine, for being such a faithful provider of the Kids and Kin Program.





## Earth Day 2023

Every April 22, people celebrate Earth Day to show how much they care about the planet. So why is it important to teach our children about Earth Day? Children are the future and if anyone is going to make a difference and start new ways of protecting the earth, it's our children. We can teach them now how to care for the earth and keep it healthy and clean for generations to come. We have completed many challenges in keeping the earth healthy for all, and there are so many more to come. Now is the time to show the youth how to keep it going strong! *So how can you teach children about Earth Day? There are a number of ways:*

**Read Books:** Reading is a wonderful way to teach little ones about Earth Day. There are many books available for all ages about how

we can recycle, help protect the earth and conserve energy. Head to your local library to see what they have. Many libraries will highlight books about the earth around Earth Day, so it will be easy to find them. If not, ask a librarian for help finding a few that are age appropriate for children. The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein and The Lorax by Dr. Seuss are two very popular ones that children enjoy. You can throw in some projects that revolve around those books as well.

**Spend Time in the Outdoors:** One of the simplest ways to talk about the earth is to get outside! Go camping if that's your thing, or just spend the day outside exploring on a hike or a nature walk. Talk about the things that you see, hear and smell. Look into whether you have local nature centers in your area. They will have activities for Earth Day that you and the children can participate in.

**Teach Them About Water and Electricity Conservation:** Around the home, one thing that helps not only the bills, but also the earth, is conserving water and electricity. Even if a child is only 3 years old, you can begin teaching them about turning lights off, shutting the water off when they brush their teeth, and unplugging things when not in use. It's important for kids to grow up doing these things to create good habits for down the road when they are older, or on their own. **BONUS:** It will help save money and conserve energy!

**Create a Story About the Earth:** After reading stories about Earth Day, and being conservative with energy and water, have children write a short story and color some photos. You can go online and print off Earth Day pintables, or other print art that they might want to make a story with. Just let them be creative. You can help them decide on a theme and what the characters will do.

**Create Recycled Art:** There are many, many art projects that can be done with recycled materials. Indoor projects, outdoor lawn projects, the possibilities are endless. If you have friends or family that use a lot of plastic bottles, you can ask them to save them for you so you can set up a bowling game. You could recycle tin cans by painting them or putting paper around them to hold writing utensils, or use old stones, sticks, recycled items and other things to create an outdoor art project. There are tons of ideas online that you can try out. If you have pets, there are even projects that you can do for them on Earth Day. Upcycle old T-shirts or towels and turn them into dog toys.

**Plant a Tree, Garden or Anything Else That Can Grow in Your Yard:** Planting aids in producing more air for the earth, and there are many small varieties that you can purchase for your yard. If your area has a tree planting event, you can always participate in that as well. Gardens are beneficial for so many reasons! It's the perfect springtime project for you and children. Even if they are very little, planting things like carrots, potatoes and beans are great because they are all easy to plant and easy to care for. You get to enjoy those fresh fruits and veggies after they are done growing, and teach children about sustaining a backyard garden. If you live in an apartment or do not have yard space, try out garden boxes or indoor gardening kits. You can also look into an indoor herb garden, which is also easy to care for and grow.



**Armed Forces and Memorial Days** are special holidays for people all over the world to come together and honor the men and women of the United States Armed Forces. **Armed Forces Day** reveres uniformed heroes serving under five branches of the U.S. Military and is celebrated on the third Saturday of May, falling on May 15<sup>th</sup> this year. **Memorial Day** is a federal holiday in the United States for mourning the U.S. military personnel who have died while serving in the United States armed forces. It is observed on the last Monday of May, falling on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Be sure to mark your calendar and support our military.





## Sensory Play Activities To Do At Home With Children

Sensory Play Activities are a fun way to help young children explore and learn about the world around them. Different sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures can be incorporated easily into play, providing important sensory stimulation for little ones. Below are five sensory play activities to do at home! Of course, supervision is always necessary with little ones, especially those that are mouthing. Enjoy!

