

The Scoop in Family Child Care

October 2026 | Issue 64

SAL Child Care Connection of Central Illinois

Featured Book

When Leonard takes a shortcut through the park, he finds and egg and takes it home, where it hatches into a lizard (or so he thinks). Leonard names his new pet Buster and takes him all around the city: on the subway, to the library, to a baseball game, and more.



Before long, Buster becomes too big to keep, and Leonard realizes he needs to set Buster free. So Leonard comes up with an inventive plan, one that involves all the balloons he can find and the annual Thanksgiving parade. This is a charming tale about a lonely boy and an uplifting solution.

<https://youtu.be/Xz4dPb-luPI?si=6BY8ycoplYogDVAU>

Sensory

Reptile Playdough Tray

Materials Needed

- Playdough
- Snake & Lizard Figurines
- Frog & Insect Figurines
- Rocks and Stones
- Wood Slices
- Refillable Eggs
- Divided Serving Tray



Possible Ways to Interact with the Materials

Children could create their own creatures from the playdough, use the reptile to leave animal prints, manipulate the little figurines to expose them to animals they may have fear of, learn more about the animal habitats and prey, and more.

Art Project

String Painting Snake Art

Materials Needed

- Construction Paper
- Paint
- Small Plates
- Yarn
- Scissors
- Clothespins



Directions

Pour a bit of paint onto the small plates. Cut the yarn into lengths about 6 to 8 inches long. Afterward, attach a clothespin to the end of each string of yarn. Have children place the string that in the color of paint that they want. Then, carefully lift the string, lay it on the paper, and drag it across with the clothespin.

Finger Play

Reptile Family

Turtle, Crocodile, Snake, Chameleon, Iguana

Turtle, Turtle, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, How do you do?

Turtle, Turtle, what are you doing?

Hiding in my trusty shell when there are bad guys

Crocodile, Crocodile, where are you?

Here I am, here I am, How do you do?

Crocodile, crocodile, what are you doing?

Looking for yummy food, yummy, yummy, yum

(Repeat for all reptiles; full lyrics can be found in the description of the Youtube video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UOQdDoTrpA>



Nutrition

Strawberry & Banana Snake

Ingredients

- Strawberries
- Bananas
- Candy Eyes

Directions

Cut the bananas and strawberries into round slices to assemble the snake's body. When you have the length you want, keep a whole strawberry for the head and add candy eyes.



12 More Books Featuring Reptiles



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Referral Services

Complete Update Survey

It's time for the annual Complete Update Survey! We ask that all providers fill this out, regardless of whether they accept CCAP or are part of the Referral Database, so we can have the clearest picture of child care in Central Illinois. The survey will be sent out via mail and email. Additionally, there will be an online survey that you can fill out, or you can call and go over the survey with the Referral Specialist.

If you have any questions, contact our Referral Specialist, Jessi, at jguzman@salccc.org or (309) 686-3750, Ext. 2129

Trainings

Talk, Read, Connect: FCCERS-R Language & Books

This training explores the FCCERS-R Language & Books items and how family child care providers can create a language-rich environment that supports children's communication, early literacy, and learning.

Tuesday, October 6

6:30 - 8:30 p.m. | In-Person and Online via Zoom | Cost: \$10

Registration Deadline: 11:55 p.m. Monday, September 28

Register at www.salccc.org/provider-services/training.

Health & Safety

Emergency Drills

Emergency drills in child care are routine practice scenarios designed to prepare staff and children for crises like fires, tornadoes, or security threats. State licensing boards typically mandate that centers practice fire drills monthly and execute other scenarios - such as lock-downs - at least quarterly or semi-annually. Practicing drills ensures a quick, instinctual response from caregivers and reduces panic for young children. Routines allow staff to identify logistical issues, test communication protocols, and ensure all children (including infants and those with accessibility needs) are safely accounted for.

Grants

Fiscal Year 2027 grants are coming soon!

Keep your eyes open for the applications for CPR/First Aid Reimbursement, Individual Professional Development Fund, and Quality Improvement Fund.

For more information on grant opportunities and the application links, go to www.salccc.org/provider-services/grant-opportunities.

Home Child Care Network

Home Child Care Network is seeking licensed home care providers to join their **free** program. Their program offers free monthly training, technical support for grants and budgets, mental health support including screenings, and add-on rates for 2nd and 3rd shifts and weekends, with monthly payments guaranteed by the 15th of the month.

For more information, call (309) 685-8064.

Higher Education Navigation

Thinking about advancing your Early Education Career?

Contact a Higher Education Navigator for Help:

1. Determining your educational goals
2. Identifying which programs are available to best fit your needs
3. Connecting you with Early Childhood Education scholarship opportunities
4. Acting as a point of contact with Higher Education Institutions
5. Completing your Gateways membership
6. CDA cohort
7. Other assistance as needed

Call (309) 686-3750 Ext. 2107

Home Daycare Professional Group

Third Tuesday of the Month

6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Zoom Meeting



For more information on any of our programs and services
Call: (309) 686-3750 | Fax: (309) 686-3850 | Visit: www.salccc.org
Child Care Assistance Program - Option 2
Referrals - Extension 2129
Training Registration & Grants - Extension 2111
Higher Education Navigation - Extension 2107
Smart Start Grant Expert - Extension 2105
Quality Visits or Information on ExceleRate - Extension 2105
Infant-Toddler Consultations - Extension 2118

SAL COMMUNITY SERVICES

Child Care Connection of Central Illinois

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