



SMART START MATTERS



A Publication of Richmond County Partnership for Children

April-June 2020

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Although precise legal definitions vary across the United States, child abuse can broadly be defined as an act or failure to act that results in a child's serious harm or risk of harm, including physical or emotional harm, exploitation or death. Neglect occurs when a caretaker fails to provide for a child's basic needs. Children depend on others to get their needs met. Sadly, in the majority of cases, the adults that children depend on are the ones responsible for abusing them.

Visit:
preventchildabusenc.org
to learn how you can help prevent child abuse and neglect.



What is the Week of the Young Child?

The Week of the Young Child is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the world's largest early childhood education association, with over 100,000 members and a network of local, state, and regional Affiliates.

The purpose of the Week of the Young Child is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

NAEYC first established the Week of the Young Child in 1971, recognizing that the early childhood years (birth through age 8) lay the foundation for children's success in school and later life. The Week of the Young Child is a time to plan how we as citizens of a community, of a state, and of a nation will better meet the needs of all young children and their families.

Today we know more than ever before about the importance of children's earliest years in shaping their learning and development. Yet, never before have the needs of young children and their families been more pressing.

The Week of the Young Child is a time to recognize that *children's opportunities are our responsibilities*, and to recommit ourselves to ensuring that each and every child experiences the type of early learning environment at home, at child care, at school, and in the community that will promote their early learning.

Week of the Young Child 2020 is April 12-April 18

Week of the Young Child Ideas for Your Students

Kick off WOYC with **Music Monday** on April 13! When children sing, dance, and listen to music, they develop their language and early literacy skills while being active and encouraging movement. Make up and record your own unique version of a song or write your own, and share it.

On April 14, focus on healthy eating and fitness at home and school with **Tasty Tuesday**! This fun, food-themed day is about more than just cheese and crackers. Cooking together connects math with literacy skills, science, and more. With the rise in childhood obesity, you can encourage healthy nutrition and fitness habits at home and in the classroom. Create your own healthy snacks and share the recipes and photos of your creations.

April 15 is **Work Together Wednesday**. When children build together they explore math and science concepts and develop their social and early literacy skills. Children can use any building material—from a fort of branches on the playground to a block city in the classroom, or a hideaway made from couch pillows at home.

April 16 is **Artsy Thursday**. Children develop creativity, social skills and fine motor skills with open-ended art projects where they can make choices, use their imaginations, and create with their hands. On Artsy Thursday celebrate the joy and learning children experience when engaged in creative art making. Use any materials—from crayons to paint, clay to crafts!

Celebrate **Family Friday** on April 17. Engaging and celebrating families is at the heart of supporting our youngest learners. RCPC applauds family members' role as young children's first and most important teachers.



What is Circle of Parents?

Purpose of *Circle of Parents*:

To provide a place where parents can connect with each other, learn from each other and be sources of strength for each other with the intention of building the five protective factors.

- Social and Emotional Competence
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of parenting & Child Development
- Resilience
- Concrete Support

Parent/Caregiver Group Goals:

The overall goal of the program is to prevent child abuse and neglect, while strengthening families. More specifically, participants:

- **Gain a sense of belonging and relief** as they learn that their family dynamics and their child's behavior are more typical than problematic.
- **Become resources to each other inside and outside of the group** by sharing coping strategies and parenting skills from parents who have 'been there'.
- **Advocate for themselves and other parents as they both give and receive help** and recognize that seeking help is a sign of strength, not a sign of weakness.
- **Become more competent and confident in their parenting role** as they improve their communication and problem-solving skill and take on leadership responsibilities.





If you have children in your home, make sure they are counted in the right place.

Young children experience new adventures each day, and little ones need all of the support they can get during these early years.



Count children in the home where they live and sleep most of the time, even if their parents don't live there.



If a child's time is divided between more than one home, count them where they stay most often. If their time is evenly divided, or you don't know where they stay most often, count them where they are staying on Census Day— April 1, 2020.



