

WHAT'S UP?

JCCDC Newsletter for Parents, Providers, Community Partners & Staff

A Note from the Director

Tena Sales



If you're looking for some fun and free activities to do with your kids this summer, check out your local library's events calendar. Libraries often switch things up during the summer months, so take a class, attend a seminar, or score some deals on used books. While activities will vary by library, here are some you can hope to find.

1. Summer Reading Programs -Most libraries have a summer program to keep kids reading while they're not in school and give them a goal to work toward. The Birmingham Public Library gives out reading logs for kids to fill out over the course of the summer, then return for a free book. They also have book clubs and discussion groups for older children and teens. Each summer reading program is a little different, so check with your local library and see what they have to offer.

2. Book Sales - Libraries take their excess inventory from donations, old books, and bestsellers that are no longer in high demand and have a massive book sale each summer. This is the perfect opportunity to pick up some great reads at a fraction of the retail price. Besides bagging some amazing deals on used books, you'll also be supporting the library. Your money goes toward funding programs and future book purchases.

3. Craft Fairs - Many libraries have started hosting craft fairs in the summer where local artists and crafters can set up a booth with their wares. Take the kids along for a fun family outing of perusing stalls and enjoying the local talent. You may even find that one-of-a-kind item you didn't know you needed.

JULY

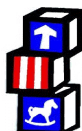
7/4 Independence Day
7/7 Tell the Truth Day
7/16 National Hot Dog Day
7/30 Share a Hug Day

AUGUST

8/4 National Friendship Day
8/17 National Non-Profit Day
8/19 World Humanitarian Day
8/24 Kobe Bryant Day



7/21 Zakeeya Miller, Provider
7/25 Melanie Washington, Ed Specialist
8/3 Dr. Earlene Reynolds, ED
8/26 Tena Sales, HS/EHS Director



Kid-Friendly No-Oven Summer Dinners

Submitted by Stella Baskin, Nutrition Coordinator

What do you make when it's just too hot to cook? Here's a list of No-Oven Summer Dinners for you! These meal ideas are quick, easy, kid-friendly, and, most importantly, won't heat up the whole house.

Snack and Sandwich Variations:



1. “Snack Dinner” or Kid-Cuterie: Forage through your fridge and find a variety of things to put together. Hummus or ranch dip with fresh veggies, slice up whatever fruit you have, then add some proteins like cheeses, deli meat, pepperoni, leftover cooked chicken...nothing is off limits. Add some crunchy crackers, pretzels, and some treats like cookies too. Arrange everything casually on a large cutting board or platter then dig in. It's a great way to use up and enjoy whatever you have on hand!

2. DIY Sandwich or Panini Station: Grab a few selections of sliced bread or rolls and your favorite fillings then let kids and adults assemble their own. If you have a sandwich press, plug that in and help kids make their own paninis. Some ideas: tomato and fresh mozzarella, Italian meats with provolone cheese, and the classic grilled American cheese and ham are some of our favorites. Serve some fresh fruit and crunchy veggies with dip to round out the meal.

3. Pita Pockets or Wraps: Another variation on a sandwich, pita bread (or a large tortilla) can be a great vehicle for lots of flavorful fillings. You can use hummus, cooked chicken like my [Slow Cooker Lemon Garlic Chicken](#), or whatever you like. For a Greek-inspired meal, put out some chopped romaine lettuce, tomato, cucumber, crumbled feta, olives, and tzatziki sauce. Everyone can make their own pita or wrap however they like it.

Kid-Friendly Summer Dinners Salads:

1. **Salad Bar/Deconstructed Salads:** I know salads don't seem “kid friendly” at first. However, you can really adjust salad dinners to everyone in the family's taste. The key is to have lots of choices and keep things deconstructed. That way everyone can create a plate they enjoy. One of our favorite summer salads is this Grilled Chicken Cobb Salad with Strawberry Dressing. If you don't want to stand by a hot grill, you can totally buy cooked chicken at the grocery store. You can also grab some other proteins and toppings at the store like hard boiled eggs, bacon, prepped veggies, and croutons or some nice bread to serve along side.



