



Helping Hands

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



Family Engagement Opportunities

Episcopal Children's
Services

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Helping Your Child Set and Reach Goals

With the New Year there are new possibilities! It is also a great time to work with your child on set goals. Learning to set goals has many benefits:

- Responsibility
- Time Management
- Self Confidence
- Resilience

Make reaching goals a family effort. This strengthens family bonds and teaches kids to support others. For more information check out the link below!

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-help-your-child-set-and-reach-goals>

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

ELC of North Florida's Early Educator's Conference

Registration begins January 3rd. Be sure to register through our website: www.elcnorthflorida.org

**EARLY EDUCATORS
CONFERENCE 2023**
CAN'T WAIT TO "SEA" YOU THERE!

Saturday, February 11, 2023
Thrasher Home Conference Center
283 College Drive, Orange Park, FL 32065
\$30 Lunch Included
Wear Your Beach Attire

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

8:30-9:00 - Registration (coffee and snacks available)	Session 1: CLASSING Through the Day - Denver Blake and Jasmine Jackson
9:00 am - Welcome	Session 2: Laying the Groundwork for Purpose (Directors/Leaders track) - Jena Waters, Katrina Willis, Kelley Warner, Susan Murphy, and Rebecca Huth
9:15-10:15 - Keynote Session #1 (Rachel Giannini) "Love & Resilience"	Session 3: Through a Child's Eye (loose parts play) - Ariel Jones, Brianna DeOsca, Krytol Berry, Santanna Walker, Alisha Dexter
10:15-10:30 - Break	Session 4: Crawlers, Walkers, Mover, Shakers, Enriching Activities for Infants and Young Toddlers - Jhordan Speed-Johnson and Shery Tindall
10:30-11:30 - Keynote Session #2 (Rachel Giannini) "Because"	Session 5: Talking with Littles - Rachel Gianini
11:30-12:00 - Door Prizes and Teacher of the Year Presentation	Session 6: Making Connections Verses Corrections - Musician/Speaker Anna Moo
12:00-1:00 - Lunch	2:00-2:15 - Break
1:00-2:00 - Break Out Session #1 (six sessions being offered)	2:15-3:15 - Break Out Session #2 (same sessions as above)

Remember to register for Breakout Sessions 1 and 2 when you register for the Conference, as they will fill up fast! A \$30 registration fee payment is made through our website at www.elcnorthflorida.org. Click the Events Tab! Registration will begin on January 2nd and closes February 3rd, 2023. Attendees will receive 4 IACET CEU's for attending. Please call 904-342-2267 at ext. 202 or 203 for more information.

OUR SPEAKERS!

RACHEL GIANNINI

Rachel Giannini is a childhood specialist, early childhood advocate, and video blog host. She currently splits her time as a public speaker, early childhood commentator, and curriculum designer. Rachel's writing, expertise, and videos have appeared in Vox, The New York Times, HuffPost, Child Care Exchange, and Chicago Parent. Rachel has an MFA in Museum Education from the University of Illinois and is a volunteer hospital magician for Open Heart Magic.

ANNA MOO

Anna Moo is an award winning songwriter and recording artist of music for children. Moo is also a children's author (Five Frogs) and nationally recognized keynote speaker for Early Childhood Educators. Moo's multicultural music has been applauded by the Parent's Choice Foundation (six Parent's Choice Gold Awards), multiple Grammy considerations, the Los Angeles Times, the American Library Association (three ALA Awards) and the Washington Post.

 **Division of Early Learning**
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 **EPISCOPAL Children's Services**

Resource: Teachstone.com



Talking with babies during their first year of life delivers huge benefits that will last them a lifetime. It doesn't just build vocabularies; it also nurtures the development of cognitive and social-emotional skills, not to mention just plain fun!

Here are a few simple ways to build strong language skills with the infants in your care or as a parent at home:

Expose Infants to language in the classroom or at home – Long before infants talk to us, they are listening and learning about language when they hear us talk. A simple way to increase language is to describe what you're doing during your daily routine with infants, such as during diapering, feeding, playing time. For instance, consider talking about what you are doing as you prepare their bottle to feed them: "I am getting your bottle from the shelf and pouring the milk in. Now I am screwing the cap back on. It is ready for you to drink. I know you are hungry".

