

Network News

Child Care Resource Center Newsletter



A MESSAGE FROM CHILD CARE RESOURCE CENTER DIRECTOR

By Jenn Perney

It's Market Rate survey time!

By now, you should have received an email from OCFS with your link for the Market Rate Survey. Each survey invitation link is unique and can only be used once. Providers should not forward their invitation to other providers.

Please take the time to complete this survey. Use it as an opportunity to share your true cost of providing child care, and not just reporting what parents can afford to pay. This information really helps the state determine what the rates will be for the next few years.

If you didn't see your survey link in your email, check your spam folder. If you still can't find it, email the Market Rate Survey Team at ocfs.sm.marketratesurvey@ocfs.ny.gov for help. A user guide and FAQ is also available on the NYSOCFS website.

If you need any other assistance, give us a call.

Newsletter Highlights

Vroom Tip

CACFP Recipe

Walkie Talkies

Caring Spaces

Developmental Screenings

World Mental Health Day

Loose Parts

Sensory Bins

Music & Movement

Years of Service





VROOM

By Rachel Dowd, Provider Services
Coordinator

Check out this Vroom tip to try out this fall!

Up and Over

Ask your child to find an object like a stick or rock and place it on the ground near you. Encourage them to explore different ways of moving over it: Can they jump? Hop over on just one foot? Run and then jump? Take turns jumping with them and talk together about how far you both go.

Brainy Background

It takes focus and self-control for your child to manage how their body moves, as well as flexible thinking to come up with different ideas. Fun experiences with math ideas like space and distance help them develop a foundation for learning now and in the future.

Interested in more Vroom tips like this?
Visit vroom.org or download their app for daily brain-building tips!

FALL ACTIVITIES BUCKET LIST

- Sing fall songs
- Read a fall themed book
- Make pumpkin scented playdough
- Create apple stamp art
- Count acorns or pinecones
- Collect colorful Leaves
- Make a fall collage
- Make leaf rubbings with crayons
- Make cone bird feeders
- Jump in a pile of leaves
- Carve or decorate a pumpkin
- Build a scarecrow
- Roast pumpkin seeds
- Take a nature walk
- Drink hot chocolate
- Have a fall picnic inside
- Pick apples
- Decorate for fall
- Bake with the children

Need more ideas? Call Roberta or another CCRC Specialist!





