

KIDS and KIN CONNECTION



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Provider Spotlights

Pickens County is excited to spotlight Sheila Bonner. Ms. Bonner attends the Kids and Kin training with her two daughters, Pamela and LaToya. She loves coming to the trainings and learning more about caring for her nephew, who is a 7-year-old first grader with autism. Sheila completed the Voluntary Certification Program in March and was thrilled to order the one hundred and fifty dollars' worth of Lakeshore Learning materials she earned to use at home with her daughters and nephew. She said she loves all the classes and couldn't pick a favorite, but the ones on autism were especially useful in helping her to understand the needs of her nephew. She also loves the support and fellowship that comes with being a part of the Kids and Kin Program. Thank you, Sheila for being a part of our Pickens County Kids & Kin family.



Marshall County is delighted to spotlight Mrs. Gwen Burke. She and her late husband were members of the Knights Templar and also members of a Scottish games and dance group where they participated in various festivals and events, as dancers. Mrs. Burke has lived an adventurous life. She has lived abroad in Australia and has given our class much insight on the land down under. She is the mother of two and has four grandchildren. She is a very involved grandmother and a dedicated member of the Kids and Kin Program, which she and her daughter have been a part of since 2017. With her granddaughter joining the program, it has truly become a family affair. Ms. Gwen is an avid gardener and great story teller. She can always be counted on to spread joy and kindness



wherever she goes. Thank you, Mrs. Burke, it is providers like you that make this program so wonderful and worthwhile!

Monroe County is elated to spotlight Ms. Jackie Ray. Ms. Ray has been a part of the Kids and Kin Program for the last 3 years. In March, she completed her first year in the Fall Incentive Program. She has 2 children and 2 nieces. Ms. Ray enjoys spending time with her family and listening to gospel music. Needless to say, her love for her children and family is huge. She is always searching for new ideas and activities that she can do with the kids that are entrusted into her care. Ms. Jackie loves all that we learn and share together in the training classes. Thank you, Ms. Jackie Ray, for being a part of the Kids and Kin Program and for all that you do for the kids that you love and care for.



Dale County is honored to spotlight Ms. Sharon Gibson. Ms. Gibson has been a participant of the Kids and Kin Program for 8 years. Ms. Gibson has 8 grandchildren, the youngest are Patton, Bryson, and Aiden, and she has another one on the way. When talking about things she enjoys, she lights up discussing her passion for baseball. "I once was a player, but now I am an observer and I still love the game. I also love basketball and really enjoy going to the casino too." Ms. Gibson works part time at the Senior Center to stay active. Ms. Gibson wants others to know how much this program has helped her to be a better grandmother, as well as helped her children become better parents. "Since being in this program I have been able to advise my children on how to handle things in today's culture and ever-changing society. I love this program and continue to encourage my friends to come and be a part of learning new things."





2024-2025 Voluntary Certification Program

Enrollment began August 1st for the 2024-2025 Voluntary Certification Program (VCP). Relative care providers who join the Kids and Kin Program and enroll

in VCP will receive their choice of a health and safety item just for enrolling! Providers may choose from a smoke detector, carbon monoxide detector, or first aid kit.

VCP begins October 1, 2024 and ends March 31, 2025. VCP allows providers to “earn while they learn.” Upon completion of this program, providers

may choose up to \$150 worth of toys, supplies, books, etc. to use in their home. If interested in joining the Kids and Kin Program and enrolling in VCP, contact the Child Care Partner in your county. See the Kids and Kin calendar insert for the Child Care Partner’s name and phone number that serves the county where you live.

Providers that completed VCP in previous years, are encouraged to enroll in the Fall Incentive Program which also begins October 1, 2024. Providers who complete the program will receive a monogrammed tote bag containing a “Kids are Fun” kit. The kit will contain items that you may enjoy all year long with the children in your care.



Monster Halloween Rice Krispie

These super cute little monsters are not only easy to make, they’re delicious! You only need 4 ingredients for these adorable Halloween treats!

