

FALL 2022

Official Newsletter
of the Lower Shore ECMHC Program



Back to School!

BY EMMA WATKINS

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOUR CHILD ISN'T READY FOR THE CLASSROOM?

Whether your child is beginning their school experience or returning to the classroom, the first day of school can be a difficult transition. After all, new environments and routines are stressful experiences at all ages! Luckily, there are strategies that can help ease the transition. Talk to your child about what school is like. Acknowledge their feelings, answer questions, and reassure them that school will be fun. Visiting the classroom and meeting the teachers can help ease their anxiety. Practicing the new routine with your child before the big day can help your child know what to expect. Be sure to say goodbye, tell them you will see them again, and offer affection.

If your child is experiencing significant difficulties going back to school, consider reaching out to us for support.



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Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

BY EMMA WATKINS

This month, we celebrate the 62 million Hispanics who call America home. Established in 1968, Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates our Hispanic and Latino community members, their history, their culture, and their contributions. Rather than beginning on the 1st of the month, Hispanic Heritage Month begins on September 15th - The anniversary of the independence of several Latin American countries - and lasts through October 15th.

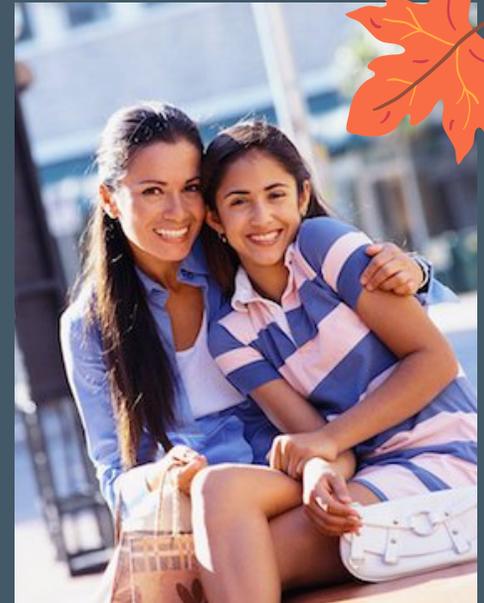


Hispanic Heritage Month is a time for pride and for reflection. Hispanics and Latinos constitute the second largest racial group in the US, accounting for 19% of the population. Today, Hispanic children face higher rates of adverse childhood experiences than their non-Hispanic peers, such as poverty or lack of access to pre-k education. As we fight the barriers and stereotypes associated with Hispanic people in our country, it is important to remember America's roots. When President Joe Biden announced the month in 2022, he said, "National Hispanic Heritage Month is an important reminder of how much strength we draw as a Nation from our immigrant roots and our values as a Nation of immigrants." This month, we invite you to listen to the voices of the Hispanic-Latino community, value diversity, and see the human in everyone. From everyone here at the ECMHC, here's to a wonderful Hispanic Heritage Month!



"Hispanic Heritage Month is an important reminder of how much strength we draw as a Nation from our immigrant roots and our values as a Nation of immigrants."

- PRESIDENT JOSEPH R. BIDEN



JUDY Center Community Baby Shower

BY MADDY PARLER

This September, the JUDY Center held its 5th annual Community Baby Shower at Somerset Technical School in Princess Anne, MD. While a private baby shower is held to celebrate one new mother and give gifts, the purpose of a community baby shower is to attract younger, lower-income women from the community and celebrate the latest additions to their families. Through the program, the mothers are connected with budget-friendly services that could help them and their children. This year, this included the MD Health Department, which provided cheap, easy, and healthy snack recipes. Specific services also attended, such as the MD Music Therapy Group, which helps children heal from trauma or developmental issues using the magic of music. There was even a table dedicated to providing monthly free books for children ages birth to five, which aims to increase literacy in the community. The event provided lunch for the mothers and their guests, who participated in bingo, trivia, photoshoots, and door prize raffles.



PICTURED: NEW ECMHC INTERNS EMMA WATKINS & MADDY PARLER AT THE JUDY CENTER BABY SHOWER

The Lower Shore EMHC team was invited to join the event and was represented by the ECMHC's newest interns, Maddy Parler and Emma Watkins. When asked about her experience, Parler said, "It was so nice to get out of the office and connect with new parents in the community. We had a lot of people coming up and telling us that they had a child or knew a child that could use our help." The ECMHC table and the interns also offered muffins for the new mothers and candy for the younger attendants, which served to attract a lot of people to look at the information that was offered. Watkins and Parler took the time to explain to mothers that the ECMHC works with children from the ages of birth to five that seem to have behavioral or mental health issues, whether these issues occur in the home or in the early learning classroom. They went on to say that the program helps the caregivers of the child develop strategies to support the challenges that the children may face, and reduce the stress of everyone involved. As Watkins said, "We're here to help and we love the work that we do!"