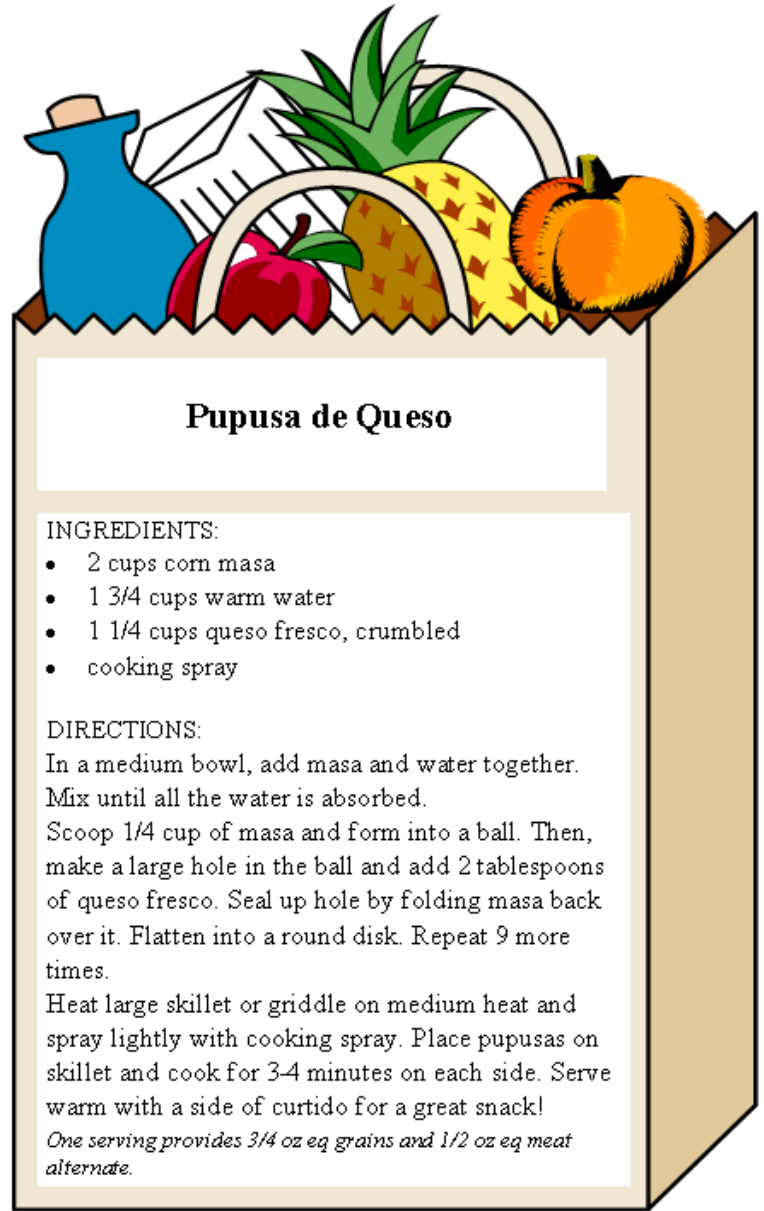
CACFP

By Cathy Lee, Health and Wellness
Supervisor

¡ Hola to Hispanic Heritage Month!

Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated from September 15 - October 15. It is a good time to try cultural recipes that can also be used in CACFP menus. Pupusa de Queso and Curtido are nutritious and flavorful Salvadoran dishes that pair wonderfully for a together for an autumn snack.

If you are interested in joining the CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program), please contact me! CACFP also pairs wonderfully with Brightwheel!



VIRTUAL TRAININGS

It's getting chillier outside and you don't want to leave your house for training, so we have virtual options available.

Each quarterly training calendar has options for virtual trainings.

Check out the latest version on our website:

[October through December 2026 Training Calendar](#)

Contact Crystal to sign up at ctaylor@familyenrichment.org or call 607-723-8313 ext. 829.





WALKIE TALKIE CHATTER

By Brittney Craig, Early Childhood
Mental Health Specialist

The use of walkie-talkies in childcare centers is an essential part of effective communication. Early Childhood Educators do more than teach; they are leaders, protectors, and responders. Because childcare environments can be unpredictable, the ability to quickly and effectively communicate with staff is essential—from coordinating daily routines and transitions to responding to unexpected or emergency situations. When used appropriately, walkie-talkies provide a reliable way for staff to stay connected, support one another, and communicate efficiently while maintaining a calm and nurturing environment for children.

Keep it “C.L.E.A.R.”

Clarify: Identify who is speaking and who you are speaking to

Location: Clearly identify where you are or where support is needed

Essential information: Keep messages brief and to the point

Appropriate tone: Use a calm, professional, and respectful tone

Respect privacy: Protect children's, families', and staff members' confidentiality

It is important to use the walkie-talkies at your center for the intended purpose to ensure clear lines of communication. Using walkie-talkies intentionally helps keep communication clear and efficient while minimizing distractions and maintaining a calm environment for children. When staff use the walkie for necessary, relevant, and appropriate information, it helps to create a safer, more organized, and more supportive environment for everyone.

A good rule of thumb - If everyone on the channel doesn't need to hear it, then don't say it.

Avoid:

- Discussing a child's behavior in detail
- Sharing confidential family information
- Discussing medical or developmental information
- Staff complaints or disagreements
- Gossip or personal conversations
- Lengthy conversations

In ECE, communication is a key part of creating safe, supportive, and responsive environments for children. When walkie-talkies are used thoughtfully and for their intended purpose, they allow educators to stay connected and support one another when it matters most. Clear communication supports strong teams—and strong teams create stronger environments for children



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 are currently endorsed.

- Young Wonders
- Campus Preschool
- BC Center

To learn more about Caring Spaces, email Victoria at vallen@familyenrichment.org or call (607) 687-6721 ext 1678 to get started.

