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 judged 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 Nick’s 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.

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

Sensational Saturday –

We are pleased to announce that David Krueger, 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.

Work 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 (QRS) for all licensed child care programs in our state. QRS 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 QRS Awareness Sessions across the state. Licensed centers that attended the Awareness Sessions were given the opportunity to volunteer to take part in the QRS 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 QRS 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.
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 Lattices provide early childhood and school-age care professionals with a tool to track their professional development. The Alabama Pathways Core Knowledge Areas (APAKA) 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 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 334-244-1345 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 Beatty, Healthy Child Care Alabama at 334-206-2910 to learn more about additional First Aid and 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 Debbie Parker, Healthy Child Care Alabama at 334-874-2550. Please leave your name and phone number.

Cullman or Calhoun County – If you live in either of these counties and need CPR and/or First Aid, please call Nancie Wilson, Healthy Child Care Alabama at 334-874-2550. Please leave your name and phone number.

Fall Feat Activities

Infants – Black and White Book
Materials: Black and white, poster board, glue, yarn
Cut simple, black and white shapes from poster board. Glue the shapes onto squares of poster board. Give each child a square to glue their shapes onto.

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.

Schoolagers – 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 use the puppets in a puppet show.

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 in your 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.

Alabama Pathways to Quality Care and Education

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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

Family Guidance Center’s training is open to all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, handicap, sex, age, socio-economic status, marital status, political beliefs or religion. If you are provided accommodation by transportation, language, location or any other reason, you must 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.

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