

Community  
Child Care  
Clearinghouse



OF NIAGARA

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# NEWSLETTER

## FALL 2026

NEWSLETTER FOR NIAGARA  
COUNTY CHILD CARE  
PROVIDERS, PARENTS & CHILD  
ADVOCATES

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## **NIAGARA COMMUNITY**

### **ACTION**

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
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#### **CCR&R STAFF:**

**SUPERVISOR:** ANGELA BURNS

**CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST,**  
**EMPIRE STATE FCC COLLABORATIVE**  
**COACH, NYS HEALTH AND SAFETY**  
**TRAINER:** VACANT

**REGISTRAR UNIT:** KIMMARIE BROWN,  
KRISTINA CLARK, CINDY DUGAN

**INFANT AND TODDLER SPECIALIST:**  
STEPHANIE LONG

**INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD**  
**MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTANT:** ERIN  
CRUMP

**LEGALLY-EXEMPT:** DEBBIE PERRICELLI,  
JORDAN ROWLAND

**BUSINESS SPECIALIST:** DONNA STRIFFLER

**CC REFERRALS:** MARY VANCE

#### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

NIAGARA COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM, INC. IS A COUNTYWIDE AGENCY DEDICATED TO REDUCING POVERTY IN A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BY INITIATING AND CONDUCTING PROGRAMS OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY. OUR ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO EMPOWER INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES TO REACH THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL.

## **RESOURCES FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS**

Our referral counselor will be working with parents who need assistance in locating a registered or licensed child care program. In addition, she will work with providers to ensure that all information regarding child care vacancies is up to date in the referral database.

If you receive a Provider Update Form, please complete the form and return it as soon as possible. As you may know, available child care slots are few and, in some areas, non-existent. If you have child care openings, please keep our office informed. A voice message which is available for calls after hours or e-mail is sufficient.

### **CONTACT US AT:**

716-285-8572 EXT. 109

**OR**

### **SEND AN EMAIL TO:**

[ccrniagara@niagaracap.org](mailto:ccrniagara@niagaracap.org)

### **OFFICE CLOSINGS:**

SEPTEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>, 7<sup>TH</sup>, 2026  
OCTOBER 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2026  
NOVEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>, 26<sup>TH</sup>, 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2026  
DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup> & 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2026

A decorative banner at the top of the page features several orange pumpkins with black outlines and simple faces, strung together by a purple cord.

# **Who We Are and What We Do**

**Referral Counselor:** We help families find child care that works for them—for free.

We learn what your family is looking for, then we give you a list of licensed child care programs that may be a good fit for your family. You then contact the programs directly to ask questions, check availability, and decide which one is right for you. We will follow up with you, provide more referrals, and connect you with other resources if needed.

**Legally-Exempt:** We help families and caregivers through the legally-exempt child care process. We help caregivers: Fill out the required paperwork, Complete required health and safety training, Make sure they meet basic child care requirements, Understand how to get paid through child care assistance, Make sure all paperwork is correct and turned in on time

**Business Specialist:** We help child care providers start and run their businesses.

We work with providers to: Get their child care business started, Set up rules and policies, Create systems to keep things organized, Understand what they need to do to meet regulatory requirements, Build a strong business that can grow and succeed.

**Infant Toddler Specialist:** We support teachers and caregivers in understanding how infants and toddlers grow, learn, and develop, while helping identify signs that a child may benefit from additional developmental or learning support services. We work alongside caregivers to understand each child's individual needs and provide hands-on technical assistance, coaching, classroom design ideas, teaching strategies, and best practices that strengthen interactions and create responsive learning environments.

**Empire State FCC Collaborative Coach:** This specialist helps child care providers run their businesses more successfully. They provide personalized support with things like child care software, budgeting, and keeping records. Providers can also get help with financial guidance and participate in meetings that encourage networking, advocacy, and professional growth.

**Infant Toddler & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant:** We help support the emotional well-being of children from birth to age 5 by working with the adults who care for them. We help caregivers and educators build strong relationships, manage challenging behaviors, and create safe, caring environments where children feel understood. This support helps young children develop healthy emotional skills and become more resilient as they grow.

**Early Childhood Development Specialist:** Our Early Childhood Development Specialists focus on helping programs build strong, high-quality care practices for preschool and school-age children. Our specialists support programs serving children ages 3 to 12 by helping create engaging learning experiences, safe and welcoming environments, positive guidance practices, developmentally appropriate activities, strong daily routines, and overall program quality.

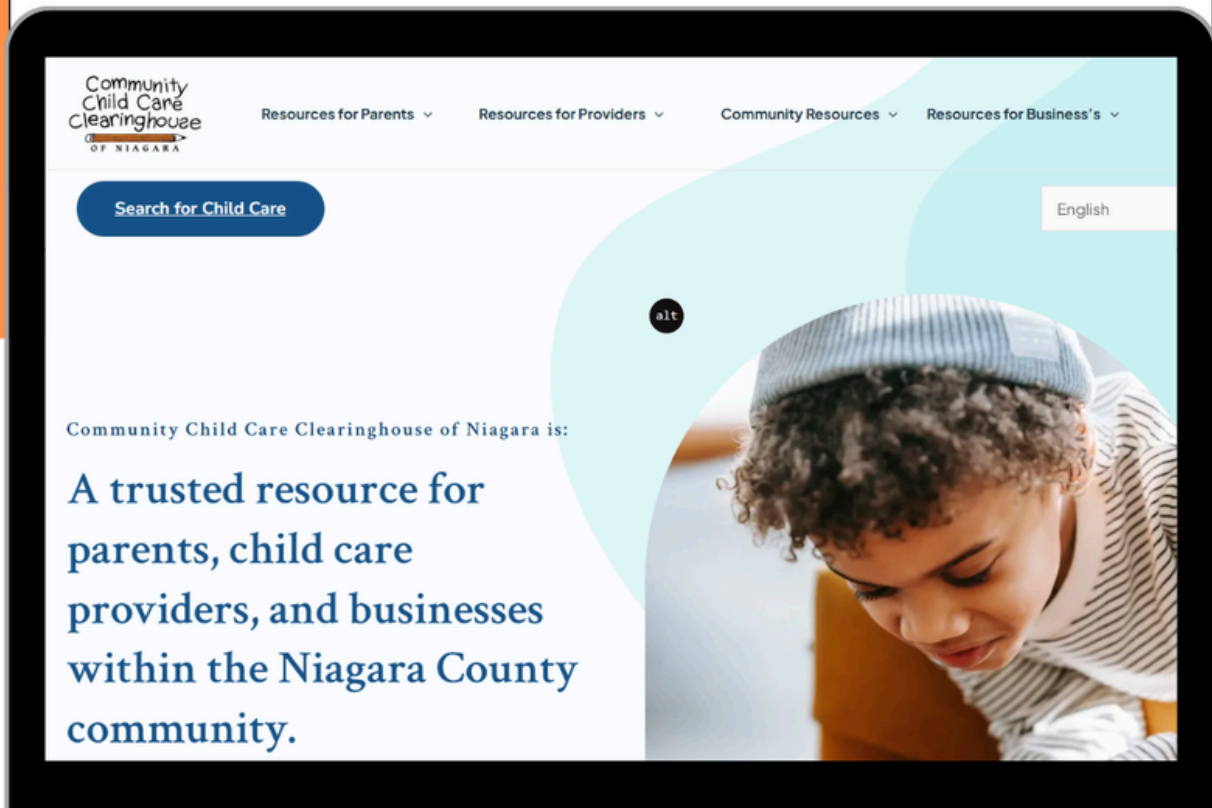


# WE'RE EXCITED TO SHARE OUR NEW WEBSITE!

The Community Child Care Clearinghouse of Niagara has launched a new and improved website designed to make it easier for child care providers and families to access information, resources, and support.