CONGRATULATIONS NEW CHILD CARE PROGRAMS!

Broome Family Child Care

The Pickel Patch: Nicole Pickel

Broome Group Family Child Care

Helping Hands Daycare and Nursery: Shevon Majewski-Brown

Puddle Jumpers Childcare: Emily Devine

Broome Child Care Center

Meadowsweet Montessori, Inc.

Two Rivers Assembly of God

Tioga School Age Child Care

Cardinal Care, LLC.





THE IMPORTANCE OF SCREENING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

By Victoria Allen, Infant Toddler Specialist

To set goals for a child, it is recommended to first use a screening method. This will provide you with a baseline, concrete data to set goals, and a system to track the child's progress over time. Developmental screening is a short, easy-to-complete formal test of young children's developmental skills, such as motor, cognitive, language, and social-emotional skills. A developmental screener reliably distinguishes children who should be referred for further, more comprehensive assessment from those who don't need to be referred.

Doctors, nurses, and other early childhood professionals use developmental screening to tell if children are on track with developing basic skills, or if they might have delays. A developmental screening tool, (such as ASQ®-3 for example), is a research-based instrument that asks questions about a child's development and gathers information. All children should receive developmental screenings as is recommended by major educational and medical organizations, including AAP, Head Start, etc.

How can screening further benefit you?

- Better understand all the children in your classroom
- Discover each child's strengths
- See any areas where a child may need more support
- Detect delays early and improve child outcomes
- See areas of development where multiple children are struggling
- Plan extra classroom activities to target developmental areas in which multiple children score in the monitoring or referral zones
- Arrange your classroom to emphasize areas where children need more practice. (For example, make sure your writing center has lots of space and materials if many children need to work on fine motor skills.)
- Understand families' concerns about their child
- Encourages parent involvement and education
- Send home activities that target developmental areas where children may need support

For more information and further assistance implementing developmental screenings into your program, please contact us here at Family Enrichment Network! 607-723-8313

Here are some free screenings you can access:

<https://www.cdc.gov/act-early/index.html>

<https://agesandstages.com/>

Or call Jenn about using the Sparkler App!

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY: CARING FOR THOSE WHO CARE FOR OUR YOUNGEST LEARNERS

By: Brittney Craig, Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist

October 10, 2026 is World Mental Health Day, a day dedicated to raising awareness about mental health and reminding us that emotional well-being is an important part of overall health. In early childhood education, this message is especially meaningful. Every day, daycare staff and preschool teachers care for young children while also managing their own emotions, energy, relationships, and responsibilities. Working with young children can be incredibly rewarding. It can also be physically and emotionally demanding. Early childhood educators are often expected to be patient, nurturing, flexible, attentive, and calm—even when the classroom is loud, busy, unpredictable, and challenging. Behind the smiles, songs, story times, and messy art projects are educators who may also be carrying stress, exhaustion, and worries of their own. Young children depend on the adults around them to help them feel safe, regulate their emotions, solve problems, and navigate difficult moments. Educators are often the people helping children take deep breaths, name their feelings, recover from big emotions, and try again after something goes wrong. But educators have emotions, too. It is normal for teachers to have days when they feel overwhelmed, frustrated, tired, or emotionally drained. Good Mental health does not mean feeling positive all the time. It means recognizing our emotions, understanding what we need, and having healthy ways to cope with life's challenges.

You Can't Pour From An Empty Cup

Self-care isn't selfish. Preventing high amounts of stress and burnout is necessary for the incredible important work in early childhood education. Practicing self-care in small moments throughout the day can help with regulation and maintaining a sense of calm. Try incorporating some of these practices to make a difference and to replenish energy, mind, and spirit.

Take a breath before responding: When a classroom moment feels overwhelming, pause for a breath before reacting. That small pause can give your nervous system a moment to reset.

Find Moments of connection: Talk with a trusted coworker. Share a laugh. Celebrate a small classroom success. Positive relationships can provide important emotional support.

Notice your needs: Ask yourself, "What am I feeling and What do I need?" Sometimes the answer might be a drink of water, a few quiet moments, support from a coworker, or simply acknowledging that you're having a difficult day.

