

The Scoop in Family Child Care

July 2026 | Issue 61

SAL Child Care Connection of Central Illinois

Featured Book

Dragon has finally fallen asleep, but suddenly, there's so much noise in the castle. When the page is turned, the breeze blows the door shut with a slam, and readers are encouraged to check and see if Dragon is still asleep. The art is vivid and makes for a light-hearted bedtime story. Preschool and young elementary school children will love to follow the instructions in this book as they care for their new dragon friend. By encouraging young ones to do things as they read, this book is sure to keep the attention of the youngest readers.



https://youtu.be/2K4dTCOXF08?si=bYaG1kjet5m1k_8

Sensory

Unicorn Soap Foam

Materials Needed

- ¼ cup Warm Water
- 2 tablespoon Dish Soap
- 2 tablespoon Cornstarch
- Food Coloring
- Unicorn Toys



Instructions

In a blender, add the water, dish soap, cornstarch, and one of the food colorings. Blend on a high speed until stiff peaks form. Repeat the process with each color until you're satisfied with all the colors. Pour the soap foam into a container and swirl it together with a stick or spoon. Add unicorns and let the children have fun!

Art Project

Outdoor Fairy Houses

Materials Needed

- Mini terracotta pots
- Paint pens
- Outdoor craft paint
- Paintbrushes
- Mod Podge



Instructions

Have the children paint their mini pots with the outdoor craft paint and paint pens in whatever way they like. To make them safe from the weather, paint or spray them with a weatherproof sealer, like Mod Podge. Once they've dried, take your fairy houses and find

Finger Play

5 Little Dragons Flying Free

Five dragons flying free
Over the land and sea
They like to flap their wings and soar
(One breathes a flame of fire
Then, she flies high and higher
That leaves four dragons flying free



(Continue counting down until you're down to zero)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkQKHKoXQn4

Nutrition

Unicorn Toast

Ingredients

- Bread
- Plain Cream Cheese
- Food Coloring
- Variety of Fruits and Toppings

Directions

Divide the softened cream cheese into small separate bowls. Add food coloring to each bowl to create the colors of your choice. Once the bread is toasted, add all the color cream cheese and toppings you want!



12 More Books with Mythical Creatures



The Scoop in Family Child Care

July 2026 | Issue 61

SAL Child Care Connection of Central Illinois

Referral Services

Complete Your Monthly Vacancy Survey

Please continue filling out our monthly Vacancy Surveys. The summer is one of the busiest times for referrals, so it's crucial that the number of openings we have for your program is accurate. Additionally, keep an eye out starting in September for our annual Complete Update Survey.

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

Trainings

Your Space Sets the Stage: Exploring Indoor Space

In this hands-on workshop, we'll explore how the indoor spaces in your home support children's health, safety, and learning-and what small changes can make a big difference.

Tuesday, July 14

6:30 - 8:30 p.m. | In-Person and Online via Zoom

Registration Deadline: 11:55 p.m. Tuesday, July 7

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

Health & Safety

Insect and Insect Repellent Tips

1. Protect children from insect bites by checking for and removing insect nests under slides, in bushes, and in the ground.
2. Near play areas, make sure there is no standing water for mosquitoes to lay their eggs.
3. Check for ticks after outdoor play, and remove any ticks as soon as possible.
4. Get written permission from guardians to apply insect repellent and follow the instructions on the label.
5. Avoid products with more than 30 percent DEET, and do not apply repellent to infants younger than two months.

Grants

Round Two for the Smart Start Workforce Grant opens up July 1!

These funds assist child care providers in offering more competitive wages for their staff to attract and retain talented staff and meet parents' needs at affordable rates.

Learn more about how to apply for these funds and if your program qualifies by going to www.salccc.org/provider-services/smart-start-workforce-grants, or contact our local Smart Start Expert, Heather, by emailing SmartStart@salccc.org or calling (309) 686-3750, extension 2105.

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. 2111

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 2111
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

3425 N. Dries Ln
Peoria, IL 61604



@salchildcareconnection