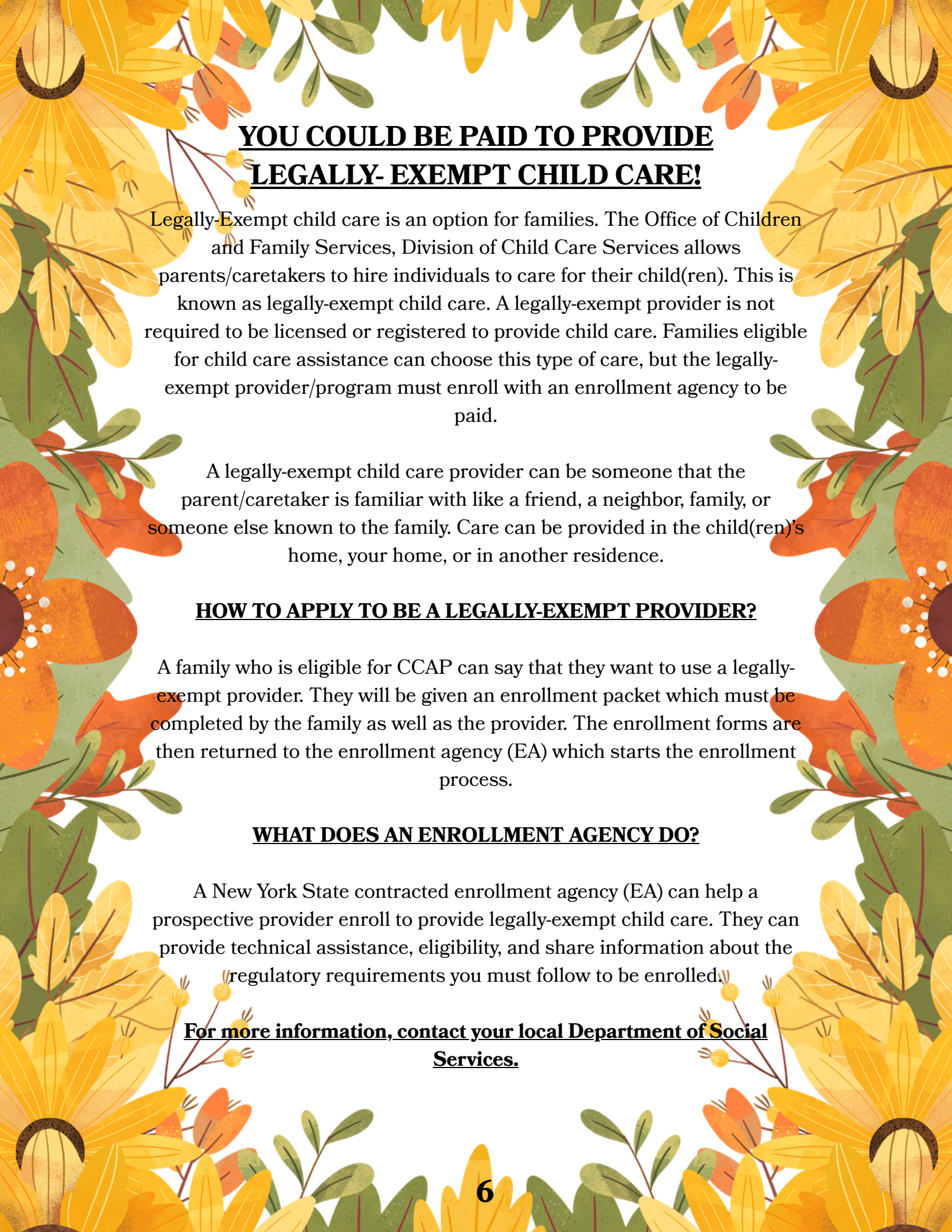


- Explore trainings and professional development opportunities
- Access OCFS forms, "Dear Provider" letters, and more
- Learn more about our programs and support services
- Stay up to date on upcoming community events and announcements



www.childcareofniagara.com





## **YOU COULD BE PAID TO PROVIDE LEGALLY- EXEMPT CHILD CARE!**

Legally-Exempt child care is an option for families. The Office of Children and Family Services, Division of Child Care Services allows parents/caretakers to hire individuals to care for their child(ren). This is known as legally-exempt child care. A legally-exempt provider is not required to be licensed or registered to provide child care. Families eligible for child care assistance can choose this type of care, but the legally-exempt provider/program must enroll with an enrollment agency to be paid.

A legally-exempt child care provider can be someone that the parent/caretaker is familiar with like a friend, a neighbor, family, or someone else known to the family. Care can be provided in the child(ren)'s home, your home, or in another residence.

### **HOW TO APPLY TO BE A LEGALLY-EXEMPT PROVIDER?**

A family who is eligible for CCAP can say that they want to use a legally-exempt provider. They will be given an enrollment packet which must be completed by the family as well as the provider. The enrollment forms are then returned to the enrollment agency (EA) which starts the enrollment process.

### **WHAT DOES AN ENROLLMENT AGENCY DO?**

A New York State contracted enrollment agency (EA) can help a prospective provider enroll to provide legally-exempt child care. They can provide technical assistance, eligibility, and share information about the regulatory requirements you must follow to be enrolled.

**For more information, contact your local Department of Social Services.**



# RAKING IN GOOD HABITS

Fall is a great time to sweep up old routines and make room for new, positive habits. For young children, everyday tasks like cleaning up toys, putting away books, or helping with leaves can become chances to practice responsibility.

Positive reinforcement means noticing and acknowledging children when they are doing the right thing, rather than only giving attention when they make a mistake. Instead of constantly correcting behavior, adults intentionally “catch them being good” by recognizing helpful, respectful, responsible, or appropriate choices. This reinforces those behaviors and makes children more likely to repeat them.

The key idea is: Don’t just correct what’s wrong, notice what’s right.

One simple way to encourage these habits is positive reinforcement. This means noticing and praising children when they make a good choice or showing helpful behavior. When children receive positive attention for what they do well, they are more likely to want to do it again.

Try to be specific with your praise. Instead of saying, “Good job,” try, “You put all the blocks in the bin without being asked. That was very helpful!” This helps children understand exactly what they did right. Just saying “Good Job” does not tell them what they did well. Instead of only saying, “Stop interrupting,” you might say, “I noticed you waited patiently while your friend was talking that was respectful.” This helps the child understand exactly what behavior is expected and encourages them to do it again.

Remember, children are still learning. They may need reminders, choices, and plenty of practice before a new routine becomes a habit. Keep your expectations simple and celebrate small steps along the way.

## **Activity: Leaf Pile Helpers**

Turn cleanup time into a fun fall activity. Invite children to help rake leaves, gather small piles, or put away outdoor toys. Inside, they can practice the same skill by putting toys, books, or art supplies back where they belong.

Look for moments when children help without being asked more than once. When they do, offer immediate, specific praise:

- “You put your toys away all by yourself!”
- “You noticed the leaves needed to be picked up. What a great helper!”
- “You listened the first time. That shows responsibility!”

A high-five, smile, or enthusiastic “Thank you!” can also be a powerful reward.

With patience and positive reinforcement, small acts of helping can grow into strong habits that last long after the leaves are gone.



# BACK-TO-SCHOOL TIPS FOR EVERY AGE



## **Tip 1: Re-establish Routines**

*Routines provide structure and help children feel safe and secure, especially during times of transition. While summer schedules often change because of childcare, work, camps, vacations, and other activities, gradually getting back into a school-year rhythm can help children feel more prepared for the start of school. Predictability can also reduce anxiety by giving children a clearer sense of what to expect each day.*

- *Prioritize sleep. Start adjusting bedtimes and wake-up times before school begins rather than waiting until the first day. Children need plenty of sleep—up to 12 hours per 24-hour period for elementary-aged children—and getting enough rest supports learning, emotional regulation, and the ability to complete daily tasks.*
- *Create a predictable schedule. Every family's routine will look different, so focus on what works best for your child and household. Visual schedules can make routines easier to understand and remember. Try a calendar, chalkboard, or paper schedule with photos, emojis, or simple symbols, and invite your child to help choose or create the visuals.*
- *Make routines engaging. Give your child opportunities to participate by checking off tasks, moving activities to a “done” column, or finding a small note of encouragement each morning. Age appropriate responsibilities—such as caring for pets, tidying shared spaces, watering plants, or helping with groceries—can also help children build independence and feel involved in the family routine.*

*Starting small and building consistency can make the transition back to school feel more manageable for the whole family.*







## ***Tip 2: Co-Create a Learning Space***

A dedicated learning space can help children feel focused, motivated, and more connected to their learning. It doesn't need to be a separate room or even a full desk—a quiet corner, small table, or bin for supplies can work. Creating a consistent space for homework, reading, and other learning activities can reduce distractions and give children a greater sense of ownership.

- Get organized. Keep notebooks, pens, art materials, and other supplies in bins or organizers so everything has a place. Encourage your child to make tidying their learning space part of their daily or weekly routine.
- Make it personal. Invite your child to decorate their space with stickers, artwork, photos, or motivational messages. Giving them a say in how their space looks can build independence, make the area feel welcoming, and help them feel more excited about spending time there.

## ***Tip 3: Promote Open Communication***

Transitions can bring both excitement and worry. Create a home environment where your child feels safe sharing their feelings—and where you can share some of your own experiences, too.

- Listen actively. Set aside distraction-free time to check in and ask open-ended questions, such as, “What are you excited or worried about?” or “How can I help?” Make space for both concerns and positive experiences.
- Share your experiences. Talk about your own school memories, challenges, and strategies for getting through difficult moments. Sharing honestly can build trust, help your child feel understood, and make it easier for them to open up when they need support.



# MAKE YOUR CHILD CARE PROGRAM STAND OUT

Marketing your program doesn't have to be complicated. A simple, thoughtful marketing plan can help families understand what makes your program unique and why it may be the right fit for their child.

## **Start With What Makes You Special**

Before creating flyers or posting on social media, think about what sets your program apart. What do you value most? What do you offer children and families beyond basic care? Use your mission, values, and program philosophy to tell a clear story about who you are and what families can expect.

## **Know the Families You Want to Reach**

Effective marketing starts with knowing your audience. Consider the families in your community, the types of care they need, and where they look for child care information. Understanding your local community—and what other programs offer—can help you identify opportunities to better meet the needs of the family.

## **Choose the Right Ways to Connect**

You don't need to use every marketing tool available. Focus on the places where families are most likely to find you. This might include:

- A simple, welcoming website
- Social media
- Flyers and community outreach
- A visible sign at your program
- Partnerships with local businesses and organizations



Set a goal for each strategy and check in regularly to see what is working and what could be adjusted.



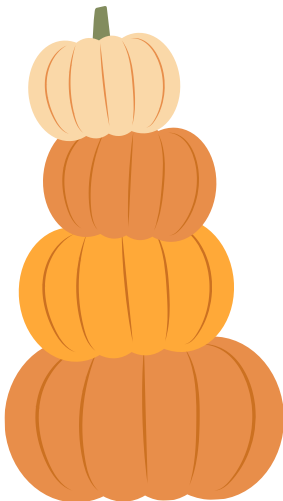


### **Keep Your Message Consistent**

Your marketing materials should clearly communicate what makes your program unique. Create a simple communication plan that outlines what you'll share, where you'll share it, when you'll share it, and how much you plan to spend.

Remember: Marketing isn't just for new programs. Continuing to share your program with families and your community can help you build awareness and reach the families who are the best fit for your program.

**Want to get started?** Explore Child Care Aware of America's marketing resources and templates.





# *A Note from the Registrars*

## **Why NYS Child Day Care Regulations Matter:**

New York State child care regulations help ensure that children receive safe, healthy, and high-quality care. Overseen by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), these regulations set standards for:

- Safety and health — safe facilities, illness policies, medication, and sanitation.
- Staffing and qualifications — background checks, training, and appropriate child-to-staff ratios.
- Quality of care — developmentally appropriate activities, supervision, and recordkeeping.
- Nutrition — safe food preparation and healthy meals and snacks.
- Accountability — licensing, inspections, and ongoing compliance.

These regulations protect children, support quality care, and give families confidence that licensed child care programs meet important safety and quality standards.





