January, February, March Newsletter/Calendar 2016

Save the Dates

Mark your calendar for these exciting events in both the Dothan and Montgomery locations!

Week of the Young Child - Teacher Training and Children’s Events

Teacher Training - April 11, 2016
Children’s Event - April 12, 2016
Montgomery
Teacher Training - April 12, 2016
Children’s Events - April 13, 2016
Supporting Children with Special Needs Conference - Montgomery
May 21, 2016
Opening Doors for Children with Special Needs Conference - Dothan
August 2016

Sensational Saturday 2016

Family Guidance Center is excited to announce that Dr. Luis Hernandez, Early Childhood Education Specialist, will be the guest speaker for our Sensational Saturday Child Care Conferences this year. Dr. Hernandez brings solid expertise based on his work history in Head Start, child care, Pre K programs, college and universities, child care resource and referral administration, and professional development design. His expertise includes early literacy, dual language learning, adult learning practices, changing demographics and diversity, and ECE management and leadership topics. As a regular presenter and keynote speaker at national, state, and local conferences, Luis is highly regarded for his motivational and energizing presentations.

Sensational Saturday Child Care Conference - Dothan
Saturday, January 30th at Wallace Community College - Cherry Hall
Registration/Sign-In begins at 7:30 am

Sensational Saturday Child Care Conference - Montgomery
Saturday, March 19th at Auburn Montgomery - Taylor Center
Registration/Sign-In begins at 7:00 am

Hope to see you for an energizing Saturday!!

What is Quality Child Care? Why is it Important?

- High quality care is much more than custodial care; it provides children with meaningful learning and play experiences guided by qualified teachers in an enriched, educational environment.
- Children with access to high quality preschool and child care programs are more likely to acquire the skills needed to enter kindergarten ready to succeed and adapt to new learning and social environments.
- During the first 5 years of a child’s life, the majority of the brain’s architecture is determined.
- Early childhood experiences set the stage for all future learning.
- For children’s programs, quality is paramount to have a positive impact on learning and to provide the economic and financial benefits we expect from our investments.

Quality child care also must meet the basic needs of all children in the child care setting. The safety of children must be the primary focus of child care providers. The child care providers need to protect the health and safety of the children in their care. They also need to provide opportunities for stimulation and learning through developmentally appropriate experiences. Building relationships among children, parents, extended family and communities are also an important aspect of meeting the basic needs of children. All areas are equally important for meeting these basic needs of children.

One way to ensure that the needs of children are being met is to use the Environment Rating Scales as a way to evaluate your child care program. These scales are internationally recognized evidence-based quality improvement tools, specifically designed for the classroom environment. They enable programs to evaluate their environment and provision of care, and to identify clear steps for moving forward to enhance quality. The Environment Rating Scales provide a detailed and objective snapshot on the day of practice within a setting, using a range of indicators.

What do the ER Scales Predict? Children in higher quality settings are found to have better school success in the following areas:
- Language ability
- Pre-academic skills (math and reading readiness)
- Attitudes toward teachers and perceptions of their own competence
- Relationships with caregivers and teachers
- Social skills

What are the Types of Environment Rating Scales?
The Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS-R), is designed to assess group programs for children birth to 2 1/2 years. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R) is used to assess programs for children 2 1/2 through 5 years of age.

The third rating scale is the Program Administration Scale (PAS). This rating scale provides directors with an administrative rating scale format to achieve and maintain a high quality child care program.

Please check the training calendar for your area on classes on the Environment Rating Scales. There are copies of the ITERS-R, ECERS-R and PAS rating scales available for checkout in the Resource Libraries in both Dothan and Montgomery.

A Day for Directors

On Saturday, January 30, 2016, the Child Care Education and Training Department will be hosting a Director’s Conference in Montgomery from 7:30 am to 2:00 pm. Our guest speaker for the conference will be Andrea McCain.

Andrea McCain serves as the Vice President of Human Resources for the Central Alabama Area of Regions Bank. She joined Regions in 2003. McCain holds a Bachelor’s degree in Human Resources Management from Auburn University. She has a Master’s degree in Human Resources Management from Troy University in Montgomery. McCain has a Senior Professional in Human Resources Certification from the Human Resources Certification Institute, Washington DC. She serves as a board member for the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra, Family Sunshine Center, and Montgomery Public School’s Business and Finance Academy.

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The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) is a professional development course for educators who work with children from birth through age five. The course is offered in two formats: face-to-face and online. The online component is available through AELG Online, while the face-to-face courses are held in various locations across the state.

### AELG Online
AELG Online offers the AELG Course in an online format, allowing educators to complete the course at their own pace. The online course includes readings, activities, and online discussions that will guide participants in understanding child development and learning, and implementing best practices to prepare children for school and life. Effective January 18, 2016, the online course is available again this quarter.

### AELG Face-to-Face - Montgomery
The AELG Face-to-Face course will be offered at the Montgomery AELG Center. This course is designed for educators who work with children from birth through five years of age and aims to help them understand child development and learning, and implement best practices to prepare children for success in school and life.

### CDA Update
The CDA program is invaluable in transforming child care providers into child care professionals. Family Guidance Center has once again partnered with ProSolutions Training to provide face-to-face training opportunities. These trainings are the third of four in the series and are held for directors. These trainings are open to directors for additional information. For the Dothan area, please call 334-712-7777 ext. 227. For the Montgomery area, please call 334-270-4100 ext 231. If you are interested in this training opportunity, please call the Training Department for additional information.

### Online Training Opportunities
Family Guidance Center has once again partnered with ProSolutions Training. Through this partnership, you are a able to earn a portion of your training hours to meet the DHR requirements through our online courses.

### Three easy steps to enroll:
1. Call and talk to the FGC online training specialist and complete enrollment form.
2. Verify that you have worked a full year in child care.
3. Verify that you have taken at least half of your yearly required training hours as face to face classes at FGC.

### Register to Win!
The Training and Education Program at Family Guidance Center’s Dothan office offers hope that you are utilizing the information that is provided to you each quarter through our Child Care Connections Newsletter. To show our appreciation, we will have a special drawing for some exciting materials to be used with the children in your care. To win, you must mention our Child Care Connections Newsletter. The deadline to enter this drawing will be January 27, 2016.

### Dates Our Offices Will Be Closed
January 1, 2016 — New Year’s Day
January 18, 2016 — Robert E. Lee/Martin Luther King Jr. Day
May 17, 2016 — President’s Day

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(More training opportunities and resources are available online at [AELG Online](https://www.aelgonline.com) and through the Family Guidance Center Resource Library.)