If a child's family (or guardian) is moving during March or April 2020, count them at the address where they are living on April 1, 2020.



Count children in your home if they don't have a permanent place to live and are staying in your home on April 1, 2020, even if they are only staying with you temporarily.



Count newborn babies at the home where they will live and sleep most of the time, even if they are still in the hospital on April 1, 2020.

Start shaping their future by going to

2020CENSUS.GOV



Shape our children's future. Start with the 2020 Census.

Young children experience new adventures each day, and little ones need all of the support they can get during these early years.

Responding to the 2020 Census is an easy, safe, and important way to help provide resources for children and their communities for the next 10 years.

Everyone living in the United States is asked to complete a simple questionnaire every ten years that asks for basic information about the people who live or sleep in their home. Children under the age of five, however, are often missed.

Young children who are missed in the census tend to live with large, extended families or with multiple families living under one roof. When newborn babies and children are not counted, support for programs such as health insurance, hospitals, childcare, food assistance, schools, and early childhood development is impacted.

Responding to the census is easier than ever. You can complete the census questionnaire online, by phone, or by mail.

And remember, just as you protect the children in your care, the U.S. Census Bureau protects your information. The Census Bureau is required by law to protect any personal information collected and keep it strictly confidential. All Census Bureau staff take a lifetime oath to protect your personal information and any violation of this oath comes with a penalty of up to \$250,000 and/or up to five years in prison.

**Start shaping their future by
going to [2020CENSUS.GOV](https://2020census.gov).**

**Shape
your future
START HERE >**

**United States
Census
2020**

Promoting Literacy Development in Young Children

Parents Can Help Nurture Healthy Language Development

Children are wordsmiths! They love to tell stories. They often come home with a new joke to tell. They are quick to learn and use new vocabulary. “Read it again” is a phrase that often comes from a child’s lips. Provide opportunities for your child to practice new skills during these important early childhood years.

1. Talk while doing everyday things. Point out familiar places or objects. Describe and talk about items you see. Speak clearly. Pause for younger children, so they may imitate and understand you.
2. Read books, sing, and say rhymes with your child every day. As your children mature, have them predict what will happen in the story. Invite them to act it out or draw a picture. Ask “Who,” “What,” “When,” “Where” and “Why” questions during the story or in conversation.
3. Provide your child with writing materials and the time and space to use them.

Go to museums, visit libraries and enjoy hobbies that broaden your children’s knowledge of the world beyond their home and neighborhood.

Providing Support for Your Child’s Growing Literacy Skills

Our teachers place a special emphasis on giving children the literacy foundations they need to be successful. We feed children’s love of words through beloved children’s literature. In addition to the book kits we provide for each classroom, from infants to school age, wonderful hands-on activities for each book are shared with the children. Older children enjoy keeping a journal. They are able to share stories and practice writing letters, words, and phonics skills. And our rich and inviting classroom book and language areas give children the tools they need to continue to develop their literacy skills every day.



RCPC is now on the National Literacy Directory! The National Literacy Directory helps connect potential students and volunteers to literacy services, community education programs, and testing centers. Listings include services for Early Childhood, Family Literacy, High School Equivalency/Adult Basic Education, English Language Learning, and Citizenship Classes. Check out our profile at:

<https://www.nld.org/richmond-county-partnership-for-children>

Library Corner

Grippies Shakers



Toddlers can explore early STEM with lessons on magnets, discovery and early engineering!

Mother and Baby Animal Puzzles

3 years & up. Beautifully photographed, this set includes familiar animal mothers with their babies from the farm, wilderness and home.



**Please come by and see all
the resources we have
available!**



Aiming for higher education?
Check out this website for
available scholarships:



<https://www.earlychildhoodeducationzone.com/early-education-scholarships/>

RCPC Staff Spotlight

Many of you already know me, but for those of you who don't I am Michell Kocan, CCR&R Administrator at the Partnership. I was born and raised in Richmond County. When I graduated high school I went on to attain degrees in Early Childhood Education and Sociology.



