



Family Guidance Center of Alabama
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The Kids and Kin Program says Thank-You!

As we, the staff of the Kids and Kin Program, reflect on the past year and prepare for the new one, we are especially appreciative for the relative child care providers that make up our program. Because of each of you, we are able to improve the quality of child care in the communities we serve. There is no greater gift than that of learning, and your continued dedication to the Kids and Kin Program is very much recog-

nized and appreciated. We have been fortunate throughout the year to work with stellar trainers as well as community and agency partners. We thank each of you for the resources, skills and talents that you bring to our program. So during this time of reflection and growth, please know how very proud we are to work in your counties and communities, and we look forward to the continued success of the program in 2025.

Sincerely,
The Staff of the Kids and Kin Program

For more information about The Kids and Kin Program in your county, please call 800-499-6597 ext. 1223 or email lforshee@familyguidancecenter.org.



KIDS and KIN CONNECTION



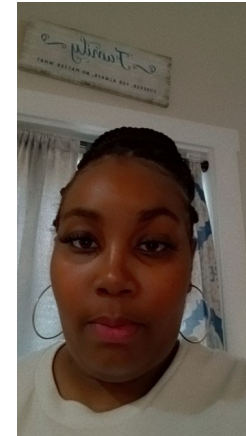
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January, February, March 2025

Provider Spotlights

Sumter County is excited to spotlight Shenae Hutchins.



Shenae is the mother of three beautiful girls who keep her super busy. Additionally, she is an outstanding aunt to her nieces and is also very active in their lives. Ms. Hutchins is enrolled in the Fall Incentive Program. Thank you, Ms. Shenae Hutchins, for being a part of the Kids and Kin Program. What you do for your children and nieces is greatly appreciated. It is providers like yourself that make this program so wonderful and rewarding!

Chambers County is proud to spotlight Mrs. Wanda Davis. Wanda has been a relative care provider since 2019. She is currently enrolled in the Fall Incentive Program.



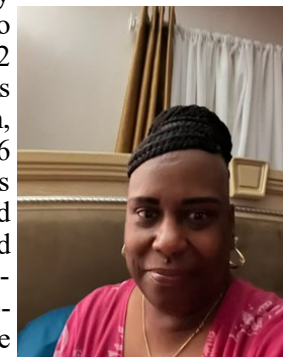
She is a grandmother, great-grandmother and aunt. She is very active in her community, working with the Golden Girls and the Jets Social Club. She also volunteers at Bowen East Head Start, the Chambers/Tallapoosa Head Start Policy Council, Fish and Loaves and Love Union food banks. She also serves on the Betty Ware/LaGail Autry Breast Cancer Foundation Board, and the Pearls, and Cuisine Committee. She is a member of Mount Herman Missionary Baptist Church where she sings in the mass choir. She says, "she wants everyone that cares for children to become involved in the program because they will learn so much about what is going on with kids today." Thank you, Ms. Wanda Davis, for being a devoted member of the Chambers County Kids and Kin family!

Blount County is honored to spotlight Mrs. Phyllis Harris.



Mrs. Harris and her late husband were long time business owners in Oneonta. They raised 3 children and their oldest grandchild. After the passing of her daughter, she began raising her 3-year-old grandson who is now 16. Phyllis has 11 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren. She attends Park Avenue Church. Mrs. Harris wishes that she had learned about the program sooner. She said that she has gained so much knowledge from the trainings and discussions that take place during classes. Besides attending church, attending the Kids and Kin trainings makes her week. Thank you, Mrs. Phyllis Harris, it is providers like you that make this program so worthwhile and fulfilling!

Bullock County is thrilled to spotlight Brenda Brabham.



Brenda is a retired New York City Corrections Officer. She moved to Union Springs to help care for her 2 grandchildren. As the family has continued to grow and blossom, Brenda now has 7 grandchildren, 6 girls and 1 boy. Brenda's son has four of the grands, two girls and two boys. Brenda also participated in the Home-Based Child Care Program. Brenda noted that this program, which partnered with the Kids and Kin Program, helped her have an enjoyable learning experience with her younger grandchildren. She enjoys traveling to new places, taking in the sights, and learning the history of the towns she visits. Brenda is always willing to lend a hand to help others in the group, whether it is taking up papers, cooking for our special events, or just lending a smile. So, thank you, Brenda Brabham, for your enthusiasm, support and continued engagement in the Kids and Kin Program!

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DYI Musical Instruments for Kids to Make and Play

Playing music makes children smarter, nicer, and happier. Playing a musical instrument helps children benefit on almost every level, it enhances their cognitive skills while fostering creative thinking and their ability to focus, all while providing a stimulating experience that allows children to learn while having fun.



Fringe Musical Anklet

Materials Needed: Colorful Felt Sheets, Jingle Bells, Sequins, Thin String or Yarn, Needle, Tacky Glue

Directions:

Cut a 3" wide strip of felt. Take the felt strip and wrap it around your ankle to measure the length you will need. Cut the strip to that length. Lay the strip in front of you and measure 1" down from the top and draw a light pencil line all the way across. Next you will cut your fringe. Make cuts from the bottom up to the pencil line in about 1/4" increments. Thread your needle and start to add the jingle bells. Continue adding the bells, evenly spacing them out until you reach the end.

