



National Early Childhood Family Network Newsletter

Spring 2019

Vol 1, Issue 2

Welcome

The **National Early Childhood Family Network (NECFN)** is a network of families and agencies committed to increasing awareness of early childhood experiences by providing resources and trainings to families of young children. We aim to bring families together locally and nationally to increase our collective voices and to advocate for policies and educational research that promote the well-being of young children and their families regardless of race, religion, or social economic status.

If you would like to get involved with NECFN, or have a submission for our newsletter, please send to: ECFamilyLeaders@gmail.com. We welcome your input and participation!

Spring and It's All About Celebrating Children



May is "Children's Mental Health Awareness Month"

Children's mental health begins at birth. Parents and caregivers promote mental health by helping children feel safe, heard, secure, happy, calm, and loved.

April is the "Month of the Young Child"

April has been designated the "**Month of the Young Child**," designed to highlight the unique needs and rights of young children and their families. Michigan State University (MSU) Extension offers some helpful tips for families with young children to focus on during April: https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/april_is_the_month_of_the_young_child

Week one: Focus on physical development

Take time this week to review your family routines to be sure your child is getting enough sleep, eating well-balanced meals and drinking enough water. Review your child's immunizations and schedule a well-child visit with their doctor if they're overdue. Find a child passenger safety technician near you and check to see if your child's car seat is installed and used correctly. Spring is upon us, and now is a great time to implement family walks or other daily outdoor physical activity with your child.

Week two: Focus on social development

Did you know that children's social and emotional development has been found to be a bigger predictor of their academic success than their family background or even their IQ? Take time this week to focus on your child's social development. What do you do in your family to promote positive relationships? Teach and model empathy, kindness and caring. Use children's books to teach kindness. Teach your child problem-solving steps. Children do best with a predictable routine and structure to their day.

Week three: Focus on emotional development

The ability to control and regulate emotions is critical for children's success in school and their personal relationships. Learn more about positive strategies to teach and guide your children. Teach your child about their emotions. Use feeling words. Many time parents will say they "just want their child to be happy," but of course that isn't exactly true. Parents want their children to experience a broad range of emotions, to genuinely feel sad when their friend is hurt or mad when an injustice occurs, but they need to be able to react in an appropriate manner. Teach your child to express their emotions verbally and through creativity such as coloring. Model appropriate expressions of feelings in your home.

Week four: Focus on cognitive development

These skills include the traditional academic skills such as counting and letter recognition. Read to your child every day. Help them look for examples of print in their environment. Talk to your child. An approach like "sports casting" an event is a great tool to help children who are learning to talk. Limit the use of electronic media. Children learn best through hands-on experiences. Encourage your child to write, color and draw with a variety of different writing implements and on different materials.

NECFN WEBINAR SERIES

Effective Father Engagement Strategies and Lessons Learned from Alameda County Systems Change Approaches

May 14, 2019

3:00 pm ET – 4:30 pm ET

Responsible and involved fathers can have positive effects on the well-being of children from the prenatal period and into adolescence. Historically, programs for children have not made an effort to engage fathers. Through video and discussion the presenters will highlight AC father-centered programming and systems change efforts and share practical tips for providers to implement successful father engagement strategies.

The webinar is hosted by the National Early Childhood Family Network and FREDLA, partners in the National TA Network for Children's Behavioral Health, operated by and coordinated through the University of Maryland. To register for the webinar go to:

https://theinstitute.adobeconnect.com/e9788v8xc9cd/event/event_info.html

National TA Network for Children's Behavioral Health Early Childhood Learning Community

Open to all who are involved in early childhood development... families, providers, educators, researchers, administrators and policy makers.

Understanding and Appreciating the Challenges and Supports Needed for Grandfamilies and Kinship Families in Early Childhood

May 21, 2019

2:30 PM - 4:00 PM

Please join us for a discussion around the unique challenges and supports needed to support grandfamilies and kinship families (when children are being raised by grandparents or extended family) for young children. We will hear from Generations United, an organization working to improve lives of children, youth and families through collaboration, policies and programs and a caregiver to share both information about the experience of these unique families, as well as how systems need to accommodate and nurture services for these families. There will be time for discussion among participants to facilitate peer exchange of ideas on challenges and successes related to supporting grandfamilies and kinship families raising young children.

To register for the webinar go to

https://theinstitute.adobeconnect.com/ehd0uwxbtmn6/event/event_info.html

In Case You Missed the Last Webinar:

Honoring One's Potential Everyday with Stories: SMARTTM - A Blueprint for Creating Connection with Susan Graham and Nan Arnstein

The recording is available at: <https://youtu.be/BIIONv8BLak>

Resources:



What Is Early Childhood Development? A Guide to the Science

This guide from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University explains how children develop in their earliest years, why that time period is so important, and the practical ways early childhood development can be supported to improve outcomes for children and families.

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/guide/what-is-early-childhood-development-a-guide-to-the-science/>



Best Children's Books about Mental Health

The Child Mind Institute reminds us that reading books with children has to be one of the most pleasurable parts of parenting, and we're happy to report that there are many books created by talented writers and illustrators that aren't just sweet stories — they also address emotional and learning issues kids may be facing. Reading them with children, or giving them to older children to read by themselves, can help kids understand and handle things that are challenging for them.

