



Helping Hands

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



Family Engagement

Episcopal Children's Services

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February is National Children's Dental Health Month

This month-long national health observance brings together thousands of dedicated professionals, healthcare providers, and educators to promote the benefits of good oral health to children, their caregivers, teachers and many others.

This is also a great time to talk with your child about dental health.

Make it a family activity:

- Talk about foods that are healthy and what foods are not
- Teach your kids the correct way to floss
- Visit your dentist as a family to make sure everyone's teeth are healthy
- Brush twice a day

Find out more here:

[American Dental Association](https://www.american-dental-association.org/)

Did you know that the Florida Department of Health has School-Based Dental Sealant Programs? Find out more here:

<https://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/community-health/dental-health/sealant.html>



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.



ELC of North FL Updates

The ELC of North Florida is pleased to announce it's 2022 Infant/Toddler and Preschool Teachers of the Year! The winners were surprised in January with a prize patrol of balloons, flowers and candy. The winners will be honored at the annual ELC of N. Florida Early Educators conference being held on Saturday, Feb. 11th at the Thrasher Home Conference Center. They will each receive a \$500 cash prize from Kaplan Early Learning Co. and Clay Electric Foundation.

Congratulations! The ELCNF is so proud to have such quality teachers touching the lives of the children we serve!

**Infant/Toddler Teacher of the Year Winner:
Takila Anderson, Anderson Day Care Center in St. Augustine**



**Preschool Teacher of the Year Winner:
Traci Green, Advent Lutheran Preschool in Orange Park**



Valentine's Day Sensory Bottle Ariel Jones, Education Specialist

Resource: <https://teachingmama.org/valentines-themed-sensory-bottle/>

What is the purpose of Sensory Bottles? Sensory bottles are activities that both children and adults can benefit from. Sensory bottles are enjoyable for infants and toddlers to explore, incorporate visual sensory play, and aid in relaxation. As children grow older, they are able to do more such as shake the bottle and even help create one. Sensory bottles are fairly easy to make with only needing a few materials and can be used across different themes and learning objectives. Here is an example of how to make one below.

Materials Needed:

VOSS water bottle and some dollar store glitter glue.

Voss water bottle

Water

Oil

Red food coloring

Glitter

Heart beads and other pink beads (found at the Dollar Tree)

Instructions:

To make the bottle, fill it with water and add food coloring and glitter. Also add in the heart beads and other objects. Then pour in the oil. Glue on the lid. Then shake it up and watch the items float around.



Valentine Heart With A Yarn Full of Love Sherry Tindall, Education Specialist

Resources: <https://www.howweelearn.com/wrapped-love-yarn/>



This is an I love you for anytime, but it can make Valentine's Day even more special when given to that special someone. This activity can support Concept Development through the interaction of creating. You can do this by having a sample of a completed heart and the materials to make the heart. Begin by asking the children to look at the materials and brainstorm how can they use them to make the yarn heart. Write down their ideas on chart paper and then, make up instructions from what you have brainstormed. This activity also falls under the dimension of Instructional Learning Formats because it offers interesting and creative materials and is hands-on.

The formal instructions are: Cut a piece of cardboard in the shape of a heart. Next, snip around the edges so the yarn can adhere to the cardboard. Then wrap the yarn until it completely covers the heart.

Materials:

- ♥ Cardboard
- ♥ Yarn
- ♥ Scissors

Resource: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/sep2018/reducing-challenging-behaviors-during-transitions>

Difficulty with transitions can occur for a number of reasons, such as when children are tired, hungry, confused, or not ready to end an activity. Difficulties with transitions can be especially difficult when children have communication delays, limited social and emotional skills, or intellectual disabilities. Educators can customize strategies to support and improve transitions throughout the school day, and educators should devote time to share these strategies and supports with parents for consistency with the goal to reduce challenging behaviors.

Preventative Strategies:

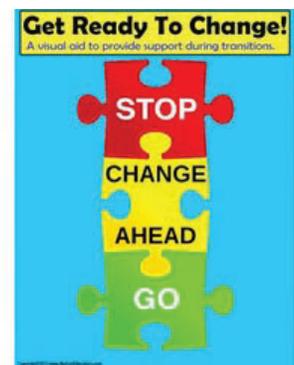
- Look carefully at a family's schedule, routines, and transitions.
- Plan ahead.
- Have materials ready.
- Use music, songs, or predictable noises to signal transitions.
- Using visual cues
- Turning transition times into a game.

-The goal of preventative strategies is to help children understand expectations for transitions so that challenging behaviors are less likely to occur.

Skills to Teach:

- Teach the child the skill to understand directions and transition when signaled.
- Suggest parents practice transition skills with their child.
- Provide praise or descriptive feedback once essential tasks have been completed and add a cue for the transition to begin.
- Teach the child a variety of emotion words so they can express their feelings.
- Teach children problem solving skills so they learn to come up with alternative solutions when problems arise.
- Use "First...then..." statements to communicate their expectations and to help children learn to wait patiently for preferred activities.

-Even with supports and efforts in place, there will still be times when transitions are challenging for some children. By learning about the specific situations that remain difficult, educators can provide individualized strategies for the child.



Celebrate Carrot Cake Day

Katrina Willis, Education Specialist

Resource: www.nationaldaycalendar.com

February 3rd is national Carrot Cake Day! You and your school agers will have fun baking Lemon Frosted Carrot Cupcakes to celebrate, while simultaneously enhancing their math concepts through measuring and mixing the ingredients.

February wasn't always the 2nd month. Going back to the ancient Roman times, when February was first added to the calendar in 700 BC, it was placed at the end of the calendar. This placement aligned the calendar with the lunar (moon) cycle. However, Roman superstition avoided even numbers, so the calendar resulted in every month having 29 days, except one—February. It remained at the end of the calendar for nearly 200 years when January and February were moved to the beginning of the year. The Anglo-Saxons called February "Sol-monath" meaning "cake month." Though they offered cakes to the gods in February, you can celebrate by having some cake with friends and family (students can take some home and share with family). It is believed that the carrot's natural sweetness may have been selected as a substitute in the Middle Ages when sugar was hard to find or expensive. Carrot cake most likely developed from a carrot pudding which could be savory or sweet.

What you will need: find the recipe at the following site:

www.allrecipes.com/recipe/238756/lemon-frosted-carrot-cake-cupcakes

*Be sure to check recipe for possible allergies your students may have.

Directions: Gather your group of students that are interested in baking the cupcakes. Share the above facts about the history behind the carrot cake holiday. Have the students decide who will be in charge of measuring and mixing the dry ingredients and who will be in charge of measuring and mixing the wet ingredients, etc., encouraging the students to work together as a team. Be sure to ask open-ended questions while interacting with the students.



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
Early Learning

LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.



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

Provider Profiles

As a reminder Provider Profiles need to be updated annually. The 2023-2024 profiles are now available. Please update your profile for the upcoming 2023-2024 program year as soon as possible. Updated Profiles are necessary for the initiation of VPK Provider Applications.

VPK Provider Application Updates

Please remember it is imperative that any changes made to your VPK program during the program year must be updated and submitted through the VPK Provider Application within 14 days of the change. This includes changes in director, teachers, aides or substitutes as well as any calendar or classroom changes.

Contract Department

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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.