Erie County Continues to Struggle with Cost of Care; CCRN Looks to Community for Advocates

By Courtney Gfroerer, Marketing and Community Impact Specialist

By now, it's no surprise to everyone in Western New York that child care is expensive—really expensive.

In Erie County, the cost of child care for one child per year is more expensive than the cost of state college tuition for one student per year. That's a lot of money (around $12,000 for an infant, in fact).

When we think of college, we think of big loans; of saving in bank accounts for our children since before they were born. But what about child care? There aren't loans available, and while college is a choice, child care is not. Most parents depend on accessible, affordable, reliable child care to go to work each day. It isn't a luxury, but rather a necessity for our economy to continue to thrive in Buffalo.

As of April 1, 2016, Erie County has stopped dispensing child care assistance to new families. There is currently a wait list with over 200 families.

The beginning of October did bring some new, much needed funding, however: Workforce Development Institute arrived in Erie County for the first time ever to dispense Facilitated Enrollment dollars. This small pot of money can serve anyone all the way up to 275% of the poverty limit. To give you an idea, that is about the equivalent of a single mother with one child making around $44,000 each year.

While this new pot of money has been able to serve families again, we're not sure how long it will last; this program is only a pilot program.

We've been in meetings with several local legislators, chamber of commerces, taskforce groups, and new initiatives to make sure Western New York is represented around the state. This past September, CCRN staff members went to meetings in New York City to discuss the effects of the high cost of child care. We heard from desperate parents, broken child care providers, and people who have lost their jobs just because they couldn't afford care.

We attended roundtable discussions and press conferences...
Child Care Resource Network’s

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Meet Our New Staff Members

Abby Brown, Registration Specialist

Q: What did you do prior to CCRN?
A: “Prior to CCRN, I worked at a different Child Care Resource and Referral agency as a Legally Exempt Enrollment Specialist in Rochester. While there I enrolled and provided technical assistance to Legally Exempt Providers in Monroe, Livingston, and Wayne County.”

Q: What do you enjoy most about working in an organization that interacts with children, families and child care providers?
A: “I enjoy working in an organization that interacts with children, families, and child care providers because each day is different and I am constantly learning new and exciting things.”

Q: What is the most rewarding part of your job?
A: “I think the most rewarding part of my job will be seeing child care providers open and sustain their own business while providing quality care to children in the community.”

Q: Who is your biggest influence?
A: “My biggest influence is my father in the way that he has provided support and encouragement every step of the way.”

Karen Kopacz, Director of CACFP

Q: What did you do prior to CCRN?
A: “Prior to both tenures at CCRN I worked in retail management. My first go-around at CCRN was as a CACFP Specialist, followed by the Infant Toddler Supervisor for WNY ITRN.”

Q: What drew you towards working at a non-profit organization?
A: “Working for a non-profit allows for the opportunity to fulfill my need to work for a place where work is meaningful and has purpose. Working with people who are passionate about the same causes I am and motivated to support those in need is certainly a great environment to surround myself with.”

Q: What do you enjoy most about working in an organization that interacts with children, families and child care providers?
A: “Supporting children and families around quality early child care and education. Working in the CACFP department allows me to focus on the nutrition and health of children at an early age, which is such an important topic in today’s society.”

Q: What is the most rewarding part of your job?
A: “The most rewarding part of my job is knowing children who attend child care programs participating in CACFP are receiving healthy and nutritious meals during their time away from family.”
Advocates, continued from Page 1

with Senator Tim Kennedy and Senator Jeffrey Kline, urging them to advocate for more child care funding.

Now we’re asking for your help. Are you a child care provider who has lost children in your program because their parents couldn’t afford care? Has it been a struggle to continue to run your business because of the high cost of new regulations?

Are you a parent who is struggling to make ends meet, just because of child care? Do you depend on it every day to go to work and make money?

We need your help, WNY. Connect with us to stay up-to-date on the latest advocacy announcements and opportunities to get involved and make your voice heard.

To become an active member in Western New York advocacy, e-mail outreach@wnychildren.org to get signed up for updates and news. It’s up to us to change the outcome of our children’s future.

Polaroid: Child care providers from all over WNY participated in an Advocacy Bootcamp in November.

Meet Our New Staff Members, continued

Jennifer Groff, Director of Finance

Q: What did you do prior to CCRN?
A: “Prior to Child Care Resource Network I was the Financial Coordinator at Horizon Health Services, the Assistant Fiscal Director at Alcohol and Drug Dependency Services, and Accountant at Genesee County ARC.”