Label and Describe objects – Use descriptive words to support infants' language development. When you are reading a book to an infant and they notice a picture of a dog on the page by pointing, batting the page with their hands or cooing, you could say "you see the dog! Yes, it has long black ears and 4 legs, 1,2,3,4!

Or when an infant is in a highchair eating lunch, you can describe what they are eating to them, for instance, "the apple sauce is cool and sweet" or "look at the color of these carrots, they are orange".

Model a conversation – a fun way to begin a conversation with a non-verbal infant is as easy as describing what may be taking place inside the classroom or outside. For instance, when you are holding up an infant to look outside from a window, you can say "Look, I see a bird, do you see it? It is blue and is called a blue Jay, I see blue jays at my house, do you see them at your house?" Wait for a moment and make eye contact after you talk to them, and then respond as if they had replied "oh you have seen one too, like this one, or was it another kind of bird". Continue with this back-and-forth exchange to model the turn-taking of conversation.

A Snowy Florida Winter Scene Katrina Willis, Education Specialist

Resource: www.funwithmama.com



What you will need: green colored rice, cotton balls, Q-Tip blue cardstock paper, glue, scissors (kid friendly), and yellow construction paper (for the sun).

Directions: Assist preschoolers to add 3 globs of glue in the center of the blue paper. Give each child one Q-Tip to spread the glue out in the shape they want their tree. Then have them sprinkle rice over the glue (shake off the excess rice). Next have them add glue along the bottom of the paper, and instruct children to separate the cotton balls (demonstrate as needed) and then press them onto the glue on the paper, “making snow.” Finally, assist the children in cutting out a sun from the yellow paper, and have them glue it on the blue paper.

CLASS Connections:

Instructional Learning Formats- Effective facilitation: the teacher actively facilitates the students’ engagement in activities and lessons to encourage participation and expanded involvement. Talk about the materials and assist the children as they manipulate the materials and ask questions such as, “In what way does this cotton look like snow?” and, “Tell me how the snow feels different from the rice.”

Quality of Feedback- Encouragement and affirmation: the teacher often offers encouragement of students’ efforts that increases students’ involvement. Make statements such as, “Annalee is working really hard with the cotton balls, spreading them all out on her paper, you’re almost there Annalee, keep going!”

Language Modeling- Advanced language: The teacher often uses advanced language with students; a variety of words connected to familiar words and/or ideas. For example, “those rice trees are bright green, just like our trees in Florida in the winter, where it is mostly warm and we rarely get snow.”

Universal Letter Writing Day Kelley Warner, Education Specialist

Resource: <https://nationaltoday.com/universal-letter-writing-week/>

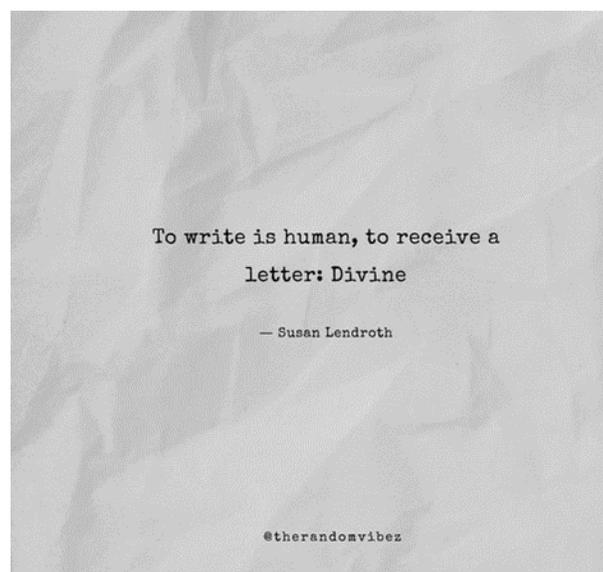
How do you let someone know you've been thinking of them? Or let them know you appreciate a gift you received? More often than not, we communicate via technology. Text, email, and instant messages have made it quick and easy to get in touch with people when we need to. But when was the last time you found a handwritten thank you note waiting for you in the mailbox? How long has it been since you wrote someone a letter? Taking place during the second week of January, Universal Letter Writing Week encourages all of us to put down our smart devices, pick up a pen and paper, and send someone a little bit of joy in the mail!

