

# Arkansas Home Visiting Notes

December 2018 Newsletter



- December Is Safe Toys & Gifts Month
- When to Take the "Winter Blues" Seriously...
- Car Seat Safety & Winter Coats
- Reflecting on the 2018 AHVN Conference



# AHVN Director's Note:



Kathy  
Pillow-Price



Arkansas Home  
Visiting Network

This is a bittersweet director's note to write, but as I'm sure all of you have heard by now, November was my last month working as director of the Arkansas Home Visiting Network. I will be remaining in the field of home visiting because you all know that my heart will not be fulfilled unless it is serving children and families in some capacity.

It has been an honor working beside each and every one of you. The decision to move forward to work at the national level was a difficult one to make, but I know it was the right one for me and my family. I know I will be able to help even more families in this new position. I'm not going anywhere! I will still be around to help the AHVN when I am needed.

I want to leave everyone with these words: Keep doing what you're doing. Keep building stronger families and brighter futures in our state! We are all part of a bigger and better story and each of us is writing our own page. Your contributions make a difference every day! I cherish each one of you! Please take care of yourselves and each other.

Let's stay in touch,  
Kathy

## We Want Your Home Visiting Stories!

Do you have a home visiting success story? Do you know somebody who deserves to be recognized? Have you ever seen a story shared on social media and wanted to share your own? Send them our way!

We love to hear from you. We want to share your good news! Send us your home visiting news, success stories, and accolades! You might just see them featured on our social media or in the AHVN Newsletter!

Email your stories to: [mccurdyce@archildrens.org](mailto:mccurdyce@archildrens.org) and be sure to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to stay up-to-date with the latest AHVN news!





# 2018 AHVN Conference

The Arkansas Home Visiting Network would like to thank every home visitor, supervisor, coordinator, speaker, presenter, staff member, facilitator, and volunteers who attended and helped make this year's Arkansas Home Visiting Network Conference a huge success!



There were 375 conference attendees this year! This was our most EPIC conference to date!

You can now access the information and handouts from your breakout sessions online! Visit the LiveBinders website by clicking here to view digital handouts!

Please remember to complete an online evaluation on Survey Monkey to help The Training Institute evaluate and improve the conference for next year! **CLICK HERE TO TAKE IT!**



## **#HOMEVISITINGHEROES**



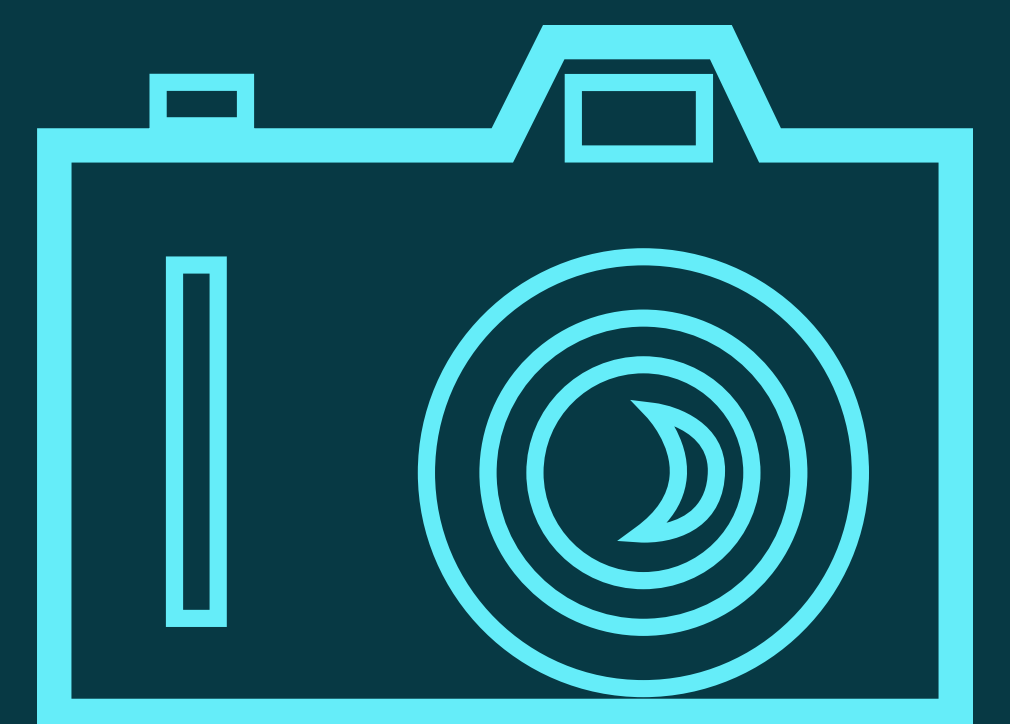
# Congratulations, Scott Gordon Home Visiting Professional of the Year Award Winners!



