

Early Learning News

January, February, March 2026

ENVISION

2026

Bright Beginnings⁺
Activity Calendar
for Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers

ACTIVITY CALENDAR
pg 3



HIGHLIGHTED COURSES
pg 5



PASS ALONG TO PARENTS
DEVELOP EXECUTIVE FUNCTION
pg 14



2026 PODCASTS
pg 17

Take a Look Inside

This edition of *Early Learning News* may have a different style, but it continues to be filled with helpful, relevant information.

The calendar view of our monthly training classes is perforated for easy removal. This allows you to tear it out and share as needed.

The "Pass Along to Parents" page is also perforated. This is a wonderful resource to share with parents, and it's copyright-free!

Winter Learning

page 2

Bright Beginnings +

page 3

Featured Courses

page 3

Pass Along to Parents

page 14

2026 Podcasts

page 14

Brain Boost TPI

page 16

Through a child's eyes, the *Future* is always *Bright!*

Envisioning Possibilities Through Play

Imagination, Curiosity & Winter Learning

Winter invites children to slow down, wonder, and explore new ideas. Through imaginative play and meaningful moments, children learn to think creatively, solve problems, and make sense of the world around them. This season, we're celebrating the power of imagination — and the joyful ways children envision what's possible.

Wonder Walks

Take a short walk together and explore with curiosity. Invite your child to imagine what they see — shapes in the clouds, patterns in nature, or stories behind footprints.

Try asking:

- "What do you think lives inside that tiny hole in the tree?"
- "If this cloud had a personality, what would it say?"
- "Where do you think this path wants to take us today?"

Create a Vision Board Together

Gather magazine cutouts, drawings, stickers, or photos. Let your child choose images that reflect things they love or want to learn.

This helps children:

- build vocabulary
- express goals and preferences
- strengthen creativity
- practice early literacy

Tip: Add their vision board to a classroom or bedroom wall to revisit throughout the season.



Winter Imagination Trays

Fill a small tray with simple loose parts — cotton balls, pinecones, craft sticks, small toys, and nature items.

Invite your child to build winter scenes and stories.

Encourage with prompts like:

"Who lives in your winter world?"

"What's happening in your scene?"

"What sounds do you hear in your winter story?"

This supports storytelling, problem-solving, and open-ended thinking.

Help Your Child Be a Noticer

Encourage your child to notice colors, shapes, emotions, and patterns throughout the day. Little observations grow big ideas.

Use prompts like:

- "I see sparkly frost on the window. What do you notice?"
- "I see three circles on this sign. What shapes can you find today?"
- "I hear crunchy leaves... what sounds do you hear?"





Why Choose Bright Beginnings+?

- ✓ Infants: Gentle activities for bonding and development.
- ✓ Toddlers: Hands-on fun to inspire learning through play.
- ✓ Preschoolers: Creative and educational activities to prepare for kindergarten!
- ✓ Affordable: Each calendar costs \$7.50 and drawstring bags: \$1.50



\$7.50

Get Yours Now!

Features You'll Love:



Daily Activities:
Easy-to-follow,
age-appropriate
ideas.



Skill Development:
Supports
cognitive,
physical, and
social growth.



Caregiver Friendly: Perfect
for parents,
teachers, and
caregivers.



Creative Play:
Encourages
imagination and
hands-on learning.



Expert Designed:
Backed by
child
development
principles.



Time-Saving:
All-in-one
resource for
busy
caregivers.

Make Learning Fun All Year Long!

Empower your child's growth with our thoughtfully curated activity calendar, designed to inspire learning and fun every day for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

Bulk orders available. Visit our website for more information.
<https://www.grecs.org/pnc-bright-beginnings-activity-calendar/>



Get To Know Our Training Sites and Locations!

When Registering for training classes, please make note of the time & locations of the session. Classes are held in 7 counties - Baldwin, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe & Washington.

Baldwin County

Daphne Public Library

Kids Plus CDC

Goodwill Community Center

The Learning Tree at "First Fairhope"

Coastal Alabama Community College, Bay Minette Campus

Country Day School

Clarke County

Jackson City Hall

Conecuh County

David Burt Agriculture Center

Future Achievers

532 S. Main St Evergreen, AL 36401

Escambia County

Coastal Alabama Community College

Flomaton Public Library

Monroe County

Monroe County Public Library

Patty Pat's Day care Center #2

Mobile County

GRECS Training Rooms -

3101 International Dr, Building 6

Washington County

Spot for Tots Child Care Center

Washington County Public Library



If you have any questions or need directions

Call us at
251-473-1060
or visit
www.grecs.org

CCDF Health and Safety Courses 2026

Looking for DHR CCDF Health and Safety Training Courses? We've got you covered for this quarter in January, February and March 2026!

- **January 16:** First-Aid and CPR Training; 8:30am-12:30pm; **Mobile**
- **January 21:** Handling and Storage of Hazardous Materials, including Correct Disposal of Bio-Contaminants CCDF: 8; 9:00am-10:00am; **Mobile**
- **January 21:** Appropriate Pre-Cautions in Transporting Children CCDF: 9; 10:00am-11:00am; **Mobile**
- **January 22:** Infection Control and Administration of Medication CCDF: 1, 3; 6:00pm-8:00pm; **Mobile**
- **February 12:** Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Prevention and Use of Safe Sleep Practices CCDF: 2 Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma CCDF: 6; 12:00pm-2:00pm; **Mobile**
- **March 4:** Preparing for the Unexpected CCDF: 5, 7; 6:30pm-8:30pm; **Mobile**
- **March 25:** Keeping Children safe CCDF: 4, 7 (CTF); 6:00pm-8:00pm; **Mobile**



Getting Started

We will introduce you to the foundational information you need to provide safe environments, nurturing interactions & developmentally appropriate experiences for the children in your care. This basic-level, 12 hour course is broken down into (3), four-hour segments. The training you receive will meet Alabama Department of Human Resources' 12-hour training requirement to work in child care.

You must attend all sessions to receive credit.

(Presenter: GRECS Staff; DHR: CD, CCPF, LD, QCCL, PDG, HSUP; Alabama Pathways: CGD, ICFC, LEE, HSN, PPD; CDA: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8; CCDF: 6, 11, 13, 15, 17, 20; Basic Training Level; 12 hours/1.2 CEUs; Appropriate for ALL Age Groups)

January 27-29, 2026 | 8:30am - 12:30pm
GRECS Training Room, Mobile

Highlighted Courses

January, February and March 2026



BIG DISCOVERIES FOR LITTLE LEARNERS: A 3-PART SERIES WITH KAREN MORRISON, PHD

Join early childhood expert Karen Morrison, PhD, for Big Discoveries for Little Learners, a playful and purposeful three-part series designed to ignite curiosity and build foundational skills in toddlers and preschoolers. Each session offers rich, developmentally appropriate experiences that foster learning through joy, culture, and imagination.

