# HCFCCA

## NOVEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Volume 47 Issue 4

grateful

## NOVEMBER TRAINING

***An Introduction to the Pyramid Model***

November 5, 2026
6:15 pm *Networking*
6:30 pm *In Person Training*
*9830 Patuxent Woods Dr.*

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## BOARD MEETING

November 12 at 6:30 pm
In Person Meeting
*All are welcome to attend to learn more about how our Board operates. RSVP at hcfccabusiness@gmail.com for details*

## RESOURCE LINKS

Click me!

- A Parents Guide to Regulated Child Care
- CDC Developmental Milestones
- Tuesday Tidbits 10/13/2026
- Tuesday Tidbits 9/29/2026
- Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program Brochure
- OCF Technical Assistance Specialist
- Child Care Quality Grant Incentive

New!!

# a note from Uyen



*Hello Everyone!*

I can't believe it's November already! As we enter this season of gratitude, I have so much to be thankful for. First and foremost, I am thankful for my wonderful family, who continues to support me in every decision I make as I grow in my career and take on new challenges. The feeling of accomplishment and being able to give back to our profession is truly beyond words.

This year, I have taken on a big responsibility as your President — representing our association and leading our upcoming conference in April. I want to assure you that I am giving this role my very best. My heart and mind are fully invested in our association and in making this conference something we can all be proud of. My hope is that, together, we can continue to make HCFCCA more visible and recognized as a professional organization and strengthen the recognition of family child care as the important career it is.

I am truly thankful to each and everyone of you for trusting me, supporting me, and believing in our association. I want you to know that our Board members, committee chairs, volunteers, and members are putting their hearts, time, and commitment into making this event successful. It truly takes all of us working together.

***Save the Date*** — Saturday, April 10, 2027

East Columbia 50+ Center

continued,

Our conference will be an all day event, and we will need more volunteers to help with setting up and breaking down the rooms. If you are available to help, please call or text me at (443) 220-7336. *Every helping hand will make a difference!*

I am also still waiting to book one of the library's largest rooms for our membership meeting and 45th Anniversary celebration in December. We hope to celebrate the season, our association, and everything we have accomplished together over the years. This will be a potluck celebration, so everyone can bring a dish to share. We are also planning to have lots of giveaways! More details will be coming soon, so please stay tuned.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, I hope each of you has a wonderful and meaningful time with your families and loved ones. May this season remind us of how much we have to be grateful for.

Once again, thank you for being a member of HCFCCA, for trusting me, and for supporting our association. I am truly grateful to be on this journey with all of you.

## *Happy Thanksgiving!*



# Calling for Closet Contributions for Our Conference Gift Baskets!

Ladies, it's time to do a little closet and basement shopping! I'm sure many of us have items tucked away that are still brand new, unopened, and waiting for a new home.

As we prepare for our **3rd Annual HCFCCA Conference on April 10, 2027,** I'm asking for your help in collecting items to create beautiful gift baskets for our conference raffle prizes.




## What can you contribute?

**Brand-new items that are still in their original packaging**

**Unopened, non-expired products**

**Gifts, household items, self-care products, and other goodies that would make wonderful raffle prizes**

Instead of letting these items sit in our closets or basements, let's turn them into something special for our conference attendees! Every contribution, big or small, is greatly appreciated and will help make our event even more exciting.

**You can bring your donations to our upcoming November training!**
Or let me know to come pick them up.

Feel free to call or text me at **(443) 220-7336.**

## Thank you all for your generosity

and for supporting our association. Together, we can make this conference a wonderful experience for everyone!

# a note from Bethany



The Pyramid Model is a framework for supporting children's social and emotional learning, built on relationships, supportive environments, and teaching skills like naming feelings and solving problems.