Q: What drew you towards working at a non-profit agency?
A: “I love working for a good cause and helping people!”

Q: What children do you interact with? What activities do you do together?
A: “I have three grown children: Mark, 25, Samantha, 24, and Daniel, 20, and two grown step-children: Kimberly, 26, and Nick, 24. I also have a five-year-old grandson, Korbin. Korbin and I play games together and when weather permits, spend lots of time doing different outdoor activities.”

Q: Who is your biggest influence?
A: “Personally, my family. Professional, my biggest influence is my former boss, Carl Baj from ADDS.”

Jodi Schwegler, Director of Community Impact

Q: What did you do prior to CCRN?
A: “Prior to CCRN I worked in a variety of settings, but the common thread to my experiences has always been serving children and their families. I was toddler and school-age teacher in a child care center; I worked as a Child Life Specialist teaching children about their bodies and illness in hospital setting; I served as the Director of Children and Youth Services at Epilepsy Toronto; and most recently I was the Outreach Coordinator for Help Me Grow Western New York. But I would have to say that my most important role before coming on board at Child Care Resource Network was being a stay at home mom with my children for almost 2 years.”

Q: What children do you interact with? What activities do you do together?
A: “I have two children, Luke an inquisitive 3 year old and Maggie, a busy little 1 year old, who keep me on my toes. Some of our favorite activities are taking walks around our neighborhood, reading stories, and coming up with silly songs and games on the go. Every moment can be a learning experience for my children and watching their faces as they experience the world around them never ceases to amaze me.”

Q: What do you enjoy most about working in an organization that interacts with children, families, and child care providers?
A: “Child Care is such a vital and important but often overlooked part of our society. Being able to work so closely with engaged childcare providers who are shaping our children’s lives is so motivating and inspiring.”
Gifts for the Developing Child
By Linnea Harris, Legally Exempt Enrollment Specialist

The holidays will be here before you know it, and soon you will be anxiously trying to get everyone a gift. It can be difficult to find that special gift for children since you have so many toys to choose from. Most people just buy what they think the child would like based on popularity and demand, but buying a toy might be more important than you think.

Toys are not just made to keep the children happy and occupied; they each serve a specific and vital role in children’s development and well being. As children grow they are able to learn and process different things based on the development of their brain and nervous system. It’s important to know how a child’s brain develops and what toys are perfect for that stage.

**Ages 0-2 Years**
According to the famous psychologist Jean Piaget, children develop in stages where they are able to process things differently, which causes them to gain a more in-depth view of life and society. Piaget calls the first stage of development the sensorimotor stage and this stage starts from newborn to age 2. At this stage they are aware of their senses causing them to be receptive of bright colors, sounds, taste and the way things feel. They are learning to use their hands at this time and have a great grip, especially when they take their tiny hands and clasp on to your finger. Throughout this stage they learn to gain more control of their body and are able to sit up, crawl and then they eventually can stand on their own. Some great toys would be push pull toys that help them master the skill of walking. Children also love to play in the water so purchasing bathtub toys would aid in teaching them about the dynamics of water; for example buoyancy and filling objects with water as well as pouring them out.

**Ages 2-7 Years**
The next chapter in their development is called the pre-operational stage, which is defined as the development and use of mental images, symbols and language. This is the age where they can absorb the most information. A toddler’s brain is twice as dense as adults, because their brains have not pruned out all the synaptic connections that are considered unnecessary. At this stage children are very self centered and can not see things from someone else’s perspective. They are very active at this stage and love to run, jump and climb. A tricycle would be an excellent gift, as well as ride on toys, for example a play car or anything to keep them physically active. It’s important to also teach them at this stage the importance of thinking of things from a different perspective and being compassionate to others possibly through play interaction with dolls or even giving them books that teach them about empathy and being aware of different cultures.

**Ages 7-11 Years**
Children between the ages of 7 to 11 have reached the concrete operational stage, which is the stage that children begin to think logically, but can only understand about what happens in the present. Some great gifts at this stage would be puzzles, board games, anything that allows them to use their problem solving skills. Science kits and other things that allow them use their imagination is very important at this stage. Their language skills are much better as well and they can now read their own books.

**Ages 11-15 Years**
The final stage in Piaget’s theory is called the formal operational stage, which is the stage that they can think abstractly, and think of hypothetical situations for the consequences of theirs or others actions. This is the artistic stage, so let them see what artistic abilities they have. Some great gifts would be a camera, paint set, crafts or anything that allows them to develop a hobby for themselves so that they can express themselves through a different outlet.

