

# CHILD CARE CONNECTIONS



A publication of Family Guidance Center of Alabama



## Staying Current as an Early Childhood Educator

The research around early childhood education is constantly evolving, and new and revolutionary methods of teaching and different ways of understanding young minds are always coming to the forefront. So, how do you stay on top of it all?

**Keep Up With the Latest Child Care Regulations and Performance Standards.** Working in the field of early childhood education requires you to be up-to-date with current regulations and standards. Rules and regulations will vary depending on your state, so research carefully to determine which will impact your business. Consider joining a professional association of educators such as The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), who can help you stay on top of current research.

**Stay Up to Date With Leading ECE Resources.** One of the simplest ways to stay current is to regularly read information from the industry's top minds and organizations dedicated to early childhood education. Schedule time each week to review your favorite resources and share and discuss any new information with your colleagues. Some of the resources we like to follow include:

- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University
- National Institute for Early Education Research

Family Guidance Center (FGC) offers many excellent ECE resources as well.

**Pursue Professional Development.** Further education and training can have a huge impact on your career as an early childhood educator. Not only will it make you a better educator today, it will also open up doors for your future. Gaining additional qualifications is key to showing potential employers that you are on top of the latest research, techniques, and trends in early childhood education. Consider attending an ECE-related conference, workshop, training course, or complete an additional education-related degree.

*Note: See page 3 for information on scholarships for childcare professionals.*

Ron Spreeuwenberg, 7/6/16 <https://www.himama.com/blog/how-to-stay-current-as-an-early-childhood-educator/>

## New Year, New Beginnings: What FGC has in store for you!

During 2023, you will see many new, expanded, or returning types of training opportunities, activities, resources and services for childcare professionals and parents, including (but not limited to) the following:

### New Opportunities:

- Directors Network: Building collaborations between directors
- Mentoring and Coaching programs for licensed centers/homes, including support for the Alabama Star Rating System and Assessing Quality through Program Assessment
- Becoming a Licensed Center: Support for new programs or exempt centers making the transition to a licensed facility
- Read to Me! Through center/family childcare home visits, FGC staff will use developmentally appropriate books and activities to promote literacy
- Enhanced Virtual Training with Canvas

### Returning Trainings/Series

- Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) classes
- CPR/First Aid certification classes (with Healthy Child Care AL)
- Special Needs training with United Cerebral Palsy (UCP/CCEP)
- Especially for Directors monthly face to face or Zoom classes for Directors
- Enhanced Virtual Training with APT and ProSolutions
- Health and Safety Zoom training (CCDF)

### Face-to-Face Training Sessions

- Introduction to Child Care
- Conferences: Opening Doors for Children with Special Needs, Directors Conference, Sensational Saturday, STEAM Saturday
- Family Child Care Provider training and technical assistance
- Age Level Training Series: Explore and Learn with Infants, Learn and Grow with Toddlers, Grow and Discover with Preschool, Discover with Schoolagers
- Alabama Early Learning Guidelines training

### Other Opportunities for Early Educators and Parents

- Parent resources
- Share available resources for scholarship program
- Collaborations with local agencies to access resources
- Monthly library newsletter, featuring seasonal activities, books, and resources
- Quarterly *Child Care Connections* newsletter and *Training Calendar*
- Comprehensive Public Education/Parent Consultation
- Creative resources: Making books, games, and activities for your program
- Extensive Early Care and Education Resource Libraries

## Registration for Training Classes

Registration for Early Childhood professionals of licensed facilities must be done through the Alabama Pathways Professional Development Registry (PDR). Use **My Calendar** to search and register for training, view upcoming training, and manage your training schedule.

Anyone not registered in the PDR will continue to call the phone numbers on the calendars to register for classes for the Montgomery or the Dothan regions.

Please be sure to pay attention to the location of IN PERSON classes. Instructors for Zoom classes will continue to email login information and policies for participation. Please read the information carefully.

## Professional Development Registry

**Alabama Pathways** is a free online resource to provide a path to support best practices for those who care for and teach children from birth-12 years.

In accordance with the Alabama Child Care Licensing and Performance Standards, all licensed Early Childhood professionals are required to enroll in the Professional Development Registry (PDR). Throughout the months of January, February and March, additional training is being offered on how to enroll, set up a profile, view previous training certificates, locate training opportunities throughout the state, register for classes, and access training certificates within the PDR. See training calendars for dates and times for these valuable training opportunities.

Obtain resources and help with questions related to the PDR by calling their help desk at 1-888-254-4244 or emailing [support@alabamapathways.org](mailto:support@alabamapathways.org) or by contacting your local Quality Enhancement Agency (Family Guidance Center).

