



• NEW HANOVER COUNTY •

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION NEWS

Smart Start Early Care and Education Newsletter

April - June 2024

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of protecting children from any form of maltreatment. Childcare workers play a vital role as they serve as advocates and protect the vulnerable children in their care.

North Carolina law requires all adults to report suspected child maltreatment. No proof is needed that the maltreatment has occurred; you only need a reasonable cause. No permission is required to file a report.

How to make a referral? Call the New Hanover County Health & Human Services and share any information you have about the child – name, age, address, and parent or caregiver name – and what makes you suspect abuse. You can create an anonymous report, but if you do provide your personal information, you will receive a notification as to whether Child Protective Services (CPS) will or will not investigate the case.

By remaining vigilant, attentive, and trained in recognizing signs of abuse or neglect, childcare workers can create safe environments where children can thrive.

To report abuse, neglect, or dependency of a child:

- Always call 9-1-1 anytime there is an emergency situation with a child
- During business hours (Monday-Friday from 8 AM-5 PM, call Social Services at 910-798-3420)
- After business hours (5 PM-8 AM) and on the weekends/holidays, call the NHC non-emergency number at 910-452-6120

Is your facility interested in purchasing pinwheels as a symbol to recognize Child Abuse Prevention Month? Visit the official [preventchildabusenc.org](https://www.preventchildabusenc.org) website to place an order!

*sources: Child Protective Services | New Hanover County, NC (nhcgov.com),
Recognizing & Reporting Child Maltreatment | Prevent Child Abuse NC*

Provider Appreciation Night

Thursday, May 9, 2024 from 4:30-7:30pm

Your work with young children does not go unnoticed.

We are grateful for all you do!

Join us for dinner, door prizes, vendors, and more!

formal invitation to come

“Anyone
who does
anything to
help a child
in his life is
a hero to
me.”

-Fred Rogers

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Do you care for yourself as much as you care for your cell phone?

Self care is not just a buzz word, especially for caregivers.

Think about how well we take care of our phones. We put screen protectors on them, wrap them in sturdy cases and charge them to preserve the battery. We do this to ensure that the phone will work optimally and last a long time.

We need to do the same for ourselves. Practicing self care helps us be physically and emotionally available to the children in our care so that we can form caring, trusting relationships with them

Ideas for Self Care:

⇒ Establish good routines

Get enough sleep

Eat well and don't skip meals

Exercise: keep it simple- a 10 minute walk a day will make a difference

⇒ Breathing exercises

When you feel stress, take a minute to do deep breathing. You Tube has some excellent breathing exercises to help you practice:

Balloon breathing

Square breathing

⇒ Take Breaks

Make it a habit to take small breaks during the day, not only when you are stressed, but in general. These small breaks can keep you regulated. So take advantage of every time someone comes around for a "bathroom break" Don't skip them!

Dedication to Education Individual Bonus Application is Open!

Licensed child care programs in New Hanover County were emailed & mailed information about our Dedication to Education (DTE) Individual Bonus the week of March 18.

OF NOTE:

*DCDEE Works documentation is NOT an acceptable form of education proof

*EDU 119 alone is NOT a qualifying course for the bonus

Please share with your staff!

Deadline to apply is Friday, April 12 by 5pm.

Applications are ONLY ACCEPTED by mail or hand-delivery.

If you have questions about the bonus, contact Natalie:
910-815-3731 x1008 or natalie.pond@newhanoverkids.org

Not getting our emails?

Be sure to always check your **junk/spam email folder** if you aren't seeing an email from us- then mark us as **'Safe Sender'**.

Directors: a private Facebook group, **Smart Start of NHC: Early Childhood Directors**, was created for you. This page provides a place for administrators to network, ask questions of each other and coordinate efforts to better serve the children in their program. In addition, the Smart Start ECE team will share news and events, and help you with questions you may have about our services.

We hope you join to keep in touch! Find us on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/>



Directors...

...Looking for a way to meet other directors, network, get ideas, or share frustrations?

We're facilitating our Director Dialogues– [via Zoom!](#)

Join other directors for the next meeting on **Tuesday, May 21 @ noon.**

A Zoom link will be emailed prior to the meeting. No planned agenda, and no RSVP needed, Just log on to chat!

For more information or questions, contact Natalie Pond.

...share our newsletter and training calendar with your staff.

- * post them in the staff breakroom (do staff know if the newsletter and training calendar are posted and where?)
- * email them to staff
- * provide a copy to each classroom or teacher or provide them with our website address to view the training calendar
- * encourage staff to decide which training(s) he/she would like to register for
- * remember that classes fill quickly. It's important to register online early.

Be sure to always check your junk/spam email folder if you aren't seeing an email from us- then mark us as a 'Safe Sender'.

Resource Room Corner

June is National Safety Month

Did you know that June is National Safety Month? It's a month dedicated to creating healthier and safer environments. Throughout the month, each week is assigned a weekly topic. This year, the first week is about emergency preparedness. Through age-appropriate activities and discussions, childcare workers can educate children about emergency preparedness, such as fire drills, evacuation plans, and basic first aid.



One of the age-appropriate activities you can do is check out the **Save the Children theme box in the Resource Room.** This theme box has materials and activities to explain what an emergency is, what to do during different kind of emergencies, and who to trust during emergencies. In the binder, you will find activity sheets to make copies of and keep in your classroom and discussion questions to guide you through the books in the theme box.

Week of the Young Child: April 6-12

Week of the Young Child is a celebration that focuses on the needs of young children and families, and the early childhood programs and services that support those needs.

Each day is themed to highlight developmental skills and encourage activities.

Make sure to use the hashtag #WOYC24 when sharing each day!

source: <https://www.naeyc.org/events/woyc>

Music Monday

Music helps children develop their language and early literacy skills. Turn the music up and let the children dance and sing along!

Tasty Tuesday

Cooking with children supports math, literacy, science, and health skills! Enjoy creating a fun, healthy snack today!

Work Together Wednesday

During the early years, children are developing social skills. Place materials out and have the kids work together to create something new!

Artsy Thursday

Open-ended art is essential to a child's education! Let the children create using a variety of materials – paint, clay, crayons, etc.

Family Friday

Family members are children's first teachers. Plan a way to celebrate and get them involved! Ice cream socials are always a good idea!



Smart Start of New Hanover County
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Address Service Requested

WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO SHARE OUR NEWSLETTER AND TRAINING CALENDAR WITH ALL STAFF

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If you would like to receive our newsletter electronically, send us an email letting us know.

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a partner in the
Smart Start network