



Family Guidance Center of Alabama
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October, November, December Newsletter/Calendar 2013

Gold Rush Gala is Rousing Success

Family Guidance Center of Alabama's recent Gold Rush Gala was held at the Alabama Activity Center in downtown Montgomery and judging by the large crowd in attendance, it was a rousing success. Executive Director, Dr. Walter White, served as emcee for the evening and welcomed the audience of over 275 friends and supporters of the agency. The western-themed event featured a delicious meal provided by Jim N Nicks Bar-B-Q. This year's silent auction was the largest in the event's history and featured items donated by an array of merchants. The evening's grand prize drawing for \$10,000 was won by the Interstate Character Council.

The festive decorations for the evening included a collection of boots that were used along with straw hats, bandanas, gold nuggets, and sunflowers to create unique centerpieces for each table. The entertainment for the evening was provided by the local band, Old Town Express, who wowed the attendees with easy listening bluegrass music. Also, back by popular demand again this year was cowboy roper extraordinaire, Bruce Brannen, who thrilled the audience with his multitude of lasso and bull whip tricks.

Family Guidance Center of Alabama has been serving the community since 1959 through its many programs and services that include counseling, parenting education, marriage education, job training, early childhood education services, child care education and training services and programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters and Success By 6. The funds raised from the Gold Rush Gala each year are vital to the agency's ability to continue to provide these important services for families. Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Gold Rush Gala a wonderful success.

SAVE THE DATES

Sensational Saturday –

We are pleased to announce that David Kisor, with Growing Sound, will be the presenter for Sensational Saturday both in Dothan and Montgomery. Dothan's Sensational Saturday is scheduled for January 25, 2014. Montgomery has their Sensational Saturday scheduled for February 22, 2014.



Week of the Young Child –

Teacher Training and Children's Concerts

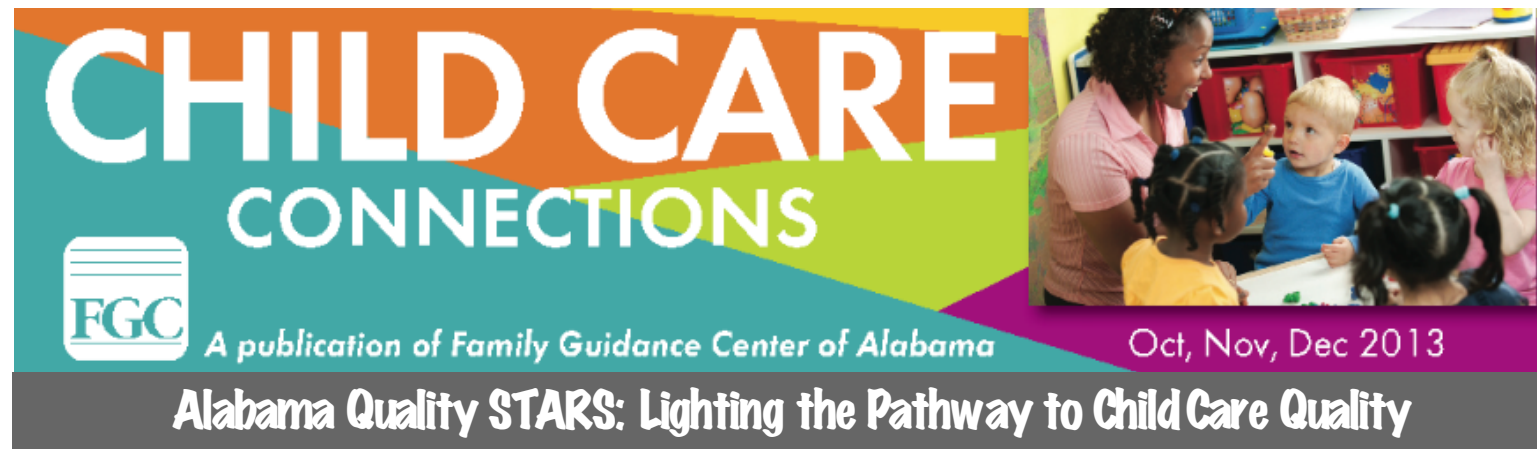
Mr. Al (Al Rasso) will be joining the staff of Family Guidance Center as we celebrate the Week of the Young Child in April 2014. Mr. Al will present a teacher training as well as concerts for children. Watch your calendars for more information about this upcoming event.