The Professional Development Registry (PDR) allows child care professionals to:

- Create an early childhood professional and training profile.
- Document professional accomplishments and professional certificates.
- Identify your current place on the Alabama Pathways Professional Development Lattice.
- Collaborate with state-designated training agencies to identify and reach your goals.
- Connect with official training organizations.
- Access available resources.

*Things to remember:*

- Website address - [www.alabamapathways.org](http://www.alabamapathways.org)
- An updated User Guide is always available for reference on your dashboard
- FAQ's - <https://www.alabamapathways.org/api/file/s/faq>
- Go to each individual tab (education, employment, etc) to add information to your profile.
- A Help Desk is available on the left footer of each webpage.
- When setting up your account, remember to use your PERSONAL email.
- As a FINAL step, don't forget to associate yourself with the facility at which you are working.

Your profile belongs to you! Take it along wherever your professional journey may take you! All you have to do is log in!

## Training Legend

### TRAINING LEVELS

**Basic** = Most appropriate for entry-level professionals who are new to early childhood and/or school-age care. Basic Level Training covers a foundational understanding and demonstration of developing skills.

**Intermediate** = Most appropriate for professionals who have at least (2) years of experience and 120 hours of training in child development, and are moving toward more formal education. Intermediate Level Training includes expanding and refining knowledge, skills, and their application.

**Advanced** = Most appropriate for professionals who have at least three (3) years of experience and 30 credit hours in child development. Advanced Level Training focuses on a more thorough knowledge and understanding of developmentally appropriate practice and highly effective application and demonstration of skills.

**ALL** = Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced

### DHR MINIMUM STANDARDS TRAINING AREAS

CD = Child Development

HSUP = Health, Safety, and Universal Precautions

QCCL = Quality Child Care and Licensing

CCPF = Child Care Professional and the Family

LD = Language Development

PDG = Positive Discipline and Guidance

AM = Administration and Management

### CDA (CHILD DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE) CONTENT AREAS

- Planning a safe, healthy environment to invite learning
- Steps to advance children's physical and intellectual development
- Positive ways to support children's social and emotional development
- Strategies to establish productive relationships with families
- Strategies to manage an effective program operation
- Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
- Observing and recording children's behavior
- Principles of child growth and development

### ALABAMA PATHWAYS CORE KNOWLEDGE AREAS (CKA)

CGD = Child Growth and Development

HSN = Health, Safety and Nutrition

LEE = Learning Experiences and Enrichment

DIV = Diversity

COA = Child Observation and Assessment (Planning for Individual Needs)

ICFC = Interaction with Children, Families and Communities

PPD = Personal and Professional Development

MA = Management and Administration

### TARGET AGE GROUPS

Infants = Birth to 12 months

Toddlers = 1 and 2 year olds (13 to 36 months)

Preschoolers = 3 and 4 year olds

School-agers = 5 to 12 year olds

ALL = Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers, and School-agers

## Smitten with Mittens

### Infants: Three Little Kittens

**Materials:** kitten infant toy, mittens.

Wear the mitten and hold the kitten as you recite the story. Let infant hold items as well. Explore textures of the mitten. Brush it along their cheek, hands, arms, legs. \*Use a different mitten with each infant for sanitation reasons.



### Toddlers: Mittens and Snowball

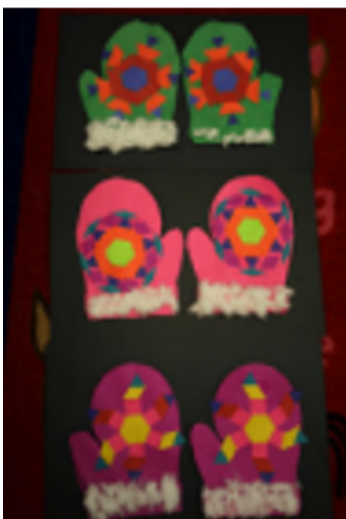
**Materials:** mittens cut from different colors of felt or foam, white circle cut from felt or foam. Play with the children by hiding the snowball under one of the mittens. Say the poem and have each child choose a color mitten to search under for the snowball. Leave out for individual play.

*Snowball, snowball  
cold and round.  
Behind which mitten  
can you be found?*

### Preschoolers: Pass the Mitten

**Materials:** A clean mitten, mitten shaped paper, crayons, pencils.

The first child that holds the mitten gives the first line to a story about a mitten. The mitten is passed to the next child, and he/she makes up the next line to the story. This continues until the story ends. The teacher can point out that stories have beginning, middles, and ends. She can talk about how the middle often has a problem to be solved. The children can repeat and create a different story. The children then draw a picture of their story.