# *Must Know Regulations:*

## **414.8 Supervision of Children (School-Age Child Care)**

### **Minimum Supervision Ratios Based on Group Size:**

- School-Age through nine years old
  - One teacher for every ten children
  - maximum group size is twenty
- Between ages ten through twelve
  - One teacher for every fifteen children
  - maximum group size is thirty

### **Releasing Children from Care**

1. No child can be released from the school-age child care program to any person other than his or her parent(s), person currently designated in writing by such parent to receive the child, or any other person authorized by law to take custody of a child.
2. No child can be released from the school-age child care program unsupervised except upon written permission of the child's parent.

## **417.8 Supervision of Children (Family Day Care)**

Children cannot be left without competent supervision at any time. Competent supervision includes awareness of and responsibility for the ongoing activity of each child.

### **Supervision Ratios**

1. One caregiver may care for a maximum of six children younger than school age, or eight children when at least two of the eight children are school aged.
2. When care is provided for children under the age of two years, there must be at least one caregiver present for every two children under the age of two years in attendance.

# Autism

is characterized in many different ways and every individual presents differently.



## Autism "profiles"

are not permanent; growth and development occur even through adulthood!

## Autism Does Not

affect a person's ability to feel emotions but rather the way in which it may be expressed.



## Community Awareness & ACCEPTANCE

is key to bridging relationships with individuals and their families living with Autism and any other developmental differences.



## Stimming

(repetitive movements & vocalizations) are important coping mechanisms and should not be taken away or considered taboo - if anything help shape the stims to fit the environment or give time before stressful or intense situations to give someone some reprieve! Believe it or not, you likely are a stimmer too!



Preschool is a time when children start to establish fundamental social skills. Their play is transitioning from parallel play, where children play side by side with very little coordination or communication to cooperative play, where children work together to reach a common goal. Not all children can reach this goal during the preschool years. This is where our role as a child care provider comes into play.

Creating an environment where all children feel included throughout the day will enhance each child's productivity. In the morning as children are getting dropped off, encourage the children to greet the arriving child with a "good morning" and their name. Remember leading by example is the most effective way to teach. This will also help with getting to know each other's names and make everyone feel welcomed.

Create a morning routine that is consistent and calming, as some children need a little more time to adjust to drop off. Creating a "calm space" with books, sensory toys, and stuffies is a great way to help regulate those children who need an extra little support during morning drop off.

The most important part of creating an environment that is all inclusive is to educate children about diversity. Children do not understand that some of their peers learn and think differently. All they understood was that their peers just took their toy, broke their tower, sat in their seat, threw a toy out of frustration in group play. **As an educator, we need to help all children understand diversity.** Some good resources about diversity are books that have been included in this newsletter.

1. **Read to your children** and give them time to ask questions or you ask open-ended questions throughout the story.
2. **Create a group activity:** Set the scenario up where you the teacher are "learning something new" and you become frustrated. Explain to the children what frustration looks like so they can start to identify that emotion amongst their peers.
3. **Teach children empathy:** Express how sad and confusing it must be to not know how to express what you are feeling or know the right words to use. Ask the children some open-ended questions like what can we do to help our frustrated classmates?
4. **Create a lesson or activities that support being patience:** board games (age appropriate.) These board games are a great way to support group interaction, even if some children sit on the side and watch, there still showing interest. Encourage all children to engage verbally even to the children watching.



Operation: Amazon.com: Hasbro Gaming Operation Electronic Board Game, Family Games for Kids Ages 6+, Kids Board Games for 1+ Players, Funny Games for Kids, Easter Gifts for Boys and Girls (Amazon Exclusive) : Toys & Games

Lets Go Fishing: Amazon.com: Let's Go Fishin' Game by Pressman - The Original Fast-Action Fishing Game!, 1-4 players : Toys & Games

Monkey Around: Amazon.com: Peaceable Kingdom Monkey Around First Game for Toddlers Interactive play with Parent Ages 2+ | Active first game for toddlers—wiggle, hug and hop through 40 movement cards with a grown-up. Cooperative play, ages 2+ : Toys & Games

**Children with sensory processing differences need their environment altered to meet their sensory needs.**

Providing visual aids will help children communicate, for example:

**Signs:** Visual signs help children with transitions and communicate what their likes and dislikes are. Signs should be labeled with a picture and words like bathroom, calm corner, coloring station etc. All children thrive on routine and predictability. If your program has a routine, display your schedule on a wall and go over it every day and before the transition happens. If your children line up, use a sign to mark the location of starting point. **(If you need help with obtaining these materials, contact Community Child Care Clearinghouse at 716-285-8572 ext.109. We can help!)**

**Visual timer!** They are a game changer! When children are engaged in playing, asking them to stop can be hard for them to process. Having a visual timer and prompting them to check in with their time helps them understand that a transition is about to accrue. This is also a great tool for taking turns with an activity between two or more children. Visual timers reduce the stress amongst children as that can predict a chance is about to accrue.

**Lighting and Sounds:** Sometimes your lighting can affect a child's mood. Too much bright light can affect sensitive eyes. Maybe your children are super wound up? Try dimming the lights and create an activity like coloring or reading. Try adding some calm music or soft sounds to the environment, offer sensory toys: (pop-its, squishy sensory stress squeezing balls, play doh, sensory bins.) If you need more resources or ideas, feel free to reach out to Community Child Care Clearinghouse. We can help!

**Acceptance:** Advocating for a child to have accommodation plays a vital role in any classroom. Whether you are a center or home base child care provider advocating for any child to be included amongst their peers builds self-esteem and a sense of belonging. Remember you are a child's biggest advocate.





When children struggle to collaborate with their peers, this is because they do not know how to interact. Remember they are just learning their communication skills. Join in on the activity, encourage all to use teamwork, have patience, empathy, and use their words! Help them evolve their problem-solving skills.

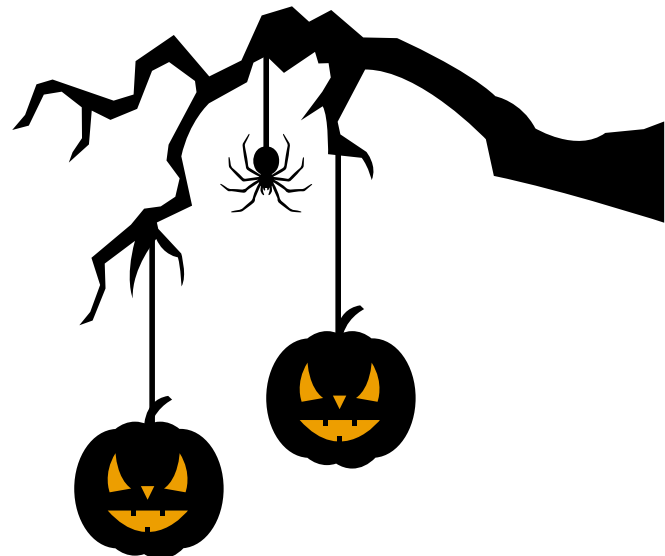
Understanding and accommodating children's special needs can be challenging, but, the first step towards creating an all-inclusive environment is recognizing their challenges, accommodating their sensory processing concerns, and educating their peers on diversity. Every child deserves to be heard, loved and seen.

If you are struggling with lessons, activities, child engagement, or collecting resources, please reach out to the Community Child Care Clearinghouse. We are here to support you and the children you provide care for.

Here are some articles you may find helpful in supporting your classroom management needs.

[Inclusion: Ensuring access for everyone | Autism Speaks](#)

[Supporting Children with Autism in Daycare Settings](#)



# Beyond the ABCs: Rethinking Language and Literacy in the Early Years

By Stephanie T Long  
Infant Toddler Specialist

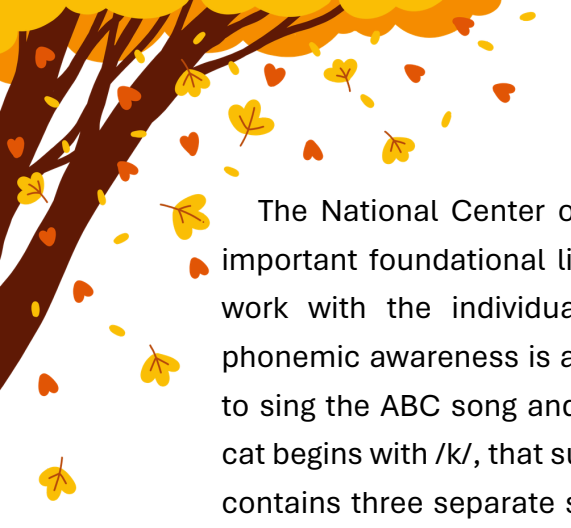
I recently completed and received the Science of Reading Fundamentals Microcredential from SUNY New Paltz, State University of New York. The microcredential provided research-based learning focused on the foundational components of literacy, including oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. This article aims to show you current research within the the science of reading, to assist you in shifting the

question from “How many letters does this child know?” to “How much language, knowledge, understanding, and curiosity is this child experiencing everyday?”.

For many years, early literacy instruction has often been associated with familiar classroom activities: alphabet posters, word walls, letter-of-the-week activities, and practicing the ABCs during circle time. These activities can have a place in an early childhood classroom. However, emerging research and a growing understanding of how children develop language and learn to read are encouraging educators to think more broadly about what it means to prepare young children for literacy.

The brain is **not** wired for reading and writing, but rather wired for speech development. For infants and toddlers especially, literacy development begins long before children are expected to identify a letter or read a word. For preschoolers, the goal is not to turn the classroom into an elementary school. Instead, it is to intentionally create experiences that strengthen the language and foundational literacy skills children will eventually use to become readers.





The National Center on Improving Literacy identifies phonemic awareness as an important foundational literacy skill. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and work with the individual sounds, or phonemes, in spoken words. Importantly, phonemic awareness is about sounds, and not letters on a page. A child may be able to sing the ABC song and identify several letters, but still have difficulty hearing that cat begins with /k/, that sun and sock begin with the same sound, or that the word map contains three separate sounds: /m/ /a/ /p/. Knowing the alphabet and being able to manipulate the sounds in spoken words are related, but they are not the same skill.

