



ECE-INSIDER

Division of Child Care Provider Newsletter



From the Director's Desk

Andrea Day

2024 is shaping up to be another busy year for the Division of Child Care. We are in the planning and preparing stages of developing the Division of Child Care Federal State Plan. This State Plan provides assurance that Kentucky will abide by federal rules and regulations surrounding federal funding. In this case, the CCDF funds that Kentucky receives each year to provide various services and reimbursements for child care providers across the state. This includes vital programs like CCAP. DCC will collaborate with our various agency partners to carefully outline the plans based on federal requirements for services, methods of reimbursement, regulation outlines for providers and state program administrative activities and more. We want to inform you of what this process looks like for Kentucky.

Please join us for the DCC Provider Town Hall on April 15th at 1pm to learn more about the State Plan and our process to meet this federally mandated requirement!

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Cultural Diversity Awareness

We all have different life experiences. These different experiences and backgrounds mean that even if the children and families in our child care programs look the same, there is still diversity and different cultures in our environments that we need to support. For many of us, culture is passed down and absorbed from generation to generation. The communities across the Commonwealth are vastly different, therefore the culture can vary greatly from one child care program to another.

Our role as early childhood education professionals is to be aware of the cultural diversity that is present in our local communities and early care and education programs. Be intentional about developing relationships with the families enrolled in your classrooms and learn how you can best support their needs from a culturally diverse perspective.

Remember that culture creates diversity, therefore family structures, beliefs, food, dress, gender roles, etc. can all reflect different cultures within your program. We know that every child is different. They develop at different rates, have different personalities and preferences, and the family unit is very similar. Each family is different in their preferences and goals for their child and their family. When they enroll in your program, it is best practice to ensure you are developing trusting relationships built on open and honest communication to do the best you can to support each child and family.

Respect different languages and cultures by incorporating the specific languages and cultures of the families you have enrolled vs. just finding off the shelf materials to include in your environments. Do you have a child who speaks French? Work with the family to translate things like shelf labels, visual schedules, and classroom signage into French. Families will feel supported, included and truly valued when they feel represented in your program.

Learn more at:

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/dec2019/valuin-g-diversity-developing-understanding-behavior>



Stress Awareness



It is no secret to those of us in the Early Childhood Education field that ECE, while rewarding, is also one of the most mentally, physically, and emotionally demanding professions out there. The challenges you face daily as you serve Kentucky children and families is REAL and while it can be easily classified as “part of the job,” we feel it is important to acknowledge the reality of the day-to-day stress you may experience working in child care.

You spend much of your time focused on the developmental and social emotional needs of the children whom you care for and nurture daily. You take on some of the worries that are often shared with you by families and colleagues. You have your own personal lives that can be equally demanding in various ways. So what are you doing to take care of you? Take some time to reflect on the stresses you experience. Think about what you can do to offset or manage the stress in your life. Some things to think about:

- Be aware of your limits and communicate when you need support. Have a clear communication plan when you are in a classroom and things become too much. Ask a member of your administration for help or even tag a co-teacher to step in so you can take a few seconds to breathe. When handling challenging situations, you need to regulate your emotions before assisting young children.
- Take time every day for you! Self-care doesn't have to be expensive spa days or trips out of town to unplug. While those are nice, focus on the small things you can do every day. Even if that is just 10-15 minutes in the car listening to music on your lunch break or commute. Find what works and schedule that into your day. Find an accountability partner who agrees to do the same and check in on each other regularly.
- Label your emotions! We often work with children to name their emotions but tend to overlook the wide range of emotions we feel as adults. Take a minute to acknowledge how you are feeling. Think about what made you feel that way and what you can do to you reset. Hanging on to unidentified emotions can add to your stress level.
- Express gratitude. Take time to express gratitude for something positive every day. Acknowledge the positive every day, even if it is small. You can think of it in your head, say it out loud, write it down or even share on social media. Positivity spreads, so chances are, if one person sees or hears you expressing gratitude during stressful times, they may try to do the same.

Remember, the young children you spend time with every day are counting on you. They can also see and feel your stress. So taking time to take care of you is an important way to take care of them too!

NAEYC's Week of the Young Child (WOYC)

April 6th-12th, 2024!

“The Week of the Young Child is a time to recognize that children’s opportunities are our responsibilities, and to recommit ourselves to ensuring that each and every child experiences the type of early environment – at home, at child care, at school, and in the community – that will promote their early learning.”



Here are some ideas of how you can celebrate:

Kick-off Saturday: Get ready for the week ahead! Share via fliers and/or social media why this week is important to your program and classrooms.

Music Monday: Create a playlist for some fun dance parties! Music is an amazing way to develop early literacy and language skills.

Tasty Tuesday: Cook together! This connects math, science and literacy skills. Ensure the snack encourages healthy eating habits. You could even involve families by asking them about culturally or ethnically relevant foods and snacks.

Work Together Wednesday: Building can take many different forms! Explore a new building medium, if available, to work together. This develops math, science, and social skills working as a team.

Artsy Thursday: Process art is enriching for so many reasons! Avoid a “make and take” and focus on the child’s creative process, rather than the outcome. Not only does art assist with fine motor skills, but process art helps children to use their imagination and autonomous decision making abilities.

Family Friday: Families are our children’s first teachers! They are critically important to helping with “whole-child” development. Think of ways to engage families today that can work for most or all families!

Source: <https://www.naeyc.org/events/woyc/faq>



Additional resources:

Division of Child Care

<https://www.chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dcbs/dcc/Pages/default.aspx>

Division of Regulated Child Care (DRCC)

<https://www.chfs.ky.gov/agencies/os/oig/drcc/Pages/default.aspx>

Child Care Aware Tips and Tools

<https://www.childcareawareky.org/tips-and-tools/>

Family Child Care Network

<https://www.fcenky.com/>