Celebrate small wins: Maybe a child used their words instead of hitting, Maybe someone in class tried a new activity. Maybe the class cleaned up together. Celebrate those moments of kindness and success. Focus on the good. Give Yourself Permission to be HUMAN!: You will not have a perfect day every day. You will lose your patience sometimes. You will make mistakes. What matters is recognizing those moments, repairing when needed, and trying again.



THE MAGIC OF LOOSE PARTS & SENSORY PLAY

By: Cortney Nornhold, Training and Coaching Supervisor

As childcare providers, you know that flashy plastic toys often lose their appeal quickly. If you want to boost engagement, problem-solving, and calm focus in your program, the answer lies in loose parts and sensory play.

What are loose parts? They are open-ended materials that can be moved, combined, redesigned, and taken apart. They don't come with instructions. A plastic toy phone is always a phone; a smooth river rock can be a phone, a cookie, a stepping stone, or a dinosaur egg.

Need inspiration? Contact our Child Care Resource Center today to check out upcoming professional development workshops!

Why It Matters for Child Development

- STEM Learning: Figuring out how to balance heavy stones on cardboard tubes teaches early physics, engineering, and spatial awareness.
- Fine Motor Strength: Scooping dry beans, picking up buttons, and squeezing clothes-pins builds the hand strength needed for writing.
- Rich Language: Because these items can be anything, children use complex descriptive words during imaginative play.
- True Inclusion: There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to play with loose parts, allowing children of all developmental stages to succeed together.

Source Your Materials on a Budget

The best items are found in nature, upcycled from home, or donated by families:

- Nature-Based: Pinecones, acorns, smooth river rocks, seashells, and twigs.
- Upcycled Items: Cardboard tubes, clean jar lids, fabric scraps, and egg cartons.
- Hardware & Craft: Large wooden buttons, clothespins, and PVC pipe connectors.

Try It Out: 3 Quick Ideas

1. The Sensory Bin Upgrade: Fill a tub with dried chickpeas or oats. Add measuring spoons, silicone cupcake liners, and a basket of smooth stones.
2. An Invitation to Create: Set out a mirror tile, a small bowl of glass gems, and wooden craft sticks. Let children explore patterns and reflections freely.
3. Cardboard Architecture: Save a large box. Give children clothespins, yarn, and cardboard scraps to build their own multi-level structures.

⚠️ Safety Reminder: For infants and toddlers who mouth objects, ensure all loose parts are larger than a toilet paper roll to prevent choking hazards. Always supervise closely.



FALL SENSORY BIN IDEAS

By Abbie Bennett, Training and Coaching Specialist

Bring the beauty of the harvest season into your program this fall with a simple change in your sensory bin. Get outside and collect some of these items to bring inside.

Benefits of sensory play include:

- Provides a calming and engaging sensory experience
- Encourages curiosity and exploration
- Builds confidence through independent play
- Connects children with nature and the changing season
- Builds language
- Fosters social skills
- Practice math and problem solving skills
- Fun and screen-free way to learn!

Ideas for themed sensory bins:

- Pumpkin Patch: Add orange pom poms, mini foam pumpkins, felt pumpkin cutouts, and toy shovels, tongs and buckets. Children can harvest the pumpkins for a great fine motor activity.
- Apple Orchard: Use red, green and yellow pom poms, fake leaves, small tree branches, and baskets. Children can sort by color pom pom for color recognition and counting skills.
- Fall Leaves: Add a variety of leaves (real or fake) with pinecones, acorns, and branches. Add small rakes and tongs to gather and sort the leaves.
- Forest Floor: Use shredded brown paper of various shades to mimic the forest floor. Add toy animals such as squirrels, deer, and owls. You can also add fake mushrooms, rocks and wooden disks. Children can prepare the animals for the winter slumber.
- Acorns and pinecones: Combine real or fake pinecones and acorns with leaves and wood chips. Provide magnifying glasses to explore different textures.
- Autumn Textures: Add materials such as faux fur, burlap, felt and fabric pieces to explore enhancing tactile senses.
- Hale Bale: Add real or fake hay (shredded paper) with little toy farm animals and tractors for storytelling and exploring life on a farm.