Before we look more closely at how these skills can develop in children, it is helpful to understand a few key terms. Understanding the following terms can help us recognize that early literacy development begins long before children are expected to read or write, and give us a broader picture of what studies often refer to in topics such as language, sounds, and literacy as a whole.

## Important Terms:

### Phonemic awareness:

The ability to hear and work with the smallest individual sounds in spoken words, also called phonemes. Phonemic awareness does not require children to see or identify letters.

For example:

- Hearing that hop has three sounds: /h/ /o/ /p/
- Putting sounds together to make a word, such as /t/ /i/ /p/ → tip
- Hearing that sun and sock begin with the same sound

### Phonological awareness:

The broader ability to hear and think about the sounds in spoken language. This can include noticing words that rhyme, hearing parts of words such as syllables, and eventually noticing and working with individual sounds. Think of phonological awareness as the larger category, with phonemic awareness being one part of it.

**Grapheme:** A letter or group of letters that represents a sound. For example, the letter m represents the /m/ sound. Sometimes more than one letter works together to represent one sound; such as th or /th/

**Phonics:** The process of connecting letters and letter combinations (graphemes) to the sounds (phonemes) they represent. This helps children connect what they see in print with the sounds they hear in words.

**Phoneme:** The smallest unit of sound in a spoken word. For example, the word map contains three phonemes: /m/ /a/ /p/.

**Decoding:** The ability to apply knowledge of letter-sound relationships to correctly pronounce written words.

**Sight Recognition:** The ability to recognize a word instantly as a whole, without needing to sound it out, usually through repeated exposure.

**Language Comprehension:** is the ability to understand and make meaning from language. This includes things such as vocabulary, knowledge about the world, understanding how language works, and being able to make connections between ideas.

**Note:** when you see / / around a letter, it is to visualize the **sound** of the letter. For example: /h/ → “huh”. (It is the little burst of air you hear at the beginning of hat, house, happy, or horse.). See page \_\_\_\_ to view the vowel valley & further explanation.

Now that we understand the foundational components of literacy, how do we translate this into our daily interactions with young children? The goal is to move away from "drill-and-practice" and toward intentional, language-rich experiences. One way researchers explain reading development is through the Simple View of Reading:



A child may be able to sound out every word on a page, but still have difficulty understanding the story if they do not know what the words mean or have enough background knowledge to make sense of what they are reading. On the other hand, a child may have a large vocabulary and understand stories when they read aloud, but have difficulty reading independently if they have not yet developed strong decoding skills. This is why oral language experiences in the early years matters so much. Before children are reading independently, they are already building the language and knowledge they will eventually use to understand what they read. So how does one begin to switch their lens? The Simple View of Reading reminds us that successful reading depends on two major areas: being able to work with the words on the page and being able to understand language and meaning. However, toddlers are not expected to read independently or decode words yet. Instead, they are building the foundation for both areas through everyday interactions, play, conversations, songs, and shared reading.

## **PLAYING WITH SOUNDS OF LANGUAGE:**

1. Narrate Your Day Describe what you are doing as you do it. "I am pouring the cool, refreshing water into your blue cup." This exposes children to descriptive vocabulary they might not encounter in casual conversation.
2. Open-Ended Questions & Spark curiosity: Instead of asking questions that require a "yes" or "no" answer, ask questions that spark curiosity: "What do you think would happen if...?" or "How does this make you feel?"
3. Singing songs and nursery rhymes daily (transitions, mealtimes, and areas of interest engage memory more than playing songs through the day)
4. Connect to Life: Relate the story to the child's own experiences. "The bear in this story is feeling sad. Have you ever felt sad like that?"



REMEMBER, ALWAYS FOLLOW A CHILD'S LEAD, NO MATTER WHAT THEIR AGE IS! IF A CHILD SHOWS INTEREST IN A BUG ON THE PLAYGROUND, LEAN INTO THAT CURIOSITY. LOOK UP PICTURES, TALK ABOUT THE BUG, AND FIND A SIMPLE BOOK ABOUT INSECTS. WHEN LITERACY IS TIED TO A CHILD'S GENUINE INTERESTS, IT BECOMES A TOOL FOR DISCOVERY RATHER THAN A CHORE.

When a toddler listens to a nursery rhyme, repeats a silly sound, joins in with a familiar song, hears a new word during play, or listens to the same book for the tenth time, they are doing much more than simply having fun. They are building the early foundations for the literacy skills they will use later. At the toddler literacy level, we may not see a child blending /m/ /a/ /p/ to say map, identifying a grapheme (letter), or decoding (recognizing) a written word. Although it may not be as easily trackable as having the audibly repeat “A” is for apple, these interactions and experiences are found to have more of an impact, due to a similar process known as “The Project Approach” which can provide a helpful way to see how literacy develops through meaningful investigations.

### Phase 1: Beginning the Investigation — Talking, Listening, Drawing & Predicting

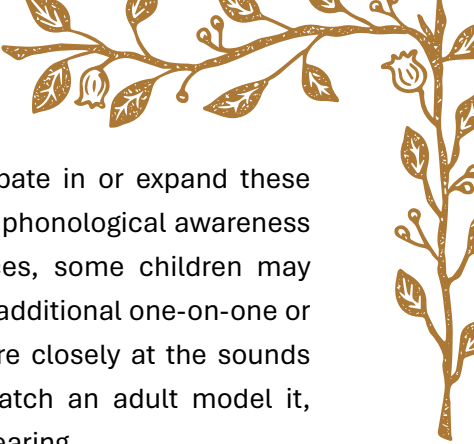
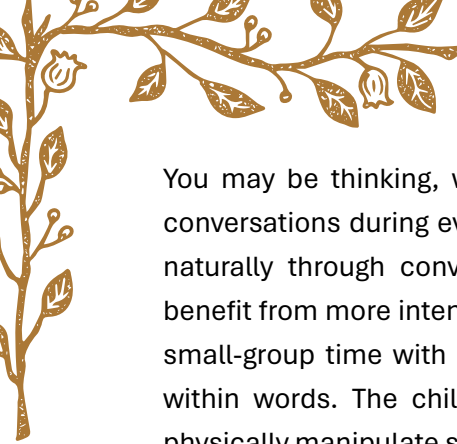
For toddlers, this early phase can be especially meaningful. Children share what they already know about a topic through words, gestures, sounds, and play. Teachers can document children's ideas by writing them down, creating simple charts, or recording their questions. Children may also draw pictures of what they think they know or what they expect to discover. As teachers introduce new vocabulary during these conversations and experiences, children begin connecting new words to things they already understand. At this stage, literacy is not about expecting toddlers to read or write independently. It is about giving them opportunities to communicate, listen, express ideas, hear new words, and begin making meaning from language.

### Phase 2: Developing the Investigation — Researching, Writing & Recording

As children move into preschool and become more developmentally ready, they can begin taking a more active role in investigating their questions. Children may have access to nonfiction books, photographs, classroom resources, or teacher-led reading experiences to learn more about a topic. This is where we may begin to see more intentional connections to print and writing. Children might help label a model, create a sign, draw and explain what they discovered, or dictate notes from a field trip or classroom experience for the teacher to record. Interviewing and Group Discussion can also become important parts of the investigation. Children practice what we might call social literacy as they ask questions, listen to one another, share ideas, and respond to what their peers say.

### Phase 3: Concluding & Sharing the Learning

In the final phase, children have opportunities to revisit what they discovered and share their learning with others. They might create a display, present their work, tell a story about what they learned, or use drawings, photographs, models, dictated language, and emerging writing to communicate their ideas.



You may be thinking, what happens when a child is not yet able to participate in or expand these conversations during everyday interactions? While many children will develop phonological awareness naturally through conversations, songs, books, play, and project experiences, some children may benefit from more intentional, individualized support. An educator may spend additional one-on-one or small-group time with a child, slowing down the experience and looking more closely at the sounds within words. The child may need more opportunities to hear a sound, watch an adult model it, physically manipulate sounds, or see a visual representation of what they are hearing.

The experiences found within the phases of the Project Approach provide a meaningful context for developing phonological awareness—the ability to hear and work with the sounds of spoken language. However, we also want to remember that children do not all access or demonstrate learning in exactly the same way. Providing multiple ways to experience language and literacy, including spoken language, visual representations, movement, objects, pictures, and print, can help educators meet children where they are. This is where tools such as Elkonin boxes, also called sound boxes, can become particularly useful. Elkonin boxes provide a simple visual and hands-on way for children to represent the individual sounds they hear in a spoken word. The boxes represent phonemes, or individual sounds—not letters or syllables.

For example, the teacher might say:

“Let’s say dog slowly. /d/ /o/ /g/. How many sounds do we hear?”

The child can then move one counter into each box as they hear each sound:

/d/ | /o/ | /g/

The child is not yet being asked to identify the letters D-O-G. Instead, they are learning that a spoken word can be broken apart into individual sounds and that each sound can be represented separately. This visual representation can make something that is otherwise invisible—the sounds within spoken language—more concrete for children. The child can hear the sound, say the sound, and physically represent the sound by moving a counter. This provides another way for children to engage with phonemic awareness beyond simply answering a verbal question.

Once the child demonstrates an understanding of the sounds, the educator can gradually connect those sounds to written symbols:

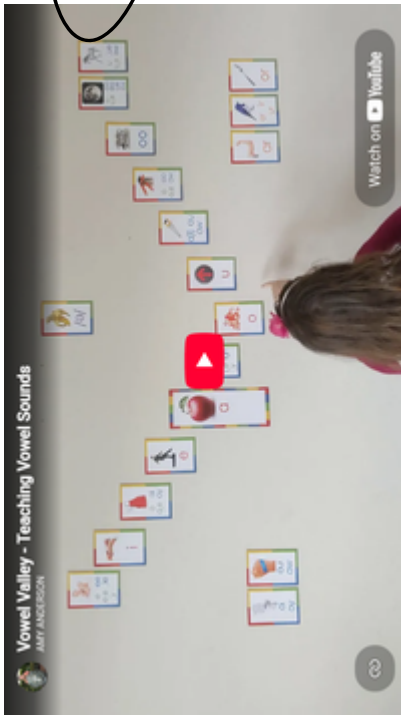
/d/ → D

/o/ → O

/g/ → G

The progression of using tokens to replace letters assists children to: Hear the word → Say the word → Represent the word (via letters & letter sounds) → and then Connect it to print(read the word).

