

CHILD CARE CONNECTIONS



A publication of Family Guidance Center of Alabama



April, May, June 2023

Celebrate YOU! Rest, Relax, Recharge!

April is the month chosen by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to celebrate the **Week of the Young Child**. This year's celebration is April 1-7, 2023 and the theme is *Working Together for All Children*. **WOYC** recognizes the needs of young children, their families and programs/services that help meet those needs.

As early childhood professionals, this includes you and all you do to help children and families succeed. Generally speaking, as early childhood professionals, we often put everyone else's needs ahead of our own needs. We tend to be last on the list. However, the reverse should be true; we need to be at the top of the list! Research tells us that if we do not give our mind and body a break, they tend not to work as efficiently as they could. All too often, we neglect the very basic of needs, SLEEP! Rest helps our body regenerate, recharge and heal. This does not mean a cat nap here or there or even a few hours at night. It means letting go of the day, focusing on relaxing and getting that deep restorative sleep. The average adult gets less than 7 hours of sleep a night. As a rule of thumb, The National Sleep Foundation recommends 7-9 hours of sleep.

Take time out for Y-O-U. Find several things that relax you, physically and mentally. Mental health is just as important as physical health. Overload either one and they tend to shut down. Relaxation looks different for everyone. Make time to listen to a favorite song, go for a stroll, take in the great outdoors, read a book, meditate, or whatever works for you. These can be quick little breaks that give you an opportunity to reset. Sure, a long vacation would be the ultimate goal, but these quick little timeouts allow you to do them daily without any cost!

Once you find yourself rested and relaxed, it is time to RECHARGE! Both these simple concepts can increase your mood and attention span, boost creativity and concentration, and generally make you feel better overall. Watch for Special WOYC activities.

Upcoming Early Childhood Webcasts

Join us to learn about FGC Programs that provide many resources for your families and staff:

- 4/12/23: **A Brief Explanation of the Child Care Subsidy Program**
- 5/3/23: **Resources for Families: Counseling Division, Families In Transition Program, and Parenting Matters Program.**
- 6/21/23: **Additional Family Resources: Work Ready! Program, Life Is Fun Together (LIFT), and Working Matters Program.**



What child care professionals need to know: Alabama law clearly defines child abuse and has clear laws regarding mandatory reporting. Any person whose profession brings them in contact with children daily is legally obligated to report signs of suspected child abuse or neglect. The **Alabama Department of Human Resources** has online training for mandated reporters, which includes child care providers. This training covers how to recognize the signs and symptoms of child abuse and why it is so important to report *even the suspicion of abuse or neglect*. The online Mandated Reporter Trainings for 2023 can be found at <https://aldhr.remote-learner.net>. On this site, you will find office contact information for every county in Alabama, along with instructions for filling out the online reporting form #1593. All information is confidential. You can also call the Family Sunshine Center (334-206-2100) to request materials or speakers to come to your center. Children who are abused or neglected may be suffering in silence and you may be their only lifeline. Long after the cuts, bruises and broken bones have healed, emotional scars and effects of adverse childhood experiences can last a lifetime. **Be willing to step up for a child who needs your help.**

RESOURCE LIBRARY

Our Resource Libraries in Dothan and Montgomery have lots of fun in store for you during April, May, and June, including food, activities, and prizes! Here's what's coming up:

Dothan

- April 5: Bunnies, Baskets and Books
- May 5: Teacher Appreciation Activity Stations
- June 7: Summer Beach Bash

Montgomery

- April 13: Open House: Month of the Young Child Celebration
- May 11: Teacher Appreciation Activity Stations
- June 8: Beach Ball Party

For more information about our events or resources, please call the Resource Specialist in your area:

- Dothan:** Michelle Woodham (334) 712-7777 ext. 224
- Montgomery:** Lisa Kirkland (334) 270-4100 ext. 267

Family Guidance Center's Child Care Resource Libraries 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 (Evening appointments available)
The Resource Library offers resources and so much more. Visit us today to see what's new!

Infant Tip: Infant Massage

Infants need secure attachments to grow and thrive. That is, the emotional connection formed by nonverbal emotional communication between an infant and a primary caregiver and parents. This attachment influences a child's mental development, as well as a child's need for security and calmness.

On your mark, get set and massage. Play soothing music, while sitting comfortably on the floor with the baby safely on a towel in front of you. Make good eye contact with the baby and let the baby know that you are going to massage him/her.

Rub oil between your hands near the baby's ears. Gently massage the baby, be sure to talk with the baby about what you are doing, "I'm going to massage your face shoulders, neck, tummy (loosen the diaper) legs, feet, back, etc.

"Ahh, so soothing, so calming, so relaxing!"

Word of caution-- nurturing touch can begin from birth, but structured massage may be too stimulating in the *very early* weeks after birth.

*Abstract for the Internalized Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health by Rebecca Mrnjak, et al."

Toddler Tip: "Rocking and Rolling"

Movement activities are promoted by providing equipment that helps facilitate brain development in young children.

Carefully place a toddler onto an exercise ball on his stomach, holding onto the young child's legs and arms, rock the child back and forth.