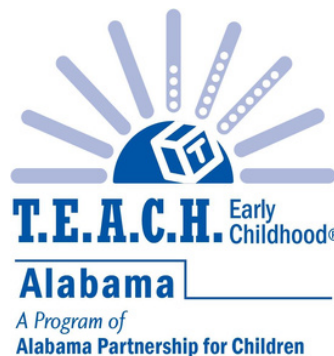


### School Aged: Mitten Pattern Match

**Materials:** Mittens cut from paper in pairs of 2, each 7 inches tall; various paper shapes (1-2 inches) in different colors; and glue or paste. Teacher introduces the idea of symmetry and how designs look that are symmetrical. Each child then makes a pattern by gluing the shapes onto the mitten in a specific design. The design must be symmetrical. Their partner must repeat the pattern on the second mitten to create a matching pair with the same pattern. Partners can discuss the patterns and the shapes used.

## Scholarships

### T.E.A.C.H. ALABAMA EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



T.E.A.C.H., a project of Alabama Partnership for Children, helps early learning professionals increase their level of education and effectiveness in the classroom by making the educational process more

attainable and affordable. It increases their potential to earn higher wages and reduce staff turnover. For more information, contact T.E.A.C.H. Alabama at (866) 711-4025.

### LEADERSHIP IN CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP

A scholarship providing tuition and select fees to qualified Alabama child care professionals currently working in child care centers and family child care homes. Child care professionals may obtain scholarships for the following credentials or degrees.

- Child Development Associate (CDA credential)
- Short-term certificate, certificate, or Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Child Development/Early Care and Education Studies
- Bachelor of Science in Education - Early Childhood Education Major
- Bachelor of Science in Education - Technical Education: Early Instructor

The scholarships are funded by the Department of Human Resources. For additional information, contact Virginia Frazer, Leadership in Child Care Scholarship program assistant, at (334) 293-4552 or by email at [virginia.frazer@accs.edu](mailto:virginia.frazer@accs.edu).

## Resource Library

Family Guidance Center's Child Care Resource libraries are open the following hours:

**Dothan:** 8:30 am-11:30 am; 1:00-3:30 pm Monday through Friday

**Montgomery:** 8:30 am-4:30 pm Monday through Friday

Check with the Resource Specialist in your region for any new resources that are available for check out. Call:

- Claire Wallace (Montgomery): (334) 270-4100 ext. 267
- Michelle Woodham (Dothan): (334) 712-7777 ext 224

**Watch for news about our newly enhanced resource library!**

## Dates our Offices will be Closed

January 2, 2023

New Year's Observance

January 16, 2023

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February 20, 2023

President's Day



## Health and Safety

Promoting a healthy and safe child care environment is the responsibility of everyone involved in the care of children. This includes owners/directors, teachers, support staff, parents, and volunteers. The most important factor in promoting health and safety is following state health and safety regulations as well as federal guidelines. Knowing your facilities' policies and procedures for emergencies, and making sure everyone involved is up to date on these plans, is vital for the success of putting any plan into action when the time comes.

Promoting health and safety involves many key areas including cleaning and sanitizing your facility, safely storing and serving food, and initial staff training and continuing education. The health and safety of the children you serve is the first step in providing them a quality start in life. FGC offers monthly health and safety trainings and has health and safety resources in our library and resource room.

### Infant Quality Tip - Babies are Children Too: Communicating with Families

Building strong relationships with each child's family is especially important in the early years. Daily communication is the foundation for a trusting relationship between teachers and family. To build truly solid relationships with the children in our care, it's important to learn from the experiences, knowledge, culture, and child-rearing beliefs of the family. Effective communication can be maintained through day-to-day contact during arrival and departure times, written notes, telephone calls and scheduled meetings. ([www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org))

### Toddler Quality Tip: Sing, Sing, Sing!

Toddlers love music! Music nourishes children's brains and can be used to teach the new words and concepts.

*Sing songs and change the words to known tunes.* If you use a familiar clean-up song in your classroom, change the words and apply the tune to setting up for snack time (example: "snack time, snack time, everybody eat yummy snacks").

*Encourage children to act out the meaning of songs.* You can teach children hand gestures to go along with "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" or "The Itsy-Bitsy Spider." Once you teach them some gestures, let children come up with their own!

*Create songs to go along with daily routines.* Make up silly songs for transitions, snack time, circle time, hello and goodbye, diaper changes, and other activities during the day. During a predictive phase, stop to let the children fill in the blank. Familiar nursery rhymes are great for this purpose. Include nursery rhymes from children's home languages.