I hope this information will help you when you go to buy that special someone their present, knowing that you are helping them develop into a healthy, happy and well rounded individual. Have fun shopping, and enjoy the holidays.

If you’re wondering why no one has called you to fill the empty spots in your program, learn what you can do to get more referrals.

By Christen Balistreri, Parent and Employer Services Specialist

Does it seem like you haven’t had any phone calls from parents looking for child care? Sometimes it seems like no one is ever calling to ask if you have openings in your child care program, even when you have times and days open for more children. If these sound like questions that you have been asking yourself, it might be that your information in our database is out of date or not relevant to your program anymore.

Child Care Resource Network gives out referrals to anyone who is looking for child care based on an area that they live in or an address that they provide to us - for example, their home or where they work. There are several questions that we ask the parent about what they are looking for: Do they need transportation? What days and hours are they looking for care? Does the child care provider need to be able to administer medicine? Does the child have any special needs? These questions, along with several others, are collected and then compared against our database of child care providers.

The information on child care providers in our database comes from what the provider gives us. Child Care Resource Network does not recommend any specific daycares or programs, but provides parents with the address, name, phone number and a detailed sheet of what days, hours and other information that is in the database for each provider. An information packet is also provided with the referral about, choosing a child care, questions to ask a provider, making child care affordable, community resources and a guide for a child care plan.

If you are wondering what information is in our database about your program, or have made changes to your program recently that you’d like reflected in our database, you can update the information. Call our Parent and Employer Services department and speak with Christen.

Our goal at Child Care Resource Network is to provide parents, caregivers, families, and the community with the most accurate and up to date information about our child care providers. We want you to be successful in providing high-quality care to all families.

For more information or to update your information in our database please contact Christen Balistreri at:

Child Care Resource Network
1000 Hertel Ave
Buffalo, NY 14216
Phone: 716-877-6666 ext. 3079
Fax: 716-332-2454
Cbalistreri@wnychildren.org
Do you wish the babies in your care could tell you what they need from you before they are reduced to screaming and crying? Do you love seeing a baby’s face light up when she realizes that you understand what she is trying to communicate? If so, you may want to try some simple baby sign language.

Teaching babies how to communicate with their hands before they are able to speak clearly can cut down on frustration for everyone. Most babies are physically able to sign their needs before they can verbalize. They just need a caregiver to teach them how.

There are many resources for learning baby sign language available on the internet. You will find some listed in the resources section below. All of them agree that it is best to begin with a few simple signs. In quality child care settings, there are consistent routines that babies can count on. These are perfect opportunities to begin introducing some signs. We have listed some suggestions for you.

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<tr>
<th>During greeting and departing, try the signs for “mom” and “dad”. (1)</th>
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<td><img src="https://example.com/mom_dad_signs.png" alt="Signs for “mom” and “dad”" /></td>
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<th>During meals, try the signs for “more” and “drink”. (1)</th>
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<td><img src="https://example.com/more_drink_signs.png" alt="Signs for “more” and “drink”" /></td>
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<th>While settling down for a nap, try the sign for “sleep”. (2)</th>
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<th>To tell a baby that it is time to change his diaper, try the sign for “diaper”. (2)</th>
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<tr>
<td><img src="https://example.com/diaper_sign.png" alt="Signs for “diaper”" /></td>
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Resources:
1. [https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/fammed-modules/parenting/sign-with-your-baby](https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/fammed-modules/parenting/sign-with-your-baby)
2. [www.babysignlanguage.com](http://www.babysignlanguage.com)
Gift buying, family visits, food shopping, decorating...all of these things can lay heavy on people's minds as the holiday season approaches and affect the care we provide to the children in our care.

Everyone feels the pressure, both at home and at work. Child care professionals are no different. Here are a few simple tips to help keep your staff happy and motivated through the holiday season.

**Be Flexible**
Understand that your staff will want to use their paid time off. Be proactive and announce the time off request deadlines ahead of time to accommodate everyone as best as possible. If a person asks to leave a couple hours early to attend a child's holiday performance or to spend some valuable time with family and you can accommodate it, let them go. This little gesture will go a long way.

**Personalize It**
Buying the same gift for everyone on staff can make everyone feel equal, but make sure you personalize something for each person also. A little note attached to the gift thanking them for something they brought to your team makes it more special.

Don't have the budget to get a gift for each person? A personalized note of thanks and recognition goes a long way.