More information about both events will follow at a later date.

Please visit the Resource Library in your region to check out CD's by both of these children's musicians.

We look forward to seeing everyone at both of these special training events!



Quality early learning experiences help children succeed in school and beyond. The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) is excited to launch the pilot program for Alabama Quality STARS. Alabama Quality STARS is Alabama's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for all licensed child care programs in our state. QRIS is a process for supporting and recognizing

child care centers for providing high-quality child care. Because so many of Alabama's young children participate in early learning programs, it is important to make sure these programs provide children with the best possible start. Alabama Quality STARS will connect families to child care and early learning programs with the help of an easy-to-understand rating system. Alabama Quality STARS will also offer supports to child care providers to help them develop programs that target each child's learning and development. In June and July, DHR conducted several QRIS Awareness Sessions across the state. Licensed centers that attended the Awareness Sessions were given the opportunity to volunteer to take part in the QRIS pilot program scheduled for later this year.

Developed in Collaboration with Early Care and Education Stakeholders

Alabama Quality STARS was developed in collaboration with early care and education stakeholders from across the state. The Alabama Department of Human Resources worked with a 40-member QRIS Steering Committee to develop the standards for the program. The Steering Committee's vision for Alabama Quality STARS is to assess, improve, reward and recognize quality early care and education programs.

How Alabama Quality STARS Works

Alabama Quality STARS combines the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) and Program Administration Scale (PAS) along with an evaluation of curriculum,

program assessment, and staff training to measure quality in a comprehensive way. Programs are rated on a scale of one to five. This voluntary system requires increasing progress by providers in standard areas of management and administrative practices, family involvement and community partnerships, learning environment and curriculum, and staff qualification and professional development.

All licensed child care programs in good standing with DHR are eligible to enroll in Alabama Quality STARS and can voluntarily decide whether they want to participate and achieve higher ratings. Centers that cannot be licensed by DHR (e.g. military centers, public school programs, post-secondary and university based programs, Tribal centers, etc.) are also eligible for participation, but must be evaluated to determine the appropriate STAR rating.

Alabama Quality STARS uses a "building block" approach. This means that all requirements at STAR One must be met before moving on to STAR Two; all the requirements for STAR One and STAR Two must be met before moving on to STAR Three; all the requirements for STAR One, Two and Three must be met before moving on to STAR Four; and all the requirements for STAR One, Two, Three and Four must be met before moving on to STAR Five.

Alabama Quality STARS will give child care providers valuable tools for improving the quality of their programs and provide a pathway for providers to establish standards of excellence.

Learn more about Alabama Quality STARS by contacting the Alabama Department of Human Resources, Child Care Services Division at 334.242.1425.

The Power of Play

Play is the highest form of research ~Albert Einstein

There is real power in play. Play is the vital activity that children use to learn about and interact with their world, and gain the mental, physical and social skills necessary to succeed later in life. For children, play is the vehicle for exploring and learning, developing new skills, and connecting with others. When children engage in self-directed play, they are following their interests, exploring the unknown, linking outcomes with choices, conquering their fears, and making friends. Professor Karen Hutchinson of Rowan University has stated, "Play is actually the work of a child in which they are preparing themselves for adult roles and for society at large."

Hands-on experiences foster brain development in children of all ages. Children need to push, pull, pedal, climb, run, crawl, build, act out, and all of the other ways children play in order to develop in a balanced manner. Child care providers can provide toys that allow for open-ended play, for example – balls, a sandbox, blocks, art supplies. Make your classroom a place that children can't wait to get to everyday.

As child care providers, we need to strive to provide a rich learning environment that stimulates the child's natural curiosity and creativity. Classrooms with multi-sensory, hands-on activities, active, and child-centered environments offer children unique opportunities for playfulness – in other words, to explore the world around them.