Alphabet Explorers: Building Early Literacy Through Playful Learning - January 20, 2026; 6:00pm-8:00pm

Breaking Bread: Building Culture Through Culture, Story, and Taste - March 3, 2026; 6:00pm-8:00pm

Little Globetrotters: Exploring the World Through Play - March 31, 2026; 6:00pm-8:00pm



Register Now

For more info see class listing, or scan QR code.



DIRECTOR'S INSTITUTE



This three-part training series is designed to equip child care directors with essential business skills that support long-term program sustainability and growth.

Strengthening Business Practices - Building a Budget - January 14, 2026; 9:00am-12:00pm

Strengthening Business Practices - Financial Reports and Internal Controls - February 25, 2026; 9:00am-12:00pm

Strengthening Business Practices - Marketing Your Program - March 25, 2026; 8:30am-12:30pm



Register Now

For more info see class listing, or scan QR code.

Alabama Early Learning Guidelines - (AELG)

NEW Saturday Schedule for 2026!

The Alabama Early Learning Guidelines were developed to promote continuity of high-quality care and learning for children ages 0-5. The AELG course serves as a guide for understanding child development and for implementing best practices to prepare children for success in school and in life. Participants who complete this course will receive 18 training hours and the official AELG Credential issued by the Alabama Department of Human Resources. **You must attend Session 1: Orientation before taking any other session.** (CDA Content Areas: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 | DHR Categories: CD, CCPE, HSUP, LD, PDG, QCCL | Alabama Pathways to Quality and Education Core Areas: CGD, COA, DIV, HSN, ICFC, LEE, MA, PPD | CCDF: 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20) | [Register now at www.grecs.org!](http://www.grecs.org)

January 24, 2026 (Day 1)

8:30am-12:30pm

- Session 1 – Orientation
- Session 2 – Observations and Assessment

February 28, 2026 (Day 2)

8:30am-12:30pm

- Session 3 – The Role of Parent and Caregiver
- Session 4 – Self-Concept and Emotional Development

March 14, 2026 (Day 3)

8:30am-12:30pm

- Session 5 – Social Development
- Session 6 – Language and Literacy

March 21, 2026 (Day 4)

8:30am-2:30pm

- Session 7 – Physical Development
 - Session 8 – Cognitive Development
 - Session 9 – Putting It All Together
- A light lunch will be served**



Scan now to register!

If you have taken any AELG Sessions within the last year but missed a session, you can register, attend and make up those classes to complete and receive your AELG Credential!

January '26 TRAINING

Addressing Homelessness: The Role of the Early Childhood Educator (APT)

January 7, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs

CCDF: 12 | AL Pathways: CGD, ICFC | CDA: 2, 4 | DHR: CD, CCPF | ALL | Basic | ALL Counties Webinar

PRESENTER: Paula Reese

Participants will identify the causes of homelessness and its impact on a child's physical and mental development. Participants will gain a better understanding of their role as they are guided through best-practice strategies for ways to support children experiencing homelessness while in their care.

Cognitive Development: Thinking and Learning in Early Childhood

January 8, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 17, 19, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD | CDA: 1, 2, 3, 8 | DHR: CD, PDG | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Desira Keith

To enhance early childhood educators' understanding of cognitive development, equipping them with knowledge of developmental theories, key thinking skills, and practical strategies to support children's problem-solving, reasoning, and learning through play-based experiences.

Let's Talk: The Power of Language for Infants and Toddlers (APT)

January 13, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13 | AL Pathways: CGD | CDA: 3, 7, 8 | DHR: CD, LD | Infant, Toddler | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Victoria Bolton

In this training, we will learn how speech and language develop, milestones for normal speech and language development as well as ways to support language development through hands-on activities, PBS KIDS and APT resources, and discussions.

Director's Institute: Strengthening Business Practices – Building a Budget

January 14, 2026 | 9:00am-12:00pm 3 hrs/0.3 CEUs

CCDF: 18, 20 | AL Pathways: MA, PPD | CDA: 1, 5, 6 | DHR: AM, QCCL | ALL, Directors | Intermediate | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Vicki Giles, Paula Reese

The purpose of this training is to strengthen child care providers' foundational knowledge of fiscal terms, concepts, and practices. It encourages providers to realize the importance of fiscal planning to the sustainability of their business operations. It provides tips and best practices to help break down fiscal processes into manageable steps.

Celebrating Mistakes: Embracing a Growth Mindset

January 15, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 18, 19 | AL Pathways: LEE, ICFC | CDA: 2, 3, 8 | DHR: PDG, QCCL | School-Agers | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Erin Franklin

Have you noticed how different children react to a challenge in different ways? Some will jump at the chance to try harder; others will fall apart and give up without even trying. How do you create a mindset that encourages children to continue to work to solve a problem and not give up? This training will provide strategies to incorporate and practice using a Growth Mindset in your classroom.

Language of Friends: Using Puppets and Literature to Build Social Skills

January 15, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 15 | AL Pathways: LEE, CGD | CDA: 3, 8 | DHR: PDG, LD, CD | Toddlers, Preschoolers | Intermediate | Kids Plus Child Development Center, Foley, AL

PRESENTER: Vicki Giles

How do you promote social skills? How can you teach empathy to your students? This session will explore ways to use puppets to allow kids to practice the language of conversation and empathy. We will also explore how to use books as conversation starters to build social competence.

First-Aid and CPR Training

January 16, 2026 | 8:30am-12:30pm 4 hrs

CCDF: 10 | AL Pathways: HSN | CDA: 1 | DHR: HSUP | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile | **No CEU Credit is awarded**

PRESENTER: Healthy Childcare Alabama Staff

Training is to provide participants with the practice and assimilation of skills to perform CPR and Basic First-aid with a certification from The Emergency Care and Safety Institute (ECSI) for the child care setting.

Positive Guidance: Why, What and How

January 17, 2026 | 9:30am-11:30am 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 15, 17 | AL Pathways: LEE, CGD, COA | CDA: 1, 3, 7, 8 | DHR: PDG, QCCL | Toddlers, Preschoolers, School-Agers | Basic | Washington County Public Library- large training room 14102 St. Stephens Ave., Chatom, AL 36518

PRESENTER: Lisa Kirkland

This training explores the underlying causes of challenging behaviors and effective strategies for fostering positive behavior in young children. Participants will also examine how the classroom environment influences behavior and discover practical ways to create supportive, nurturing spaces that promote success for all children.