**Come Together**
Celebrate each other with a pot luck lunch on work time, or a lunch you purchase. Celebrate and let the staff enjoy.

**Give Back**
The holiday season is also a great one to give back to the community. Find a cause close to their hearts and do a drive for food, blankets, mittens, etc. Or go into the community and volunteer to feed the homeless. Many local organizations need extra hands during the holiday season. Survey your staff for ideas.

**Set an Example**
The holidays are stressful and distracting for everyone. When you set the example and not let the distractions get in the way of your work, everyone will be more likely to keep working at a good pace.

You may also need to provide the materials they need to make this holiday season successful. Teachers that receive the items they need to complete the projects for their classroom will be more motivated and have less stress.

As always, remember that we work with children. Take time for yourself to keep stress levels lower; when your stress level is lower, the children will benefit.

By Kathy Kiblin, Education & Training Specialist
Cooking with CACFP Guidelines: Holiday Edition

By Maria Navarro, CACFP Specialist

On Christmas in Puerto Rico we dance, sing, and eat a lot, but most importantly we spend time with family and friends. We start celebrating before Thanksgiving and we finish around mid-January. Our traditions start with get-togethers where we go house to house playing and singing traditional music and dance for our holidays celebration.

Our big day of celebration is Three Kings Day when all the children cut green grass and put it under their bed on January 5 for the Three Kings, and January 6 when they find the gifts under the beds.

In Puerto Rico for Christmas we eat a lot of food like roast pork, Spanish rice, soups, Spanish roots, and, most importantly, our traditional sweets such as sweet rice with coconut and more. A lot of people travel to Puerto Rico to be with their families during the holidays.

These traditional beef empenadas are a dish we make and eat not just during Christmas, but for all holiday gatherings and party’s.

**Ingredients:**

- 1/2 lb. ground beef, 90/10
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tbsp. Goya Sofrito
- 1 packet Goya Sazon con Culantro y Achiote
- 1/4 cup tomato sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 onion, diced
- 1/8 tsp. black pepper
- 1/8 tsp. oregano
- 6 stuffed olives, diced
- 1 package frozen turnover dough
- Oil for frying (optional)

**Directions:**

In a skillet, heat oil on medium. Stir in beef and cook until browned. Stir in remaining ingredients, except for the dough. Lower heat and simmer for 15 minutes or until mixture thickens. Roll dough out into 1/2 inch or larger discs. Spoon about 1 tbsp. of the meat mixture into the middle and fold over; moisten edges and seal with a fork. Heat 2-3 inches of oil in a deep sauce pan on medium. Cook empanadas in batches, turning to brown both sides. Drain on paper towels. For a healthier option, bake in the oven at 375 degrees Fahrenheit for 10-15 minutes, or until golden brown.

**Make it again:**

For a different twist, try using other ingredients, such as chicken, turkey, shrimp, or cheese.

*Image: https://flic.kr/p/7TgMqz*
Back It Up: Keeping your Documents Safe

By Carrie Truesdell, Information Specialist

As computers continue to be used increasingly in child care programs for record keeping, marketing, and program planning, it's important to remember one thing: they crash. And recovering your files, pictures, music, and other information from a failed hard drive is not always possible.

What should I back up?
You should regularly be backing up all your personal files. Programs and apps can be reinstalled, but your personal files can't be recovered if they're wiped from your computer. To decide how much storage space you'll need for your personal files, right click on your My Documents/Documents file and click on “Properties.” The size of the file should be in the pop-up. Though it's not a necessity, you can also back up your operating system. The easiest way is to create a restore point. Use your computer's Help button to get instructions. You should also keep a list of what programs you have installed on your computer; especially if you purchased a program that has a key code. If your computer crashes, you'll need the key to re-install the program or you may have to pay for it again.

What is the best way for me to back up my computer?
USB Drive: USB drives are also called “flash” or “thumb” drives – small drives of varying sizes that can hold your files, folders, pictures, and more. Depending on what you want to back up, you can get a medium size flash drive for as under $30. Insert the drive into one of your computer's USB ports, copy all your documents, and paste them into the drive. After you've done this once, when you copy and paste your documents again, you'll be prompted that the files already exist. You'll want to over-write the old files to save any changes you've made. Remember that your back up is only as good as you are – copy and paste your files often so that changes and new files are always on the back up. Use this option if: you're looking for something cheap and you don't mind regularly moving your files over.

