

Network News

Child Care Resource & Referral Newsletter



A MESSAGE FROM CCR&R DIRECTOR

By Jenn Perney

As we enter the spring, I wanted to update you on the parent referrals that we do in the CCR&R. Our CCR&R Referral Specialist assists parents with finding child care to meet their needs. We try to match parents to programs with specific criteria they are looking for, such as location of care, days/hours they need care, and providers who accept children of certain ages. This is why keeping us to-do-date on your openings and any changes in your program hours is so important. We also need to know changes in contact information. If you change the way you want to be contacted by prospective parents, let us know. If you want to use a specific email address, or have parents go to a website or social media page, we need to know that.

In 2023, we conducted follow up surveys to the parents who used our referral service. 30% of the parents who responded to our survey indicated that one of the issues they had finding child care was the “provider was not responsive”. So when parents tried to contact the providers on the referrals they received, the provider never answered their call, returned their message, or responded back in any way.

One of the most important aspects of high quality customer service is being responsive. Even if are full and have a waiting list, you should let parents know that information. We encourage you to take this time to strengthen your policies and procedures around responding to calls and emails. If you need any assistance, give us a call!

Newsletter Highlights

OCFS Updates

CACFP Recipe

Gardening

Spring Safety

Years of Service for FCC

Self-Efficacy in Children

Week of the Young Child

Eliminating Expulsion

Plastics in Your Bottle

Sensory Play



OCFS COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

OCFS has started a new way to communicate directly with programs and providers in the state. Bi-monthly “Community Conversations” started on February 27th at noon.

If you couldn't watch the live stream, then watch the recording at a time you are available.

The first conversation can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cd4ZLPbkIUk>

(the conversation starts 30 minutes into the recording)

OCFS will take your questions to address on those calls. You can submit questions at any time by emailing:

ocfs.sm.dccsinfo@ocfs.ny.gov

Put “Community Conversations” in the subject line.

The next Community Conversation is planned in April, so keep an eye on your email with more information.

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OCFS

OCFS wants to work collaboratively with child care programs. Think of your regulator as your partner in providing high quality child care. Licensing visits should be seen as the opportunity to connect with your regulator to make your program the best it can be. Use your regulator as a resource for support and guidance. They want to partner in your program's success with the shared goal of children receiving the best care possible.

It's ok to ask questions of them. If you don't understand a violation you receive, it's ok to ask more information so you do understand it. That's what they are there for.

You can always reach out to us for support as well. We can help you develop that relationship more.

OCFS IMPACT PROJECT

OCFS is conducting a survey of all community child care partners on the definition of high quality child care.

The goal is to create and uphold a standardized definition of quality child care that can be used by all OCFS-funded programs and services.

What does high quality child care mean to you?

Learn more about the project:

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/supporting-children.php>



vroom

Brain building moments



VROOM

By Rachel Dowd, Training & Coaching Specialist

Junior Scientist:

Invite your child to look for animals, birds, or bugs when you're out and about together. Take a moment to observe what it's doing. Where does it seem to be going? What does your child think it is doing on its travels? Are other animals doing the same thing?

Braining Background:

Your child is naturally curious about the world around them. This helps them think like a scientist - focusing and making careful observations. They're using what they see and know to form their own ideas about how animals get food and find safe places to live.

Air Fryer Chicken Nuggets

From: <https://kristineskitchenblog.com/>

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter melted
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup Panko breadcrumbs

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cut the chicken breasts into 1-in cubes.
2. Mix together melted butter, olive oil, paprika, garlic powder, oregano, salt & pepper.
3. Preheat air fryer to 400°
4. Add chicken pieces to the bowl and toss gently to coat.
5. Pour bread crumbs into a large zip-lock bag. Add the chicken, seal and shake to coat the chicken.
6. Add chick to the air fryer in a single layer (cook in batches if needed). Air fry for 5 minutes, then flip and cook another 4-5 minutes until cooked through. Serve immediately.

SOLAR ECLIPSE

Are you ready for the solar eclipse on Monday, April 8, 2024?

Make sure you are ready to view the solar eclipse safely. Never view the sun with the naked eye or by looking through unfiltered optical devices such as binoculars or telescopes! Get your solar viewing glasses, or make a pinhole projector to keep all your eyes safe!

Find out how and other great information: www.exploratorium.edu/eclipse/how-to-view-eclipse



PLANT A LASAGNA GARDEN

By Cathy Lee, Health and Wellness
Coordinator

Did this catch your attention? What? You can
plant a Lasagna Garden?

You certainly can and you don't need pasta
and cheese!

A Lasagna Garden is a no dig raised garden
bed that protects the soil and does not require
any digging. Simply layer mulch, kitchen
scraps, compost and other organic material.
The layers will break down naturally,
improving the soil. Creating the bed in the
spring will allow for mid- summer planting.