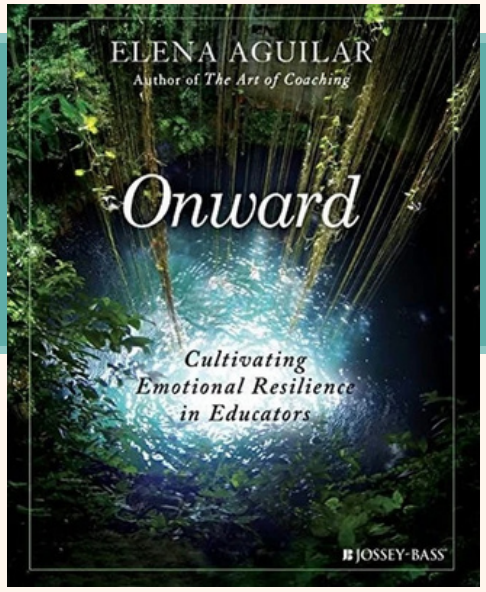
Here is what I love about it for family child care: the strongest levels are the ones you are already building. Your home is a small, steady community. You know each child's moods, comfort items, and the family stories behind them. You are with the same children all day, often for years, and relationships like that are the foundation everything else rests on.

This month, look at your own pyramid. Where do you feel solid? Is there one small thing you'd like to strengthen, like a feelings chart at your table or a calm-down corner with a few favorite books?

*You are already doing this work.* This month's training will give you language and tools to do it with even more confidence.



# Building Resilience:
## *Build Community*




*This year I 'm going to be reading through the book* ***Onward*** *by Elena Aguilar. Join me each month here in the newsletter for a short recap of each habit or grab a copy of the book and read along with me.*
*-Bethany*

Family child care can be one of the most isolating jobs in early education. There's no staff lounge, no team meeting, no colleague down the hall to check in with. But resilience research is clear on this point: connection is one of the strongest protective factors against burnout there is.

Community doesn't have to mean a big network or a formal group. It can be one or two other providers you touch base with regularly, a peer circle, or even a single person who understands the specific weight of this work without you having to explain it.

This month, try reaching out to one other provider — even a quick text — just to check in, not to solve anything or fix anything. Connection doesn't need an agenda.

### *Reflections*

Who is in your corner right now? Is there someone you'd like to build a stronger connection with this year?

You weren't meant to carry this work alone, even when the structure of the job makes it feel that way.

# connecting with Desiree



Hi there! I'm Desiree Richards, and I'm excited to be working on a project that I really believe in—one that's designed to support our providers, especially those just starting out.

Here's the idea: I want to create opportunities for providers to visit each other's family childcare homes within their own areas. You'll get to see how other providers run their programs, share what you know, and learn from one another. It's a real chance to grow together.

I'm reaching out to ask two things: Would you be willing to open your home for visits? And if you'd like to participate in visiting other programs, I'd love to have you join in.

I genuinely think this is one of the best ways we learn—by seeing each other's spaces and practices firsthand. We have so many talented providers in our Association, and I know we can all benefit from getting new ideas and discovering ways to strengthen and grow our programs.

If you're interested, just reach out to me at (240) 354-8871. Text is my preference.

*Thank you for supporting this project. It means a lot.*

a note from Kim

# Networking and Mentoring

We're kicking off our very first networking and mentoring event of the year—and we couldn't be more excited! These mentoring nights provided a safe space to share concerns, brainstorm solutions, and gather practical advice from peers who truly understand the challenges and joys of family child care. We're deeply grateful for the contributions and sense of community that blossoms at each meetup.

This year, we're ready to build on that momentum! Join us for another evening of connection, encouragement, and fun.

📍 la Madeleine
6211 Columbia Crossing Circle Columbia, MD 21045
📅 Wednesday, November 11, 2026
⏰ 7:00 PM

We can't wait to see you there.