The goal is not to rush a child toward identifying letters. The goal is to first help the child understand that spoken words are made up of individual sounds, and then build the connection between those sounds and the letters used to represent them. Elkonin boxes can therefore serve as a bridge between oral language and written language, helping children move from what they can hear to what they can eventually see, read, and write.



## NEED TO MAKE A QR CODE- USE THE SUNY NP FOR THIS INSTEAD

The Vowel Valley can be another tool educators use to help children explore and understand the sounds they hear in spoken language. Rather than introducing vowels as isolated letters to memorize, educators can use the Vowel Valley alongside children's real experiences, conversations, investigations, and project work. The goal is to help children notice that the sounds within words are different and that their mouths, lips, and jaws move in different ways when producing those sounds. The Vowel Valley does not need to become another worksheet, flashcard activity, or visual children are expected to memorize. Instead, it can be a tool that educators use in the moment as children encounter meaningful words.

### Introducing the Valley:

Remember to start with activities that children are already interested in. For example, imagine a preschool classroom investigating gardens. Children may be talking about seeds, plants, flowers, dirt, bugs, and what they notice growing outside.

The teacher might introduce vocabulary such as: seed • bee • leaf • bug • flower • soil • sun

Rather than immediately asking children to identify the vowels in these words, first give them opportunities to hear, say, and experience the words naturally. For example, the class might plant or grow sunflowers together. As the flowers begin to develop, children could participate in a fine-motor activity where they carefully pull apart a sunflower and investigate what they find.

The teacher might become excited and say: "I found a seed!"

Then invite the children to join in: "Can you say seed?"

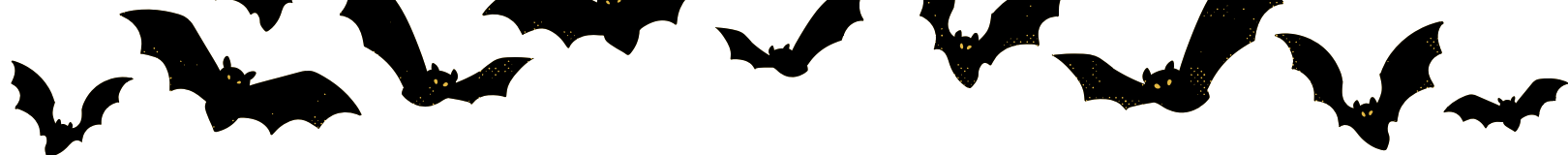
The teacher can stretch the word: "Sssseed."

Once children begin to follow the lead of the teacher and begin stretching the word as well, the teacher can begin drawing attention to the sounds they hear within those words.

The teacher might say: "Listen to the middle of seed. /ē/. What do you notice about your mouth when you make that sound?" The teacher would then exaggerate the pronunciation slightly so children can see and hear the sound. They may even point toward their mouth or chin while producing the sound and invite children to watch what happens: "Watch my mouth. What do you notice?" Children might notice that their mouths are stretched differently for different sounds.

For example, compare:

- /ē/ in seed
- /ō/ in go
- /ū/ in sun



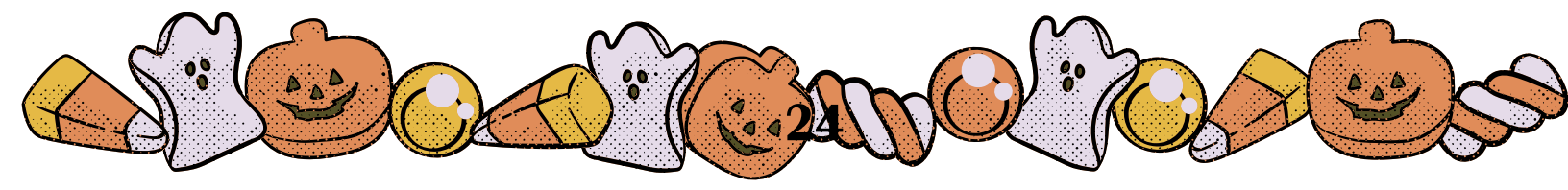
Of course, literacy and language development for young children are not a one-stop solution or a single process. There is no one activity, worksheet, book, flashcard, or strategy that suddenly teaches a child to read. When we think about literacy, it can be easy to picture a child sitting with a book, tracing letters on ditto sheets, identifying letters on a rug or poster, sounding out words from a flashcard, or writing a sentence. Those moments can certainly be part of literacy—but they are not where literacy begins. It begins as quickly as an infant listening to a caregiver's or parent's voice reading a book, or pronouncing words from their babble. It continues when a preschooler begins noticing that cat and car start with the same sound, claps the syllables in elephant, recognizes a rhyme, or uses an Elkonin box to separate the sounds in a word. Eventually, these experiences support children as they connect sounds to letters, decode words, write their ideas, and comprehend what they read.

The most important takeaway is that literacy development is a progression, not a switch that gets turned on when children enter preschool or kindergarten. Each experience builds upon what came before it:

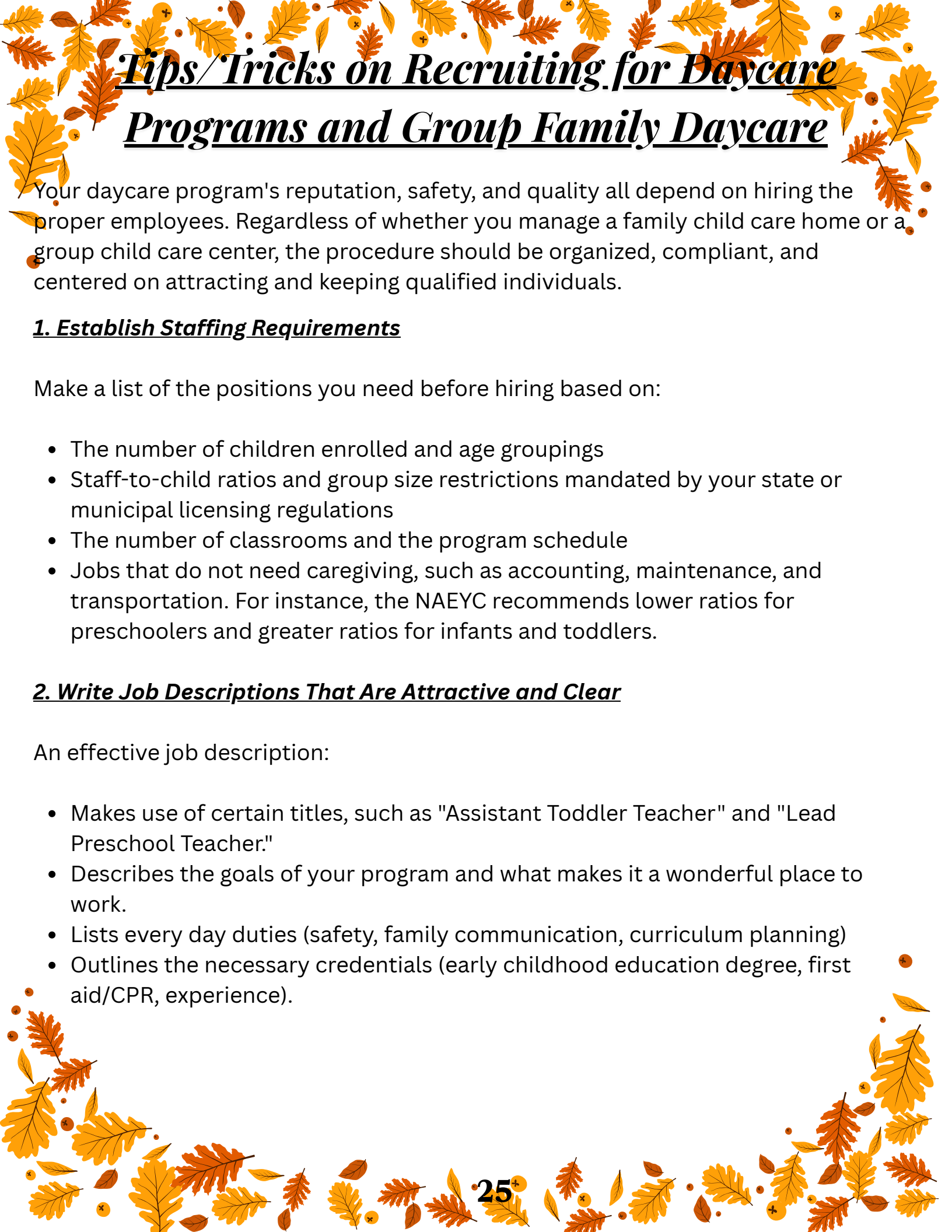
Relationships → Language → Vocabulary → Listening → Sound Awareness → Phonological Awareness → Phonemic Awareness → Phonics → Reading & Writing

Children need opportunities to experience each of these areas in ways that are meaningful, engaging, and developmentally appropriate. We should not expect a child to jump from hearing a story to reading the words on the page without the experiences that connect those two points. Methods such as the Project Approach remind us that children learn through meaningful experiences and investigations. When children are investigating something they are genuinely interested in, educators have countless opportunities to introduce vocabulary, encourage conversation, explore sounds, read informational texts, document children's thinking, and eventually connect spoken language to print. A project about gardens can become an opportunity to talk about seeds, listen for sounds in sun, explore the vowel in bee, create labels for plants, dictate observations, and eventually write about what the children discovered. A project about animals can become an opportunity to explore dog, cat, and pig, compare sounds, clap syllables, identify rhymes, use Elkonin boxes, and connect sounds to letters. Remember, going back to developmentally appropriate literacy instruction does not mean doing less for a child's education; it transforms the child to becoming more aware, and you become intentional about what you do with children, when we do it, and how we feel about it. For an infant, intentional literacy might mean singing the same song every day and responding to their babbling. For a toddler, it might mean introducing new vocabulary during sensory play and pausing during a familiar book to allow them to participate. For a preschooler, it might mean playing with rhyming words, clapping syllables, or listening for the beginning sound in a familiar word. And for a kindergartener, it might mean using Elkonin boxes to segment phonemes and connecting those sounds to graphemes.