The Lost Art of the Letter

The first handwritten letter dates all the way back to the Queen of Persia in 500 BC. Ancient societies used a variety of materials for their correspondence; shards of ceramic, wax covered wood, and animal hides were all used to write on before the advent of paper. The first letter to mailed with a stamp was sent in Great Britain in 1840, and the first American postage stamp was issued in 1847.

Here are some simple classroom activities to participate in Universal Letter Writing Week

- Pair students in different classes as in school pen-pals
- Write letters or cards to soldiers serving overseas
- Research an online pen-pal site such as penpal.me to find a pen-pal anywhere in the world
- Write letters to your parents, or grandparents, they'd love to get something in the mail!



How to Cool Meltdowns Jhordan Speed-Johnson, Inclusion Specialist

Resources:

Calm Down Menu: https://challengingbehavior.org/docs/Calm-Down_Poster_EN.pdf

Solution Cards: https://challengingbehavior.org/docs/SocialEmotionalSkills_solution-kit_cue-cards.pdf

We Can Be Problem Solvers: https://challengingbehavior.org/docs/ProblemSolving_Story.pdf



When preschoolers have temper tantrums, it's because they struggle to communicate their needs, wants, and feelings. Factors such as temperament, stress, overstimulation, basic unmet needs, adult-child power struggles, peer conflict, and strong emotions can trigger meltdowns.

Self-regulation and emotional literacy only comes with maturity and good modeling from adults. As early childhood educators and caregivers, our actions *before*, *during*, and *after* a temper tantrum matters A LOT.

Here are some steps you can take to reduce or address a meltdown:

Before	During	After
<p>Promote emotional literacy and self-regulation by labeling emotions, describing physical actions associated with emotions, and redirecting to a coping skill when children experience big emotions.</p> <p>Familiarize and pay close attention to your preschoolers' possible triggers, facial experiences, body language, and classroom activities (drop-off, transitioning, outside play, etc.) they struggle with.</p> <p>Distract and redirect when you see a preschooler is on the cusp of a meltdown. Give them a different toy, move them to a different center, read them a book, make them your helper, etc.</p>	<p>Keep your cool and don't take the meltdown personally. Take deep breaths if you need to. Matching temper with temper will only escalate and intensify the meltdown.</p> <p>Keep everyone safe (including the upset child and yourself). If you must move the child for them to work through their meltdown to a safe calm space, do so. If the child must be removed for their own safety and the safety of others or if you need backup, do what's necessary.</p> <p>Wait until after a child has calmed down to talk to them. Let them complete the temper tantrum because a child's brain cannot process logic or words during one. In fact, talking too soon might intensify and elongate the temper tantrum.</p>	<p>Talk about what happened. Put a label to the emotion the child was feeling and describe their actions too. (You wanted to play in housekeeping, but it's time to clean up and that made you angry. You threw toys, screamed, and ran away.)</p> <p>Show empathy. Let the preschooler know you understand how they feel. Reassuring a child you're not mad at them and/or giving them a big hug can go a long way. If possible, encourage the child to share how they felt or model it and have them repeat the sentence. Validate the child's feelings.</p> <p>Provide the child a safer, healthier way to resolve the problem, cope, calm down, or express their feelings. Use a choice menu, coping skill visual, or a social story.</p>

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



DIVISION OF
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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

Statutory Requirement- Providing Parents with Student Performance Results

Programs are required to provide a student's performance results from the assessment to the student's parents within seven calendar days after the administration of the assessment.

VPK Programs must provide the Star Parent Report which provides a printable informational letter for parents or guardians and is available in English and Spanish. The link to running instructions can be found here: <https://help2.renaissance.com/reports/25027>. It is important to customize the date range to view reports based on classroom progress monitoring dates.

For more information about Florida's Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) using Star Early Literacy for VPK Programs, please visit our website at <https://www.floridaearlylearning.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 * 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, and 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.