



# Helping Hands

Offering a helping hand to School Readiness Providers  
A publication from Childcare Resource & Referral



## Family Engagement Opportunities

### Your Home as a Learning Experience

By Rebecca Palacios



For young children, their home is the best place to begin learning about math, science, and social studies, build early reading and writing skills, and to stretch their creativity. Get practical tips on how to look at your home through the lens of "learning through experiences." You'll also find ways to connect learning from school-to-home and home-to-school.

Check out the article link below:

<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/your-home-learning-experience>

Episcopal Children's Services

Volume 17, Issue 3

September 2022

Inside this issue:

ELC of NFL Updates	2-3
Relationship Building with Infants & Toddlers	4
Emergent Reading & The Pre-K Child	5
Mindful Breathing	6
National Dance Day	7
T.E.A.C.H	8
Professional Development	9
VPK Corner	9

ATTENTION HH  
READERS...



If you have a question, comment, or concern you would like addressed in an upcoming issue of *Helping Hands*, please send an e-mail to:

**Blythe.Mauldin@ecs4kids.org.**  
We will do our best to find the answer, post the comment, and address the concern.

Thanks!  
Blythe Mauldin  
Editor

## ELC of North Florida Updates



### ELC DAYS AT AMAZING GRACE CROP MAZE IN Green Cove Springs:

**4251 State Road 21.** This is their new location.

**Date: Tuesdays, October 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>**

**COST - \$10.00 – CHILDREN, SIBLINGS AND CHAPERONES.  
TEACHERS ARE FREE!**

#### **What's included?**

A visit with farm animals, Spookley the Square Pumpkin story time, crop maze, science adventure, amazing agriculture lesson which includes how food gets from the farm to your fridge, jump on the “The Jump Pad” and play area featuring, mini-hay bale maze, duck races and corn hole games.



## ELC of North Florida Updates

**Booking Information:** Email: [info@agcropmaze.com](mailto:info@agcropmaze.com) Include school name, contact email and phone number, approximate number of children and chaperones. Please mention the ELC of North Florida when booking. Their office will contact you to confirm.

**What makes coming on ELC Days special is that each child will receive a FREE Farm themed book as a gift and each classroom will receive a bag of assorted FALL books. Also ELC staff and volunteers will be on hand to provide an extra fun craft activity for the kids.**



## **Relationship Building with Infants & Toddlers** Ariel Jones, Education Specialist

Resource: CLASS Dictionary, [www.momjunction.com](http://www.momjunction.com)

Relational Climate and Positive Climate are the two dimensions of CLASS that focus on building relationships with Infants and Toddlers. To build relationships with Infants and Toddlers you have to show that you are enjoying your time with them and treat them with respect.

One way to do this is by introducing finger plays to them. It allows you to be close to them, be on their eye level, show positive affect by smiling, laughing, show enthusiasm and giving verbal and physical affection.

Check out this common finger play below:

Finger family is one of the most popular finger games for children. This activity teaches kids about the names and relations of every family member.

The rhyme goes as:

Daddy finger, daddy finger, where are you? (hold out your thumb)

Here I am, here I am! How do you do? (for the thumb)

Follow with mommy finger, brother finger, sister finger, and baby finger using the index, middle, ring, and pinky fingers respectively.

Be sure to let the infant or Toddler know that you will be touching their fingers before you began the fingerplay. Have Fun building relationships!

## **Emergent Reading and the Pre-K Child** Sherry Tindall, Education Specialist

Resources: NAEYC 2010 & 2013, Birth to Five Florida Standards

Emergent writing is the child's first attempt at the writing process. "Children as young as two begin to imitate the act of writing by creating drawings and symbolic markings that represent their thoughts and ideas." (Rwoe & Neitzel 2010; Dennis & Vottler 2013)." Considering this, what can we expect from a preschooler who is three and four years old to accomplish? Well, a lot as they emerge into the writing process. It is our job to provide a support that development. In this article we will look at what the Birth to five standards say about emergent writing, what research has to say, and how to teach writing through children's literature.

First, the Birth to Five standards says in Standard G.1. Benchmark a; "Children begin to show motivation to engage in written expression and appropriate knowledge of forms and functions of written composition." This means the use of pretend writing when playing in dramatic play area, write random letters or letter-like shapes to represent word, and they try to copy words from their environment. How do we encourage this standard? To start with, we provide a variety of writing tools and paper for children. Lined paper is more suitable for conventional writing. Now we want the child to have the freedom to experiment with letter form-like writing. Next, we place writing materials in the dramatic play area and other centers. We even ask children to write about what the pictures they draw, or paint. These are the suggestions from the Florida Birth to Five Standards.

Research says children will follow a progression of writing as they emerge into conventional writers. They will go through the scribble stage around one year and on until they have mastered that skill. Next, they will write scribbly lines that look like writing streams, then they will make random letters like shapes, these may be strung in a line or look like a paragraph that covers the page. Finally, they will move toward conventional writing and begin to use letter sounds to form words. This is a process every child undergoes. This is the organic way in which children learn to write. Forcing a child to write letters on a lined sheet of paper, negates the natural way children learn to write. However, writing the child's first name is usually the first word the child writes. This should occur on unlined paper and for a purpose, like writing their name on their paper to distinguish whose work it is.

Considering what has been said about writing, let us explore one way a child can be motivated to write. They can use environmental print to spark their curiosity or specific literature showcases specific purposes for writing. Reading such books as A Letter for Amy, Bunny Cakes, The Day the Crayon Quit, and Click, Clack, Moo Cows that Type. These books offer children the different reasons for writing. For example, in A Letter for Amy, the author uses the concept of writing an invitation. Children can mimic this form by writing invitations to parents to come to school functions, In Bunny Cakes, the concept of writing a grocery list is showcased. Children can be encouraged to write a grocery list in the dramatic play area. The Day the Crayons Quite is all about writing a conventional letter. Children can be encouraged in the writing area to write letters to their friends to be read during circle time. Lastly, in Click, Clack, Moo Cows Type, children see the value of writing notes to one another. As you see children's literature can be a motivator to the emergent writing for our preschoolers.