First, create the lasagna

1. What you need:

- stakes, twine, newspaper
- Green organic matter such as grass clippings,
vegetable scraps, plant trimmings and
coffee grounds
- Brown organic matter such as dried leaves,
mulch hay and straw

2. Here is how you start:

- Collect the Green and Brown matter
- Mow or trim a bed area and mark it with stakes
and twine
- Smother it and cover the area with wet
newspaper

3. Make the Lasagna

- Spread 2 inch thick layer of organic material on
the newspaper
- Alternate Green layers and Brown layers
- Moisten with a hose until the bed is 1 foot high.

Now get ready to plant!

1. Let the bed decompose for about 8 weeks
2. Dig little holes in the bed and plant some
seedlings
3. Maintain the beds by watering, but not too much!

And there you have it, a Lasagna Garden! Keep
your eyes open for future programs on Gardening
with Children.

CONGRATULATIONS NEW CHILD CARE PROGRAMS!

Broome School Age Child Care
Boys and Girls Club of Binghamton
at Chenango Bridge Elementary





SPRING SAFETY

By Erica Hazard, Chenango CCR&R Specialist

As Spring approaches, you and your kids may choose to spend more time outdoors. However, before you do, we want to remind you of some outdoor spring safety tips to keep your kids safe and healthy!

Remember the bug spray

Nice weather means those pesky bugs are also ready to get out and play.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that repellents contain no more than 30% DEET, and children under 2 months of age should not be sprayed with insect repellent.

Put on the helmets

Spring weather means dusting off the bikes, scooters, and rollerblades. Be sure your kids are following safety procedures and wearing their

helmets properly. Helmets are vital to your child's safety when biking or rollerblading.

Make sure that your kid's helmet fits correctly and replace any helmets that are damaged.

Protect from the sun

It might not feel as hot as summer, but the sun can still have damaging effects on the skin, even in the cooler spring months. In addition to covering skin with lightweight clothing or wearing a hat, sunscreen of at least 15 SPF can add extra protection. Remember to reapply sunscreen to children every two hours or after they have gotten wet. For infants under 6 months of age, limited sun exposure is the goal (keep them in the shade, covered with lightweight clothing, use a hat).

Remember to follow non-medication application regulations. Use OCFS-6010, "Non-Medication Consent Form" to get parent permission for each product administered. Document any application of topical products like bug spray and sunscreen as well.

All forms can be found on the OCFS website under "Resources and Publications."



FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS YEARS OF SERVICE

In the last newsletter, we started recognizing years of service.

It can get a bit confusing when programs change modalities from family to group family or move locations, but still continue to provide care.

Now that we recognized long-term programs, we will recognize programs who originally opened in April, May or June and how many years they have been opened. You will see some amazing length of time operating a family or group family child care program!

Congratulations! Thank you for all you do to provide a safe and loving environment for all the children.

Broome County

Valerie Antonakos – 18 years
Annette Chalker - 20 years
Charity Davis – 3 years
Kiminu Goodson – 1 year
Mona Ingraham – 22 years
Lisa Knapp – 21 years
Wendy Poyer – 16 years
Julie Skojec – 10 years
Diana Starks – 18 years
Candance Vandermark - 5 years
Gabrielle Vega – 15 years
Mary Wood - 20 years

Chenango County

Samantha Bennett – 6 years
Amy Bohndorf – 10 years
Micah Boyd - 2 years
Bev Christie – 33 years
Kathleen Duncan – 23 years
Peggy Marango – 24 years
Heather Mierke – 15 years
Stacey Mowatt – 23 years
Brandy Pasanens – 5 years
Lisa Wright – 12 years

Tioga County

Emilee Komanisky – 1 year
Rose DeAngelis – 29 years
Stacey Thorp – 19 years
Shannon Wheeler – 22 years



BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY PROGRAMS

Congratulations to the following for recently obtaining the Breastfeeding Friendly Designee:

- Christine Rathke
- Tiffany Vandermark



TIPS FOR BUILDING SELF-EFFICACY IN CHILDREN

By Leslie Vermaat, Training and TA Specialist

Self-efficacy is the belief that you are capable of performing a task or managing a situation and learning how to persevere when things are difficult. Developing a sense of self and belief in your own abilities is key to good mental health. Self-efficacy begins at birth. Here are some examples to help you encourage self-efficacy in your children:

- Resist the urge to do everything for the child. Stand back and wait for them to ask for help – always allow the child to try, if safe, but not to struggle too much.
- Offer only as much help as is needed e.g. let the child put on the shoe even if they can't fasten or tie them. Ask them how they would like you to help.
- Use words of encouragement – “You are really trying, well done, you will soon be able to do that all by yourself”.
- Focus on the child's strengths and use them to help them overcome new challenges eg “You are really good at making friends in preschool, so you will soon make new friends in kindergarten.