# a note from Anita



## Please Renew Your Membership Early

All memberships expire at the end of the month. ***To receive the class link, you must renew by the Sunday before class.***

Renewing late creates a significant burden: it takes four volunteers coordinating to get you access for that one class. We work, too. Renewal notices are sent well in advance. Renewing early doesn't shorten your membership or cost you anything—it simply protects your access and respects our volunteers' time.

***About the class link***: Do not share it with anyone. If someone didn't receive it, they're no longer a member. That's the system working as intended.

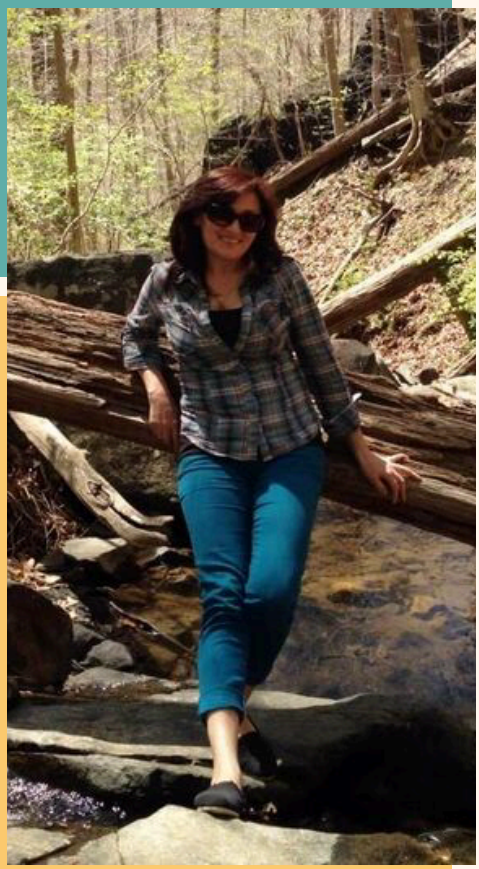
Your membership fee pays Georgia and the other trainers for their time.

Questions about your membership?
Contact Claudia Cuestas (VP of Membership) or me.

Thank you,
Anita



# Member Spotlight



## Welcome to My Treeschool Childcare!

I am Sona, the provider of care, love, and education for your children. I have nearly 40 years of teaching experience, including more than 20 years teaching Armenian language and literature in Armenia before moving to the United States. For me, educating children is one of life's most rewarding tasks, and every mastered skill is a triumph. Knowledge matters, but I believe love, security, trust, and confidence matter even more, because they help children discover the world around them and thrive.



I grew up in a family that encouraged imagination, creativity, an active lifestyle, and self-sufficiency. As kids, we invented games and crafts using only what we found in our backyard, and the fun and learning never ended. I strive to give children that same space to set their own goals and reach their full potential.



continued,



The earliest years are crucial for developing personality, values, social behavior, and life skills. Like a good gardener, I love to nurture little seeds in rich soil and watch healthy sprouts grow. Every child is unique, and each deserves care and support for a successful start. Tying shoes, zipping jackets, making salads, and pedaling a tricycle are all celebrated as steps toward new levels of learning.

Outside the classroom, I am a certified rescue diver with a love for the sea and underwater nature. I also enjoy mountain climbing and gardening, and I bring all three passions into my childcare program in a variety of ways.



# Getting to Know You

*We are excited to recognize and celebrate our HCFCCA members! Each month, we hope to feature a childcare provider in our newsletter so members can get to know one another, share experiences, and learn from the history and wisdom of our fellow providers.*

How did you get started in family childcare?
What has kept you in the childcare profession over the years?
What is one of your favorite memories from your childcare career?
What has been one of the biggest changes you have seen in family childcare?
What is something you are most proud of as a childcare provider?
What advice would you give to someone who is new to family childcare?
What do you wish you had known when you first started?
What has being a member of HCFCCA meant to you?
What is one fun or interesting fact about you that members may not know?
Anything else?

Please provide a photo of yourself and/or your childcare program. Make certain you have permission to share the children's photos.