**Winner:** Karen Garner  
**1st Runner Up:** DeAnna "Didi" Borr  
**2nd Runner Up:** Nancy Hernandez



Let's Take A SELFIE!





**Say  
Cheese!**





# Meet Karen Garner: Home Visitor of the Year

Karen Garner is a HIPPY Home-Based Educator and currently works at DeQueen Mena ESQ. "Since the beginning of 2017, I feel that I have touched the lives of several families," she said. "And HIPPY has been my life for the past 14 years! I have truly enjoyed working with hundreds of families over the years!"

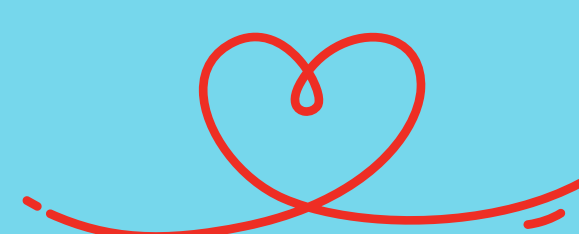
Karen was nominated for this award by Cheryl Green, who stated that "Karen is a shining example of how to build stronger families and brighter futures for children and families." Karen began working with the DeQueen Mena Educational Coop HIPPY program 14 years ago, and since then she has worked with more than 400 families! The impact of her home visiting work has been significant.

Karen really gets to know her families on a personal level in order to understand their needs and help them access the services and resources they need. She has even gone so far as to develop a county-specific resource guide that includes information on doctors, dentists, lawyers, churches, food banks, shelters, laundry mats, and more! Karen is also in frequent contact with the teachers of her students, works closely with special education staff, and collaborates with other preschool and daycare programs in Howard County for recruitment purposes.

"For me, this is not just a job," Karen said. "It is my LIFE with lots of wonderful, precious families." Karen is well-known in her community. She is a founding member of the Quachita Spectrum Outreach and Support Group, which helps families with children on the autism spectrum. At the Group's annual "Summer Social," Karen educates parents about the importance of reading to their children. Karen is a member of the Howard County Single Parent Scholarship Fund. She recruits volunteers for the Funds annual fundraiser and the program is very near and dear to her as several of the families she serves have received awards to continue their education.

Karen knows how tough the holidays can be for the families she serves. She supports them, as well as her community, in various ways throughout the holidays. For Thanksgiving, she and her families read the book, "Stone Soup." She brought the book to life with a food pounding, during which each family contributes one food item to include in a vegetable soup. The children were involved in the soup making and all of the families were able to share a meal together. Karen is also on the board for the Howard County Angel Tree program. She helps families apply to be on the Angel Tree and supports two families from the tree each year. Karen engages her social network to support these families' Christmas wishes – last year the families she adopted received more than \$1,000 worth of gifts.

Karen's plans for the future are to keep moving upward and onward! "I am blessed to have a job that allows me to make a difference in families in my community," said Karen. "I will continue to search for ways to better my HIPPY families."







# Car Seat Safety: Winter Coats



Cold weather is officially here, which means it's time to brush up on winter coat and car seat safety!

As you probably already know, car seat harness straps are vital in keeping our child safe in the car. In order to ensure that the car seat is going to work properly, we have to make sure the seat is installed correctly and that the straps are tightened.