*Sing songs in the children's home languages.* Ask families for recommendations about songs they sing at home. Remind families about the importance of singing at home in their home language.

([www.2.ed.gov](http://www.2.ed.gov))

## Featured Collaborations

FEBRUARY 6, 2023 AT FAMILY  
GUIDANCE CENTER OF ALABAMA

UCP PRESENTS  
Moving through Your Day in an  
Inclusive Way



**United Cerebral Palsy (UCP)** sponsors Child Care Enhancement with a Purpose (CCEP), a statewide quality enhancement training initiative for child care settings, which is funded by the Alabama Dept. of Human Resources. CCEP was created in 2002 to offer free training, consultation and onsite technical assistance to community child care teachers. FGC is pleased to collaborate with UCP to enhance training opportunities for early childhood educators (ECE).

**Truman Pierce Institute, College of Education, Auburn University,** offers preschool and school-age trainings for child care professionals.

**Wallace State Community College** hosts ECE trainings on the Dothan/Eufaula campuses. The Lurleen B. Wallace/MacArthur campus hosts ECE trainings on the Opp campus.

**Calvary Baptist Church** hosts ECE trainings in Houston county.

**Healthy Child Care Alabama (HCCA)** is a program that supports people who take care of other people's children - whether it is in a child care center or child care home, or through family, friend, or neighbor care. HCCA is sponsored by the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Alabama Department of Human Resources. HCCA was developed to:

- Promote health and safety to prevent injuries and the risk of illness in child care settings
- Encourage routine visits to the health care provider
- Encourage practices to promote optimal brain development and good nutrition for good health
- Coordinate community services to make sure children have the medical care that they need

Classes available at FGC this quarter include:

- February 9, 2023: CPR/First Aid Certification
- March 27, 2023: CPR/First Aid Certification



## Online Training Opportunities

### APT's Early Childhood Online Winter 2023 Courses-Registration is Now Open!

To register for these upcoming facilitated trainings, visit [www.aptlearnonline.org](http://www.aptlearnonline.org).

- Exploring STEM with School-Aged Children (January 9-30, 2023)
- Character Education: Life's Little Lessons with Daniel Tiger and Friends (January 9-30, 2023)
- Kindergarten Readiness Approaches to Play for Preschoolers (February 6-27, 2023)
- ACEs: Understanding and Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (February 6-27, 2023)
- Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) Online (January 9-February 27, 2023)

### APT's On-demand Training Opportunities - Always Available

On-demand, free, 2-hour trainings are always available on APT Learn Online. Visit to explore the on-demand catalog or to enroll in a training.

\*Please see Montgomery and Dothan training calendars for additional training opportunities.



Early childhood education is  
the key to the betterment of  
society.

MARIA MONTESSORI

## SAVE THE DATE FOR SENSATIONAL SATURDAY

VIRTUAL Sensational Saturday 2023 will present Lisa Murphy, the "Ooey Goey Lady," on February 18, 2023. Please see the attached flyer!

## Update for Directors

Every month, the FGC Training Department offers an in-person or ZOOM class especially for directors (2 credit hours). You will learn new skills and connect with other directors in your area! You will also learn about new trends in child care and discuss ways to improve your center and staff dynamics.

Our next Director's trainings will be:

- **January 18, 2023, 10 am-12 pm:** Bosses vs Leaders (in-person)
- **February 15, 2023, 10 am-12 pm:** Using DHR Performance Standards Successfully (in-person)
- **March 8th, 2023, 1-2 pm:** Retaining Quality Staff (Zoom)
- **March 15, 2023, 10 am-12 pm:** Stress Management (in-person)

**\*Director's Conference (Zoom)- April 22, 2023**

## Holiday Storytelling with Children



Family Guidance Center's Education and Training Department staff members visited centers during the first two weeks in December. They read books to the children and demonstrated activities (such as using cool whip "snow" to paint) to encourage ECE professionals to emphasize literacy in their classrooms.





Family Guidance Center of Alabama  
2358 Fairlane Drive  
Montgomery, Alabama 36116

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit #409  
Montgomery, AL

[www.familyguidancecenter.org](http://www.familyguidancecenter.org)



## January, February, and March Newsletter

Play is often talked about  
as if it were a relief from  
serious learning. But for children,  
play is serious learning.

Play is the work  
of childhood.  
-Mr. Fred Rogers



"If you make  
the world  
better for  
kids, you  
make it  
better for  
**everyone.**"

Kid President



Children are the world's most valuable resource and its  
best hope for the future.

JOHN F. KENNEDY