Please send an email to newsletterhcfcca@gmail.com or fill out the the Google Form

Click me!

# Advance Your Career at Howard Community College

## *Ready to earn your early childhood degree?*

Howard Community College's Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF) is open for applications January 1 to March 1, 2027. This tuition assistance program covers tuition, fees, and books for an AAS in Early Childhood Child Development or an AAT in Early Childhood Education/Special Education or Elementary Education/Special Education, which transfers to a 4-year program.

To be eligible, you need:

- At least one year of licensed child care experience
- A minimum of 10 hours per week in a licensed child care program
- A Maryland Child Care Credential Level 2 or higher
- Willingness to complete a service payback after your degree

Questions? Contact Joan Johnson at
jjohnson6@howardcc.edu

# thankful Rhymes



## Grateful Me

I'm thankful for the sun above (point up)
I'm thankful for my family's love (hug self)
I'm thankful for my cozy bed (rest head on hands)
And all the yummy food I'm fed! (rub tummy)

## Five Thankful Fingers

This little finger's thankful for home (wiggle pinky)
This little finger's thankful to roam (wiggle ring finger)
This little finger's thankful for friends (wiggle middle)
This little finger's thankful for food that never ends (wiggle pointer)
This little finger's thankful for YOU! (wiggle thumb, point to child)

## Grateful Heart

I have a grateful heart today (pat chest)
For the people who come to play (clap hands)
For a hug and a kind, kind word (hug self)
For every happy sound I've heard (cup ear)



a craft from Claudia



# Pinecone Turkey



## Materials

- Pinecone
- Red, yellow and orange paint
- Paintbrush
- Construction paper scraps
- Green pipe-cleaner
- Glue tape
- Googly eyes (10mm)
- Glue Gun

## Instructions

***Paint***: Paint the pinecone tips red, orange, and yellow, leaving some brown. Add a second coat if needed. Dry about 1 hour.
***Face***: Roll a pipe cleaner into a tight spiral and secure the end with hot glue. Cut a small yellow triangle (beak) and a red squiggle (wattle). Tape the wattle to the beak, then press both onto the center of the spiral. Tape on the googly eyes above the beak.
***Legs***: Fold a pipe cleaner down about ¾ inch, then fold it back the opposite way to make toes.
***Assemble***: Hot glue the legs to the pinecone with toes facing up, then glue the head on.

a recipe from *Claudia*



# Autumn Squash Soup

## INGREDIENTS



- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium red or yellow onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 large carrots, peeld and diced small
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 large apple, cored and diced
- 3 to 4 pounds butternut or other winter squash, peeled, seeds removed, and diced
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1/4 tsp ground ginger optional
- 1/8 tsp ground or freshly grated nutmeg, optional
- 2 1/2 cups vegetable and chicken broth
- 1 to 2 Tbsp maple syrup or honey
- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt or coconut cream

## Directions

- Heat oil over medium heat (or use saute in a pressure cooker). Cook onion, garlic, carrot, and salt for 1 minute. Add apple, squash, thyme, ginger, and nutmeg; cook 30-60 seconds. Add broth and cover. Simmer 20 minutes on the stovetop, pressure cook on manual for 12 minutes, or cook 6-8 hours on low or 3-4 hours on high in a slow cooker, until squash mashes easily.
- Finish: Stir in maple syrup (optional) and yogurt or coconut cream. Blend until smooth with an immersion blender, or work in two batches in a regular blender, filling it only partway. Thin with broth or water, then season with salt and pepper. Serve warm.

# AUTUMN APPLE-WASH & WARM ORCHARD SPLASH

## FOR AGES 12 TO 48 MONTHS



## 1 WARM ORCHARD SPLASH & SCRUB

- Bring the magic of an autumn orchard indoors with a soothing, water-based sensory activity!
- Perfect for hands-on exploration and fine motor development.
- Guides little ones to scrub, wash, and splash.
- A fun, calming way to build coordination and confidence!