Most winter coats and snowsuits add approximately 4 inches of extra bulk that have to have to compress to fit underneath the car seat harness straps.

In the event of a car accident, the high impact of the crash will push all of the air out of a puffy winter coat or snowsuit, rendering the car seat straps too loose. When the harness straps are not snug on the child, they don't do their job of helping the child come to a gentle stop in the event of a crash. It's even possible that the straps could become so loose that the child could slip through the straps and come out of the car seat entirely!

So, what is the solution during cold weather? Dress your infants as if they were going to be indoors, and top them off with a warm winter hat. Remove their coat before placing them in their car seat and use blankets to keep them warm on the drive, making sure they don't overheat as your car warms up during the drive.

Remember, if you can pinch the harness straps between two fingers, they are too loose! You can check to see if your child's coat is too puffy by placing your child in his or her car seat while he or she is wearing a coat and then buckling them in. Remove your child's coat and put them back in the car seat. How do the straps fit now? If you can pinch the webbing between your thumb and forefinger, then the coat is too bulky to be worn under the harness.

Make sure to educate your families, and stay warm! Safe travels, everyone!





# When You Should Take the "Winter Blues" Seriously...

Winter is a joyous time for many people, but for some of us, the cold weather and early sunset makes it a little harder to get out of bed, or even out of the house.

Many people can still go about their daily lives in winter with little to no problem, but approximately 2% of us suffer from a form of clinical depression called "Seasonal Affective Disorder" (SAD). The symptoms of SAD include fatigue, overeating, loss of interest in activities, difficulty concentrating, sleeping too much or too often, social withdrawal (feeling like hibernating), and weight gain.

According to the National Institute for Mental Health, SAD is not considered a separate disorder from depression. It is "a type of depression displaying a recurring seasonal pattern, and to be diagnosed with SAD, people must meet full criteria for major depression coinciding with specific seasons for at least 2 years."

You are more at risk for SAD if you are female, have a family history of depression or bipolar disorder, or are a young adult.

The best way to treat this disorder is by taking an antidepressant SSRI medication, vitamin D, or by talking to a therapist. Some people also try light therapy to mimic the sun's rays, since SAD is linked to the diminishing exposure to sunshine in the fall and winter months.

Remember to care for yourself and for one another during the busy holiday months! [Click here for more information.](#)

## Did You Know?

Season Affective Disorder is four times more common in women than in men.



# 20%

Of Americans report feeling tired or sad when there are fewer hours of daylight in the winter months





# December is Safe Toys & Gifts Month

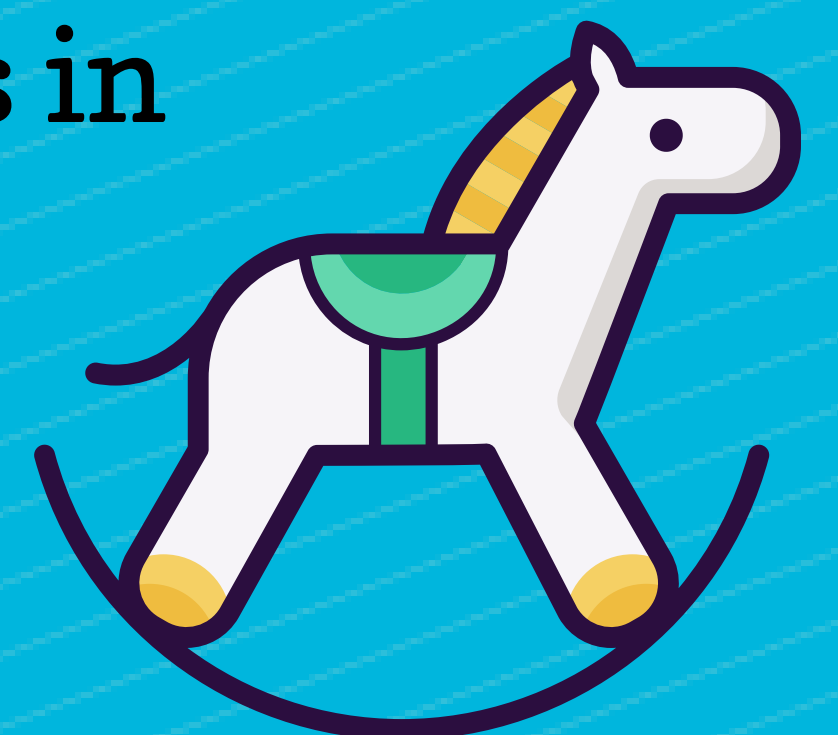
The holidays are just around the corner, which means children and families are brimming with excitement about snow days, time spent with loved ones, and of course, gifts under trees. December is also National Safe Toys and Gifts Month, and rightfully so. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, hospital emergency rooms treated an estimated 251,700 toy-related injuries in 2010 in the United States and 72% of those injuries were to children under the age of 15. On top of that, more than 19 million toys were recalled due to safety concerns such as lead paint and small magnets in 2007 alone.