Big Discoveries Session 1: Alphabet Explorers: Building Early Literacy Through Playful Learning

January 20, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 17, 19 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE | CDA: 1, 2, 3, 8 | DHR: CD, LD | Toddler, Preschoolers | Intermediate | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Dr. Karen Morrison, PhD.

This session highlights how to use music, movement, storytelling, and hands-on materials to build foundational literacy skills. Participants will leave with practical tools, book lists, and creative ideas to spark a love of letters and language.

Handling and Storage of Hazardous Materials, Including Correct Disposal of Bio-Contaminants CCDF: 8

January 21, 2026 | 9:00am-10:00am 1 hr

CCDF: 8 | AL Pathways: HSN | CDA: 1 | DHR: HSUP | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Judy Cunningham

Participants will review essential information on handling and storing hazardous materials in the child care setting. **No CEU Credit is awarded**

Appropriate Pre-Cautions in Transporting Children CCDF: 9

January 21, 2026 | 10:00am-11:00am 1 hr

CCDF: 9 | AL Pathways: HSN | CDA: 1 | DHR: HSUP | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Judy Cunningham

Training to provide participants with basic information on safely transporting children. Participants will identify Department of Human Resources (DHR) performance standards for transporting children. **No CEU Credit is awarded**

All The Kool Kids Are Eating It

January 22, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 15 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE | CDA: 1, 2, 3, 8 | DHR: CD, PDG | ALL | Basic | Future Achievers 553 S Main St, Evergreen, AL 36401

PRESENTER: Theresa Patterson

Participants will explore foods that are often less popular with young children while becoming familiar with basic cooking terms. The session will also include a hands-on taste test featuring a variety of fruits and vegetables.

Infection Control and Administration of Medication CCDF: 1, 3

January 22, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs

CCDF: 1, 3 | AL Pathways: HSN | CDA: 1 | DHR: HSUP | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Avery Fick

Participants will explore, how germs are spread while also identifying situations which may require administration of medications and list the symptoms of allergies. **No CEU Credit is awarded**

Day 1: Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) Sessions 1, 2

January 24, 2026 | 8:30am-12:30pm 4 hrs/0.4 CEUs

CCDF: 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, COA, DIV, HSN, ICFC, LEE, MA, PPD | CDA: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 | DHR: CD, CCPE, HSUP, LD, PDG, QCCL | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: GRECS Staff

Session 1 – Orientation *Must attend before taking other sessions* 8:30-10:30 (see page 5 for more information)

Session 2 – Observations & Assessment 10:30-12:30

Inclusion in the Early Childhood Setting

January 26, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 15 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE | CDA: 2, 4, 8 | DHR: QCCL, PDG | ALL | Intermediate | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Dr. Abigail Baxter, PhD.

Inclusion is the practice of educating and caring for children with disabilities and other special needs in the same environment or setting as their typically developing peers.

Getting Started 2026

January 27-29 | 8:30am-12:30pm 12 hrs/1.2 CEUs

CCDF: 6, 11, 13, 15, 17, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, ICFC, LEE, HSN, PPD | CDA: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 | DHR: CD, CCPE, LD, QCCL, PDG, HSUP | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: GRECS Staff

See page 4 for more information. **You must attend all sessions to receive credit!**

Decisions! Decisions! The Importance and Benefits of Giving Children Choices

January 27, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE | CDA: 2, 3 | DHR: CD, PDG | Preschoolers | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: GRECS Staff

This course explores the concept of choice and its importance in child development. Participants will learn the benefits of offering children choices and gain practical guidance on the do's and don'ts for implementing them effectively.

Right on Time: Healthy Routines for the Early Childhood Classroom (APT)

January 29, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 20 | AL Pathways: PPD, LEE | CDA: 1, 7 | DHR: CD | Infants, Toddlers | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: APT Staff

Routines keep a successful classroom running smoothly, making for effective teaching, learning, and growing. In this two-hour training, we will explore how to create classroom routines to effectively care for infants and toddlers while maintaining the flexibility that this age group requires.

Alabama Quality STARS: Lift Them Higher with Quality Early Care and Education

January 30 | 9:30am-11:30am 2 hrs

CCDF: 13, 20 | AL Pathways: LEE, PPD, MA | CDA: 5, 6 | DHR: QCCL, CCPE, AM | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Symone Mixon, Amber Edwards, Rachel Kitsos

This session provides an overview of the Alabama Quality STARS: Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), a systemic approach to assessing, improving, and communicating the level of quality in early childhood education programs. In addition, participants will take a closer look at the Best Practice Verification Manual and define program standards that are comprised of standardized, research-based criteria. Participants will gain a better understanding of the requirements for obtaining a higher star rating. **No CEU Credit is awarded**

February '26 TRAINING

Why Transitions Trigger Meltdowns

February 3, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 15, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE, COA | CDA: 1, 3 | DHR: QCCL, PDG | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Paula Reese

Participants will understand practical, evidence-based strategies for preventing and de-escalating meltdowns. Instead of just reacting to the behavior, participants will learn how to proactively build skill-building opportunities into routines and respond collaboratively when triggers arise.

The GPS to Infant Caregiving: Understanding Infant Behavior

February 5, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 15, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE, COA | CDA: 3, 7, 8 | DHR: CD, PDG | Infants | Intermediate | The Learning Tree at First Fairhope

PRESENTER: Victoria Bolton

This course provides tools to understand infant behavior, nonverbal communication, and its effect on the caregiver-infant interaction and relationship. Provides strategies to inform caregivers of infant states/behaviors and the impact on their relationship.

The Art of Serve and Return (APT)

February 5, 2026 | 6:30pm-8:30pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 17, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE | CDA: 2, 3, 8 | DHR: CD | Infants, Toddlers | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Erin Franklin

The art of serve and return not only builds communication skills in infants and toddlers, but it also builds social and emotional development as they learn about taking turns as well as building confidence. In this two-hour training, participants will learn about serve and return as well as having the opportunity to practice it using games and interactive discussions.

February '26 TRAINING

Continued..

Math All Around Me

February 10, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs

CCDF: 13, 17, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD | CDA: 8 | DHR: CD | Infant, Toddler, Preschoolers | Basic | ALL Counties Webinar

PRESENTER: Vicki Giles

Is there a difference between 'doing math' instead of 'playing math'? Yes! Help young children see the Math All Around with playful practices.