## Mindful Breathing Jhordan Speed, Inclusion Specialist

Resource: <https://copingskillforkids.com/deep-breathing-exercises-for-kids>

Self-regulation is the ability to understand and manage your own behavior and actions. Though it's not innate like breathing, educators can use a technique called mindful breathing to teach young children how to navigate strong emotions.

What is mindful breathing? Deep breathing exercises that can calm an upset child, reducing their stress, anxiety, or anger. When we're upset, we often take shallower, quicker, and shorter breaths which can often flip the "fight or flight" switch in our brains. For young children, this leads to screaming, throwing, hitting, running away, and tantrums. Mindful breathing sends the oxygen they need to their little, growing brains so they can regain control of their emotions.

Here's four fun deep breathing exercises!

**Darth Vader Breathing:** Pretend you have a straw in your mouth, suck in through the straw and breathe in. Breathe out like Darth Vader.

**Bubble Breathing:** Have kids breath in deeply as they hold a bubble wand and blow out carefully and slowly.

**Bumblebee Breath:** Breathe in and pretend you are smelling a flower. As you breathe out, make humming bee sounds. Try different ways of making the sound - longer or shorter, high or low sounds.

**Snake Breath:** Breathe in, pause briefly, then breathe out slowly while you make a hissing sound for as long as you can.



## National Dance Day, Kelley Warner, Education Specialist

Source: <https://nationaltoday.com/national-dance-day/>  
<http://americandancemovement.org/national-dance-day/>

Dancing is a great way to get up and get moving for people of all ages. There's really no wrong way to dance, just let the music move you however you want! From the Charleston back in the 1920's, the Twist in the 1960's, the Macarena in the 90's, to the latest TikTok trend, dancing has always had a place in our culture!

### National Dance Day is September 17, 2022

National Dance Day was first celebrated in 2010 and was established by a partnership between the American Dance Movement and Congresswoman Elenore Holmes Norton. Celebrating dance as valuable form of self-expression and exercise, National Dance Day serves to educate people about the power of dance, as well as making dance inclusive to everyone! The American Dance Movement even provides an original dance routine every year that is available to learn online!

### How can you celebrate National Dance Day in your classroom?

Turn on some music and let it move you!

Discover dance fads from previous decades.

What kind of dances did your parents do, what about your grandparents?

Practice the latest viral dance trends.

Learn a formal ballroom dance.

Have a dance off among different classes.



## T.E.A.C.H

The T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) Early Childhood® Scholarship Program funded by the Florida Office of Early Learning provides scholarships for early childhood teachers and facility/family home directors to work toward earning a degree in early childhood education (Associate, Bachelor's, or Master's), an Infant-Toddler Certificate, Florida Staff Credential, Director Credential, National CDA Assessment, or credential renewals.

Your T.E.A.C.H. scholarship will cover the majority of the cost of tuition and books, a per semester student access stipend, a tiered bonus structure for degree-seeking scholars, and much more!

Contact our office today at 877-FL TEACH (877-358-3224) to see how T.E.A.C.H. can work for you.

<https://teach-fl.org/>

# T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships





## Local Professional Development Opportunities (Training Calendar)

To register for one of our great training opportunities, please visit our website:  
<https://www.ecs4kids.org/programs/regional-training-institute/>

Click on the registration link to see a list of available courses.

Click on a course and follow the directions for registration and payment.  
The website provides a list of trainings and descriptions offered each quarter.

For CDA information and questions, please contact  
Danesha Davis, Professional Development Coordinator  
904-726-1500 ext.2299  
(904) 536- 2119 (cell)

### VPK Corner Sarah March, Contract Coordinator

#### VPK Provider Applications

As a reminder, please be mindful that you are updating and resubmitting your VPK providers applications (VPK 10,11A,11B) with any changes to classrooms, instructors, directors, substitutes, and calendars as soon as possible when the changes occur, so that the new information can be verified and approved by ECS staff, ensuring that your program remains in compliance throughout the program year.

#### Florida's Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) using Star Early Literacy

Since the recent implementation of Florida's Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) using Star Early Literacy is now under way we wanted to reshare some helpful links for information and/or assistance.

**Renaissance System Support:** Users that need Renaissance System support should contact the Renaissance Place Help Desk and Technical Assistance Team at 1-800-338-4204 or by email at [FAST\\_Star@renaissance.com](mailto:FAST_Star@renaissance.com)

If you have questions related to **FAST using Star Early Literacy training registration**, please email [VPK-FAST@oel.myflorida.com](mailto:VPK-FAST@oel.myflorida.com)

For detailed information and links please visit, <https://www.floridaearylearning.com/vpk/fast>

#### Contract Department

8649 Baypine Rd Suite 300 Bldg. 7 Jacksonville, FL 32256

Toll Free: 1-800-238-3463 \* Fax: 904-726-1522

[contracts@ecs4kids.org](mailto:contracts@ecs4kids.org) \* [www.ecs4kids.org](http://www.ecs4kids.org)



Warm Line 1-800-238-3463

Ext. 2281 (CNBB)  
Ext. 2227 (PSJ)



Do you have a concern about the health, development, disability, or special needs of a child? If so, call the Warm Line. The purpose of the warm line is to provide advice to child care personnel concerning strategies, curriculum, and environmental adaptations that allow a child to derive maximum benefit from the child care experience.