**Rice Bin:** There's something that little ones just love about playing with rice, scooping, pouring, running it through their fingers. It's not like anything else. Buy a bag of white rice in bulk, and use it again and again to fill a plastic storage bin for play. Add measuring cups and kitchen utensils, or use play utensils and dishes. Make sure to include spoons and cups for scoop-

ing and pouring. Dye your rice to add even more visual interest. This is not recommended for babies or toddlers that are still putting everything in their mouth.

### Colored Rice

**Materials Needed:** rice, lemon juice, food coloring

**Step 1:** Measure 1 cup of rice into a container.

**Step 2:** Next add 1 teaspoon of lemon juice .

**Step 3:** Now add as much food coloring as desired (deeper color= more food coloring)

**Step 4:** Cover the container and shake the rice vigorously for a minute or two. Check to see if the rice is evenly coated with the food coloring.

**Step 5:** Spread the colored rice on a paper towel or a tray to dry in an even layer.

**Water Play:** Use plain or food-colored water in a large storage bin as the base for a variety of sensory play activities. You can made alphabet soup with bath letters, a farm animal wash (by adding farm animal figurines), a car wash, and a simple scooping and pouring water station (by adding cups, bowls, bottles, and pitchers). Water play is great for babies and toddlers!

**Homemade Dirt:** If the children in your care love bugs, dinosaurs, cars, or trucks, this is the perfect sensory activity for them (and it smells delicious!). You can make homemade dirt with flour, cocoa powder, and vegetable oil. Place the dirt into a large storage bin to contain the mess, with an old tablecloth underneath for double protection.

### Edible Dirt

**Materials Needed:** 2 cups flour, 1/2 cocoa powder, 1/3 vegetable oil

**Step 1:** Place the cocoa powder in a bowl.

**Step 2:** Add the flour.

**Step 3:** Add the oil little by little and mix until the desired texture is achieved.

**NOTE:** Uncooked flour can have bacteria, if babies or toddlers still put things in their mouths, cook the mixture on a cookie sheet at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. Let it cool down before setting up this activity.

**Pom Poms:** Poms are always a hit and if you're looking for a "clean" sensory play activity, then pom poms are the perfect sensory material for you. Fill a box with different color and size pom poms, add cups, bowls and tongs and do some pom -pom color sorting!

**Cooked or Dry Pasta Bin:** Cooked spaghetti noodles make for a squishy fun time. And they're perfectly safe if the kids decide to go in for a taste! Simply put the cooked noodles in a large container, and let the them explore. The possibilities are endless here, pretend the noodles are worms, use the noodles for scissor practice, or engage in some imaginative play and start an Italian restaurant! You can also dye dry pasta with vinegar and food coloring for a different sensory experience.

### Colored Pasta

**Materials Needed:** pasta, vinegar, food coloring, zip lock bag, disposable cup

**Step 1:** Measure about 2 cups of desired pasta.

**Step 2:** Place pasta into zip lock bag.

**Step 3:** Add 1/8 cup of vinegar into a disposable cup, then add 20-30 drops of food coloring and stir.

**Step 4:**Add mixture to pasta in bag.

**Step 5:** Mix well by shaking the bag until pasta is covered in color.

**Step 6:** Spread the colored pasta on a paper towel or a tray to dry in an even layer.



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## Happy Mother's Day

My Mother kept a garden, a garden of the heart. She planted all the good things, that gave my life its start. She turned me to the sunshine, and encouraged me to dream. Fostering and nurturing, the seeds of self-esteem. And when the winds and rain came, she protected me enough. But not too much because she knew, I'd need to stand up strong and tough. Her constant good example, always taught me right from wrong. Markers for my pathway, that will last a lifetime long. I am my Mother's garden, I am her legacy. And I hope today she feels the love, reflected back from me.

**Author Unknown**

Happy Mother's Day to all the mothers, grandmothers, aunts, and relative care providers in our program.

**May 14, 2023**

## Happy Father's Day



Walk a little slower daddy, said a child so very small. I am following in your footsteps and I don't intend to fall. Sometimes your steps are very fast, sometimes they're hard to see. So walk a little slower daddy, for you are leading me. Someday when I am all grown up, you're what I want to be. Then I will have a little child, who'll want to follow me. And I would want to lead just right, and know that I was true. So, walk a little slower, daddy, For I must follow thee.

**Author Unknown**

Happy Father's Day to all the fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and relative care providers in our program.

**June 18, 2023**