**Sensational Saturday 2020**

The Child Care Education and Training Program in Dothan and Montgomery are excited to announce that Shawn Brown, *Super Fun Show* will be the special speaker for our Sensational Saturday Child Care Conference 2020. Shawn, originally from Chicago, Illinois and now Johns Creek, Georgia writes and implements unique and entertaining curriculum enhancement programs for child care centers, elementary school and private schools. He uses his infectious music for hooking his audience into learning and moving while having “Super Fun.”

Shawn’s CDs are available for checkout in the Resource Library in both Dothan and Montgomery.

For more information on Shawn, visit his website at www.SuperFunShow.com.

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**Sensory Connections**

We know that children use their senses to obtain information. They use sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell to take in and understand the world around them. These five basic sensory systems allow children to process and understand the world during sensory play. Therefore, when planning activities/interactions educators need to involve as many of their senses as possible. The more senses we involve, the more connections we make in the brain. Everything a child experiences helps to make those connections. Repeating the experience strengthens the connections. A child is born with synapses that control heart rate, breathing, appetite and sleeping. However, during a child’s early years, what they experience helps to develop those synapses. Research has shown that by the age of 3, the brain is 80% of its adult size. And by age 5, brain size grows to 90%. The amount of growth depends on the stimulation it receives.

Think about all of the information that we acquire through our senses; texture, color, temperature, scent, sound, etc. Then imagine a group of children playing with bubbles. Children love playing with bubbles! What senses are they using during this experience?

**Sight -** They see the bubbles.

**Sound -** There are oohs and aahs, squeals of laughter or use of descriptive words.

**Touch -** They reach for and try to pop the bubbles.

**Smell -** Add a scent like vanilla or lavender or simply the freshness of outdoor air.

In this activity, the children also chase or try to catch the bubbles. This may lead to another question. Do we really only have five sensory systems? Actually, there are two other systems that work with the senses called the proprioception and vestibular systems. Basically proprioception tells us the position of our body and movement in relation to the environment. For example, if you close your eyes and raise your arm above your head, this is proprioception. The vestibular system (located in our inner ear) controls our perception of motion, balance, head position and spatial awareness. Rolling over is an activity that stimulates your vestibular system. Think about standing up, turning around and sitting back down. This simple activity uses both systems.

In order to truly meet all of a child’s needs, we should include their sensory requirements too. Allowing children to move actually helps them better focus and pay attention. By allowing them to wiggle, jump, spin or crawl before an activity that requires sitting, you are preparing them to take in and process information. As educators, choosing a variety of techniques to allow children to learn to their fullest potential is key. So the next activity you plan or song you sing add a little bit of movement to prepare your children to learn to their fullest potential is key. So the next activity you plan or song you sing add a little bit of movement to prepare your children.
Pumpkin STEM Challenges

Infants: Pumpkin Exploration
Materials: Variety of pumpkins, washed and dried thoroughly
Sit or prop infant on the floor. Allow them to explore the pumpkins placed around them. Extend the activity by cutting open a pumpkin and placing the contents into a zip bag sealed with tape for a mess-free pumpkin guts sensory bag. Supervise infants at all times during these activities.

Toddlers: Pumpkin Stacking STEM Challenge
Materials: Mini pumpkins (1 - 2 inches), play dough
Challenge toddlers to stack the mini pumpkins using the play dough to support the pumpkins one atop the other.

Preschoolers: Pumpkin STEM Challenge
Materials: Small real pumpkins (3-5 inches), blocks, wooden popsicle sticks
Challenge the preschoolers to create a structure that will support the pumpkins using only the blocks and sticks. Further extend the learning by asking them to make their structure taller.

Schoolagers: Pumpkin STEM Challenge
Materials: Mini pumpkin décor (1-2 inches), paper straw-some cut in half, play dough
Challenge schoolagers to create a structure that will hold 5 little pumpkins using only the straws and play dough. Further extend the learning by asking them to make their structure taller.

Innovate

Health and Safety Tip
As we enter into the cold and flu season, plan now to get your flu shot and encourage others to do so. October 21-28 is National Health Education Week. The more we know about keeping children healthy the better we can provide a healthier environment for those children in our care. Utilize this week to provide your clients with information regarding flu facts, vaccination and when to keep children at home if sick. Plan to attend health and safety classes offered in your area. Remember, if we know better, we do better.

Update for Directors
Every other month, the FGC Training Department offers a thirty-minute teleconference for Directors. One hour credit is this is a convenient way to gain insight and to connect with other Directors in your area. Without leaving your center, you can learn about new trends in child care and in engagement in discussion about ways to improve your center and staff dynamics.

Our next teleconference is entitled, When Parents Are Late. It will be held November 15th, from 12 pm - 12:30 pm.

This quarter, both Dothan and Montgomery locations will be offering trainings for directors. These trainings are the Especially for Directors series and are held for Owners, Directors and Assistant Directors of day care centers. Please check your calendars for the dates, times and locations of these upcoming directors trainings.

DATES OUR OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED:
October 14, 2019 - Columbus Day
November 11, 2019 - Veteran’s Day
November 28, 2019 - Thanksgiving
December 25, 2019 - Christmas

Email Update

Please make sure that the Child Care Education and Training Program in your region has your correct email address. We continue to utilize our database to keep you updated on information about training opportunities available to you.

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Online ECE Courses - APT
Alabama Public Television offers the following online classes through their Early Childhood Education Department. For additional information, please contact Lisa Nunn, lnuun@agro, 1-800-239-5233.

1. Early Learning Guidelines: 10/7/19 - 11/25/19
3. STEM for the Preschool Classroom: 10/28/19 - 12/9/19

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

Three easy steps to enroll:
1. Call and talk to the FGC online training specialist and complete an 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

If you are interested in this training opportunity, please call the Training Department for additional information. For the Dothan area, please call 334-712-7777, ext. 227. For the Montgomery area, please call 334-270-4100 ext. 235. Please ask to speak to the FGC Online Training Specialist, or, if necessary, please leave your name, phone number and a brief message and your call will be returned.

Registration Notes
Since Child Care is Not Available, Please Make Other Arrangements for Your Child/Children
Family Guidance Center’s training is open to everyone regardless of race, color, national origin, handicap, disability, age, sex, political beliefs or religion. If your attendance is hindered by transportation, language, location is any other reason, you may contact the Montgomery office at 334-270-6360 or 1-800-693-0137 for the Dothan office at 334-712-7777 or 1-800-290-0933 to discuss the matter. As resources are available, alternate training methods may be made to overcome obstacles that hinder attendance. Funding provided by Alabama Department of Human Resources.