Cloud storage: Many companies like Apple and Microsoft offer cloud storage, both free (usually for limited sizes) or for a fee. Software can be installed on your computer to make backing up your files even easier. You can use your cloud drive in the same way you can use a USB drive, uploading your files rather than transferring them. Note: you'll need to be connected to the internet to be able to upload your files. As a bonus, you can log in to your cloud service from any internet-connected computer, and many smartphones, so you can get your files anywhere. In addition, check into any software that you're using. Software like MinuteMenu™ will automatically back up your information when you save it, giving you one less thing to worry about! Use this option if you aren't going to need a lot of space and/or you don't mind paying a small fee and you want to be able to access your files from any internet-connected computer.

External hard drive: External hard drives can be set to back up your computer as soon as they're attached. In Windows 8 and 10, use File History to set up an automatic back up. In Windows 7, you can use Windows Back up. For Macs, Time Machine will allow you to set this up. Use a reminder or alarm to regularly connect the external hard drive to your computer, or leave your external hard drive attached to the computer and your back up program will run automatically. Use this option if: you don't mind spending a little more so that you don't have to remember to keep backing up your documents and/or your computer isn't usually connected to the internet.

Back up service: Companies like Carbonite® offer back up services for various amounts, depending on the size of the computer and how much you want to back up. After paying the fee, you can download a program and set up your account. Generally, back up services will back up your computer daily, or as often as your computer is connected to the internet. Like cloud storage, using a back-up service is generally dependent on internet access. Use this service if: you don’t mind spending a little more so that you don’t have to remember to keep backing up your documents, your computer is usually connected to the internet, and/or you want to make sure your programs are back up along with your files.

Whichever back up you choose, it's important to remember to not only keep up with the process, but also to occasionally check to make sure your files are being backed up properly. When the inevitable strikes, you'll be ready to put all your files back on a new or restored computer!
Tommy McClam was the Keynote Speaker for our Annual Conference, Growing the Future. Tommy is the Deputy Director for Open Buffalo and Associate Pastor at Edison Street Community Church. He presented two sessions: “Children Today, Leaders Tomorrow” and “Thriving Children in a Growing Community.”

Lori E. Miller, Owner of Developing Professionals, presents a training titled, “Maximizing Performance Through Effective Team Building.”

Jill Boeck from QUALITYstarsNY talks with participants at the session “Early Learning Guidelines: A Resource to Support Play in Your Program.”

Attendees discuss their findings during a training session on Day 2 of the Annual Conference, Growing the Future.
Kate Dust, M.S.Ed., of EduKids, Inc., addresses a large crowd of child care directors and owners as the Featured Lunchtime Keynote Speaker.

JoAnna Rozier-Johnson, Founder of JoRo Organizing, addresses a breakout session of participants to talk about workplace relationships.

Elizabeth McClam from the U.S. DoH and Urban Development holds a True Colors Session.

Dr. Kathy Doody of Buffalo State presents to a full room on behavior.

David Collins from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Buffalo presents on challenging behaviors.

Kate Dust, M.S.Ed., of EduKids, Inc., addresses a large crowd of child care directors and owners as the Featured Lunchtime Keynote Speaker.
QCRTN’s Fall 2016
Training Spotlight

PlayDoh®: What’s Standard About It?
Tuesday, November 29 | 6:30 p.m.

Quality Stars Standards, Head Start Standards, NAEYC Standards, NYS OCFS regulations....list goes on and on. “Standards” is the new buzz word and is used for expected developmental outcomes in the classroom. What’s one item that can meet all those “standards”? PlayDoh®! As a classroom teacher, center director, school age employee, or group family provider, you know the value that PlayDoh® brings to your program by providing hands-on active learning. Let us explore the other ways PlayDoh® enhances and supports your curriculum and your required learning outcomes and, at the same time, is a whole lot of fun to use.

Loose Parts: Inspiring Play in Young Children
Thursday, December 1 | 6:30 p.m.

How can we effectively develop a child’s creativity and problem-solving skills? Give them loose parts! Loose parts play provides decision-making opportunities: to choose, to build, to invent, to collaborate, to move, to consider, to manipulate, and so on. See for yourself the originality and connections to formal learning that unfold from loose parts play!

Introducing our new program...

Coupons for CACFP

Beginning this November, all family, group family, and legally exempt child care providers who participate in CACFP will receive a free coupon each month to use towards their food bills.

This month’s coupons include donations from the following sponsors:

- Apple & Eve
- Bolthouse Farms
- Newman’s Own
**What is CACFP?**

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federally funded program administered by the NY State Department of Health (DOH).