Alabama Pathways Professional Development Registry

February 11, 2026 | 10:00am-12:00pm 2 hrs

CCDF: 18 | AL Pathways: PPD | CDA: 5, 6 | DHR: QCCL, CCPF | ALL | Basic | ALL Counties Webinar

PRESENTER: Bernice Pettway, DHR

Participants will discuss the goal of Alabama pathways and how it can help early childhood professionals. Tutorial on the PDR.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Prevention and Use of Safe Sleep Practices CCDF: 2 Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma CCDF: 6

February 12, 2026 | 12:00pm-2:00pm 2 hrs

CCDF: 2, 6 | AL Pathways: HSN | CDA: 1 | DHR: HSUP | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Judy Cunningham

Participants will discuss ways to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Use of Safe Sleep Practices and Identify signs of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma and discuss ways to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome. **No CEU Credit is awarded**

How to Care for Children with No "Off" Button

February 16, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 15 | AL Pathways: CGD, COA, LEE | CDA: 2, 3, 7, 8 | DHR: PDG, CD | Basic | Toddlers, Preschool, School-Agers | Discovery Island - 24843 Commercial Ave Orange Beach, AL 36561

PRESENTER: Lisa Kirkland

Caring for high-energy, always-on children can be both rewarding and exhausting. This dynamic session explores strategies for supporting children who seem to be in constant motion. Participants will learn practical tools for creating structured, supportive environments, promoting emotional regulation, and building strong caregiver-child relationships. Perfect for caregivers seeking to better understand and respond to children who never seem to slow down.

Preparing the Early Childhood Learning Environment: Setting the Stage for Learning and Growth

February 19, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 17, 19, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD | CDA: 1, 8 | DHR: CD, QCCL | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Desira Keith

Equip early childhood educators with knowledge and strategies to intentionally prepare learning environments that foster safety, engagement, and holistic development in young children.

Planning Nature Play Activities

February 21, 2026 | 9:30am-11:30am 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 15 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE | CDA: 1, 3, 8 | DHR: CD, LD | Toddler, Preschoolers, School-Agers | Basic | Monroe County Public Library

PRESENTER: Lisa Kirkland

Participants will learn how to design engaging nature play experiences that are developmentally appropriate and tailored to meet the unique needs and interests of each child in their program.

Music, Melody and Emotions

February 24, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13 | AL Pathways: CGD | CDA: 2, 3, 7 | DHR: CD | Preschoolers | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: GRECS Staff

Music can be a powerful tool for helping preschoolers understand and manage their emotions. In this 2-hour training, the participants will learn how to support children's various emotional expressions while listening to various genres of music. Through group discussions and activities, the participants will learn how to build empathy and how to assist children with emotional regulation through music.

Director's Institute: Strengthening Business Practices – Financial Reports and Internal Controls

February 25, 2026 | 9:00am-12:00pm 3 hrs/0.3 CEUs

CCDF: 18, 20 | AL Pathways: MA, PPD | CDA: 1, 5, 6 | DHR: AM, QCCL | ALL, Directors | Intermediate | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Vicki Giles, Paula Reese

The purpose of this training is to strengthen child care providers' foundational knowledge of fiscal terms, concepts, and practices. It encourages providers to realize the importance of fiscal planning to the sustainability of their business operations. It provides tips and best practices to help break down fiscal processes into manageable steps.

Creating Calm: Co-Regulation and Building Resilience

February 26, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 15, 17 | AL Pathways: CGD | CDA: 2, 3, 8 | DHR: CD, PDG | Infants, Toddler, Preschoolers | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Vicki Giles

In this course, teachers will explore the connection between co-regulation and resilience in infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Educators will learn how to provide emotional support and model calming behaviors to help young children navigate stress and build resilience.

Day 2: Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) Sessions 3, 4

February 28, 2026 | 8:30am-12:30pm 4 hrs/0.4 CEUs

CCDF: 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, COA, DIV, HSN, ICFC, LEE, MA, PPD | CDA: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 | DHR: CD, CCPF, HSUP, LD, PDG, QCCL | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: GRECS Staff

Session 3 – The Role of Parent and Caregiver 8:30-10:30

Session 4 – Self-Concept & Emotional Development 10:30-12:30

March '26 TRAINING

Big Discoveries Session 2: Breaking Bread: Building Culture Through Culture, Story, and Taste

March 3, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 17, 19 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE | CDA: 1, 2, 3, 8 | DHR: CD, LD | Toddler, Preschoolers | Intermediate | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Dr. Karen Morrison, PhD.

This session will explore how the simple act of baking and sharing bread can connect children to family, culture, and community. This session blends storytelling, sensory play, and traditions to create meaningful early learning experiences. Participants will leave with book-based activities, songs, and tasting ideas that celebrate community through food!

Preparing for the Unexpected CCDF: 5, 7

March 4, 2026 | 6:30pm-8:30pm 2 hrs

CCDF: 5, 7 | AL Pathways: HSN | CDA: 1 | DHR: HSUP | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Avery Fick

During this session we will explore major causes of disaster possible in our area, recognize ways to safely prepare and experience these by good hazard recognition and response in the childcare setting. We will explore rules for good preparation, common issues that occur in disaster emergencies and risk factors that require further attention.
No CEU Credit is awarded

Setting Time and Space for Physical Activity in Early Childhood

March 5, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 17, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, HSN | CDA: 2, 8 | DHR: CD, HSUP | Infant, Toddler, Preschoolers | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Victoria Bolton

This training will delve into best practices of physical activity in Early Care and Education settings related to time and space.

Helping Children Resolve Peer Conflict

March 7, 2026 | 9:30am-11:30am 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 15, 17 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE, COA | CDA: 1, 3, 7, 8 | DHR: PDG, QCCL | Toddler, Preschoolers, School-Agers | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Lisa Kirkland

This session explores both the positive and negative aspects of peer conflict and why it occurs among children. Participants will learn practical strategies to guide children in managing and resolving conflicts in healthy, constructive ways that support their social and emotional development.

Engaging Our Sensory Systems - Session 3: Sight, Sound and Touch

March 10, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 15, 17, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, HSN | CDA: 2, 3, 8 | DHR: PDG, HSUP | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Vicki Giles

In this session, we'll explore the visual, auditory, and tactile sensory systems and how sensory input helps young children make sense of the world.

Hands at Play: Developing Fine Motor Skills

March 12, 2026 | 6:30pm-8:30pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13 | AL Pathways: CGD | CDA: 2, 3 | DHR: CD | Preschoolers | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: GRECS Staff

Participants will be able to demonstrate appropriate fine motor skill activities for preschool-aged children, enabling them to create supportive learning environments that foster engagement in age-appropriate activities with increased precision and coordination.

