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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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April is National Garden Month!

It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

- Choose a spot
- Choose what to grow
- Spend time together inside or out!
- * Even 2- and 3-year-olds can help plant their own little patch, and watch as life unfolds around them.



For more information and even more ideas:

<https://www.hgtv.com/outdoors/gardens/garden-styles-and-types/plant-a-child-friendly-garden>

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 FL Updates



Please note that the *Chillin' with The Cats* event date has changed from April 14th to **May 3rd!**



Chillin' with the Cats!

When: Wednesday, May 3, 2023, 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Where: Ravine Gardens State Park
1600 Twigg St., Palatka, FL 32177

Who: Event for VPK age children (4-5 year olds).

Event Details

The event will feature a fun music-filled storytime with special guests "The Cat in the Hat" and "Pete the Cat" with time for group photo ops. There will be activities for the kids to do all over the room related to different Dr. Seuss & Pete the Cat books. Examples are: Cat in the Hat Cup Stacking, Green Eggs and Ham Sensory play, One Fish Two Fish Fishing game, Pete the Cat playdough fun and Pete the Cat puppets.



RSVP Required: Friday, April 7, 2023 to Joan Whitson:
joan.whitson@ecs4kids.org or
904-342-2267 ext. 202. Space is limited!



www.elcnorthflorida.org

Each child will receive a FREE Dr. Seuss and Pete the Cat book and each classroom will receive a bag of assorted books.

The FREE event is being sponsored by the ELC of North Florida, Episcopal Children's Services and the Division of Early Learning. Schools must RSVP because space is limited.

Doors open at 9:20 am. Story time program starts promptly at 9:30 am.

Resource: <https://chicklink.com/20-activities-for-a-toddler/>

Spring is here and there are so many fun learning activities you can use with plastic eggs! Using plastic eggs and an ice cream scoop, work with the infants and toddlers to scoop up the egg and place it in a bucket or basket. This activity strengthens a child's hand eye coordination as well as their gross motor skills.

While the child is completing the activity remain close to the child, if an egg is getting away provide assistance by holding the egg stable. As the child tries scooping it encourage the child to keep trying using their name and encouraging phrases such as "Aspen, you can do it, you are almost there, keep going." Label what the child is looking at, "Aspen is trying to get the red egg with the green ice cream scooper." When the child places the egg into the basket cheer, clap and show excitement for the child's accomplishment.



Resource: <https://nationaltoday.com/national-childrens-picture-book-day/>

If there is one thing early educators have in common, it has got to be a love of picture books! Where the Wild Things Are, Llama Llama Red Pajama, The Cat in the Hat, Chicka Chicka Boom Boom, Goodnight Moon, Corduroy... we all have our favorites. National Children's Picture Book Day celebrates the classics we loved as children, the stories our children love now, and everything in between!

Did you know...

- National Children's Picture Book Day is celebrated on April 2nd, which is also fairytale writer Hans Christian Anderson's birthday.
- The first picture story book, A Little Pretty Pocket Book, was published in 1774.
- According to research from Readers Digest, the best-selling picture book is Eric Carle's The Very Hungry Caterpillar.

Here are some fun ways to celebrate your favorite picture books in class:

- Invite students to share their favorite picture book with the class. Offer them the opportunity to read the book to the class, lead a picture walk through the illustrations, or share why they chose that story as their favorite.
- Graph classroom favorites: Create a bar graph featuring popular picture books from your class library, and have children vote for their favorite.
- Use props in your dramatic play center to recreate scenes from picture books chosen by the students.
- Invite special guests to read their favorite picture book to the class; family members, school administration, community helpers...

CLASS Connections:

Positive Climate: *Relationships* – shared activities and social conversation.

Regard for Student Perspective: *Support for Autonomy and Leadership* – allows choice, allows students to lead lessons

Instructional Learning Formats: *Student Interest* – focused attention.

Quality of Feedback: *Feedback Loops* – back & forth exchanges, follow-up questions.

Resource: <http://nationalhighfiveday.com/>

History of National High Five Day

National High Five Day is a reminder that every little success in life deserves a bit of celebration, and the high five serves as a universal form of celebration at every level of success!

The day began unofficially in 2002, when some college students from the University of Virginia decided it would be a great idea to enjoy giving and receiving high fives (without the opportunity to say no!). The day was set to be the third Thursday in April.

How To Celebrate National High Five Day

Give and Get High Fives

What's the best way to celebrate this day? Give a High Five for every conceivable reason that you can. Spend the day appreciating friends and family members with high fives for any and every reason.

High fives are a great way to increase the positive climate in your classroom. High fives show positive communication and are an easy way to show physical affection.



The Power of Effective Praise Rebecca Huth, Inclusion Specialist

Resource: <https://www.understood.org/en/articles/the-power-of-effective-praise-a-guide-for-teachers#Download: 7 ways to give praise>

Handout: https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/Ts0Q8jEP5gO2YRSsqorhh/30abbe55eca428abdc438df3bd3aa58/7_Ways_to_Praise_Students_Understood.pdf

Praise is one of the simplest and most powerful tools to engage and motivate children. When used consistently and effectively, praise can turn around behavior challenges and improve children's learning. Research shows it's not always the go-to tool and in fact, it's often underused. When praise is used effectively, it is really effective.

There are 3 types of praise:

- Personal praise- focuses on natural talents or skills that come easily to children rather than the efforts they put in. Ex: "You have such a beautiful singing voice!"
- Effort-based praise- emphasis what children can control and their effort. Ex: I am so impressed at how hard you worked to write your name all by yourself."
- Behavior-specific praise- lets children know what they are doing correctly. This specific feedback clearly tells children what they've done correctly. Ex: Great job using your words to take turns playing with the toy cars."



How to deliver effective praise:

- Be specific
- Be clear about the expectations
- Praise the process and progress, not just the outcome
- Be sincere and don't overpraise
- Be sensitive, and follow culturally responsive practices (some cultures see praise as being singled out and it can make the child uncomfortable)
- Get to know your students
- Avoid comparisons to other students

Teachers who use praise regularly tend to have better relationships with their students. They lose less instructional time and see fewer behavior issues. Children who learn and think differently often receive negative feedback as a result of their struggles. That makes meaningful and appropriate praise even more important for them.

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

23-24 VPK Provider Profiles are Available!

23-24 Provider Profiles are now available! Providers must have an Active 2023-2024 profile before VPK applications and contracts can be initiated. If you have not done so, please update your 2023-2024 profile. Existing providers simply need to click 'Create 2023' and most info will populate from your previous profile for you to look over and revise, as needed, before submitting.

VPK Provider Application Updates

Please remember 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 due to closures. Not updating your VPK application within the required timeframe can result in a non-compliance.

Contract Department

8649 Baypine Road, Ste. 300, Bldg. 7, Jacksonville, FL 32256

Toll Free: 1-800-238-3463 * Fax: 904-726-1516

contracts@ecs4kids.org * www.ecs4kids.org

Warm Line 1-800-238-3463

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.

Ext. 2281 (CNBB)

Ext. 2227 (PSJ)