Belly laughs begin as the child rocks and rolls, enjoying the sensations produced from this movement which activates the vestibular system in the inner ear.

The vestibular system receives messages about balance and movement from the neck, eyes and body which helps generate muscle tone, allowing us to move smoothly and efficiently.

"Rock and Rolling" is like a toddler experiencing a toddler ride at the Fair. Yipee! The child wants to do it again and again!

Director's Conference: Caring for the Caregiver VIA ZOOM

Join us on Saturday, April 22, 2023, from 9:00am-11:00 am, as **Jeff Johnson, Explorations Early Learning**, presents **Caring for The Caregiver**. Child Care Directors often are so focused on caring for the children and staff that they neglect themselves, leading to stress and burn-out. Jeff will discuss ways to find time to care for yourself and decrease stress in your life.



April Showers Activities

Infants: Weather Elements Sensory Play

Add cotton balls to a small box for clouds. Add blue vase stones for raindrops or you can use a small bottle with water inside (add a few drops of blue coloring). Make lightening from yellow or gold chenille stems cut to 6 inches and creased into a zigzag. Add flattened gold cupcake liners for the sun. Explore the textures in the box. Pick up an item and rub it on the infant's arm and describe the texture (soft, fluffy, cold, hard, prickly, crumple, etc.) Say the words to identify the elements represented. Let them touch the items with your supervision only.

Toddlers: Puddle Movement Game

Make large paper puddles to place on the floor. This can be done with just one puddle for younger children. Challenge children to get to the other side of the puddle without getting "wet". They can jump over it, walk around it, build a bridge over it, etc. When using several puddles, Children can identify different shapes, colors, letters, or numbers as they move from one puddle to another.

Preschoolers: Raindrop Counting

Materials: Card stock, foam or felt, marker. Cut several cloud shapes from card stock, foam, or felt. Write a number on each cloud. Cut several raindrops from the same materials. Children identify the number and place that many raindrops underneath the cloud.

School Aged: Rain Jar

Materials: Mason jar, paper towel, rubber band, eye dropper, blue watercolor paint or colored water. Place paper towel over the opening of the jar and secure it with a rubber band. Children take turns dropping paint onto the paper towel. As it becomes saturated, the "rain" will fall into the jar.

UPDATES 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! Join us as we learn what is trending in child care and discuss ways to move your center to the next level. Our next Director's trainings will be:

4/22/23 **Director's Conference: Caring for the Caregiver.**
9:00 am - 11:00 am via ZOOM.

5/10/23 **Especially for Directors: Come Learn More About FGC's Child Care Subsidy Program.**

6/14/23 **Especially for Directors: Interviews that Prepare Teachers to Work in your Unique Program.**

Alabama Pathways 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 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
- 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.



Claire Wallace, our Training and Education Resource Specialist, retired on March 17, 2023. Claire is pictured here with FGC Executive Director, Yolanda Adams and Kathy Camp, Assistant Executive Director, Director of Early Care and Education Services. We extend our best wishes to Claire and our thanks for 22 years of service.

ONLINE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

APT's Early Childhood Online **SPRING 2023 Courses-Registration opens on APTV's website on March 13, 2023**

To register for these upcoming facilitated trainings, visit www.aptlearnonline.org.

- Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) (April 3--May 29, 2023)

Classes offered April 10-May 29, 2023:

- Talking to Young Children About Race and Racism
- CDA Credential: An Introduction
- Early Brain Development and the Lasting Importance of Caregiver-Child Relationships
- Kindergarten Readiness: Essential Math Skills for Preschoolers

APT's Early Childhood Online **SUMMER 2023 Courses-Registration opens on APTV's website on June 12, 2023**

- Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG): July 10-August 28, 2023

Classes offered July 17-August 28, 2023

- Sesame Street in Communities: Training, Resources and Support for ECE Educators
- Exploring Literacy Development with PBS Kids
- Exploring STEM with School-Aged Children
- Kindergarten Readiness: Essential Math Skills for Preschoolers

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 APT training opportunities

Featured Collaborations with Community Partners

The Family Sunshine Center is offering training at FGC in areas such as Bullying, Online Safety for Children and adults, and Child abuse prevention beginning in April.

United Cerebral Palsy (UCP): FGC is pleased to collaborate with UCP to enhance training opportunities for early childhood professionals.

Truman Pierce Institute (TPI) offers preschool and school-age trainings for child care professionals. Watch for training from TPI in April and May via ZOOM.

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

Calvary Baptist Church hosts trainings in Houston County.

Healthy Child Care Alabama is offering CPR/First Aid certification classes at FGC in April and June, as well as CCDF classes in May.

Alabama Public Television (see previous article, as well as the Montgomery and Dothan training calendars for classes).



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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.

REGISTRATION FOR TRAINING

Registration for Early Childhood professionals of licensed facilities must be completed 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.

Health and Safety Resource

The *American Academy of Pediatrics* offers many health and safety-related tips on their Healthy Children website, www.HealthyChildren.org. The website has articles pertaining to children from birth through age 16 years of age. There is also a free parent newsletter that parents or child care providers can register for on the website.