Day 3: Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) Sessions 5, 6

March 14, 2026 | 8:30am-12:30pm 4 hrs/0.4 CEUs

CCDF: 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, COA, DIV, HSN, ICFC, LEE, MA, PPD | CDA: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 | DHR: CD, CCPE, HSUP, LD, PDG, QCCL | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: GRECS Staff

Session 5 – Social Development 8:30-10:30

Session 6 – Language and Literacy 10:30-12:30

An Ounce of Prevention = Less Chaos Later

March 12, 2026 | 6:30pm-8:30pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 15, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE | CDA: 1, 8 | DHR: PDG, CD | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Paula Reese

Participants will equip themselves with the skills to prevent classroom challenges by focusing on their own self-awareness and behavior, rather than solely reacting to children's actions. Participants will shift the focus from the child's behavior to the teacher's role in fostering a positive environment where challenges are less likely to emerge.

Alabama Quality STARS: Lift Them Higher with Quality Early Care and Education

March 18, 2026 | 9:30am-11:30am 2 hrs

CCDF: 13, 20 | AL Pathways: LEE, PPD, MA | CDA: 5, 6 | DHR: QCCL, CCPE, AM | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Symone Mixon, Amber Edwards, Rachel Kitsos

This session provides an overview of the Alabama Quality STARS: Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), a systemic approach to assessing, improving, and communicating the level of quality in early childhood education programs. In addition, participants will take a closer look at the Best Practice Verification Manual and define program standards that are comprised of standardized, research-based criteria. Participants will gain a better understanding of the requirements for obtaining a higher star rating.
No CEU Credit is awarded

Math, Count Me In! (APT)

March 19, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 17 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE | CDA: 2, 8 | DHR: CD | Preschoolers | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: APT Staff

This hands-on preschool math training focuses on building number sense and introducing the foundations of addition and subtraction. Educators will explore playful, age-appropriate strategies to help young learners recognize numbers, understand quantity, and solve simple math problems through stories, games, and movement. This training will utilize the PBS KIDS show Peg + Cat and various other APT and PBS resources.

March '26 TRAINING

Continued..

Day 4: Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) Sessions 7, 8, 9

March 21, 2026 | 8:30am-2:30pm 6 hrs/0.6 CEUs

CCDF: 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, COA, DIV, HSN, ICFC, LEE, MA, PPD | CDA: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 | DHR: CD, CCPE, HSUP, LD, PDG, QCCL | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: GRECS Staff

Session 7 – Physical Development 8:30-10:30

Session 8 – Cognitive Development 10:30-12:30

Session 9 – Putting It All Together 12:30-2:30

Motor Development: Motor Milestones

March 23, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 17, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE, ICFC | CDA: 1, 2, 3, 8 | DHR: CD, HSUP | ALL | Advanced | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Abigail Baxter, Ph.D

Physical education is a critical part of every early childhood curriculum. Children need to move to channel their energies in creative, beneficial ways and to learn habits for lifelong health and fitness. Participants will discuss developmentally appropriate activities that foster physical development and build self-esteem. The activities are built around developmental motor milestones and are flexible enough to encourage skill development for a variety of learners.

Groovin' with Nursery Rhymes

March 24, 2026 | 6:30pm-8:30pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 17, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE | CDA: 2, 3, 8 | DHR: CD, LD | Infant, Toddler, Preschoolers | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Desira Keith

This training will empower educators to harness the inherent musicality of nursery rhymes to create vibrant learning environments that inspire curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of music and language in young learners.

Director's Institute: Strengthening Business Practices – Marketing Your Program

March 25, 2026 | 8:30am-12:30pm 4 hrs/0.4 CEUs

CCDF: 18 | AL Pathways: MA, PPD | CDA: 5, 6 | DHR: AM, QCCL | ALL, Directors | Intermediate | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Vicki Giles, Paula Reese, GRECS Social Media Team

The purpose of this training is to strengthen child care providers' understanding of marketing tools, audiences, and elements necessary to develop a marketing plan. It encourages providers to tailor marketing practices to the audience they are trying to reach and to develop effective communication strategies to promote their services. Working Lunch (Provided by GRECS) GRECS Marketing Department Presents Marketing Strategies.

Keeping Children Safe CCDF: 4, 7 (CTF)

March 25, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs

CCDF: 4, 7 | AL Pathways: HSN | CDA: 1 | DHR: HSUP | ALL | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Avery Fick

Join us as we discuss how to work together to make good decisions for avoiding the common events that could hurt our children at different stages and ages as they grow. **No CEU Credit is awarded**

Boosting Brain Skills through Play: Executive Functioning in Action

March 26, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 17, 19 | AL Pathways: CGD | CDA: 2, 3, 8 | DHR: CD | Preschoolers, School-Agers | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Truman Pierce Ins. Sandy Resa, Michelle Denney

Looking for practical ways to help kids build focus, memory, and self-control? Join us to explore how everyday play activities can strengthen executive functioning skills—essential for school success and lifelong learning. Learn how to spot these skills in action and use easy-to-implement games and strategies to coach and support children as they build and improve their executive functioning skills.

Planning Nature Play Activities

March 28, 2026 | 6:30pm-8:30pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 15 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE | CDA: 1, 3, 8 | DHR: CD, LD | Toddler, Preschoolers, School-Agers | Basic | Coastal Alabama Community College Classroom C-100 Bay Minette

PRESENTER: Lisa Kirkland

This training helps educators apply intentional teaching practices to outdoor and nature-based learning. Participants will learn how to design engaging nature play experiences that are developmentally appropriate and tailored to meet the unique needs and interests of each child in their program.

Big Discoveries Session 3: Little Globetrotters: Exploring the World Through Play

March 31, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 17, 19 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE | CDA: 1, 2, 3, 8 | DHR: CD, LD | Toddler, Preschoolers | Intermediate | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Dr. Karen Morrison, PhD.

Take your toddlers and preschoolers on a journey around the world through music, stories, and hands-on discovery. This session explores how to introduce global cultures in ways that are meaningful to young children. Participants will leave with practical ideas, book lists, and center activities that celebrate global awareness!

The Art of Serve and Return (APT)

March 31, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 17, 20 | AL Pathways: CGD, LEE | CDA: 2, 3, 8 | DHR: CD | Infants, Toddlers | Basic | The Learning Tree at First Fairhope

PRESENTER: Erin Franklin

The art of serve and return not only builds communication skills in infants and toddlers, but it also builds social and emotional development as they learn about taking turns as well as building confidence. In this two-hour training, participants will learn about serve and return as well as having the opportunity to practice it using games and interactive discussions.