Some of the most important literacy learning may not be immediately visible, a child's literacy skill will change as the child develops, and is given more opportunities and experiences. True Language Comprehension is built through thousands of interactions, experiences, conversations, discoveries, and connections over time. When we recognize our everyday moments as literacy, and slowly take away tracing cards and letters of the weeks in toddler classrooms, maybe we will have the grace to see that the hard and intentional work of play has been promoting literacy more all along. Before children can read the words on a page, they need a world full of words worth reading about, that work begins long before kindergarten. Don't forget, if you say they can't, they most likely won't.







# **Tips/Tricks on Recruiting for Daycare Programs and Group Family Daycare**

Your daycare program's reputation, safety, and quality all depend on hiring the proper employees. Regardless of whether you manage a family child care home or a group child care center, the procedure should be organized, compliant, and centered on attracting and keeping qualified individuals.

## **1. Establish Staffing Requirements**

Make a list of the positions you need before hiring based on:

- The number of children enrolled and age groupings
- Staff-to-child ratios and group size restrictions mandated by your state or municipal licensing regulations
- The number of classrooms and the program schedule
- Jobs that do not need caregiving, such as accounting, maintenance, and transportation. For instance, the NAEYC recommends lower ratios for preschoolers and greater ratios for infants and toddlers.

## **2. Write Job Descriptions That Are Attractive and Clear**

An effective job description:

- Makes use of certain titles, such as "Assistant Toddler Teacher" and "Lead Preschool Teacher."
- Describes the goals of your program and what makes it a wonderful place to work.
- Lists every day duties (safety, family communication, curriculum planning)
- Outlines the necessary credentials (early childhood education degree, first aid/CPR, experience).



### **3. Hire Strategically and Widely Make Use of Several Channels**

Make use of several channels:

- Professional networks and employment boards dedicated to childcare
- Schools and local community boards
- Social media and organizations in the field of childcare
- Referrals from other daycare providers or current employees.

### **4. Conduct an Effective Interview**

Create a checklist for evaluating applicants with a focus on:

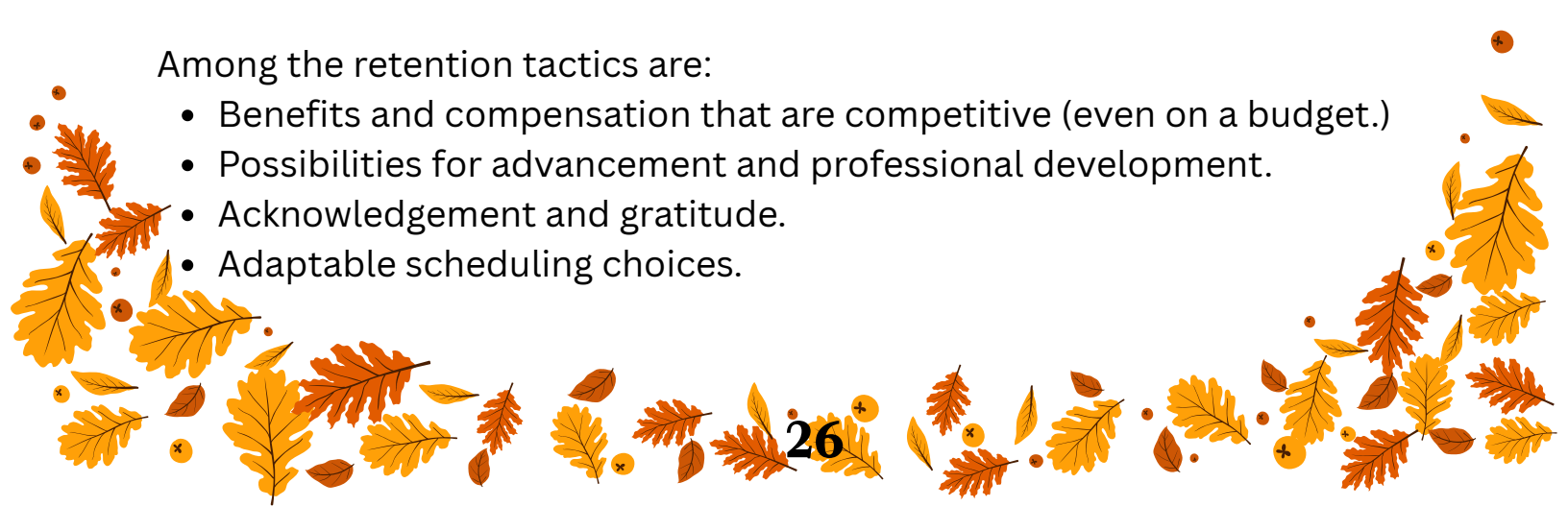
- Understanding of child development
- Proficiency in classroom management
- Interaction with families
- Health and safety procedures
- Empathy and cultural competency

### **5. Train and Board**

- Verify adherence to background checks and license criteria.
- Give instruction on safety precautions, policies, and procedures.
- Provide continuing education in program-specific skills, health and safety, and child development.

### **6. Keep Good Employees**

Among the retention tactics are:

- Benefits and compensation that are competitive (even on a budget.)
  - Possibilities for advancement and professional development.
  - Acknowledgement and gratitude.
  - Adaptable scheduling choices.
- 



## **7. Safety and Compliance**

Always adhere to:

- Local and state licensing laws
- Health and safety regulations for child care
- Childcare workers' labor legislation

Tip: Depending on the size of the family child care home, think about hiring a director or assistant caregivers. For group centers, consider numerous positions and ratios across age groups.

You can create a committed, competent staff that provides excellent care and supports the success of your program by combining a clear hiring strategy, effective recruitment, and continuous support.

### **For More Information:**

<https://www.childcareaware.org/recruiting-and-hiring-staff/>

<https://mybrightwheel.com/blog/hiring-childcare-workers>

<https://www.earlylearningventures.org/guide-human-resources-child-care-providers/>

# *Healthy Fall Themed Snack/Meal Recipes*



## *Fall Apple Pumpkin Oatmeal* *(Breakfast)*

**Total Time:** 15 minutes

**Serving Size:** 2/3 cup oatmeal and 1/2 banana

**Servings:** 8

**CACFP Components:** Grains, Vegetable and Fruit

### **Ingredients:**

- 1 cup quick cooking oats
- 1 1/2 cup water
- 2 cups applesauce
- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 4 bananas

### **Directions**

1. Add oats, water, applesauce, pumpkin, cinnamon and vanilla to a medium saucepan.
2. Cook on medium-high heat until liquid is almost nearly absorbed by the oats.
3. Serve 2/3 cup warm oatmeal to each participant with 1/2 banana, sliced.

*\*One serving provides 1/2 oz eq grains and 1/2 cup combined fruit and vegetable.\**





### **Build-a-Bear Pancake** **(Breakfast/Snack)**

**Total Time:** 15 minutes

**Serving Size:** 1 Bear Pancake

**Servings:** 8

**CACFP Components:** Meats/Meat Alternates, Grains, Fruits

### **Ingredients**

- 8 (34 g each) whole wheat pancakes
- 1/2 cup nut or seed butter
- 8 bananas
- 24 blueberries

### **Directions**

1. For each child, serve on a plate 1 pancake, 1 Tbsp of peanut butter, a banana, and 3 blueberries.
2. With a plastic kid knife, allow children to make their own bear face on their pancake! Children can spread the nut or seed butter, slice the bananas, and assemble a bear face.

*\*One bear pancake provides 1 oz eq grains, 1/2 oz meat alternate and 1/2 cup fruit.\**



### **Pumpkin Applesauce** **(Snack)**

**Total Time:** 5 minutes

**Serving Size:**  $\frac{2}{3}$  Cup

**Servings:** 12

**CACFP Components:** Grains, Vegetables, Fruits

### **Ingredients**

- 6  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups unsweetened applesauce
- 1 (15 oz) can pumpkin puree
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon or more to taste
- 1 tsp ground pumpkin spice
- 12 graham crackers (14 grams each cracker)

### **Directions**

1. Place applesauce, pumpkin, vanilla, pumpkin spice and cinnamon in a large bowl.
2. Mix until all is well combined.
3. Scoop  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of mixture into a bowl and serve with 1 graham cracker for a complete snack.

*\*One serving credits as  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup fruit,  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup vegetable and  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz eq grains.\**



### **Cranberry Applesauce** **(Lunch/Snack)**

**Total Time:** 20 minutes

**Serving Size:**  $\frac{3}{8}$  Cup

**Servings:** 16

**CACFP Components:** Fruits

### **Ingredients**

- 1 (12 oz) package fresh cranberries
- 4 cups unsweetened applesauce
- 1 orange, juiced and zested
- 2 cinnamon sticks or 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1-2 tbsp maple syrup (optional)

### **Directions**

1. Place all ingredients in the medium saucepan, including the orange zest.
2. Cook ingredients over medium heat - if it starts to boil, lower the heat. Stir frequently until cranberries are soft and have broken down.
3. Serve fresh off the stovetop, or it can also be served chilled or cooled to room temperature. Optionally, you can also place the applesauce in a blender and purée it to your desired consistency.

\*One serving provides  $\frac{3}{8}$  cup fruit.\*

# Crafts/Activities



## Materials Needed

- Paper plates
- Paint
- Googly Eyes
- Paint Pens
- Paint brushes
- Black and White Marker

## How to Make a Paper Plate Monster Craft

### Step 1: Paint Your Plate

Use acrylic paint or tempera to paint your paper plate. Use whatever color you like for this step, this is a great way to let your kids express their own unique creativity.

### Step 2: Draw on a Mouth

Once the paint is dry, use your paint pen to draw on a mouth and teeth. You can create whatever kind of mouth you like, like a smile, frown or growl. What will you choose?

### Step 3: Glue on Googly Eyes

You can use however many eyes you like. But once again, play around with what you have and see what you like.

