

CHILD CARE CONNECTIONS



A publication of Family Guidance Center of Alabama



July, August September 2025



The Benefits of Play for Adults



In our hectic modern lives, many of us focus so heavily on work, family commitments, and caring for others that we never seem to have time for pure fun. Somewhere between childhood and adulthood, we stop playing. When we do carve out some leisure time, we're more likely to zone out in front of the TV or computer than engage in fun, rejuvenating play like we did as children. But just because we're adults, that doesn't mean we have to take ourselves so seriously and make life all about work.

We all need to play. Play is not just essential for kids; it can be an important source of relaxation and stimulation for adults as well. Playing with children, friends, and pets, is a sure and fun way to fuel your imagination, creativity, problem-solving abilities, and emotional well-being.

Play can:

- **Relieve stress.** Play is fun and can trigger the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.
- **Improve brain function.** Playing chess, completing puzzles, or pursuing other fun activities that challenge the brain can help prevent memory problems and improve brain function. The social interaction of playing with family and friends can also help ward off stress and depression.
- **Stimulate the mind and boost creativity.** Young children often learn best when they are playing, and that principle applies to adults, as well. You'll learn a new task better when it's fun and you're in a relaxed and playful mood. Play can also stimulate your imagination, helping you adapt and problem solve.
- **Improve relationships and your connection to others.** Sharing laughter and fun can foster empathy, compassion, trust, and intimacy with others. Play doesn't have to be a specific activity; it can also be a state of mind. Developing a playful nature can help you loosen up in stressful situations, break the ice with strangers, make new friends, and form new relationships.
- **Keep you feeling young and energetic.** In the words of George Bernard Shaw, "We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing." Playing can boost your energy and vitality and even improve your resistance to disease, helping you feel your best.

Incorporating more fun and play into your daily life can improve the quality of your relationships, as well as your mood and outlook. Even in the most difficult of times, taking time away from your troubles to play or laugh can go a long way toward making you feel better. It's true what they say, laughter really is the best medicine.





RESOURCE LIBRARY



We invite you to visit our resource libraries in Dothan and Montgomery for lots of great ideas and materials to enhance your learning environment.

Each library offers a selection of books, learning materials, puppets, kits and a wide assortment of die cuts. Best of all, it is a free resource for you. We provide basic colors of construction paper for die cuts and lamination. For check out procedures and die cut orders, please contact the resource librarian in your area. Be sure to sign up for the library newsletters emailed each month.



CONTACT INFORMATION

Dothan

Library hours: 8:30 am to 4:00 pm
Monday through Friday (*evening appointments available*)
Resource Specialist:
Michelle Woodham (334) 712-7777 ext. 1713
Email: michelle.woodham@dhr.alabama.gov

Montgomery

Library hours: 8:30 am to 4:00 pm
Monday through Friday (*evening appointments available*)
Resource Specialist:
Lisa Kirkland (334) 270-4100 ext. 1102
Email: lisa.kirkland@dhr.alabama.gov

Contact information for the mental health consultant for each region:

Dothan: Amanda Hall, ahall@familyguidancecenter.org, 334-746-0905
(Butler, Crenshaw, Pike, Covington, Barbour, Coffee, Dale, Henry, Geneva, and Houston.)

Montgomery: Debbie Bailey, dbailey@familyguidancecenter.org, 334-746-1005
(Montgomery, Lowndes, Autauga, Elmore, Bullock, Macon, Lee and Russell)

For more information about the program visit: <https://www.first5alabama.org>



First 5 Alabama®
Alabama Association for Infant and
Early Childhood Mental Health

MEET OUR INFANT/TODDLER SPECIALISTS

Looking for opportunities to increase the quality of care for your infants and toddlers?
Please contact the specialist in your area:

DOTHAN: Barbara Culver, 334-712-7777 or barbara.culver@dhr.alabama.gov
MONTGOMERY: Adrienne Royster, 334-270-4100 or adrienne.royster@dhr.alabama.gov



ALABAMA PUBLIC TELEVISION'S EARLY CHILDHOOD ONLINE SUMMER 2025 TRAINING COURSES

Registration for summer facilitated classes opens Monday, June 16, 2025.