- Do not compare with others. Pointing out that another child can put their own shoes on won't help them, it may even demotivate them.
- Be honest; telling a child that they are good at everything will not motivate them to keep trying, it may even encourage them to give up when they realize it's not true.
- Give the child appropriate choices –this sends a clear message that they have control of some aspects of their life. Children who have choices are more self-reliant.
- Help children see failure as learning – “You will get better at that the more you try” – don't be tempted to just do it for them.
- Respond to the child's communications e.g. a baby will turn away when they don't want any more food – respecting this builds a sense of the child having control.
- Give children time e.g. start to get ready to go out 20 mins before you have to leave so that the child has time to try to put on their own coat/shoes. See these transitions as teachable moments.
- Praise for effort, not ability – “You found that tricky, but you did it!”
- Ask the child how the achievement made them feel “Wow you have done it, how do you feel?” This encourages the child to express feelings of pride and satisfaction at their achievements.

Excerpts from Podcast: [*Self-Efficacy in Young Children*](#)
by Maureen Hunt



CARING SPACES ENDORSEMENT

Caring Spaces is a four-tiered approach to measuring quality in infant, toddler, and preschool environments evaluating the child care provider's ability to provide a free exploratory environment, responsive caregiving, age appropriate materials and experiences, and the ability to engage in brave conversations with families about child development and challenging behaviors. The goal of Caring Spaces is to increase the quality in these environments and reduce the prevalence of expulsion and suspension in early childhood.

The following programs/classrooms in Broome County have recently received their endorsements.

Campus Preschool

- Flamingos Classroom

The B.C. Center

- Preschool Classroom

Congratulations on earning your Caring Spaces Endorsement!

You can earn your Caring Spaces Endorsement through training and technical assistance visits from your Infant Toddler Specialist, Cortney.

To learn more about Caring Spaces, email Cortney at cnornhold@familyenrichment.org or call (607) 687-6721 ext 1187 to get started.

WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

APRIL 6TH - 12TH

The Week of the Young Child® is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). 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. Enjoy a fun filled week celebrating young children and their families with hands-on activities.

Daily themes for the week are:

Music Monday

Tasty Tuesday

Work Together Wednesday

Artsy Thursday

Family Friday

For more information, including ways to celebrate, visit

<https://www.naeyc.org/events/woyc>

ELIMINATING EXPULSION

By Allie Drake, Training and Coaching Specialist

Statistics

Preschoolers are expelled three times more often than children in kindergarten through 12th grade.

Preschool boys are four times more likely to be expelled than girls are.

African American Children are expelled three times as often as white children. Five times as often as Asian American children.

Why is this a concern?

Children who are expelled suffer many negative consequences including:

- Losing chances to learn and socialize with other children.
- Missing key developmental times.
- At higher risk for developing increased behavior problems that lead to later school difficulty.
- Negative self-image, feeling of being incapable of learning.
- Develop negative views of learning, teachers, and the world around them.

Why does expulsion happen?

Teachers may become overwhelmed by a child's behavior or may lack education or skills to help with the behavior.

Working conditions including low salaries can cause teachers to feel depressed and stressed affecting the tolerance for behavioral issues.

High teacher to child ratios may leave teachers overwhelmed and unable to effectively deal with challenging behaviors.

Teachers may misunderstand a young child's challenging behavior.

Implicit Bias

Implicit bias is unconscious negative beliefs. Implicit bias may affect how certain children are viewed leading to more harsh consequences including expulsion for certain students.

Steps to Prevent Expulsion

- Collaborate with parents, work with parents to produce a plan of action for behavioral concerns.
- Use a mental health consultant.
- Recognize that some children may need to be referred to evaluation services, help parents find information if needed.
- Seek support from coaches.
- Learn new ways to create healthy environments for all children.
- Build social emotional skills of the children.
- Recognize your own bias and evaluate your viewpoints.

Ask Yourself

- 1.What do you describe as challenging behavior?
- 2.Think about last time you responded to a challenging behavior, what was stressful in that situation? What would you have done differently?
- 3.What types of support do you need?
- 4.What are your attitudes and beliefs about young children with these challenging behaviors?



TINY PLASTICS IN YOUR BOTTLE

By Cathy Lee, Health & Wellness Coordinator

Have you ever wondered if you are drinking a little plastic with your water? A recent study found there are roughly 240,000 detectable plastic fragments in a typical liter of bottled water. While the side effects of using plastic are still being researched, some evidence suggests it can have impacts on the endocrine and reproductive systems. Experts recommend minimizing exposure to plastic whenever possible by using refillable bottles made of metal or glass.

Americans now purchase about 15 billion gallons of bottled water each year. Did you know that each bottled liter is teeming with a quarter million tiny plastic particles?