2. **Simple Pasta Dishes:** Pasta salad is a summer staple. However, pasta salad can get a little boring. Some things to keep it interesting: prepared pesto, try filled pastas like tortellini or ravioli, add quick proteins like canned tuna or hard boiled eggs. Have kids help make this fun Rainbow Pasta Salad to use up any veggies you have in the fridge.



This homemade playdough is **soft, takes 5 minutes to make**, doesn't stain little hands, and uses common ingredients you probably already have.

To make a simple 3-ingredient playdough, you'll need 1 cup of flour, 1/2 cup of salt, and 1/2 cup of water. You can add food coloring to the water before mixing for colored playdough.

Here's how to make it:

1. **Combine the dry ingredients:** In a bowl, mix together the flour and salt.
2. **Add the wet ingredients:** Gradually add the water to the dry ingredients, mixing as you go.
3. **Knead the dough:** Once the mixture starts to come together, knead it with your hands until it forms a smooth, pliable dough.
4. **Add more water or flour if needed:** If the dough is too dry, add a little more water; if it's too sticky, add a little more flour.
5. **Play and enjoy!** Your 3-ingredient playdough is ready to use.



Established in 2006, **Black Family Month** celebrates families and their enrichment through education, health, and self-improvement. **Shaun McLaughlin** founded this celebration after observing how families spent more time together in July attending family-related events.

We know it can be difficult to reconnect with the family sometimes, but studies show that spending time with family can improve communication, promote respect and mutual appreciation, and build confidence and self-esteem.

The black family has been a topic of study in many disciplines—history, literature, the visual arts and film studies, sociology, anthropology, and social policy. Its representation, identity, and diversity have been revered, stereotyped, and vilified from the days of slavery to our own time.

The black family knows no single location since family reunions and genetic ancestry searches testify to the spread of family members across states, nations, and continents. Not only are individual black families diasporic, but Africa and the diaspora itself have been long portrayed as the black family at large.

While the role of the black family has been described by some as a microcosm of the entire race, its complexity as the "*foundation*" of African American life and history can be seen in numerous debates over how to represent its meaning and typicality from a historical perspective—as slave or free, as patriarchal or matriarchal/matrifocal, as single-headed or dual-headed household, as extended or nuclear, as fictive kin or blood lineage, as legal or common law, and as black or interracial, etc.

Variation appears, as well, in discussions on the nature and impact of parenting, childhood, marriage, gender norms, sexuality, and Incarceration.

The family offers a rich tapestry of images for exploring the African American past and present.

HEY PROVIDERS,



Professional Development Training

will be held

**Monday, July 7, 2025
thru Friday, July 11, 2025**
at

Huffman High School

950 Springville Road
Birmingham, AL 35215

In the Media Center



July is [Social Wellness Month](#), a time to celebrate the virtues of social support and increase national awareness surrounding the long-term benefits of social interaction.

Social wellness means nurturing your mind, body and relationships. It can be defined in many ways and encompass different qualities depending on the individual. For some, social wellness may mean cultivating relationships with themselves or with others. For others, it may entail both providing and receiving social support.

Practicing social wellness can be emotional, physical or informational. However you do it, the practice can enhance quality of life for those on both the giving and receiving ends. Developing positive social habits and a [social wellness toolkit](#) can ultimately help you stay healthier mentally, physically and emotionally.

Several studies have found that individuals with a strong social network live longer lives, cope better with stress and maintain good health. A foundational 1905 study by Dr. Joseph Pratt on the effects of support groups on tuberculosis patients established that psychological support has a profound impact on physical health and well-being.

Positive relationships with our selves and with others are vital to everyone's lives. And there are many ways to initiate and nurture them, whether by starting a new hobby, taking a class, joining a club, starting a new routine, volunteering or spending quality time with friends and family.



TAX-FREE WEEKEND

In Alabama, the back-to-school sales tax holiday for 2025 will be held from July 18-20.