Scan the QR code below or visit our website, aptv.org/education/registration on Monday, June 16th to register.



Summer 2025 Facilitated Online Training Opportunities:

July 7 - August 25 - Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) Online
July 7 - July 28 - Exploring STEM with School-Aged Children
July 7 - July 28 - Early Brain Development and the Lasting Importance of Caregiver-Child Relationships
August 4 - August 25 - Healthy Habits for a Healthy Start: CCDF 1, 8, & 13
August 4 - August 25 - Implementing PBS Kids Resources in the Child Care Setting

APT's On-Demand Course Catalog

On-demand 2-hour trainings are always available on our website:

Scan the QR code or visit aptlearnonline.org to access APT's on-demand training enrollment.

For more APT training opportunities see the Dothan and Montgomery training calendars .





Children and Play



Rolling on the floor with a baby or getting down on your knees to play with a young child is important, both to the child's development and to your own health. Play is essential for developing social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills in children. Play is a time when children are often learning the most. Whether it's an infant playing peek-a-boo, a toddler playing make-believe, or an older child playing a board game, play develops social skills, stimulates a child's imagination and makes kids better adjusted, smarter, and less stressed. While children need time to play alone and with other children, playing with parents and caregivers is also important.

Here are some helpful tips to encourage play:

- * **Establish regular play times.** Remember, this time spent playing together is benefiting both of you.
- * **Give children your undivided attention.** Having your undivided attention makes them feel special.
- * **Get down to the child's level.** That may mean getting down on your knees or sitting on the floor.
- * **Embrace repetition.** Children learn through repetition. Let children play the same game over and over. Children will move on when they are ready.
- * **Let the children take the lead.** Become part of their game rather than trying to dictate the play. In pretend play, let the child take the lead, make the rules, and determine the pace of play. Ask questions and follow along, you'll likely get drawn into imaginative new worlds that are fun for you, too.
- * **Don't force play or try to prolong a game.** The best way to teach a new skill is to show children how something works, then step back and give them a chance to try. When the child is tired of an activity, it's time to move on to something new.
- * **Make play age-appropriate and consider safety.** If a game is too hard or too easy, it loses its sense of pleasure and fun. Help children find age-appropriate activities and understand safety rules for play. Nothing ruins a fun game faster than a child getting hurt.

Keep in mind that, as well as aiding a child's development, play can also bring adults and children closer together, strengthening bonds that can last a lifetime.



In the SPOTLIGHT



OPENING DOORS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Dothan: 8/16/25 8:30 am - 1:00 pm

Using Our Senses to Process the World

Covenant Methodist Church, 3610 W Main St, Dothan, AL 36305

Montgomery: 8/16/25 9:00 am-1:00 pm

1. Atypical Sense of Brain Development

2. Know Before You Go and Care Before You Share

Family Guidance Center 2358 Fairlane Dr., BLDG D, Montgomery, AL 36116



Interested in obtaining your Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)?
For information, visit the Council for Professional Recognition at
<https://www.cdacouncil.org/en/>





Family Guidance Center of Alabama
2358 Fairlane Drive
Montgomery, Alabama 36116

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #409
Montgomery, AL

www.familyguidancecenter.org

REMEMBER

CALENDARS

RED = Montgomery office IN PERSON classes

GREEN = ZOOM classes

BLUE = Dothan office IN PERSON classes

***Register with the HOST office

👁👁 Please see the calendar insert
for the following:

- Registration procedures
- Classes specifically for directors/administration
- Trainings in person and via ZOOM



Our office will be closed
the following dates:

July 4, 2025

September 1, 2025



SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

T.E.A.C.H. ALABAMA EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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

For more information, contact Alabama Partnership for Children at 334-271-0304. or visit

<https://alabamapartnershipforchildren.org/our-work/t-e-a-c-h/>

LEADERSHIP IN CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP

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.

For information about the Child Development Associate credential, visit <https://www.cdacouncil.org/en/>