Alabama Pathways Core Knowledge Areas

The goal of the *Alabama Pathways to Quality Care And Education* (Alabama Pathways) is “to provide a path to support and advance the best practices of those who care for and teach children birth through 12 years.” The Alabama Pathways Professional Development Lattice provides early childhood and school-age care professionals with a tool to track their professional development. The Alabama Pathways Core Knowledge Areas (APCKA) serve as a foundational checklist of knowledge, skills, and abilities that child care professionals can use to guide and track their professional development.



You can view the Alabama Pathways brochure on the DHR website at www.dhr.alabama.gov in the regular brochure version and in a printer friendly version. Hard copies of the brochure can be obtained by calling the Alabama DHR Child Care Services Division at 334-244-1425 or toll-free at 866-528-1694 and asking to speak with a Quality Enhancement Coordinator.

Additional CPR and First Aid Classes Available

Montgomery County — Please call Janet Brealy, Healthy Child Care Alabama at 334-206-2910 to learn more about additional First Aid and/or CPR classes. Please leave your name and phone number.

Autauga, Dallas, Lowndes or Wilcox County — If you live in these counties and need CPR and/or First Aid, please call Nancy Wilson, Healthy Child Care Alabama at 334-874-2550. Please leave your name and phone number.

Elmore or Chilton County — If you live in either of these counties and need CPR and/or First Aid, please call Debbie Parker, Healthy Child Care Alabama at 205-280-5700. Please leave your name and phone number.

Connecting to the FCC Website

To access calendar and training information go to www.familyguidancecenter.org. - on the right hand side of the home page you will see a purple box. Locate the file that you want to open and double click.



Important Information

When making your selection for class registration, please note the title of the class you are going to attend. We do offer the same class in various locations to allow easier access for providers in all our counties. If you have already attended a class in one county, it is important to choose a different title so you receive the most information and can be confident that it will be counted towards your total professional development hours for the year. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to check with the office you contact to register for training.

Fall Felt Activities

Infants — *Black and White Book*
Materials: Black felt, white poster board, glue, hole punch, yarn
Cut simple, basic shapes from black felt. Glue the shapes onto square pieces of poster board. Punch holes in each poster board square. Fasten the squares together with yarn. Hold a baby on your lap and share the book. Point to shapes as you name them for baby.

Toddlers — *Stringing Felt Circles*
Materials: Colored felt, shoe string, scissors, large button
Cut colored felt into five 4-inch circles. Use scissors to cut a nickel-size hole in the center of each circle. Tie a large button to one end of a shoe string. Show toddlers how to string the felt circles onto the shoe string. The large button on the end of the string will prevent circles from slipping off the string.



Preschoolers — *Button Holes*
Materials: Colored felt, shoe string, two large, round buttons
Cut felt into ten 4-inch squares. Fold the squares in half; cut a 1-inch slit in the middle of the fold. Unfold the squares to reveal a 2-inch button hole in the middle of the squares. String a large, round button on each end of a shoe string, securing each button with a knot. Show preschoolers how to put the button through the button hole in a square, and slide the square along the string. When all squares are on the string, reverse the process by unbuttoning the squares from the string.

Schoollagers — *Felt Puppets*
Materials: Felt, shoe string, art supplies
Cut pairs of felt shapes to fit children's hands. Punch holes around the edges of the shapes. Children can lace the shapes together with a shoe string. Provide art supplies for children to decorate the puppets. Schoolagers may want to use the puppets in a puppet show.

Infant Quality Tip

Take the Babies Outside!

Infants are in the sensory motor stage of development and therefore learn by exploring and receiving feedback from their entire body. Infants learn through all of their senses by touching, smelling, hearing, seeing and tasting the items in the environment. This interaction with materials offers experience and knowledge upon which to build later experiences. Outdoor play is very important for the development of babies. It's one of the best ways for children to develop their physical, cognitive and social skills as well as building the foundation for literacy, math and science concepts. From the minute they can sit up on their bottoms, they should be exploring their world outside. They should be engaged with all of its sensory stimulating pleasures.

A cartoon illustration of a baby with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a pink dress with white polka dots, sitting on the grass and holding a red flower to their nose.