January 2026



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 GRECS and EHS Closed for New Years Day	2	3
5	6	7 <i>Addressing Homelessness: The Role of the Early Childhood Educator (APT)</i> ; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Webinar	8 <i>Cognitive Development: Thinking and Learning in Early Childhood</i> ; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile	9	10
12	13 <i>Let's Talk: The Power of Language for Infants and Toddlers (APT)</i> ; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile	14 <i>Director's Institute: Strengthening Business Practices – Building A Budget</i> ; 9:00am-12:00pm; Mobile 	15 <i>Language of Friends: Using Puppets and Literature to Build Social Skills</i> ; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Kids Plus Child Development Center, Foley <i>Celebrating Mistakes: Embracing a Growth Mindset</i> ; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile	16 <i>First-Aid and CPR Training</i> ; 8:30am-12:30pm; Mobile	17 <i>Positive Guidance: Why, What and How</i> ; 9:30am-11:30am; Washington County Public Library- Large Training Room
19 GRECS and EHS Closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day	20 <i>Big Discoveries Session 1: Alphabet Explorers: Building Early Literacy Through Playful Learning</i> ; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile	21 <i>Handling and Storage of Hazardous Materials, including Correct Disposal of Bio-Contaminants</i> CCDF: 8; 9:00am-10:00am; Mobile <i>Appropriate Pre-Cautions in Transporting Children</i> CCDF: 9; 10:00am-11:00am; Mobile	22 <i>All The Kool Kids Are Eating It</i> ; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Future Achievers, Evergreen <i>Infection Control and Administration of Medication</i> CCDF: 1, 3; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile	23	24 (Day 1: <i>Alabama Early Learning Guidelines AELG</i>) Sessions 1, 2; 8:30am-12:30pm; Mobile
26 <i>Inclusion in the Early Childhood Setting</i> ; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile	27 <i>Getting Started 2025 (Day 1) CTF</i> ; 8:30am-12:30pm; Mobile <i>Decisions! Decisions! The Importance and Benefits of Giving Children Choices</i> ; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile	28 <i>Getting Started 2025 (Day 2) CTF</i> ; 8:30am-12:30pm; Mobile	29 <i>Getting Started 2025 (Day 3) CTF</i> ; 8:30am-12:30pm; Mobile <i>Right on Time: Healthy Routines for the Early Childhood Classroom (APT)</i> ; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile	30 <i>Alabama Quality STARS: Lift Them Higher with Quality Early Care and Education</i> ; 9:30am-11:30am; Mobile	31

*All classes in Mobile County will be held at Gulf Regional Early Childhood Services unless otherwise noted.

February 2026






GULF REGIONAL
Early Childhood Services

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2</p>	<p>3 <i>Why Transitions Trigger Meltdowns</i>; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5 <i>The GPS to Infant Caregiving: Understanding Infant Behavior</i>; 6:00pm-8:00pm; The Learning Tree at First Fairhope</p> <p><i>The Art of Serve and Return (APT)</i>; 6:30pm-8:30pm; Mobile</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>10 <i>Math All Around Me</i>; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Webinar</p>	<p>11 <i>Alabama Pathways Professional Development Registry-PDR Information</i>; 10:00pm-12:00pm; Webinar</p>	<p>12 <i>Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Prevention and Use of Safe Sleep Practices</i> CCDF: 2 <i>Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma</i> CCDF: 6; 12:00pm-2:00pm; Mobile</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>16 <i>How to Care for Children with No "Off" Button</i>; 12:00pm-2:00pm; Discovery Island Orange Beach</p>	<p>17</p> <p>GRECS and EHS Closed for Mardi Gras</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19 <i>Preparing the Early Childhood Learning Environment: Setting the Stage for Learning and Growth</i>; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 <i>Planning Nature Play Activities</i>; 9:30am-11:30am; Monroe County Public Library, Monroeville</p>
<p>23</p>	<p>24 <i>Music, Melody and Emotions</i>; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile</p>	<p>25 <i>Director's Institute: Strengthening Business Practices – Financial Reports and Internal Controls</i>; 9:00am-12:00pm; Mobile</p>	<p>26 <i>Creating Calm: Co-Regulation and Building Resilience</i>; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 (Day 2: <i>Alabama Early Learning Guidelines AELG) Sessions 3, 4</i>; 8:30am-12:30pm; Mobile</p>

*All classes in Mobile County will be held at Gulf Regional Early Childhood Services unless otherwise noted.

March 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2</p> 	<p>3 <i>Big Discoveries Session 2: Breaking Bread: Building Culture Through Culture, Story, and Taste; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile</i></p>	<p>4 <i>Preparing for the Unexpected CCDF: 5, 7; 6:30pm-8:30pm; Mobile</i></p>	<p>5 <i>Setting Time and Space for Physical Activity in Early Childhood; 6:30pm-8:30pm; Mobile</i></p>	<p>6</p> 	<p>7 <i>Helping Children Resolve Peer Conflict; 9:30am-11:30am; Mobile</i></p>
<p>9</p>	<p>10 <i>Engaging Our Sensory Systems - Session 3: Sight, Sound and Touch; 6:30pm-8:30pm; Mobile</i></p>		<p>12 <i>Hands at Play: Developing Fine Motor Skills; 6:30pm-8:30pm; Mobile</i></p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 (Day 3: Alabama Early Learning Guidelines AELG) Sessions 5, 6; 8:30am-12:30pm; Mobile</p>
<p>16</p> 	<p>17 <i>An Ounce of Prevention = Less Chaos Later; 6:30pm-8:30pm; Mobile</i></p> 	<p>18 <i>Alabama Quality STARS: Lift Them Higher with Quality Early Care and Education; 9:30am-11:30am; Mobile</i></p>	<p>19 <i>Math, Count Me In! (APT); 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile</i></p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 (Day 4: Alabama Early Learning Guidelines AELG) Sessions 7, 8, 9; 8:30am-2:30pm; Mobile</p>
<p>23 <i>Motor Development: Motor Milestones; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile</i></p>	<p>24 <i>Groovin' with Nursery Rhymes; 6:30pm-8:30pm; Mobile</i></p>	<p>25 <i>Director's Institute: Strengthening Business Practices - Marketing Your Program; 8:30am-12:30pm; Mobile</i></p> <p><i>Keeping Children safe CCDF: 4, 7 (CTF); 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile</i></p>	<p>26 <i>Boosting Brain Skills through Play: Executive Functioning in Action; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile</i></p>	<p>27</p> 	<p>28 <i>Planning Nature Play Activities; 9:30am-11:30am; Coastal Alabama Community College Classroom C-100, Bay Minette</i></p>
<p>30</p> 	<p>31 <i>Big Discoveries Session 3: Little Globetrotters: Exploring the World Through Play; 6:00pm-8:00pm; Mobile</i></p> <p><i>The Art of Serve and Return (APT); 6:00pm-8:00pm; The Learning Tree at First Fairhope</i></p>				

Developing Executive Function in Young Children

How understanding neuroscience helps educators nurture executive function.



