

Professional Development

Virtual training? Oh, my! Yes, we have shifted our June - September trainings virtually to adhere to the states mandate in social distancing and limited amount of indoor group gatherings. This is truly a learning curve for many of us, but a great opportunity for professional development in technology and a wonderful way for us to still stay connected. Check out our website www.randolphkids.org that is periodically updated, with Parthnership trainings and a myriad of other trainings from various agencies.

Professional Development Peer Support Cohorts

Have you ever heard the phrase, "It takes a village to raise a child?" Are you in school pursuing your degree and ever find yourself in need of support? Well, it probably feels as though you could use a village to help you through school sometimes! That is the thought behind Peer Support Cohorts. These are small "villages" or small groups who will come together during six month periods (July-December and January-June) to support one another through the education experience.

Our peer support group begins July 2020 for those individuals who are pursuing their Associates and/or Bachelor's Degrees in Early Childhood Education to join and support one another in this journey. We will also have a second support group for individuals who are starting their journey in the EDU 119 Credentials Course. Both support groups will meet monthly as a group as well as individual members will meet for one on one Profes-sional Development Counseling with Susan Helsabeck monthly to discuss coursework challenges, strategies for success, and looking towards the future for career and educational advancement. Successful completion of the Peer Support Cohorts will also lead to stipends! Contact Susan Helsabeck: shelabeck@randolphkids.org no later than June 25, 2020.

Healthy Futures Through Classroom Cooking
A 5-part series with
Chef John LaTour and Dietician Pam McIntyre

July 16: Food Insecurity & Understanding Labels
July 30: Hands on Cooking
Aug. 20: Healthy Celebrations
Sept. 17: Teaching Nutrition through the Arts
Oct. 15: Food Activities in the Classroom

Upon completion, each participant will receive cooking equipment! Questions? Contact: Patty at psullivan@randolphkids.org or 629-2128 ext. 16

Be Active Kids Hero

Congratulations to Karen Williams, two - three year old teacher at The Children's Center of Asheboro. Nominated by peers and parents, Karen received a "Swag Bag" filled with a towel, gift card, t-shirt and water bottle and a Play Pack with hoops, balls and more to help give her children more opportunities to be physically active.

Visit Be Active Kids:
www.beactivekids.org or tinyurl.com/childcareheroes for more information and to nominate your superhero!



Child Care Services Program
349 Sunset Avenue Asheboro, NC 27203
If you would like to receive this newsletter by e-mail or would no longer wish to be on our mailing list, please call (336) 629-2128.



Early Education Explorations

Discovery, Investigation & Experiences in Randolph County's Quality Early Care & Education

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A monthly publication of the Randolph Partnership for Children, providing resources for the early childhood community.

Randolph Partnership for Children

To add your name to our mailing list please contact us! Include your name, address, phone, fax, etc.

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There's No Going Back: Child Care after COVID-19

Throughout this crisis, the spotlight has brought attention to the essential service our child care centers bring as an economic factor for a thriving and healthy community. We, early educators, play an important role and have hard science to back up the value of our profession.

So, at the local, state and federal level, it will require a reimagined approach to financing and structuring the systems that support high-quality child care.

Now gives us time to pause and also help promote self care. We need to make sure we are taking care of ourselves, before we can take care of others. We are the drivers of comfort, connections and resiliency.

Since we can't go back, hopefully we can go forward by building on the best of what we know about how young children thrive and learn, how families need stable care to go to work, and early childhood educators must be valued with more than applause.

Resource: NAEYC

Celebrating our Early Childhood Professionals

How do we define a hero? A hero is someone who puts others before himself or herself. A hero is a person of distinguished courage or ability and admired for his or her brave deeds. In response to the COVID-19 community challenges and needs, our early childhood professionals immediately knew what you had to do! Without missing a beat, you continue to provide a safe (using new guidelines mandated by the Division of Child Development Early Care and Education), caring, and still maintaining a high quality learning environment for children of essential workers.

When most child care centers across the United States decided to close, 76% of Randolph County child care programs remained open, knowing you would be critical in offering this essential service for other essential workers.

We celebrate our early educators, as you too put the welfare of children and families as a priority even as you continue to grapple with the health and safety for yourselves and your-families. To all our early childhood professionals: we see you, we hear you, we appreciate you, we value you! You are our heroes!



The Coronavirus did not deter the spirit of Earth Day 2020. Knowing the current situation, it is even more important than ever for children to take action and understand the role they play as good stewards of planet earth. Our creative early educators provided wonderful hands-on experiences from planet and recycling activities to garden planting and harvesting.