AELG Update

Family Guidance Center would like to congratulate the thirty-four childcare providers who recently completed the Alabama Early Guidelines Course. This course consists of nine training sessions that cover a wide range of topics dealing with child development. The benefits of taking the AELG course are that you will become familiar with the Guidelines and you will be able to utilize it as a valuable tool in planning and working with your children.

The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines is an important milestone on the Career Lattice of Alabama's Child Care and Education Professional Development System — Pathways to Quality Care and Education.

AELG will be offered in Montgomery in January 2014. Call the Child Care Education and Training Department at 270-4100 ext. 235 for further details.

Toddler Quality Tip

Name That Noise

Ask toddlers to identify noises as they occur, this encourages the ability to process information and recognize sounds in everyday life.

Have different people say something to the toddlers. Being able to recognize voices and noises helps toddlers understand there are many levels of meaning behind the sounds they are hearing.

A cartoon illustration of two young children, a girl and a boy, both wearing headphones and smiling. The girl is holding a green musical instrument, possibly a xylophone or a small keyboard.

New Information

Training Express
The Child Care Education and Training Program staff in Montgomery and Dothan are always ready to support caregivers by providing technical assistance or bringing training sessions you request to your site. Sessions, with topics based on your needs, can be planned for 1 or 2 hours either during the day or evening. To schedule these sessions, please call the office you normally contact to register for training.



DATES OUR OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED

- October 14, 2013 — Columbus Day
- November 11, 2013 — Veterans Day
- November 28, 2013 — Thanksgiving
- December 25, 2013 — Christmas Day

CDA Update

CDA Renewal
A CDA Credential may only be renewed for the original setting, age-level endorsement, and specialization. The Credential is valid for either three years or five years depending on when it was first issued. Renewing the CDA Credential ensures that Associates maintain current knowledge and skills while working with children and families. The renewal process can now be done online by accessing the Council for Professional Recognition website at www.cdacouncil.org. The renewal application may be submitted no sooner than six months before the credential expiration date. Renewal candidates must review the criteria and process and take advantage of the online discount fee noted on the Council for Professional Recognition website.

USDA Food Safety Project

The USDA Food Safety Project at ASU holds a FREE “Food Safety Development for Early Childhood Educators” workshop — Saturday, November 2, 2013 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Hosted by the Family Guidance Center, Bldg. D at 2358 Fairlane Drive in Montgomery.
This workshop addresses proper food safety and illness prevention practices in the home, classroom and child care environments, as well as how to share food safety content with children and parents. Though not affiliated with “Serve Safe,” this workshop meets DHR Alabama Pathways Professional Development criteria in several areas.

Registration Required: To register, email Tillie Jones at tilliemcquaidjones@gmail.com or leave a message with complete details at 334-229-4189. Provide your name, name of your center/agency, and contact information (phone number, mailing and email addresses).

Deadline to Register: Thursday, October 24, 2013

Registration

- Registration Procedures**
- Registration is on a first come, first served basis.
 - To attend any class please call the number listed below and on the calendar grid.
 - Cancellation calls are accepted prior to the training. **Please remember that if you are not able to attend, by calling you will allow someone else to use that slot.**
- Registration Guidelines**
- To register in Montgomery please call 334.270.4100 ext. 235 or 1.800.499.6597 if long distance. To register in Dothan please call 334.712.7777 ext. 227 or 1.800.290.0933 if long distance.
 - At either location, you may leave a voice mail message after office hours on the appropriate extension.
 - Walk-ins will be accommodated as seating allows.

Registration Notes
SINCE CHILD CARE IS NOT AVAILABLE, PLEASE MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUR CHILDREN.

Family Guidance Center's training is open to all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, handicapping disability, age, sex, political beliefs or religions. If your attendance is hindered by transportation, language, location or any other reason, you may contact the Montgomery office at 334.270.4100 or 1.800.499.6597 or the Dothan office at 334.712.7777 or 1.800.290.0933 to discuss the matter. As resources are available, attempts will be made to overcome obstacles that hinder attendance. Funding provided by Alabama Department of Human Resources.