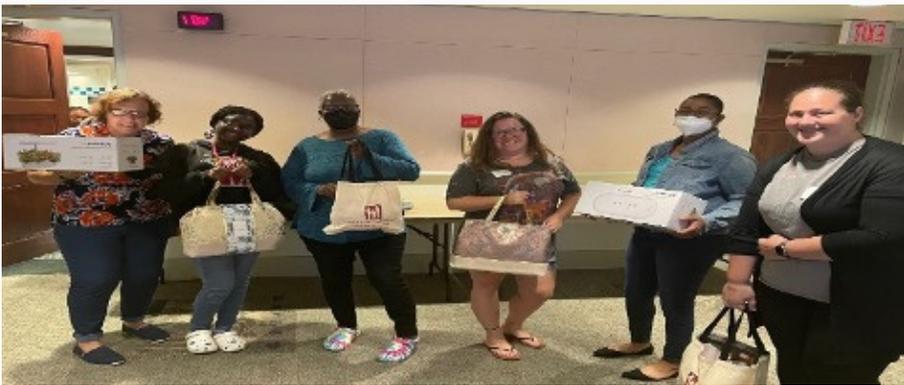




Finding Joy and Creating Calm: An ECMHC Training Imperative

BY JANELLE PARKER

The Lower Shore Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program (ECMHC) sponsored training for early childhood professionals focused on Finding Joy and Creating Calm on Saturday, September 17, 2022. The event was a collaborative effort between ECMH and the Eastern Shore Childcare Resource Center. This event was made possible with funding from the Maryland State Department of Education.



Latrice Gray, LCSW-C, RPT of Creative Space Child Therapy, LLC presented the causes of stress in young children as well as the benefits of relaxation and coping skills. Participants had the opportunity to engage in a hands-on activity using sand and other arts and crafts materials to depict a scene that reminded them of the feelings of joy and calm. Kirsten Rhodes, M. Ed. Teaching Strategies presented on the Stress Cycle, ways to combat burnout, and the benefits of mindfulness practices.

The event concluded with prize giveaways! The prizes coincided with the event's theme (Finding Joy and Creating Calm) and ranged from spa kits to indoor hydroponic garden systems. We look forward to hosting the second offering of this training in 2023!



A ECMHC PROFESSIONAL PRESENTS A POWERPOINT ON "CREATING A STRESS-FREE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN"

PARTICIPANTS DREW SCENES THAT REMINDED THEM OF "JOY" AND "CALM" IN SAND





Pemberton Elementary School Summer Social-Emotional Program



BY CHLOE BIRCH

During the summer of 2022, the Lower Shore Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program partnered with the Wicomico JUDY Center to provide social-emotional literacy support to selected preschoolers and kindergarteners enrolled in Pemberton Elementary's summer program. An intern consultant led 12 groups over 3 weeks, guiding the children in identifying feelings, managing behaviors, and practicing empathy.

The groups were divided by age, with one pre-k3 group of 10, two pre-k4 groups of 7, and three kindergarten groups of 12. The ECMHC Program also created 70 calm-down kits - One for each classroom and child enrolled in the summer program. The calm-down kits consisted of sensory-stimulating toys, different textured fabrics, bubble wrap, and manipulative toys.

The purpose of a calm-down kit is that when a child feels an overwhelming emotion, they can choose an item from the kit to help manage and regulate that emotion. The partnership between ECMHC and The JUDY Center was successful in teaching the children the target social-emotional skills, and the children benefitted from the evidence-based practices that were introduced.





Fall Lunch Inspiration

BY EMMA WATKINS

Adding some visual flair to food can make a snack go from tempting to irresistible! These rabbit-themed apple slices are a great way to celebrate the season.

Instructions:

1. Prepare the apple by cutting it into wedges.
2. Use a knife to cut a V-shape into the skin of the apple. The top points of the V should align with the middle of the apple wedge. Don't cut too deep!
3. Carefully cut away the skin to create the rabbit ears. This can be done by placing the apple skin-down on the counter and sliding the knife along the bottom of the wedge. Be sure not to remove the entire skin!
4. (Optional) Push chocolate chips into the sides of the wedge to give your apple bunnies some eyes.



BUNNY APPLE SLICES

YOU WILL NEED:

- An Apple
- A Knife
- Chocolate Chips (Optional)



GRANOLA BARS

YOU WILL NEED:

- Rolled Oats
- Nuts, Seeds, Dried Fruits, and/or Chocolate
- Honey
- Nut Butter
- Salt
- Butter
- Baking Paper



These granola bars can be a fun fall activity for you and your kids. Plus, they're customizable! The nuts, fruits, spices, seeds, and sweets you include are up to you.

Instructions:

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F
2. Toast 2 Cups of rolled oats for 12-15 minutes.
3. Chop your favorite dried fruits & nuts into small pieces. About 2 cups worth is recommended.
4. Heat 1/3 Cup of honey, 1/4 Cup of a nut butter of your choice, & a Pinch of salt in a saucepan on medium heat, stirring to combine.
5. Add the oats, nuts/fruits/chocolate/seeds, & nut butter mixture to a bowl & mix well.
6. Line a brownie pan with baking paper & spread the granola mix evenly across the pan.
7. Freeze the granola for at least 20 minutes.
8. Remove the granola from the pan & cut into bars.



The Referral Process @ECMHC

The ECMHC Program offers FREE intervention services for children who struggle with mental and behavioral issues, such as acting out, not responding to directions, separation anxiety, aggression, hyperactivity, or difficulty getting along with peers.

What would our service look like for you?

HOW IT WORKS:

1. Tell us a little bit about yourself and your child. Explain the difficulties/concerns you have with your child's behavior.
2. Schedule a visitation with us. We will observe your child's behavior in their daily life and ask questions.
3. Help us gather more information by completing questionnaires. We will assist you if needed.
4. We will discuss our ideas with you and work together on strategies to redirect your child's behavior.
5. You work together with your child to use the suggested strategies. These could include changes to routines or the classroom, the introduction of regulatory items, or other strategies.
6. We will check in on your progress and make changes as needed. Tell us what worked and what didn't. We can connect you with other resources if your child needs them.

Contact Us!

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