If you don't have any googly eyes, you can also use circles of white paper. Or use your paint pens again to create the monster's eyes instead.

### Step 4: Let it Dry



# Halloween Find and Colour

Find the following items and colour them in!

- |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  1 Witch          |  6 Witch's cats |
|  2 Haunted houses |  7 Tombstones   |
|  3 Bats           |  8 Witch's hats |
|  4 Vampires       |  9 Skulls       |
|  5 Spiders        |  10 Spider webs |

What else can you find??





# **HALLOWEEN** **WORD SEARCH**

M B Y N W G V Z E T F R M H O S D  
U A T T E R O C T O B E R Z V Q W  
N H S F R A N K E N S T E I N C Z  
O A D K E V K P S B J I Y Q S O O  
F L R N W E C V P K O G U S C K M  
R L A I O Y S M I E U N A M A K B  
I O C G L A I C D Q E L E M R K I  
G W U H F R W D E P J E L S E V E  
H E L T J D F P R C O F F I N S Q  
T E A E L I Z T W C A U L D R O N  
E N V A M P I R E B V B R O O M Q  
N S H A D O W S B I M A E K X Z D

BONES  
DRACULA  
GRAVEYARD  
OCTOBER  
SPIDERWEB

BROOM  
FRANKENSTEIN  
HALLOWEEN  
SCARE  
VAMPIRE

CAULDRON  
FRIGHTEN  
MASK  
SHADOWS  
WEREWOLF

COFFIN  
GAMES  
NIGHT  
SKULL  
ZOMBIE





# **HALLOWEEN COLOR BY NUMBER**

1 = ORANGE    4 = PURPLE  
2 = BLACK    5 = GREEN  
3 = YELLOW    6 = BROWN





Time to Set Up: 2 minutes

Time to Watch the Magic: 10-15 minutes

Paper towels – The more absorbent, the better (we love Bounty for this one)

Washable markers

Water

2 small glasses or cups

Scissors

Pro Tip: Check that your markers say “washable” on the package. Not all Crayola markers are washable, and you need the water-based kind for this experiment to work its magic!

### **Step 1:**

Fold one sheet of paper towel in half so you have two layers stacked together. Now trim it down to about 7.5 inches long.

The shorter your paper towel, the faster your rainbow will connect. Any longer than 8 inches and the colors might not make it all the way to the middle. Trust us on this one!

### **Step 2:**

Draw thick rectangles of rainbow colors on each end of your paper towel. Go in rainbow order if you want the full effect: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple.

The secret: You need to really saturate those ends with color. We’re talking thick, bold stripes. The more marker you add, the more vibrant your rainbow will be as the colors travel upward.



### **Step 3:**

Fill two glasses about 3/4 full with water. Don’t fill them to the brim – you need some space at the top.

Critical step: When you place your paper towel in, you only want the very bottom edge touching the water. If the colored part goes too deep into the water, the dye will just dissolve into the cup instead of traveling up the paper towel. Keep those colored rectangles just above the water line!





#### **Step 4:**

Place one end of your paper towel into each glass. The colored ends should dip into the water (but not the marker itself – just the paper towel below it). Now step back and watch. Within seconds, you'll see the water start climbing up the paper towel, pulling the colorful dye along with it. The colors will slowly creep toward the center, getting closer and closer until – BAM! – they meet in the middle and create a gorgeous rainbow arc.

#### **Pro Tips for Maximum Rainbow Success**

- ***Use the right paper towels***
- ***Load up on markers***
- ***Keep the paper towel short***
- ***Don't submerge the color***
- ***Fold for double the impact***
- ***Try different color combos***
- ***Try different liquids.*** For older kids, experiment with rubbing alcohol instead of water. You'll see that permanent markers disperse in alcohol but not in water.
- ***Test permanent markers vs. washable.*** Set up two experiments side by side to show kids why marker type matters. The washable one will create a rainbow, while the permanent marker one stays put. Science in action!



**Timing tip:** If nothing's happening after a few minutes, your paper towel might not be absorbent enough, or your markers might not be washable. Double-check your supplies!

**Don't submerge the color.** This is the most common mistake! Only the plain paper towel should touch the water – keep those colored rectangles just above the waterline.

Click the link to find more fun activities: <https://playpartygame.com/>

**Music and movement activities significantly enhance children's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development, fostering a well-rounded growth experience.**

- Engaging with music helps children develop numeracy and literacy skills. Activities like singing nursery rhymes and playing musical instruments stimulate memory, attention, and language skills.
- Music engages both sides of the brain, promoting the development of important neural connections that facilitate faster thinking and learning.
- Music provides a universal language for children to express their emotions. Activities like dancing and clapping allow them to release feelings positively, fostering emotional intelligence and self-awareness.
- Different types of music can influence children's moods, helping them to calm down or energize, which is beneficial for emotional regulation.
- Group music activities encourage teamwork, cooperation, and turn-taking, essential social skills for early childhood development. Children learn to interact, share ideas, and build a sense of community.
- Participating in musical games and activities enhances children's ability to communicate and collaborate with peers.
- Movement activities such as dancing, jumping, and clapping help develop both gross and fine motor skills. These activities refine coordination, balance, and control over body movements, laying a strong foundation for physical development.
- Engaging in music and movement helps children become more aware of their bodies and how to control their movements effectively.
- Music and movement activities encourage children to use their imagination, whether through inventing dance moves or creating songs. This form of self-expression is vital for cognitive flexibility and problem-solving skills.
- Incorporating music and movement into children's daily routines not only makes learning fun but also supports their overall development in a holistic manner. By fostering these skills early on, children are better prepared for future learning and social interactions.



## Five Speckled Frogs

Five little speckled frogs  
Sat on a speckled log  
Eating the most delicious  
bugs (yum yum)  
One jumped into the pool  
Where it was nice and cool  
Then there were four green  
speckled frogs. (glub glub)



## Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, Turn Around

Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around,  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground.  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, reach up high,  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the sky.  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch your nose,  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch your toes.  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch your belly,  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, shake like jelly.  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch your ear,  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, give a cheer.  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch your knees,  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, sit down please.





Name \_\_\_\_\_

Color the letters and the picture.

Aa



apple

Color the images that start with the letter a.



Color the circles with the letter A or a.

V

A

d

e

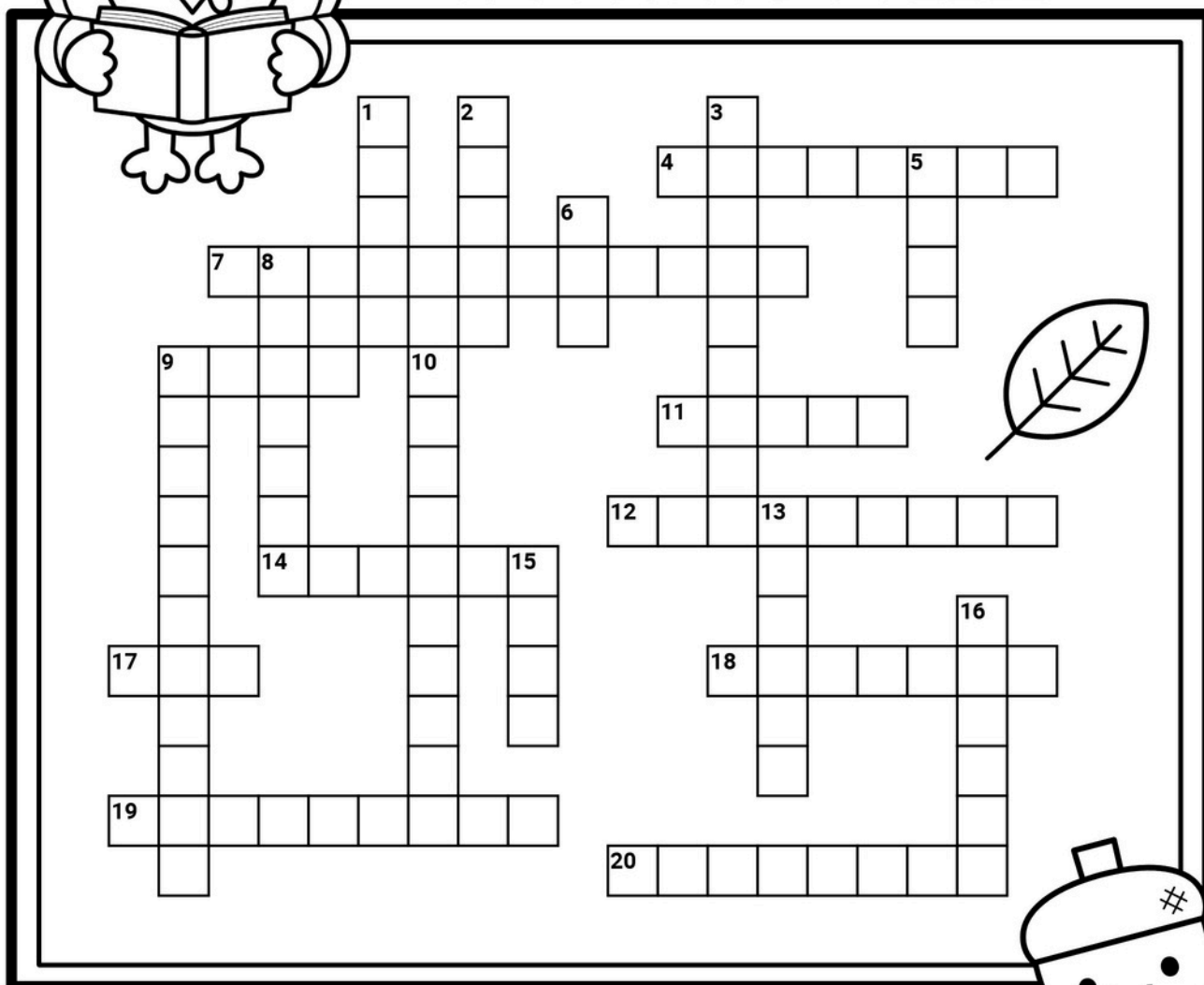
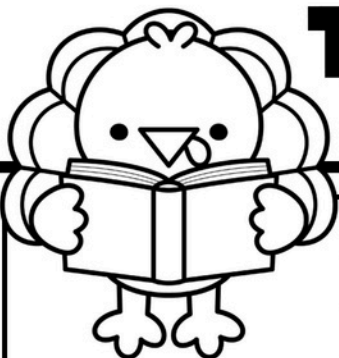
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# THANKSGIVING