WHAT IS EXECUTIVE FUNCTION, AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Executive function is often compared to an air traffic control system. Just as air traffic controllers manage the safe and orderly flow of airplanes, the executive function system in the brain manages impulses, attention, emotions, and decision-making. A strong executive function system allows children to take turns, resist distractions, remember rules, solve problems, and recover from setbacks.

NEUROGENESIS: BUILDING THE BRAIN'S FOUNDATION

Each new experience, from hearing a story to climbing on a jungle gym, helps determine whether these new neurons survive and integrate into the brain's networks. Positive, stimulating environments provide the rich input needed for healthy neurogenesis.

NEUROPLASTICITY:

Plasticity is greatest in early childhood, making this the optimal time for developing strong mental habits and skills. But neuroplasticity is a double-edged sword: while positive experiences build strong, healthy pathways, repeated negative experiences (like trauma or unpredictable care) can strengthen stress-driven brain patterns.

YOU ARE A BRAIN CHANGER!

Neuroscience tells us that early childhood educators are not just caretakers or curriculum deliverers. You are brain changers. Every word of encouragement, every practice of patience, every game that stretches memory or focus, every nurturing moment—it all counts.

WHAT EDUCATORS CAN DO:

RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

- Foster curiosity through play-based, child-led learning experiences.
- Offer diverse sensory experiences such as music, movement, tactile play, and outdoor exploration.
- Encourage language development through talking, singing, and reading aloud.
- Build secure relationships where children feel safe, seen, and supported.

BEHAVIOR IS COMMUNICATION

- Model calm behavior and self-regulation strategies.
- Celebrate effort and persistence to promote a growth mindset.
- Provide frequent practice of executive function skills through games and routines.
- Co-regulate emotions, helping children navigate stress until they can do so independently.

Training Levels

Basic = Most appropriate for entry-level professionals who are new to early childhood and/or school-age care. Basic Level Training covers a foundational understanding and demonstration of developing skills.

Intermediate = Most appropriate for professionals who have at least (2) years of experience and 120 hours of training in child development, and are moving toward more formal education. Intermediate Level Training includes expanding knowledge and application, and refining skills.

Advanced = Most appropriate for professionals who have at least three (3) years of experience and 30 credit hours in child development. Advanced Level Training focuses on a more thorough knowledge and understanding of developmentally appropriate practice and highly effective application and demonstration of skills.

DHR Performance Standards Training Areas

CD = Child Development

HSUP = Health, Safety, and Universal Precautions

QCCL = Quality Child Care and Licensing

CCPF = Child Care Professional and the Family

LD = Language Development

PDG = Positive Discipline and Guidance

AM = Administration and Management

CDA (Child Development Associate) Subject Areas

1. Planning a safe, healthy learning environment
2. Advancing children's physical and intellectual development
3. Supporting children's social and emotional development
4. Building productive relationships with families
5. Managing an effective program
6. Maintaining a commitment to professionalism
7. Observing and recording children's behavior
8. Understanding principles of child development and learning

Alabama Pathways Core Knowledge Areas (CKA)

CGD = Child Growth and Development

HSN = Health, Safety and Nutrition

LEE = Learning Experiences and Enrichment

DIV = Diversity

COA = Child Observation and Assessment (Planning for Individual Needs)

ICFC = Interaction with Children, Families and Communities

PPD = Personal and Professional Development

MA = Management and Administration

CCDF Training Areas

1. *Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunizations)*
2. *Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) prevention and use of safe sleep practices*
3. *Administration of medication*
4. *Prevention of and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions*
5. *Building and physical premises safety, including identifying electrical hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic*
6. *Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and abusive head trauma*
7. *Emergency preparedness and response planning for natural or man-caused events*
8. *Handling and storage of hazardous materials, including correct disposal of bio-contaminants*
9. *If applicable, appropriate precautions in transporting children*
10. *First-aid and CPR*
11. *Recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect*
12. *Identifying and serving homeless children and their families*
13. *Promoting the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children, including those related to nutrition and physical activity, using scientifically-based, developmentally appropriate and age appropriate strategies*
14. *Caring for children in geographic areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment*
15. *Implementing behavior strategies, including positive behavior interventions and support models that promote positive social and emotional development and reduce challenging behaviors, including reducing expulsions of preschool-aged children for such behaviors*
16. *Engaging parents and families in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways to expand their knowledge, skills and capacity to be meaningful partners in supporting their children's positive development*
17. *Understanding early neurological development*
18. *Using data to guide program improvement*
19. *Supporting positive development of school-age children*
20. *Improving the quality of programs and services for infants and toddlers*

Target Age Groups

Infants = Birth to 12 months

Toddlers = 1 and 2 year olds

Preschoolers = 3 and 4 year olds

School-agers = 5 to 12 year olds

ALL = Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers, and School-agers





The Professional Development Registry (PDR) will allow you to:

- Create your own early childhood professional and training profile.
- Document your professional accomplishments and professional certificates.
- Identify your current place on the Alabama Pathways Professional Development Lattice.
- Collaborate with state-designated training agencies to help you identify and reach your goals.
- Link to official training organizations.
- Access to available resources.

Alabama Pathways Professional Development Registry

February 11, 2026 | 10:00am-12:00pm 2 hrs

CCDF: 18 | AL Pathways: PPD | CDA: 5, 6 | DHR: QCCL, CCPF | ALL | Basic | ALL Counties Webinar

PRESENTER: Bernice Pettway, DHR

Participants will discuss the goal of Alabama pathways and how it can help early childhood professionals. Tutorial on the PDR.

Your profile belongs to you! Take it along wherever your professional journey may take you! All you have to do is log in!

Things to remember:

- Website address – www.alabamapathways.org
- An updated User Guide is always available for your reference on your dashboard
- FAQ's - <https://www.alabamapathways.org/api/file/s/faq>
- When adding info into the profile, go to each tab to add information: education, employment, etc.
- A Help Desk will be available on the footer of the page on the left side.
- When setting up your account, remember to use your PERSONAL email.
- As a FINAL step, don't forget to associate yourself with the facility at which you are working.

Special Delivery Courses

Please Contact: Vicki Giles

251-473-1060

vgiles@grecs.org

We are offering special delivery courses for the following sessions:

- What is Your Piece: Professionalism
- Active Supervision of Children
- Guidance: Not Discipline
- Preparing for Emergencies

Please contact us for more details on how you can schedule a training or if there are other sessions you need!