The Child Mind Institute vetted books on ADHD, anxiety, dyslexia, autism, OCD, depression and more. They have also included books on common things kids struggle with, such as managing big emotions, dealing with grief, bullying, and self-esteem. The list of books for children up to age 12 years is on the Child Mind website.

https://childmind.org/article/best-childrens-books-about-mental-health/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=READ%20MORE&utm_campaign=Weekly-04-16-19

NECFN Member Updates:



The Alabama Partnership for Children has been awarded a \$600,000 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to increase access to quality early care and education programs statewide by educating parents, child care providers and the community about the benefits of regulated child care. The grant supports the Alabama Partnership for Children's work of promoting public awareness through the *Don't Be In The Dark About Child Care Campaign* and implementing a technical assistance program to support license-exempt child care centers in obtaining a license from the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR). According to DHR's Subsidized Child Care Statistics, there is a current shortage of infant and toddler child care options. The Alabama Partnership for Children's technical assistance program will focus on supporting existing license-exempt child care centers in order to begin building the supply of quality child care available to working families.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation funding prioritizes efforts to increase the number of licensed and inspected child care as a necessary step in improving the overall quality of Alabama's early care and education system. The Alabama Partnership for Children's work supported by this two-year grant began in January 2017.

Elm City Project LAUNCH in Connecticut is working to promote NECFN and to build a parent group in CT that would be champions and participants for the network. NECFN Steering Committee members Susan Graham, Caroline Austin, and Heather Black are piloting family connection calls. Susan will walk family participants through a "Developing the Leader Within You" series and discussions on leadership. Calls will be held in the evening to give more families an opportunity to participate.

- Jerry Haruna, an NECFN founding member, recently took his bar exam and continues to lead in his respective community of New Haven, CT. He is still heavily involved with LAUNCH and has recently been appointed by the Mayor of New Haven to be a member of the New Haven Early Childhood Council (NHECC). The parent group is working with the New Haven Early Childhood Council to develop a "Partnering with Parents" curriculum and are developing a network of parents who can help other parents navigate the New Haven School System.

NECFN Regional News

Eastern Regional Early Childhood Family Connection Call

Join a warm and welcoming parent leadership learning community along with Leadership Consultant Susan Graham for the review and discussion on *Developing the Leader Within You*.

When: Tuesdays,
Starting Tuesday April 23, 2019

8:00 pm -9:00 pm
Call Line # (515) 604-9305
Access Code # 340960

All parents and family champions are welcome!
It's never too late to participate!

NECFN Founding Member Receives Award



Caroline and two of her daughters



Caroline and Beth Bye, Commissioner
of the Office of Early Childhood

Caroline Austin, NECFN Steering Committee member, was recently awarded the 2019 **Community Vision Award** presented by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood at the 2019 Annual Childhood Conversations/Together We Will Conference. This award is given to two people annually who have made a significant impact in the lives of children and families. Caroline received this award on March 30th.

From Elizabeth Gooding, a Founding Member of the NECFN

Last year I had the privilege of attending the Family Leadership Summit in Maryland. Like most of us, I had no idea what I was getting myself into, but I knew it was going to be good. I was wrong however, it was better than good, it was transformative, inspiring and touched deeper than I ever expected it to. It was an honor to meet with so many other advocates. Together we laid the ground work and created the National Early Childhood Family Network. Little did I know this was not the only exciting new beginning in my life. The day after I returned home I found out we were expecting!

This was to be mine and my husband's fourth baby! During my pregnancy I worked closely volunteering for my local DOH and Launch program. I also became a part of the Vision subcommittee for our network as we developed our vision. During this time, I completed a 10-week certification course in Community Health Care work at Rhode Island College. This course aligned very well with many of the aspects our networks focus on.

My 5-year-old daughter is attending Head Start and I had the honor of being elected as parent representative for the New England Regional Head Start Board of Directors. I currently also serve on policy council for a local level involvement. It's a wonderful learning experience for me and I enjoy helping make decisions for the wellbeing of Head Start families.

This all kept me very busy as I was growing a baby and taking care of our other three children! Then on October 30th, 2019 Piper-Ella Ann Gooding was born, and we became a family of 6! She is an exceptional baby, brighter and more beautiful then we could have ever hoped for. The whole family adores her, and our hearts are so full of the love and joy she has brought to us. I am now just recently returning to my volunteer work with the National Early Childhood Network and other roles.

We had our first board meeting and policy council meetings for Head Start. I will also be teaching some part time yoga classes. I am looking forward to joining on calls for the network and seeing where I can be of service. Piper-Ella is our networks first baby and as she grows I pray we can have the joy and pride of watching our network that we created together grow and meet its full potential. Eventually becoming a valuable resource to families with young children.



Piper-Ella Ann Gooding



Gooding Family

Congratulations to all!

NECFN Steering Committee Members:

Trish MacInnis David Armstrong
Vadonna Williams Heather Black
Caroline Austin Jill Miller
Susan Graham



A Vision Realized NECFN Family Leadership Summit February 2018

Join US: If you are interested in serving on the Steering Committee or have a submission for our newsletter, contact us at: ECFamilyLeaders@gmail.com.