PROGRAMS UPDATES

Do you have an opening for a child?

Did you change your program hours?

Did you change your rates?

Make sure to let us know!

Call Crystal at 607-723-8313 ext. 829 or email

ctaylor@familyenrichment.org



CO-REGULATION TIP: MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

By Mary Fox, Tioga Child Care Specialist

Adapted from article from Prerna Richards, Early Childhood Educational Consultant

Co-regulation is the interactive process where a calm adult helps a child manage big emotions. Children cannot self-regulate until their brains mature; they must first borrow your calm to build their own internal regulation skills over time.

One of the best things for young children's brain development, and for teaching them self-regulation, is to give them exposure to music and movement.

Music helps train the brain to match a steady rhythm, practice impulse control, and transition between high energy and calm states.

How Music Supports Self-Regulation

- Beat synchronization: Clapping, drumming, or tapping feet to a steady beat teaches the brain to align physical actions with external cues.
- Inhibition and impulse control: Stopping movement instantly when music stops strengthens the brain's ability to halt an action.
- Emotional shifting: Changing from fast, loud songs to slow lullabies helps children learn how to shift their energy levels and soothe their nervous systems.

Practical Activities to Try

- Freeze games: Play upbeat music for dancing, then pause it suddenly and ask children to freeze like statues.
- Call and response: Clap a simple rhythm and have the child repeat it back to practice listening and turn-taking.
- Singing and swaying: Use slow-tempo songs or familiar lullabies at the end of playtime to signal a transition to quiet time or rest.
- Missing words: Leave out specific words in a repetitive song to challenge working memory and attention.

Here are some specific games:

- Sleeping Babies: Turn on a slow, calming song and have the children rock their favorite stuffed animal to sleep. They must tiptoe or walk very quietly so they don't "wake the baby". When the music stops, they can gently tuck their animals into bed and "wake up" to act like wild animals until the music restarts.
- Speedy Scarves: Give each child a light dance scarf. Play music that drastically changes tempos. Match the scarf movements to the music—slow, floating waves for classical; fast, frantic shaking for upbeat pop. Controlling the fine motor muscles to match the sound builds excellent physical inhibition.
- The Train Transition: To get children from playtime to lunch or nap, use a movement song like Chugga Chugga Choo Choo. Have everyone form a "train" moving around the room to a steady beat. The key to regulation here is the planned ending: design the song to slowly decrease in tempo until the train "gets tired," stretches, yawns, and lays down to fall asleep on their mats.



FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS YEARS OF SERVICE

CELEBRATING YEARS OF SERVICE

Congratulations to the following providers who are celebrating years of service in the months of April, May, and June.

Tioga County

Terri Brogdale – 33 years

Michaela Leyburn – 2 years

Lora McCreary – 24 years

Broome County

Michelle Arlequin – 4 years

Christina Hall-Weaver – 7 years

Marnita Johnson – 23 years

Wendy Ladd – 5 years

Anna Raheem – 12 years

Christine Schell – 4 years

Hurija Selimovic – 3 years

Kristy Snow – 4 years

Jessica Teed – 7 years

Lori Turck – 29 years

Melinda Wood – 13 years

Robin Wright – 14 years

Cheryl Yacovoni – 12 years

Chenango County

Dallas Beang – 5 years

Alexis Buell – 1 year

Jamie Fleming – 13 years

Amy Prime – 19 years

Krystal Smith – 13 years

Jennifer Stewart – 16 years

Kathleen Turner – 27 years

DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Do you have a hard time asking parents for their tuition payments, even if it's late?

Do you find it hard to talk to others who aren't following policies?

Is it easier to ignore it and hope it goes away? It won't.

Come learn some strategies for having those difficult conversations with parents, coworkers, or staff.

Attend "Business Basics: Difficult Conversations: with Isabelle on November 17th from 6-7pm at Cherry St, Johnson City.

Sign up with Crystal at 607-723-8313 ext. 829 or email ctaylor@familyenrichment.org.