CACFP is a nutrition education and meal reimbursement program helping providers serve nutritious and safely prepared meals and snacks to children and adults in day care settings. The program provides partial reimbursement for providers who choose to participate.

**Benefits of CACFP?**

The program will:

- Help pay for the meals you serve to children in your care.
- Teach you how to plan and serve meals that meet child care standards for nutrition.
- Let parents know that children have nutritious meals at child care.
- Provide you with training that will help you do a good job and run your home-based business or child care center as a professional.

**How do I apply for CACFP?**

To participate, child care home providers must sign up with a state-approved sponsor. Centers must be licensed, non-profit, or public. Centers may apply for themselves or participate through a sponsor that meets the same requirements.

For more information about CACFP or to contact a CACFP Specialist in your county, visit us at [www.earlycareandlearning.org/cacfp-contact-list.htm](http://www.earlycareandlearning.org/cacfp-contact-list.htm).
Beautifully colored trees, crisp crunchy leaves, pumpkin smells, and so much more remind us that Thanksgiving is right around the corner. As a provider of children, this time of year can bring so much joy to the children you care for. You can take this time to teach children what it means to be thankful. A great way to do this is to model behavior for children. You can accomplish this by having a meal together to celebrate the holiday. This would make a great time to talk to the children about what they are thankful for and why. You can always write their answers down and have the children decorate them to make this into a fun art project to send home. Below are some various ways to incorporate the holiday and have some fun.

**Art Projects**

**Paint with Feathers**

**Materials:**
- Feathers of all shapes and sizes
- Construction paper
- Paint

**Directions:**
- Have the children dip the feathers into the paint and paint a picture on the construction paper. A fun twist to this: let them use either end of the feather to paint. Ask them how it makes the picture look different.

**Handprint Turkey Card**

**Materials:**
- White construction paper
- Paint and brushes
- Black and red markers

**Directions:**
- Paint the palm and thumb of the child's hand brown. Then paint each of the fingers a different color. Have them stamp their hand onto the white construction paper. Place the construction paper lengthwise to ensure their hand will fit. When dry, use markers to draw eyes, feet, and wattle.

**Harvest Prints**

**Materials:**
- Ears of corn: cooked, uncooked, big, small, etc.
- Paint and brushes
- White construction paper cut into thirds

**Directions:**
- Have the children paint a solid color or multiple colors of paint onto an ear of corn. Show them how to stamp it onto the paper. Have them try stamping firmly and picking up; have them roll it; have them slide it. How does stamping the corn in different ways create a different print? Try having the older children paint individual kernels different colors.
**Thanksgiving Songs to Sing**

**Turkey in the Barnyard**

Turkey in the barnyard, what does he say?
Gobble, gobble, gobble, all day.
Turkey on the table, what do you say?
Yummy, yummy, yummy, all day.
Turkey in my tummy, what do I say?
I ate too much turkey on Thanksgiving Day!

(hold your hand on your belly and make a pained face - the kids will love this!)

**Gobble, Gobble**

A turkey is a funny bird
His head goes wobble, wobble.
And he knows just one word:
Gobble, gobble, gobble!

---

**Thanksgiving Games to Play**

**Turkey Talk**

Choose two children to be turkeys. Have them go to the center of the circle. Recite, with the other children, the poem below. When the poem is done, encourage the two turkeys to chat with each other in turkey talk.

Two turkeys went out to play,
One fine sunny day.
When they got together,
this is what they had to say...

---

**Turkey Tag**

Turn the classic game of tag into a holiday favorite. Encourage adults to play with the children, too! Each player, or “turkey,” gets three clothespins on the bag of their shirt, to act as their “feathers.” One person is tagged as “It” to start, and has to run and try to catch the clothespin, or “feather” of another turkey. The turkey that loses a clothespin is now “It.” The turkey that is the last to lose all of their feathers wins!

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**Turkey Baster Relay**

Change up the normal relay race and hand out a (clean and empty) turkey baster to each team. Place a feather near the starting line, and a cone or other object to loop around about 10 feet away. Once you say “Go,” the first player of each team is to squeeze the turkey baster at the feather to get air to push the feather forward. Have them go to the cone, loop around, and have them hand off the turkey baster to the next player. The first team who has everyone complete a lap with the feather, wins!
Did you know?

We’re Mobile!

Child Care Resource Network’s dedicated team of Education Specialists can come to you for training. Does your entire center need a refresher course? Looking to get everyone MAT certified? Why haul everyone to our office when we can come to you? Call 716-877-6666 today to set up an appointment.

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