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

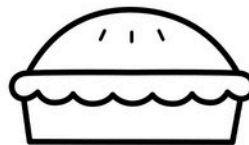


### Across

4. Feeling thankful for what you have
7. Holiday when we gather to give thanks
9. Yellow vegetable often served as a side dish
11. Warm food made from dough that's perfect for soaking up gravy
12. The ship that brought the Pilgrims to America
14. The main dish at most Thanksgiving meals
17. A pink meat that's sometimes served beside turkey
18. Early settlers who celebrated the first Thanksgiving
19. Sweet yellow bread made from ground corn
20. The month of Thanksgiving

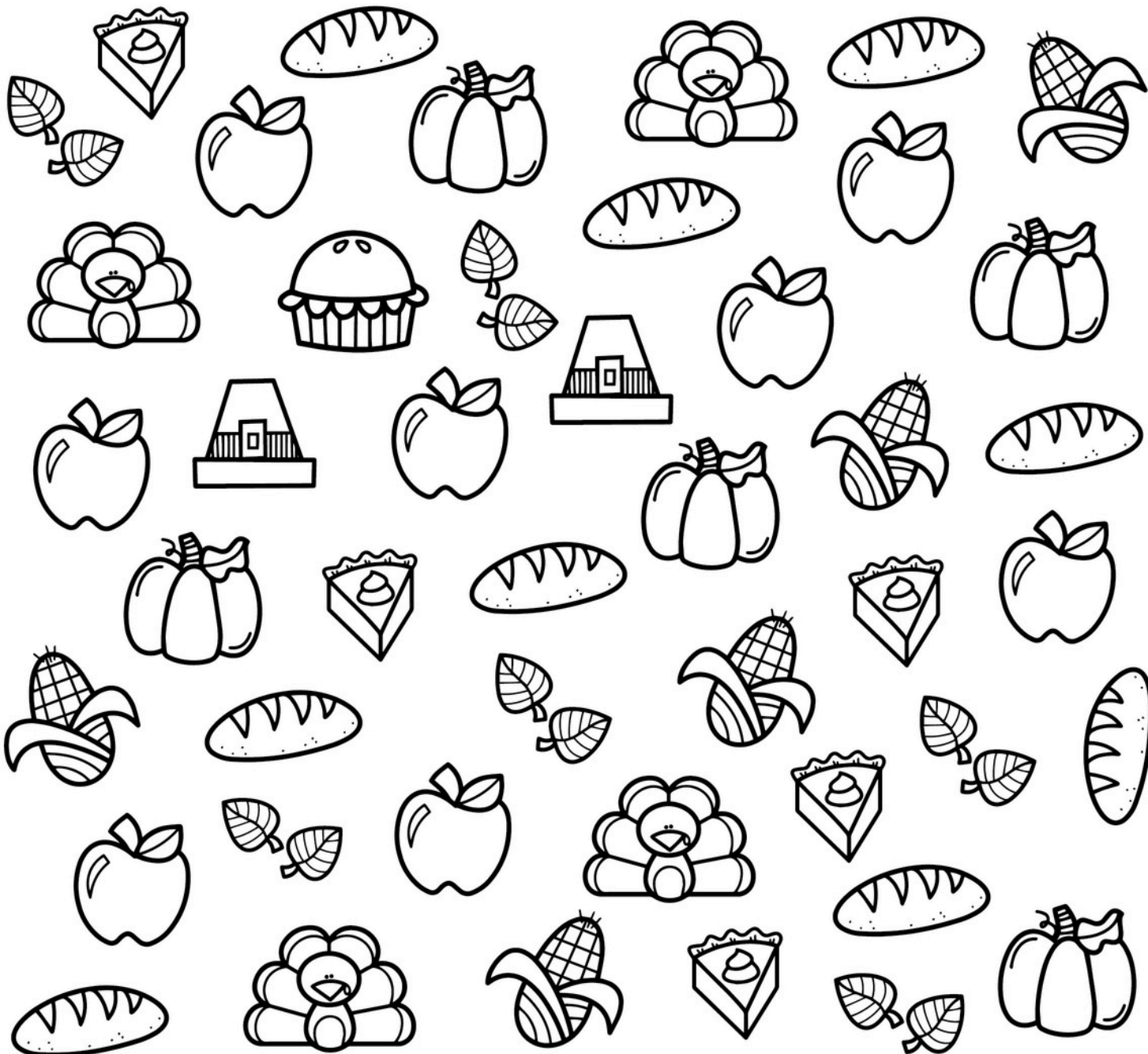
### Down

1. To express gratitude or appreciation
2. A large, special meal shared with others
3. Tart red fruit made into a sauce
5. The season when we celebrate Thanksgiving
6. A sweet dessert often made with pumpkin
8. The gathering of crops in autumn
9. A special gathering to honor an occasion
10. Traditional orange dessert
13. People who gather together for the holiday
15. Sweet orange potatoes topped with marshmallows
16. The traditional evening meal





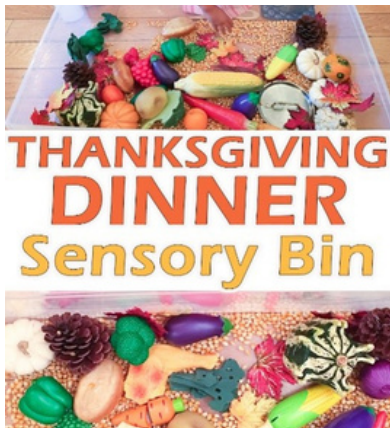
Happy  
THANKSGIVING



|                                                                                     |  |                                                                                     |  |                                                                                       |  |
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A sensory bin allows toddlers and preschoolers to explore and develop their primary senses of touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound. This activity allows children to know how different body parts like limbs, eyes, and ears relate. They also need self-regulation skills to control emotions and maintain a steady balance. Sensory bin play activities support learning and language development by stimulating multiple senses simultaneously. Learning through sensory play is descriptive and provides many opportunities for children to learn new concepts and vocabulary words in a hands-on way. Sensory bin play activities are one way to promote motor skills development. Also, moving from one sensory bin station to another helps develop motor skills since children mostly explore through hands-on activities. These activities teach children how to take turns and work as a team, especially when playing with peers or siblings. They also learn how to coexist peacefully and respond to social situations. A sensory bin aids math skills development like counting, sorting, volume, and shapes. There are many ways you can create a sensory bin

### **What's in the sensory bins you ask?**



- Corn
- Plastic play food
- Utensils
- Pinecones
- Real pumpkins
- Mini gourds
- Fresh leaves
- Flint (Indian, calico) corn

- Black beans
- Yellow lentils
- Porcupine balls
- Real mini pumpkin
- Plastic pumpkin buckets
- Scoops
- Skeltons
- Pompoms
- Halloween decorations
- Googly eyes
- Feathers





# HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL NEED FOR PUMPKIN BOWLING...

- Empty Plastic Water Bottles – around 6 (use different empty bottles to create different shapes)
- White paint
- Google Eyes – All shapes and sizes
- Black Sharpie
- Low temp glue gun
- Pie Pumpkin
- Sand, popcorn kernels, rice or dry beans – to weight the bottles down



Source: <https://kidfriendlythingstodo.com/ghost-and-pumpkin-bowling-halloween-party-game/>



# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU LET A PUMPKIN ROT?

Take your children on this fun and engaging science experiment and explore the stages of a decomposing pumpkin. Links are provided for full articles of the experiment and more fun activities you can do with your pumpkins before you start your rotting experiment!

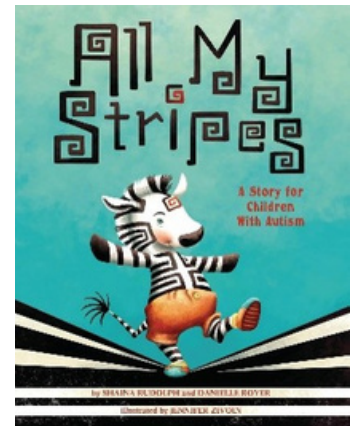
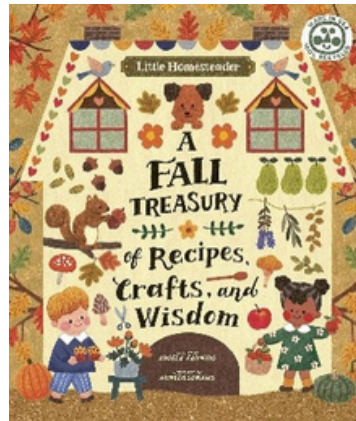
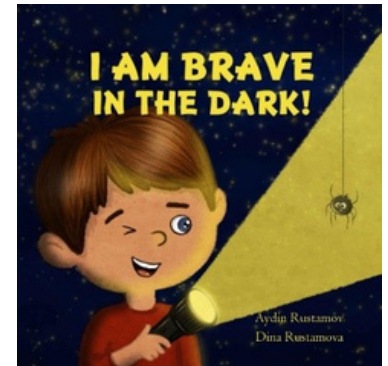
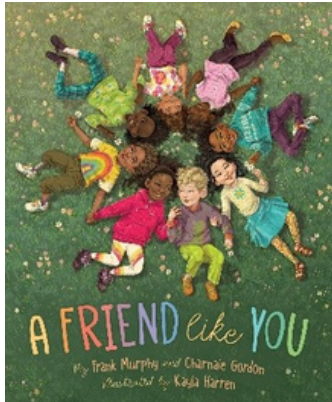


<https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/7011/rotting-pumpkin/>

<https://fun-a-day.com/smelly-pumpkin-experiment-decomposition/>



*That you read, the more things you will know. The more that you Learn, the more places you'll go. -Dr. Seuss*



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