Ingredients

6 oz candy melts (in any color)
8 Rice Krispie squares (homemade or store-bought)
1/4 cup assorted candy eyeballs
Sprinkles
Parchment paper

Instructions

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside.
In a microwave-safe bowl, melt the candy melts in the microwave in 30-second increments, at 70% power, stirring each time until smooth.
Holding the end of a Rice Krispie square, dip it into the melted chocolate until it’s covered 3/4 with chocolate. Hold it up to let the excess chocolate drip off.
Place the square on the baking sheet.
Immediately press in various candy eyeballs, and add the sprinkles.
Repeat with remaining squares.
Place the squares in the fridge for 10 minutes until the chocolate is hardened.
Squares remain fine at room temperature for 4-5 days, in an airtight container.

This craft should only be done under adult supervision.



Don’t forget to follow the Kids and Kin Program on Facebook and see the wonderful things happening in all 67 counties!



Color A Smile

As adults, we all want children to soak in as much knowledge as possible. But, what about helping children to become good citizens of the world? Character skills,

like generosity and compassion are just as important to a child's development as learning key academic skills. Who a child becomes is as important as what they know. This simple project will help you and the children in your care make con-

nections with those that need them most during the upcoming holiday season and beyond.

Directions: print an art sheet or color page from the color a smile website, colorasmile.org. Preschoolers, school age children and kids at heart who like to color and draw can help to spread a smile.

Color: using crayons or markers, please do not use glitter.

Sign: the front of the drawing with your name and age. Please do not date your drawing.

Mail: to Color A Smile, P.O. Box 1516, Morristown, NJ 07962-1516.



Ways Children Can Give Back This Holiday Season

Teach children how to create a little holiday magic for the less fortunate. For many children, the holiday season is a time of joyful anticipation filled with delicious food and lots of toys. All children deserve some holiday magic, and helping kids create a little magic for the less fortunate is a huge gift for everyone involved. Forget grand gestures and work with the kids in your care on a few small holiday give-backs:

- 1. Provide a hands-on experience in fighting hunger and helping other kids.** The popular volunteering activity of preparing and serving food at a soup kitchen poses safety risks for young kids due to the hot surfaces and sharp knives. Find an age-appropriate opportunity instead, such as contacting a local shelter or food bank about assembling and packaging sandwiches or other portable meals. Or, let kids bake away hunger through Domino Sugar and C&H Sugar's Bake Sale for No Kid Hungry. Go to nokidhungry.org for more information.
- 2. Show children how to share their love of sports.** Young athletes outgrow equipment quickly. Have the kids gather up their old but still usable gear and donate it to an organization such as Sports Gift, which collects and distributes used equipment to kids in need throughout the world. For more information go to sportsgift.org.
- 3. Explore micro-volunteering through "quick acts of kindness."** Doing Good Together, a Minnesota-based nonprofit dedicated to making volunteering accessible to families, created the 30 Days of Kindness Challenge, which lists many ideas at doinggoodtogether.org. Some include creating uplifting sidewalk chalk messages and leaving thank-you notes for trash removers and mail carriers to show appreciation.
- 4. Shine a happy light.** Encourage kids to smile, hold doors open for others and wish people "Happy Holidays" while out shopping. Sometimes, a holiday gift can come in the form of a courteous child.
- 5. Let kids connect with elderly friends or relatives who live alone.** Invite one to dinner and let the children help cook the meal, or have the kids deliver a package of goodies to the friend's home.
- 6. Play some games.** Check out freerice.com, which donate 10 grains of rice through the World Food Program for every correct answer given on their online quizzes.
- 7. Help furry friends by making toys for animals.** Toys can be made by braiding socks (new ones!) or T-shirts.
- 8. Organize a pajama drive for kids at homeless shelters.**



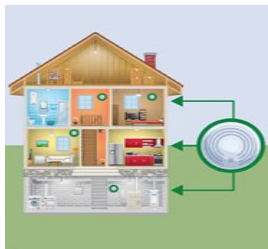
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October 6th - 12th is Fire Prevention Week



Keeping your family and the children in your care safe is a number one priority. One tool that can help is following this year's National Fire Protection Association's theme of, "Smoke Alarms Make Them Work for You!"



Install: Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area (like a hallway), and on each level (including the basement) of the home.

Test: Test smoke alarms at least once a month by pushing the test button, and replace batteries every six months.

Replace: Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old or stop responding when tested.