## 2 CLEAN FRUIT SORT & PLAY




- Younger toddlers love squeezing the soft sponges and splashing in warm vanilla-scented water.
- Older toddlers can wash each apple clean, “wipe” them, scoop them up, and sort red and green apples.

## A Safe, Cozy Fall Activity!

(No Pumpkins, No Leaves, No Small Parts, No Crunching)

Email thelma_hayes @msn.com for full details

# Maryland Child Care Credential

The credentialing program is coming back—and our mentoring program is here to help. If you're renewing your credential or considering applying once the program reopens for new applicants, we can connect you with guidance every step of the way.

One of the biggest wins? Members in the credentialing program get reimbursed for trainings and conferences. That means you're investing in your professional growth without the out-of-pocket cost. We anticipate opening applications for new credentialed providers soon, and our mentoring team will be ready to walk you through the process.

Already renewing? Great. Ready to pursue it for the first time? Let's talk. Reach out if you'd like to learn more about what credentialing looks like and how mentoring can support you at hcfccabusiness@gmail.com

Click here for more information from MSDE Office of Child Care



# Maryland Child Care Credential Updates

Child care providers who held an active credential as of July 1, 2023 can submit an Update application.



Maryland
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# Howard County Family Child Care Association

# Vendor Tables

## NOW AVAILABLE

### AT THE HCFCCA CONFERENCE

**APRIL 10, 2027**

Our members, their families, and friends have amazing businesses of their own! We'd love to showcase and celebrate them at our conference.




**Tables are $50 each**

For more information, contact

**Uyen Feliks**
hcfccabusiness@gmail.com

*Together We Grow*

# Save the Date!
## 2026-2027

~~**September 3, 2026** In Person 2 CUR~~
~~Crunch, Rustle, Explore! Fall Activities~~

~~**October 1, 2026** In Person 3 CUR~~
~~A Child's Eye View: Inspiring Wonder through in Person Environmental Design~~

**November 5, 2026** In Person 3 CD
Introduction to the Pyramid Model

**December 3, 2026** Virtual 1 PRO 1 SN
Developmental Screening Essential



**January 7, 2027** Virtual 2 HSN
Beyond Mr. Yuk Poison Safety and Prevention

**February 4, 2027** Virtual 3 PRO
Marketing Your Business for Growth

**March 4, 2027** In Person 3 CUR
Creating a Writing Center from Dollar and Thrift Store Finds

**April 1, 2027** In Person 3 CUR
Exploring Scientific Thinking and Inquiry with Children's Literature

**May 6, 2027** In Person 1 PRO 2 CD
Showcasing Growth: Documenting through Portfolios

**June 3, 2027** In Person 1 CUR 1 PRO
Empowering Infant & Toddler Understanding through Discovery

# We can help you participate in the Food Program.

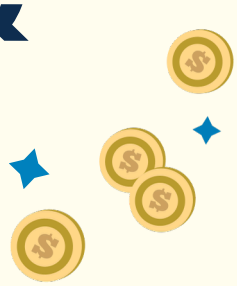


**Contact us!** Fernanda Brito | 757-657-0711

Are you a licensed childcare home or center provider?

KidKare by Minute Menu

# Enjoy the nutritional & financial benefits of the Food Program.



## What is the Food Program (CACFP)?

CACFP is a federally-funded program that **reimburses qualifying organizations for serving nutritious meals and snacks** to eligible children and adults.

*CACFP Benefits:*

- Provide Nutritional Education
- Receive Money for Serving Healthy Meals
- Support Low-Income Families
- Nourish Healthy Meals for Children

## How can I join the Food Program?

You can join the Food Program by **finding a sponsor.**

**Learn More**
Scan QR Code

SCAN ME

# ATTENTION EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS

You could be eligible for free tuition, fees, and books at Howard Community College through the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF!