During this period, certain items like clothing under \$100, school supplies, books under \$30, and computers/software under \$750 will be exempt from sales tax.

Alabama's 2025 Sales Tax Holiday:
Dates: July 18-20, 2025.

Eligible Items:

Clothing under \$100, School supplies.
Books under \$30, Computers and software under \$750.

Ineligible Items:

Jewelry, protective equipment, sports equipment, and video games

Online Purchases:

Qualifying online purchases must be paid for and delivered during the holiday.



July is National Make a Difference to Children Month. Looking back on your childhood, try to remember who made a positive difference in your life. Can you be a person that will make a positive difference to today's children? Of course, you can! As early childcare educators, you have amazing opportunities to make these positive differences every day with the children in your classrooms. Along with offering these positive differences, you can also support and create learning opportunities for children to make a

difference in their world.

Four ways to offer these learning opportunities to children in your classrooms include:

1. Practicing kindness:

Acts of kindness can increase one's sense of control, happiness, and optimism. Additionally, these acts could inspire others to carry out the kind deeds they themselves have performed, building a better classroom community.

- Create "kindness cards" or decorate "kindness rocks" to hide in fun places.
- Read books about kindness such as *Be Kind* by Pat Zietlow Miller or watch educational videos such as ***Color Your World with Kindness***.
- Record children's acts of kindness daily by using a classroom kindness tracker.

2. Planting a garden:

With the summer weather here, what a great time to plant a garden to help teach children the importance of the earth and learn to appreciate the environment.

- Find a space: even if you do not have a yard, there are countless options you can use around your classroom.
- Decide what kind of garden you would like to plant. Sunflowers or cherry tomatoes are easy summer plants to grow!

3. Showing gratitude:

Gratitude helps others experience more positive emotions, improved health, and build strong relationships.

- Try including moments of gratitude into circle time to discuss what the children are grateful for.
- Join children in a gratitude scavenger hunt and allow them to search for things they are grateful for.

4. Volunteering:

Help children find their voices by sharing some of the social and environmental issues that impact our world. Then, allow children to volunteer in projects in your communities that can help solve these issues. Here are some other ways to get children involved:

- Volunteer at local animal shelters or nursing homes.
- Write and send letters to local community workers.
- Start a donation drive to be delivered to local shelters.

Enjoy this summer making a lasting difference in children's lives and allowing them to make a positive impact in the world!



For a kindergarten student starting school, focus on easing the transition with familiar routines, positive encouragement, and fun activities. Prepare for the first day by gathering necessary supplies, discussing the new experience, and practicing getting ready in the mornings. Activities like memory books, crafts, or reading books about starting school can also help build excitement and ease anxiety.

Preparing for the First Day:

- **Gather supplies:** Pencils, crayons, a pencil case, and other essentials like a backpack and lunchbox.
- **Practice the routine:** Get up, get dressed, eat breakfast, and practice walking or driving to school.
- **Talk about school:** Read books about starting school, discuss what will happen, and focus on the positive aspects of making new friends and learning new things.
- **Visit the school:** If possible, visit the school beforehand, especially the playground, to help familiarize the child with the environment.
- **Positive reinforcement:** Offer encouraging words and praise for their bravery and excitement about starting school.

Back to School Activities for Kindergarten:

- **Memory Book:** Create a memory book to document their first week, including drawings of their teacher, classmates, and favorite activities.
- **Crafts:** Engage in simple crafts like a pencil name craft, where they can practice letter recognition and fine motor skills.
- **Read Alouds:** Enjoy back-to-school themed books like "Froggy Goes to School" or "Going to School".
- **Playdates:** Arrange playdates with classmates or neighborhood children to foster friendships.

Tips for the First Week:

- **Be patient and understanding:** The first week can be overwhelming, so offer extra patience and support.
- **Maintain a positive attitude:** A positive attitude from parents can help ease the child's anxiety.
- **Establish a consistent routine:** Having a predictable schedule can help the child feel secure and comfortable.
- **Stay involved:** Attend school events and communicate with the teacher to stay informed about the child's progress and well-being.