Working with or on behalf of young children has always been my career focus. In work endeavors and life I strive to make a positive impact on the lives of young children.

When I have free time I enjoy being with my grandchildren, reading, exercising and relaxing at the beach.

April-June 2020 Training Calendar

Reminder:

RCPC is hosting the
Creating Higher Education
conference on 3.21.2020 at
Washington Street School,
Rockingham. You still have
time to register!

Strategies for Challenging Behaviors

Thursday, April 7, 2020 6:30pm - 8:30pm
Richmond County Partnership for Children
2.0 Contact Hours Credit \$5.00
Class to be taught by Elizabeth Chambers

This workshop will focus on difficult behaviors in the classroom. Participants will have a chance to discuss the frustrating behaviors they face in their classroom, and explore techniques and resources for supporting social emotional development and addressing challenging behavior.

Must register by 4:00pm March 31

ITS-SIDS

Tuesday, April 21, 2020 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Richmond County Partnership for Children
2.0 Contact Hours Credit \$5.00
Class to be taught by Michell Kocan

In this session you will be introduced to infant/toddler safe sleep standards in North Carolina, and best practices. We will discuss adopting safe sleep practices and creating a safe sleep environment to reduce the risk of SIDS.

Must register by 4:00pm April 9

Caregiving Routines: A Major Component of the Curriculum for Infants and Toddlers

June 2, 2020 6:30pm-8:30pm
Richmond County Partnership for Children
2.0 Contact Hours Credit \$5.00
Class to be taught by Tonya McCall

What does the word "curriculum" mean to you? If teaching skills and planning projects are the first ideas that come to mind, then this training event will open your eyes to a new way of thinking about infant-toddler "curriculum". Infant and toddler teachers spend a large part of the day engaged in routine caregiving responsibilities. These are key learning times! Participants will understand why routines are essential to the "curriculum" and discover strategies to carry out daily routines that deepens the teacher-child relationship and promote infant and toddler development.

Must register by 4:00pm May 26

School Age Transition Activities at Your Fingertips

Saturday, June 6, 2020 10:00am-12:00pm
Richmond County Partnership for Children
2.0 Contact Hour Credit \$5.00
Class to be taught by Mary Anders

You have the key, so unlock your creativity by planning and scheduling fun, innovative transition activities! Transitioning is one of the most important but, often ignored components of a school age classroom schedule. This interactive workshop will focus on identifying transitions in your daily schedule and exploring some new transition activities your children will enjoy.

Must register by 4:00pm May 28

11 Fun, Low-Cost Outdoor Activities for Kids

Benefits of Outdoor Play and Activities for Kids

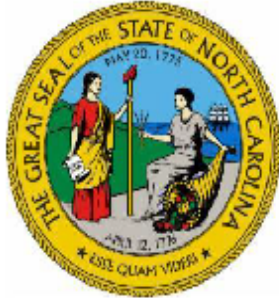
When it comes to family time, we don't have to make elaborate plans or break the bank. Often, the simplest activities foster the strongest connection because children and parents focus on each other. This is especially true when you take family time outside. You've probably heard about the [benefits of nature and outdoor play for children](#). According to the [National Wildlife Federation](#), outdoor play boosts fitness and decreases the risk of childhood obesity; increases focus and academic achievement; and reduces stress and increases feelings of well-being. As a provider of early childhood education and child care, we understand and agree with all these findings. While less tangible and quantifiable, the “fun” value of being outdoors can also be beneficial to children, particularly when they can share that fun with a beloved adult.