## APPLY TODAY IF YOU...

- have worked in a licensed child care setting for at least one year
- be eligible for a MSDE Level 2 or greater Credential Certificate
- want to work toward an AAS in Early Childhood Development (career program) or an AAT in Early Childhood/Special Education or Elementary Education/Special Education (transfer programs)

## TO QUALIFY FOR THE SCHOLARSHIP, THE STUDENT MUST...

- work at least 10 hours/week in a licensed child care setting while completing the program
- maintain a 2.5 minimum GPA while enrolled
- continue to work in child care at least 20 hours/week in Maryland for a period of time (2 years for a 2 year degree, 4 years for a 4 year degree) after your degree is completed

## TO LEARN MORE OR APPLY NOW...

Contact HCC's CCCPDF Coordinator:
Joan Johnson jjohnson6@howardcc.edu

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
– Meeting students where they dream –

You Can Get There From Here.

# I Have a Question... Who Do I Ask?






I want to know where my certificate is.

**Bethany**
VP of Education
hcfccavpofeducation@gmail.com



I have a membership question.

**Claudia Cuestas**
VP of Membership
hcfccavpmembership@gmail.com



I want to volunteer to be on the board or serve on a committee.

**Uyen Feliks**
hcfccabusiness@gmail.com

*Thank you for reaching out!*
We're here to help!

# Meet the HCFCCA Board

**Uyen Feliks, *President***
hcfccabusiness@gmail.com

**Bethany Corrie, *VP of Education***
hcfccavpofeducation@gmail.com

**Anita Marino, *Treasurer***
treasurerhcfcca@gmail.com

**Maria Trout, *Secretary***
maria.trout16@gmail.com

**Claudia Cuestas, *VP of Membership***
hcfccavpmembership@gmail.com

***Sona Yoder, VP of Marketing and Public Relations***
hcfccamarketing@gmail.com

**Angela Lamberti, *HCFCCA Representative to MSFCCA***
atlamberti@gmail.com



Howard County Family Child Care Association
Est. 1981

# HCFCCA Committees

*(you know you want to join one)*

**Fundraising**
Rhonda Watson

**Website**
Claudia Cuestas

**Newsletter**
Bethany Corrie
newsletterhcfcca@gmail.com

**Mentoring & Networking**
Kim Stinnett

**Volunteer**
Anita Marino

**Hospitality**
Deena Kinnaman



**By Laws, Policy & Procedures**
Nancy Cauley

**Sunshine**
Lynda Davenport

**Parent Line**
Nancy Cauley

**Social Media**
Natacha Michel

**Nominating Committee**
Nancy Cauley

**Conference Committee**
Your name could be here!
Check out page 6-8

*To volunteer email Uyen at hcfccabusiness@gmail.com*

# CALL FOR ARTICLES

## Have Something to Say?

*We need YOU to contribute to our newsletter!*



*Your contributions to our newsletter enhance the quality of HCFCCA. By sharing your insights, experiences, and ideas, you help foster a collaborative environment where we can all learn from each other and grow as providers. We are grateful for the knowledge you contribute to help us all become better child care providers.*



## DEADLINES

For the 2026-2027 school year:

| | |
|---|---|
| ~~**August 16**~~ | **January 17** |
| ~~**September 20**~~ | **February 21** |
| ~~**October 18**~~ | **March 21** |
| **November 15** | **April 18** |
| **December 20** | **May 16** |

## TOPICS TO CONSIDER

**Nature:** Bringing nature indoors, getting outside in all weather, identifying plants in your yard.

**Art and Crafts:** From open ended process art to handprint crafts for parents, showcase what you are doing in the art area.

**Recipes:** Share your tried and true lunch recipes and sweet treats you like to make for special occasions.

**Book reviews:** Tell us about a favorite picture book you've read with the children or an early childhood education book you've enjoyed.

**You can submit an article or ask for more information at newsletterhcfcca@gmail.com**