



ParentLink Newsletter

2023 Program Highlights



Note From the Director

A new year begins! As 2024 lies before us, our potential grows under the sunlight of *lessons learned, hopes for what might be, and commitment to making it happen*. I'm so proud of my ParentLink colleagues across the organization, who achieved new ways to assist Missouri families. I hope you'll take a moment to check out some of ParentLink's 2023 successes and give a smile to our outstanding partners who make it possible. I believe the best is yet to come as we continue our mission to bolster healthy families, thriving children, and responsive developmental environments.



Detoxifying the developmental soil, so that developmental nutrients can do their developmental work.

Our Newest Edition-Military Navigators

As ParentLink continues to expand and meet the needs of all Missourians, we are now working to intentionally meet the needs of Military families. We welcome, Mabeline Woods, as our new Military Families Navigator. Mabeline is a two-time retired Navy veteran who enjoys working within the community to assist those who need a helping hand in time of need. If you know Military personnel, past or present, in need of assistance, please ask them to call ParentLink at 1-800-552-8522!



Warmline

For our Warmline Program, here were some of the biggest highlights and milestones that were met throughout the year:

- In October we welcomed Rachel Fisk! Rachel has a master's in Early Childhood and has proved to be an integral part of the Warmline team.
- In the new year we will be offering free parent coaching sessions via Zoom
- Warmline now has a blog and book recommendations. Look for our first post on January 15th. You will be able to link to it via the website and social media
- Housing assistance, guardianship questions, general parenting questions surrounding child development stages, and topics such as separation anxiety continue to be top Warmline calls.

Early Childhood

Please consider using ParentLink for your developmental screening needs if you work with infants and young children! It's a free, simple, and very quick process for parents and caregivers to ensure that their young infant or child is on track for their major milestones and social-emotional development! Parents will then receive one of our complimentary early learning and diaper bags! Just direct parents or caregivers to the following link to take both the ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE and our early childhood team will send out the results via email or text within 24-72 hours.

Is your child on track?

FREE DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING

ParentLink
University of Missouri

https://www.asqonline.com/family/363acc/chain_start

Kinship

The ParentLink Kinship team hit a ton of major milestones this year which include:

- Worked with a group of representatives in the legal community to plan and host three in-person informational legal clinics for kinship caregivers in central Missouri. At the clinics, kinship caregivers received general information from attorneys about legal options available, what is needed to acquire the legal authority to make decisions for the children in their care, and how to navigate the legal system. In addition, at each clinic a family mediator shared information about the mediation process and the benefits of mediation in negotiating effectively with the biological parents of the children in their care. We plan to host in-person legal clinics in southeast Missouri this spring.
- Hosted the first annual Kinship Family Fun Day in Columbia to celebrate and recognize kinship families in Missouri. We had a wonderful time spreading the word about the importance of kinship care and interacting with kinship families in fun activities and crafts.
- Collaborated with community organizations in central and southeast Missouri to provide cafés for parents and kinship caregivers using the Be Strong Families curriculum.
- Worked to engage professionals and kinship caregivers in more communities across the state by increasing our outreach event participation and providing more educational opportunities for kinship caregivers to build their capacity to support the kids in their care.



Access Navigators

Program highlights for the ParentLink staff in SE include:

- On April 6, 2023, ParentLink staff in SE received an award from the Fresh Start Self Improvement Center in appreciation of our dedication to the Fathers on The Move Program and for continuous support of Fresh Start in all their endeavors.
- Staff in SE worked together to hosted four Family Fun Fests over a four-month period June-September.
- Local staff attended a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony held by a local community partner that was attended by President Choi, Governor Parson, and other university and legislative officials.
- On December 1, 2023, ParentLink staff received a Resolution from members of the Missouri House of Representatives, One Hundred-Second General Assembly, for outstanding service to Missouri parents and caregivers.
- On December 1, 2023, ParentLink staff was presented with an awarded from Alive & Well in recognition of providing services in the Bootheel region.

Award Received

ParentLink received an award in Sikeston from Alive & Well for community service in the bootheel. The banquet that night also provided ParentLink with a Resolution of Appreciation from Missouri's House of Representatives, offered by Representative Donnie Brown of District 149. While there were three other honorees for the first award, ParentLink was the only organization to receive a RA (photos attached).

Accepting the awards on behalf of ParentLink were (from left to right, below) Lester Gillespie, Outreach Navigator; Freda Kershaw, Associate Director of Access Navigation; Donna Garcia, Associate Director of ParentLink Operations; and Nan Macklin, Statewide Kinship Navigator.



Thank you to everyone who shows their support to our organization. We can't wait to see what's in-store for 2024!