Below are a few suggestions for fun family activities, many that can be done outdoors:

Family Time: Fun, Low-Cost Outdoor Activities for Kids

- **Hang out in the yard.** When was the last time your family pulled out a picnic and enjoyed the wonders of nature from your own backyard? You don't have to go far to take in all that the great outdoors offers. This is especially beneficial for babies, where they can crawl, walk, and explore a variety of textured surfaces like grass, sand, or dirt. With your toddler or preschooler, point out and label birds, squirrels, insects, and plants.
- **Be tourists in your own city.** Have you ever wondered about the history and legends of your community? Do you know which Native American tribes first settled the area? Have you noticed the types of architecture? Do you know the history behind the statues in the local park? Become tourists in your own town. Contact your local tourist board or historical museum to get started.
- **Plan a weekly neighborhood walk or hike.** Toddlers are at a vantage point to observe things that we adults often miss. A simple walk around the neighborhood with the family can open a whole world to them if we simply slow down. Make time to explore with toddlers, keeping in mind the journey, not the destination. How many plants and insects can you find? How many different textures or sensations can you discover?
- **Gather natural materials.** Offer your child a variety of natural and re-purposed materials — such as old metal pie tins, sticks, ribbon, wire, spoons, shells, or rocks — and head outside to explore them. Ask your child, “What can you make with these materials? How about wind chimes, a bird feeder, or an old-fashioned mud pie?”
- **Make storytelling a part of your family culture.** Reading together is one of the best ways to make memories, transfer values, and improve language and literacy skills. Read classics like *Charlotte's Web* or *Winnie the Pooh* together. Act stories out or put on a puppet show. When it's warm, you can turn this into a summertime outdoor theater.
- **Play with rocks.** It's fun to collect rocks, make sculptures, toss rocks, or use small stones to create designs or form letters. Explain that, like people, no two rocks are exactly alike. Look for rocks that are similar in size, shape, color, or texture. Create a science laboratory where you can weigh and measure rocks; older children might research the different types of rocks, such as sedimentary or metamorphic.
- **Play a game.** Kids love games, and the sillier, the better. Pull out your [favorite board game](#) or play some active games, such as Sardines, Hide and Go Seek, Red Light, Green Light, or Tag. How about charades or I'm Thinking Of?

Whether your family enjoys playing board games, blowing bubbles, searching for insects, having a picnic in the park, working on art projects, gazing at the sky, cuddling up with books, or volunteering in the community, time spent together builds strong relationships and satisfying memories. And when these activities are taken outside, we believe experiencing nature with children through outdoor play has benefits today and for years to come. So, get out there. Turn over a rock. Feel the breeze on your face. Get some dirt on your shoes.



NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Division of Child Development
and Early Education

Interim Guidance Regarding the Coronavirus

There is an expanding outbreak of respiratory illness centered in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China caused by a new novel coronavirus. The disease associated with this virus has been named COVID-19, and is being spread widely in other parts of mainland China. At this time, the health risk to the general public in North Carolina from COVID-19 remains low; however, child care facilities are encouraged to take common-sense precautions to prevent the spread of all infectious diseases, including the prevention of other common illnesses such as influenza and gastroenteritis.

For up-to-date information regarding COVID-19, see the following websites:

- [The North Carolina Division of Public Health](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)

The CDC has also suggested the following websites from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP):

- [Hand Washing: A Powerful Antidote to Illness](#)
- [Reducing the Spread of Illness in Child Care](#)
- [Germ Prevention Strategies](#)
- [When to Keep Your Child Home from Child Care](#)

Child care facilities who have questions or concerns related to COVID-19 may call the Poison Control Center at 888-462-3821 for more information. To submit questions online, go to www.ncpoisoncontrol.org and select "Chat." General COVID-19 questions can be emailed to ncresponse@dhhs.nc.gov.

