



November/ December 2025 Child Development Today

Welcome to our November/December 2025 newsletter! The leaves have changed colors and have begun to fall off of the trees. We have changed the newsletter up a bit, and will now be sending it out six times a year instead of four. We all turned our clocks back an hour. Don't forget to check/change the batteries in your smoke detectors.



Empire State Family Child Care Collaborative

Attention home-based child care providers! If you're licensed and in good standing with OCFS, you may be eligible to join a growing network that will make your life easier and your business stronger.

The Family Child Care Collaborative supports family and group family child care providers with individual and group business coaching and training, a free one-year license to a Child Care Management System, and free consultation with a certified financial planner.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Apply Online—Takes 5 minutes
 2. Get Approved—We'll review your eligibility
 3. Get Connected—Start receiving support
- Apply to the Empire State Family Child Care Collaborative

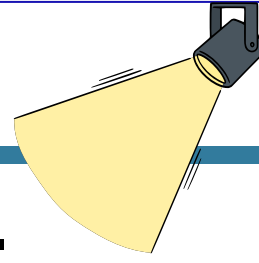
Do you have questions or would like to apply? Call Lisa at (607) 273-0259 ext. 233 or email lisa@childdevelopmentcouncil.org

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Spotlight On...



The Child Development Council's Ithaca office recently adopted a Blue Cabinet Food Pantry. Mutual Aid Tompkins created the network of Blue Cabinets to support those in need in our community. The cabinets are all volunteer run, neighbors helping neighbors. People make donations by placing non-perishable food items (with current dates of goodness), personal hygiene items like soap, shampoo, toilet paper and menstrual supplies into the Blue Cabinets.

The idea is that anyone in the community can access the items when they need to. Other businesses in the Clinton West Plaza are adding to the cabinet as well. If you would like to offer support by dropping off food or other needed items please stop by anytime, for larger donations please call and schedule a time the office is open. If you need something from the pantry, please help yourself; Blue Cabinets are always open. As we're heading into colder weather, keep in mind food in cans and glass jars should not be placed into cabinets when temperatures are freezing.

For more information about Mutual Aid food sharing cabinets follow the link:

<https://mutualaidtompkins.com/food-sharing/locations>



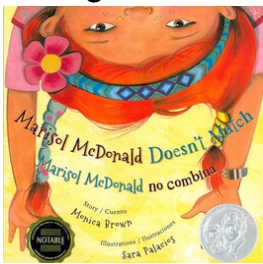
Bookworm Banter

For Ages 0-2



Kiss by Kiss / ocêhtowina: A Counting Book for Families by Richard Van Kamp
In Plains Cree and English. Recommended by American Indians in Children's Literature. A kisses counting book for babies. Sweet photographs of all sorts of people. From the publisher's synopsis: "One kiss, two kiss, three kiss, four! So many kisses and so many more".

For Ages 3-5

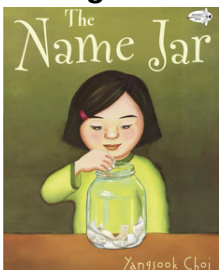


Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match / Marisol McDonald no combina by Monica Brown

This book is bilingual- in English and Spanish.

Marisol McDonald doesn't match. She wears polka dots with stripes. She likes peanut butter and jelly burritos. Her hair is red like fire. She likes to be a pirate while playing soccer. She uses Spanish words and English words in the same sentence. She even chooses a puppy who doesn't match. She is wonderful!

For Ages 5-8



The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi

Unhei has a small red pouch. Inside is a wooden block with her name carved on it, a special gift from her grandmother in Korea. On the bus to her first day in American school, some children ask about the pouch and then tease her about her hard-to-pronounce name. When Unhei arrives in her classroom she is still feeling embarrassed and won't tell her classmates her name. The next morning she finds a glass jar with slips of paper in it. Each child in her class wrote down a special name for her to use if she would like to. What name does she choose?

Self-Regulation Skills: Breathing Strategies

Teaching this Skill

Teach the following strategies when the children are calm and engaged. Remind children of the strategies when they need to calm down through use of visuals or props.

Controlled Breathing: Smell the Flower, Blow Out the Pinwheel

Using the visual below, have children smell the flower (to breathe in through their nose) and blow out the pinwheel (to exhale through their mouth). Repeat several times.

Take a Deep Breath

Smell the flower



Blow the pinwheel



How You Can Help Children Self-Regulate

- ▶ Teach clear positive expectations/rules daily.
- ▶ Model and discuss reasons for desired behaviors.
- ▶ Validate feelings.
- ▶ Assist with language through labeling actions, feelings, and emotions.
- ▶ Provide positive feedback in response to the child regulating their behavior and help child regulate by modeling ways to calm down when needed.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate play.
- ▶ Promote children's independence across the day.
- ▶ Provide a place child can go to take a break and calm down.

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations | ChallengingBehavior.org

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Food and Culture: Honoring Indigenous Roots in What We Eat Today

Long before grocery stores and farmers markets, Indigenous peoples in the United States cultivated and cared for the land, developing foods and farming methods that continue to nourish us today. Many of the foods we enjoy—corn, including popcorn, beans, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, and pumpkins—have deep roots in Native traditions. “Three Sisters,” as corn, beans, and squash are known in many Indigenous cultures, were often grown together in a way that supported both the plants and the soil—an early example of sustainable farming. Indigenous peoples also taught methods of drying, smoking, and preserving foods to last through the seasons. Wild rice from the Great Lakes region, salmon from the Pacific Northwest, and berries gathered across the continent all show how food connects people to the land, community, and their traditions.