A study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, showed roughly 240,000 detectable plastic particles in a typical liter of bottled water which is 10 to 100 times more than previously estimated!

About 10% of the particles identified in the water were microplastics and 90% of the particles were nanoplastics. Microplastics are small plastic pieces that range in size from 1 micron to 5 millimeters in diameter. Nanoplastics are even smaller, ranging in size from 1 nanometer to 1 micron. For perspective, a human hair ranges from 50 to 120 microns wide. The smaller the tiny plastics, the easier it is for them to enter our bodies.

When possible, minimize use of single use plastics. Try glass, aluminum, or stainless steel bottles, straws and food containers. Avoid microwaving in plastic, since heat can lead to the release of plastic chemicals into your food.

Using less single use plastics may be good for your health, your budget and the environment!

QUALITYstarsNY

Get the latest information from QUALITYstarsNY by reading their new newsletter!

Join their mailing list on their website at:

<https://qualitystarsny.org/>



SENSORY PLAY

By Cortney Nornhold, Infant Toddler Specialist

“Sensory play fosters a sense of wonder and awe, inspiring children to question, explore, and discover.”

What is sensory play?

Materials and experiences that stimulate a young child’s sense of touch, smell, taste, movement, balance, internal sense of safety, sight and hearing are often called Sensory Play. Young children explore the world through their senses and learn by engaging all of their senses to make sense of their environment. They put toys in their mouths, shake and bang things together, and throw things to watch their path as they fall.

Benefits of sensory play?

- Improved fine motor skills
- Language development
- Increased concentration
- Increased focus on a specific task
- Strengthens pre-writing skills
- Develops creativity and pretend-play
- Good for brain development

Sensory play activities and ideas for infants and toddlers:

- Simple water play with bubbles
- Jumbo pom-pom color sorting
- Playdough (recipe on next page)
- Baby doll bathing
- Oobleck (recipe on next page)
- Painting with cars
- Rainbow discovery bottles
- Sticky wall art (contact paper- sticky side out, add some shape cutouts)
- Free exploration - Presenting everyday household items like plastic colanders, metal mixing bowls, shower loofas, silicone pot holders and Tupperware. This allows children to explore through banging, mouthing, dropping , grabbing, and sliding.
- Outdoor experiences - Nature has so much to offer our young scientists. I love to watch toddlers navigate the weight and smoothness of rocks. Filling buckets with rocks and leaves and transporting them. Have you ever witnessed an infant’s first exposure to grass? Laying on their tummy, hands in the grass, breeze blowing by, dog barking in the background, smell of a recent lawn mowing, prickly yet soft feel of the grass, grasping and releasing the blades of grass by the fistful and sharing all this with a trusted caregiver is stimulating all senses!

Whether infants are shaking DIY shaky eggs filled with buttons, sand and jingle bells or whether they are shaking metal bowl full of blocks, they will be gaining information about these materials, it’s properties, what they can expect from it, what they can do with it and where it fits into all of the previously gained information they have. Sensory experiences are all around us.



SENSORY PLAY RECIPES

Easy No-cook Playdough

MATERIALS: A mixing bowl and a large spoon

INGREDIENTS: Mix: 1 cup salt, 2 cups flour, 1 cup water, 2 tbsp alum, 2 tbsp vegetable oil, and the food coloring of your choice.

ACTIVITY

OLDER INFANTS AND TODDLERS:

Allow children to explore the mixture and grasp, roll, poke, pull, mash, and more. Playdough encourages imaginative play as well as developing fine motor skills. Grab some props from around the house like cookie cutters, combs, rolling pins, and plastic utensils.

Oobleck

(Oobleck is quick to clean up with water!)

MATERIALS: A mixing bowl and a large spoon plus some scoops or smaller spoons for play.

INGREDIENTS: Mix: 2 parts cornstarch with 1 part water and a few drops of food coloring of your choice (optional)

ACTIVITY

INFANT: Allow your infant to explore the Oobleck with their hands. Pinching, scooping, grasping the Oobleck from the table surface encourages fine motor development. Provide some spoons or scoops, to promote self-help skills like lifting and holding spoons and scooping up the mixture.

TODDLER: Squish it, roll it, squeeze it, mix it, and watch it transition from solid to liquid form. Toddlers can play with Oobleck the same way infants can. Extend the learning by mixing up different colors and notice what happens when the two colors get blended together.

LITTLE LAUGHS

Where do elephants pack their clothes?
In their trunks!

Why do bees have sticky hair?
Because they use a honeycomb.

What did the little corn say to the mama corn?
Where is pop corn?

What's worse than finding a worm in your apple?

Finding half a worm in your apple!

Person 1: Knock-knock.

Person 2: Who's there?

Person 1: Lettuce.

Person 2: Lettuce who?

Person 1: Lettuce in, it's cold out here!