NC DHHS Division of Child Development and Early
Education, 2201 Mail Service Center, 333 Six Forks Road, Raleigh, NC 27699-2201

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Child Care Professional Appreciation Banquet

RCPC is pleased to announce that we will hold our 19th Annual Child Care Professional Appreciation Training Banquet on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 6:30 pm in Cole Auditorium at Richmond Community College. We have a wonderful evening planned that you are sure to enjoy. In order for us to plan this event, we need to know how many employees from your facility will attend. Please fill out the registration form and return it to our office no later than **Thursday, April 23rd**. Please remember that child care is NOT provided, so be courteous to your fellow child care professionals and make appropriate child care arrangements if you plan to attend. You must register to attend! Don't miss out on this fun filled event!!!!

Do you think that your Child Care Center or Family Child Care Home is the greatest in Richmond County? If so, let everyone know!

As part of the Appreciation Banquet we will once again present an award for "Child Care Center of the Year" and "Family Child Care Home of the Year." We encourage center directors and family child care home operators to ask parents to write a letter in support of your center or home. A form is included in the newsletter that can be copied and given to parents at your convenience. Please return all nominations by **Thursday, April 23rd**. Winners will be chosen by a panel of judges based on nomination letters. Thank you!

Bernice Ratliff Outstanding Teacher Award

Richmond County lost a dedicated and well respected Child Care Professional several years ago. Bernice Ratliff was a teacher at Leak Street Head Start who lost her life in a tragic car accident. Bernice was honored at the First Annual Child Care Professional Appreciation Banquet with an "Outstanding Teacher Award". We will again honor an outstanding teacher from Richmond County with the "Bernice Ratliff Outstanding Teacher Award". We encourage child care center directors and family child care home operators to ask parents to write a letter in support of their child's teacher. A form is attached included in the newsletter that can be copied and given out to parents at your convenience. Please return these nominations by **Thursday, April 23rd**. Thanks for your help!

Kathy Alexander Positive Attitude Award

Several years ago we lost a beloved member of the child care community, Kathy Alexander, owner of Richmond Kiddie College, was killed in a motorcycle accident. We will again this year, in memory of Kathy, present the "Kathy Alexander Positive Attitude Award" at the Child Care Provider Appreciation Banquet. Kathy was a shining example to each of us in her upbeat outlook on life. We encourage child care center directors and family child care home operators to ask parents and other staff members to write a letter in support of any teacher who exemplifies a positive attitude. A form is included in the newsletter that can be copied and given out to parents and staff at your convenience. Please return these nominations by **Thursday, April 23rd**. Thanks for your help!

Center or Home Nominated: _____
Submitted by: _____
Date Submitted: _____

Please mail to:

Richmond County Partnership for Children, PO Box 1944
Rockingham, NC 28380

All nominations must be received no later than Thursday, April 23rd.

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19th Annual Child Care Professional Appreciation Banquet Registration Form

Registration must be received no later than Tuesday, April 28th.

Facility Name: _____

Total # of Staff working at your facility: _____

Total # of Staff attending: _____

Please list the names of all staff attending:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Education Survey

Please use the following form to list staff members and the certificates and/or degrees (Credential I, II; Administrative Credential I, II; Associate Degree; Bachelor's Degree, etc.) they have attained between May 2019 and May 2020.

Survey must be received no later than Tuesday, April 28th.

Staff Name

Certificate or Degree Attained

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Richmond County Partnership for Children

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email: kchance@richmondsmartstart.org

We are on the web!

www.smartstartrichmond.org

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Board Meetings Dates

April 15, 2020 @ 12:00pm

May 6, 2020 @ 12:00 pm

All meetings are held at Richmond County Partnership for Children

315 South Lawrence Street Rockingham, NC 28379

The public is invited to attend these meetings.

Yes! I would like to make a contribution to the

Richmond County Partnership for Children

My donation will be used to ensure all Richmond County children enter school healthy and ready to succeed.

_____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$75 _____ \$100 _____ Other

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number, Fax Number, or E-Mail _____

Make checks payable to Richmond County Partnership for Children and mail to:

P. O. Box 1944, Rockingham, NC 28380