In order to prevent buying dangerous, or possibly even fatal, toys for your children around the holidays, there are a few guidelines to follow to ensure your child's safety.

First and foremost, remember that all toy manufacturers are required to follow certain guidelines and must label new toys for specific age groups to enable parents to buy age-appropriate toys. This means that while older toys and hand-me-downs may hold sentimental value, they may be best kept on higher shelves for décor rather than for playtime since they may no longer comply with U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standards. Older toys may be more likely to break, and may still contain lead paint as well.



**“More than 19 million toys were recalled due to safety concerns such as lead paint and small magnets in 2007 alone.”**



Secondly, stuffed toys should be machine-washable. Stuffed toys receive lots and lots of love, and therefore can pick up lots and lots of germs, so if they aren't able to be washed in a washing machine, your child may be more susceptible to illnesses. Also, all toys made of fabric should be flame retardant or flame resistant.

Toys should also be age-appropriate for your child. Babies and toddlers should not have access to any toys that are breakable. Toys should be strong enough to withstand any chewing, smashing, pulling, or pushing. There should be no sharp ends that could poke, parts that could pinch fingers or body parts, strings longer than 7 inches, small parts (such as wheels, buttons, or eyes) that could be pulled loose and put into mouths, or any protruding pieces that could be inserted into the mouth. Anything smaller than 4.4 centimeters can become lodged in the throat and cause choking or restricted breathing. The most important thing is to always supervise children while they are playing in order to keep them safe and to use your best judgement as a parent or caregiver.

Toys and gifts are meant to be fun! Opening gifts during the holidays is always magical for children, and giving safe toys makes it fun for everyone.

Of course, one of the safest and best gifts you can give to a child is a book. Nothing beats pulling a child onto your lap and reading to them. It promotes quality time, early literacy, and stimulates their imagination.



# Milestones and Shout-Outs!

FBBH

Kids First Following Baby Back Home Outreach Section was selected as the ImmunizeAR 2018 Outstanding Childhood Immunization Champion!

According to ImmunizeAR, "The Kids First Following Baby Back Home Outreach Section was selected because of their exceptional dedication to childhood immunizations."

Kids First FBBH was invited to accept their award and celebrate by attending ImmunizeAR's year-end meeting in Little Rock on December 11, 2018, where they will be honored.

Congratulations and way to go!  
You guys are AWESOME!





stronger  
families.  
brighter  
futures.



We want to  
hear from you!  
[mccurdyce@archildrens.org](mailto:mccurdyce@archildrens.org)

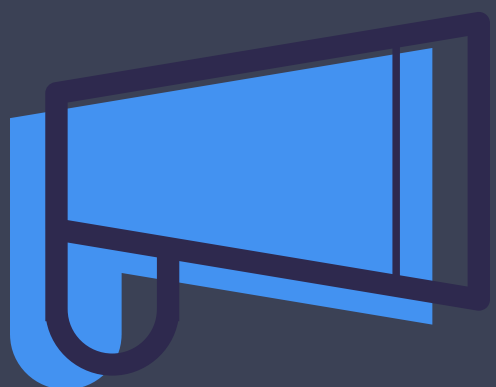
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