Boosting Brain Skills through Play: Executive Functioning in Action



March 26, 2026 | 6:00pm-8:00pm 2 hrs/0.2 CEUs

CCDF: 13, 17, 19 | AL Pathways: CGD | CDA: 2, 3, 8 | DHR: CD | Preschoolers, School-Agers | Basic | GRECS Training Room, Mobile

PRESENTER: Truman Pierce Institute Sandy Resa, Michelle Denney

Looking for practical ways to help kids build focus, memory, and self-control? Join us to explore how everyday play activities can strengthen executive functioning skills—essential for school success and lifelong learning. Learn how to spot these skills in action and use easy-to-implement games and strategies to coach and support children as they build and improve their executive functioning skills.

Smart Horizons On-Demand Courses

Our online training courses are designed to help you meet your professional goals. Whether you simply want to complete annual training requirements or you're trying to acquire training hours for a CDA, our courses provide a variety of engaging topics designed specifically for you!

We have scholarships available for this program!

**Call Sofie McNamara at
251-473-1060
for more information!**

See 2026 Clearly with Podcasts That Guide, Support & Inspire

For ECE Professionals & Parents

Start the year with clarity, connection, and conversations that matter—whether you're parenting or working in early childhood.

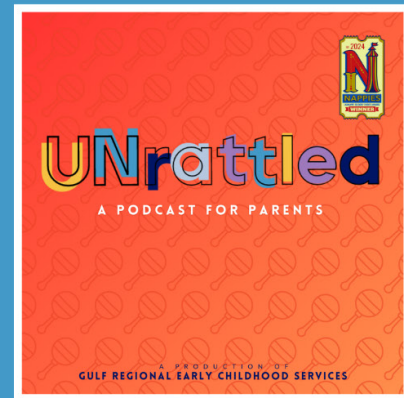
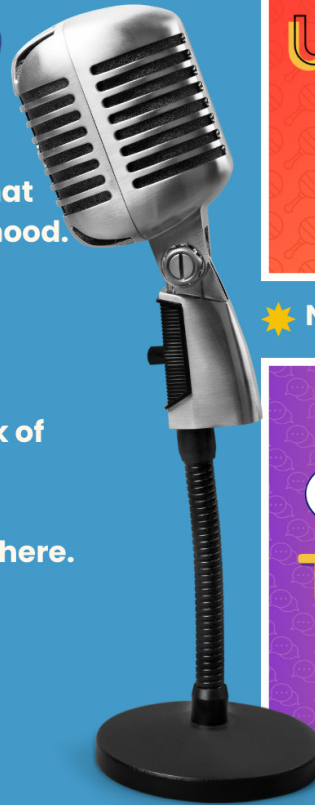
Parents turn to UNrattled for honest guidance on stress, resilience, and navigating family life with confidence.

ECE professionals rely on Tiny Talks for insights on child development, playful learning, and the heart-centered work of caregiving.

Begin 2026 with focus and fresh ideas. Listen anytime, anywhere.



New Episodes Weekly



★ New Season is out NOW!



APT Winter Online Training

Alabama Early Learning Guidelines (AELG) Online

January 5 – February 22, 2026

NEW! Introduction to the CDA Credential: Updated Edition

January 5 – January 26, 2026

Each Quarter, Alabama Public Television™ offers free online training for anyone interested in expanding their professional development! We encourage you to check out what they have in store and register directly through their website,

<https://aptv.org/education/learn-online/>

Registration opens on their website : **December 8th, 2025**

Scan for Facilitated Courses



Scan for more information about APT's Winter Online Training!



APT's On-Demand Training Catalog



ALABAMA'S NEW SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDCARE SUBSIDY

Benefits for Child Care Centers, Family and Group Home Providers

Availability

Alabama's new Special Needs Childcare Subsidy is available statewide.

Reimbursement

Participating centers will be reimbursed \$250 per week. There is no penalty when a child is not in attendance, so the center will be reimbursed regardless of attendance.

Inclusion Support

Childcare staff will have FREE access to training, consultation, technical assistance, and adaptive materials provided by Childcare Enhancement with a Purpose (CCEP) Inclusion Consultants statewide to support inclusion in the classroom.



About the Subsidy

Financial assistance is now available for qualifying Alabama families of a child with special needs to attend quality, inclusive childcare programs statewide. To qualify, the child must be receiving services (IFSP, IEP, private therapy, etc.).

To learn more, or to determine eligibility, contact Melissa Anderson. Statewide Childcare Enhancement with a Purpose Project Manager, at manderson@ucphuntsville.org or 256-859-4900.



The Resource Place



GULF REGIONAL
Early Childhood Services

Call today to make your appointment with us!

Browse our comprehensive lending library and workroom where you'll find:

**Children's Books * Teacher Resource Books* Outdoor Play Materials*
Manipulatives* Puzzles* Puppets* Big Books * Laminating Machine *
Bulletin Board Paper and More!!!!**

**Monday | 9am-4pm
Tuesday | 9am-4pm
Wednesday | Closed
Thursday | 9am-4pm
Friday | 9am-2pm**

**Call
251- 473-1060**

**Scan to sign
up now!**



visit our website for more information at www.grecs.org

Interested in a Membership?

Visit our website at www.grecs.org and fill
out our online application today!

If you need more assistance or have any
questions,
please contact

Marybeth Fields at 251-473-1060 ext 1702

**The Lending Library
is now online!**

Our library and resources are available
online to check out and reserve at your
convenience! More information to come,
subscribe to our newsletters to stay up-to-
date!



Register today.
Scan and select the
"getting started" tab.



*Lift them higher with quality early
care and education.*



334-604-6260



info@alabamaqualitystars.org

SUPPORT CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND

**We are celebrating over 20 years of collaboration with the Children's Trust Fund supported through the
Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention!**

Caring for the Caregiver allows us opportunities to provide training and support to Child Care providers.

**We appreciate all who participate to make this project possible and help educate parents and caregivers
on the prevention of child neglect and abuse.**

**The next time you renew your car tag, purchase this specialty tag at your local Probate office. It is tax
deductible & proceeds directly fund community-based prevention programs.**



Gulf Regional Childcare Management Agency, Inc.

3101 International Drive, Building 6 Mobile, AL 36606

Ph. 251.473.1060

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MOBILE, AL
PERMIT NO. 148

Connect:



www.greecs.org



@GRECSMobile



greecs_communities



greecsmobile



GULF REGIONAL
Early Childhood Services



United Way
of Southwest Alabama



Make sure to like,
follow and friend us on
all of our media outlets
to stay up to date with all
the latest happenings and
events!



SAVE
THE DATE!

January 1, 2026

GRECS & EHS offices are CLOSED for
New Years Day

January 19, 2026

GRECS & EHS offices are CLOSED for
MLK Jr. Day

February 16-17, 2026

GRECS & EHS offices are CLOSED for
Mardi Gras