

CHILD CARE CONNECTIONS



A publication of Family Guidance Center of Alabama



July, August & September 2026



GET YOUR PROGRAM AND CLASSROOM READY FOR BACK-TO-SCHOOL



As summer winds down and the school year begins, childcare teachers have a wonderful opportunity to lay the foundation for a joyful, organized, and engaging year.

- Be kind to yourself. Schedule time for your mental and physical well-being. Add some self-care moments.
- Prepare your classroom with care. Label everything with picture and word labels. Create clear learning centers.
- Build strong relationships. Spend one-on-one time with each child daily. Establish fun welcome rituals.
- Establish clear routines early in the year. Provide daily visual schedules and have few rules stated in a positive manner.
- Assign classroom jobs. This helps your children help out and take ownership. It also builds independence, responsibility, and provides smoother transitions.
- Observe and assess early in the school year. Get to know where your children are developing so you can tailor your lessons and classroom environment.
- Involve families from the start. Families engaging in school experiences create a partnership that supports children's success. Keep open lines of communication and involve parents in the classroom community.
- Plan fun and engaging activities. Create themes for the school year that will focus on children's interest.
- Be flexible and patient. Be prepared for some bumps along the way and approach them with patience and flexibility. Be ready to adapt your plans based on the needs and responses of the children in your classroom. Offer lots of encouragement and positive reinforcement.
- Create a calm down space in your classroom. Set up a cozy corner with soft cushions, calming visuals, and sensory tools where children can go if they feel overwhelmed. This supports emotional regulation.
- Set clear transition signals. Use songs, timers, or bells to help children know when it's time to switch activities. This builds predictability and reduces stress.
- Regularly reflect on what's working well and what might need adjustment. Continuous improvement ensures that you're meeting the needs of the children in your classroom.



SUN SAFETY AND YOUNG CHILDREN

Make sun safety a priority. When children see you taking precautions, then they will see the significance of sun protection and copy your actions. They are always listening and learning from you.

Remember, the safest time to go outside during the summer are early morning or late evening.

Heat considerations:

Avoid peak heat hours: between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Stay hydrated.

Weather awareness

Check for heat advisories

Dress appropriately

Ask parents to send hats, sunglasses, cooling bands, and long sleeve UV tops for outdoor play. Make sure there are no strings or cords for safety purposes.

Plan activities wisely



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.



Remember, we have die cuts for SUMMER and upcoming special days!

CONTACT INFORMATION

Dothan

Library hours: 8:30 am to 4:00 pm
Monday - Friday (*evening appointments available*)

Resource Specialist:

Michelle Woodham (334) 712-7777 ext. 1713
Email: michelle.woodham1@dhr.alabama.gov

Montgomery

Library hours: 8:30 am - 4:00 pm
Monday - Friday (*evening appointments available*)

Resource Specialist:

Lisa Kirkland (334) 270-4100 ext. 1102
Email: lisa.kirkland@dhr.alabama.gov

Come celebrate America's 250th Birthday with Dothan Resource Library!

Stop by the Dothan Resource Library until June 26, any weekday from 8:30 am and 4:00 pm and take part in our "Fourth of July Extravaganza!" A patriotic make and take activity will be available and classroom supplies for that activity will be in your goody bag. Also contained in your bag will be teaching materials, projects, and classroom décor to help you celebrate America's 250th year of Independence! We will have a teacher challenge activity, and one teacher's project will be chosen to receive a winning prize! We are also challenging each teacher to decorate your classroom in patriotic Americana themes for the summer. Submit photos of your room (with you included in the photo) by noon, June 24th. The winner will be chosen on June 24th. A class party package will be delivered Thursday, June 25th in time to celebrate America's 250th "Fourth of July" with your class. Call Michelle for more information 334-712-7777 Ext 1713.



It's a Spectacular Celebration!!

Montgomery Resource Library Open House
Wednesday, July 15th from 10 am to 2 pm
This is a come and go event.



Come see all the amazing things we have to offer directors and teachers to use in their centers and classrooms. While you are there, visit the die-cut room. We will have some great ideas for you to use in your classrooms for back-to-school and into the fall. Make-and-take sessions will be available. Feel free to bring a sack lunch and spend your lunch break with us or just do a quick drop by.

More information to come!!





2026 Heart & Sole Sneaker Gala

Join us for an unforgettable evening inspired by the Roaring 20's—where elegance meets comfort and sneakers steal the spotlight. Enjoy dinner, music, dancing, and a lively silent auction, all while supporting the children, families, and seniors we serve.

Date: August 22, 2026

Location: Renaissance Hotel 201 Tallapoosa Street, Montgomery, AL 36104
Gala begins at 6:00 pm, dinner served at 7:00 pm

Tickets: \$125.00 (admits 2 + dinner)

Tickets can be purchased from FGC staff members or by scanning the QR code. At checkout, enter TRAINING for staff member.

For more information or tickets, please contact: 334-270-4100 ext. 1303
<https://www.familyguidancecenter.org/2026-heart-and-sole-sneaker-gala>



*We look forward to seeing you there!
THANK YOU for your continued support*

ALABAMA PUBLIC TELEVISION'S EARLY CHILDHOOD ONLINE SUMMER TRAINING COURSES



Registration for APT's summer facilitated classes opens June 15, 2026.

- July 6 - August 23, 2026—Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) Online
- July 6 – July 27, 2026 - Introduction to the CDA Credential

APT's On-Demand Course Catalog

APT's On-Demand Trainings - APT's on-demand 2-hour trainings are always available. Scan the QR code or visit aptv.org/on-demand to access APT's on-demand self-enrollment.



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

Contact information for the mental health consultant for each region:

Dothan: 1-866-419-6868 ; new consultant coming soon
(Butler, Crenshaw, Pike, Covington, Barbour, Coffee, Dale, Henry, Geneva, and Houston.)

Montgomery: **Debbie Bailey**, dbailey@familyguidancecenter.org, 334-746-1005
(Montgomery, 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



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





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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 3, 2026
 September 7, 2026



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.
<https://www.accs.edu/community-college/leadership-in-childcare/>