Classrooms without Walls: Stay and Play Outside All Day

In the early 20th century, open door classrooms in Northern Europe were common and designed to prevent and combat the widespread rise of tuberculosis. The open door school movement has been a source of inspiration that was initially created in Germany as the "forest school" in 1904.

Fast forward to 2020, and the benefit of reestablishing and embracing outdoor classrooms seems the ideal place for learning and growing during our current health crisis, providing exposure to fresh air, good ventilation and minimizing risk of transmission. Modeling from childcare programs in Scotland, "When you have the natural world at your fingertips, you don't need so many toys, which means fewer surfaces where the virus can be passed on." Each child is given a bag containing their own paintbrush, crayons and glue stick, then encouraged to spread out and find their own space to do crafting activities.

As we begin reopening and resuming the full capacity of children in our child care programs, the answers to the challenges posed by the coronavirus are already embedded in our outdoor learning environments. Our outdoor settings offer such rich components in play and learning but it also helps with maintaining physical distancing in a natural environment, building resilience, and viewing lunch, snack and even rest time through a different lens! Anything done inside can be experienced outdoors, we just need to think creatively.

Let our imaginations breathe, run further and have bigger ideas for the future!

Resources: Scotland eyes outdoor learning as model for reopening of schools and Classrooms without Walls: A Forgotten Age of Open-air Schools



Rest time outdoors!
Two year olds at The Growing Place Child Care Center

Reconnection between families and teachers

Covid-19 came in with a vengeance, robbing us of many things-opportunities, celebrations, relationships. While child care programs remained open to serve essential employees, the welcoming feeling you get when you walk into our centers was taken away and replaced with a sterile entrance. Families can no longer enter the building, walk their child to class, have a conversation with the teacher, and give hugs and kisses to their child while the child is in their classroom with their friends and their teachers- their safe place. Instead, drop-off routines began with temperature checks, questions of health, and the passing of child to staff member who walks them to class. As much as these changes were necessary, they took a toll on our children, families, and staff emotionally. Unlike primary and secondary schools, child care programs have proudly created the type of environment that welcomes and encourages families to be a part of their child's education.

As we begin to enter the phases to get back to school and work we encourage you to think about that reconnection between families and teachers. How can we make families feel welcome and safe in our programs again? How can we help them understand that the extra time they spend transitioning their child is more critical than getting to work a few minutes earlier?

Teachers are going to struggle with these issues moving forward. We hope you can stay encouraged to go back to your typical routines of communicating with families at drop-off and pick-up. We imagine this will take more work than before. Start planning now what changes you can make in your classroom to reconnect with families. Here are a few suggestions to get you thinking.

- Use the child and the adult's name when greeting them
- Create a short routine for children and families to do together as they enter your classroom (wash hands, sign-in, read a book, choose a center)
- Inquire about a families preferred method of communication
- Share information with families about yourself and your classroom
- Create an open door policy for families to participate anytime (following all safety guidelines)
- Invite families and home life to be part of the classroom (bring pictures of family vacation or a favorite
- Encourage children to create 'All About Me' activity with their families to bring in and share with everyone

Be creative! The relationship between families and teachers is a critical component in a child's educational experience. Early childhood teachers are experts in partnering with families and it's time we get our chance to do that again.

Side note: While wanting to get back to a normal routine with families it is important to follow all safety guidelines put in place to keep everyone healthy.

For additional support and/or questions, contact Kristy Umfleet: kumfleet@randolphkids.org or (336) 629-2128 ext. 29.

Calling ALL young Jokesters!



Children say the cutest things and love telling jokes! Submit a joke from a child in your center for the Partnership's Sidewalk Chalk publication. Please include the child's: First name, age and child care center. Send to Micki Bare: mbare@randolphkids.org



Feeding the Birds!

Year round bird watching evolved into a rainy day bird feeding project at Trogon's Day Care! Using bird feeder kits provided by Lowe's along with child friendly hammers and smocks, the children practiced their STREAM skills in science, technology, reading, engineering, art and math. Veteran builders, 8-12 year olds, guided the younger children in handling the tools and displayed an ensemble of true team work. The outcome, masterfully and proudly built bird feeders to enhance the outdoor learning environment at the center and children's homes.



Justice and Equality For All

Education is deeply intertwined with issues such as equality, justice, and human rights. If the crucial values are not promoted throughout all aspects of a child's educational experience, beginning in early childhood programs, some children will never have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential and contribute to a just and equal society!

As early educators we need to play our part and envision a future different than the world around us. We need to have a better understanding how racism, discrimination and prejudice, impacts our youngest children.