Pull the string through so you have even lengths on either end of the anklet. Tie a knot at the first and last hole with the string to keep it from pulling through. Glue sequins onto the front of the band between the bells. Let dry. Tie the anklet around the child's ankle and trim any excess string.



Popsicle Stick Harmonica

Materials Needed: Popsicle Sticks, Paint, Paint Brush, Rubber Bands, Cardstock, Toothpicks, Scissors

Directions:

Paint all sides of two popsicle sticks and let them dry. Cut a piece of card stock that is the same size as the popsicle stick. Sandwich the card stock piece between two popsicle sticks. Bind the popsicle sticks together by wrapping a rubber band around each end. Slide two toothpicks between the popsicle sticks

next to the rubber bands. Cut off any part of the toothpick that sticks out. Blow through the two popsicle sticks just as you would with a harmonica. Try squeezing the popsicle sticks closer together to see what sounds you can make!



Mini Lid Banjo

Materials Needed: Jumbo craft sticks (one per banjo) Loom bands (four per banjo), Washi or colored tape, Duct tape, Sequins, Craft glue

Directions:

Place four loom bands over the lid and secure in place with a piece of duct tape. Next cut one of the ends from the craft stick and decorate it with the washi tape. Now attach the lid with loom bands in place to the craft stick with a second piece of duct tape. Finally use small dabs of craft glue to stick on your sequins, or alternatively use plastic gems or a marker to draw



Meet the New Relative Care Specialist for Calhoun, Clay, Cleburne and Talladega Counties!

The Kids and Kin Program is thrilled to welcome aboard Alethia Holloway. With a bachelor's degree in child development, Alethia brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the program. She and her husband have four wonderful children, 3 boys and 1 girl. Alethia believes and understands that children are the foundation of our future, and is dedicated to helping parents and caregivers equip them with the necessary tools to become successful citizens. She is so excited to share all the program has to offer with the grandparents, aunts, uncles and older siblings who are helping to care for their relative's children. She invites anyone who is interested in learning more about or joining the Kids and Kin Program to contact her at (334) 465-0084, or lholloway@familyguidancecenter.org.

Kids and Kin is a Program of Family Guidance Center of Alabama and is funded by the Alabama Department of Human Resources.

Teaching Children to Embrace Differences



Understanding and appreciating diversity and inclusion helps children understand and accept differences in others. It also helps them appreciate the unique qualities of our amazing world. By exposing kids to different cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds, we can help them become more open-minded, empathetic, and culturally competent individuals. But how to do it? Here's how to do so in small, daily doses:

Start early: Children begin to form their beliefs and attitudes at a young age. That means it is essential to

start teaching them about compassion, diversity, and inclusion as early as possible. How to start? Read books and watch movies about different cultures and traditions, expose them to diverse foods and music, and talk to them about the importance of treating everyone with respect and kindness are all good ways! By teaching these values early on, children will develop a positive attitude toward diversity and inclusion, which will undoubtedly be helpful as they navigate the world.

Celebrate differences: Don't ignore or hide differences. Celebrate them! Encourage children to explore and learn about different cultures, traditions, and backgrounds. Help them understand that these differences make the world a beautiful and fascinating place. Attend cultural events and festivals and learn about various cultural and religious holidays to expand a child's knowledge and appreciation for diversity. By exposing children to these experiences, you are helping them develop a more open-minded and accepting worldview.

Practice what you preach: Don't just tell them. Show kids that compassion, diversity and inclusion are valuable to you. Children learn by watching the adults in their life's, so it's important that you're their model of compassionate and inclusive behavior. If you treat everyone with respect and kindness, no matter their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or ability, you are setting a good and important example for not only your children, but the children in your care.

Teach empathy: Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. This essential skill can help children become more compassionate, inclusive and understanding of others. But how do you teach empathy? Encourage children to imagine how they would feel if they were in someone else's situation, and have discussions with them about how their actions can affect others. Help them understand and recognize different emotions. By teaching empathy, you help children develop a positive attitude towards diversity and inclusion while creating a kinder and more understanding future generation.

Address stereotypes: Stereotypes can perpetuate discrimination and prejudice. It's crucial to teach children to recognize and challenge stereotypes when they come across them. Have conversations with them about how stereotypes can be hurtful and inaccurate and help them understand it's essential to see people as individuals rather than just representatives of a particular group. By teaching children to challenge stereotypes, you are helping them develop critical thinking skills and a positive attitude toward others who may be different.

Encourage diversity in their social circle: It's natural for children to seek out those who are similar to them, but expanding their social circle is crucial for fostering diversity and inclusion. Encouraging children to make friends with people from different backgrounds and cultures not only broadens their perspectives, but also teaches them the value of appreciating and respecting differences. It can also help to break down stereotypes and prejudices.

Every step counts: In a complicated and troubled world, it's easy to feel that nothing we do will make a difference. Teaching children about diversity and inclusion requires ongoing effort. It won't happen overnight, but you can instill these values in them with patience and persistence. Remind yourself: Every small step counts! By teaching children to appreciate and celebrate differences, you are doing important work in creating a kinder and more compassionate society.