When we serve these foods in our child care meals, talking with children about where foods come from helps them appreciate different cultures and respect the earth that provides for us all.

This month, try introducing a “Three Sisters” stew or these CACFP-Friendly Corn and Blueberry Muffins to your menu, and share the story of how Indigenous communities used teamwork—just like we do—to grow healthy, delicious food.

CACFP-Friendly Corn and Blueberry Muffins

Yields: 12 child-size muffins

CACFP Crediting: 1 muffin = 1 oz eq grain (50%+ whole grain-rich)

+ ¼ cup fruit for all ages

Serving Tip: Serve warm with milk for a balanced breakfast or snack

Ingredients:

1 cup whole wheat flour (WGR)

1 cup enriched cornmeal (fine or medium grind)

1 tbsp baking powder

¼ tsp salt

2 tbsp sugar or honey (optional)

1 cup milk (low-fat or non-dairy alternative)

1 cup of fresh or frozen blueberries

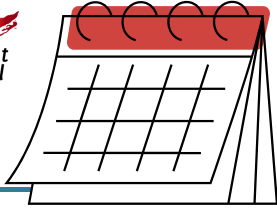
1 egg

¼ cup oil or melted butter

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F
2. Mix dry ingredients together.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk all wet ingredients.
4. Combine wet and dry ingredients until just mixed. Gently fold in blueberries.
5. Spoon batter into greased muffin cups, filling ¾ full.
6. Bake 15–18 minutes until golden brown and a toothpick comes out clean.
7. Cool 5 minutes before serving.





Agency Calendar

Closings:

November 11 - Veteran's Day
November 27th and 28th - Thanksgiving
December 25th - January 2nd- Closed

Meetings:

December 2nd - Center Directors
Meeting 10 am -11 am
December 2nd - SACC Directors -
10:00am-11:30am

Provider Corner

Anne Withers retired after 37 years between the Child Care Council and Child Development Council, not including many years spent in various roles in the child care field. We are grateful for her many years of service, and she will be missed.



What content would you like to see in upcoming newsletters? Please email Vickiem@childdevelopmentcouncil.org to share your ideas. Thank you for your dedication to providing high-quality care and education for young children in our community.

Hometown Happenings

Here's your round-up of free, fun, and family friendly events happening across Tompkins and Cortland counties. Mark your calendar's and share with families!

Ask a Registrar: Childcare Provider Information Session

Registrars from the Child Development Council will be available to answer questions about becoming an in home registered child care provider.

Friday, November 14th, 2025.
11:30am-12:30pm
Location: Tompkins Public Library in the Thaler/ Howell Programming room.

Families learning Science together

Free science program hosted by Chemists for Outreach and Graduate Inclusion (CoRGI) at Cornell University. Age Range: 5 years old and up!

Saturday, November 22nd 2:00pm-3:00pm
Location: Thaler/Howell Programming Room at the Tompkins Public Library (100 East Green Street, Ithaca)

*It is free but registration is required:
<https://www.tcpl.org/event/families-learning-science-together-54074>

Family Open Play

A space for families to come with their children and socialize with other families. There are books, toys, and room for movement. Age Range: 0-4 years old

Monday mornings from 9:30-11:30am from November 17th- April 13th 2026. Closed on December 29th, January 19th, February 16th, and March 30th. Location: Cornell Cooperative Extension 615 Willow Ave, Ithaca, NY, 14850

*It is free but registration is required:
<https://ccetompkins.wufoo.com/forms/family-open-play-20252026/>

Trumansburg Winterfest

Winterfest is a free community event featuring activities such as horse-drawn carriage rides, street performances, and a visit with Santa.

Saturday, December 6th from 10:00am-6:00pm
Where is it? 56 East Main Street, Trumansburg, NY, 14886

The event is free to attend but there may be fees for food vendors



Training Calendar November-December 2025

Date	Time	Location	Title	Description	Instructor	OCFS Categories
11/19	6:30-8:30pm	Cortland Office	Quality Environments for Infants & Toddlers	Participants will examine best practice pertaining to infant and toddler environments in child care programs. Together we will use the ITERS to rate our environments and create goals for improvement.	Lisa Potter	1,3
12/11	6:30-8:30pm	Zoom	Promoting Physical Development in Infants & Toddlers	This training will focus on building fine and gross motor development in infants and toddlers. Participants will examine activities and discuss developmentally appropriate fine and gross motor skills.	Lisa Potter	1, 3



To register for training: call (607) 273-0259 or email training@childdevelopmentcouncil.org

The Child Development Council is happy to offer convenient on-site training for child care programs. Our Team is available to travel to your program, or provide a Zoom link, and teach one of our many training workshops to your staff. Email or call for a training catalog and applicable fees.

Current Child Development Council Team

Administrative:

Diane Feldman
Margaret Tinker
Melissa Perry
Michael Hoit

Family Services:

Amy Riotto
Ashaneé Brooks
Cassandra Carlton
Elizabeth Wolff
Jessi Soto-Moyer
Ken Cassano
Lisa Bowman
Lisa Drake
Malinda Rees

Child Care Services:

Alexxis Strauf
Allison VanGalder
Ann Turcsik
Barb Mechalke
Don Yeager
Hannah Behrens
Joanie Slatoff
Lisa Potter
Ruth Williams
Sara Sandritter
Sue Sopp
Vickie Mundy- Hebert

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