



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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National Crafting Month

March is National Craft Month and on March 14th it is National Children's Craft Day.

The day celebrates crafting with children. By opening children's eyes to the world of crafts, we spark their imagination, and from there, the possibilities are endless.

Crafting can give children a sense of accomplishment as well as help build their self-esteem. As with adults, crafting reduces stress in children, too.

Some benefits of children crafting are:

- Following Directions
- Improving reading comprehension
- Feeling included

It doesn't cost a lot to get a child involved with crafts. Use everyday household items for projects. Don't be afraid to use recycled items such as paper towel tubes and yogurt containers. These items make excellent craft items and demonstrate repurposing.

For more information go to:

<https://nationaldaycalendar.com/national-childrens-craft-day-march-14/>



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!

ELC of North Florida Updates

The ELC of N. Florida hosts successful Early Educators Conference

On Saturday, Feb. 11th the ELCNF hosted it's annual Early Educators Conference in partnership with Episcopal Children's Services. 250 attendees showed up at the Thrasher Home Conference Center in Orange Park for a fun filled informative day. The keynote speaker was Rachel Giannini and she was very inspiring and uplifting. You can learn more about Rachel by visiting: www.rachelgiannini.com CEU hours were awarded.

A big thanks to speaker and musician Anna Moo and all the many staff members from Episcopal Children's Services who were workshop presenters and helped with the conference. Thank you to all the many ELCNF volunteers who ran the registration table and helped to set up the event.



ELC of North Florida Updates

The 2022 Infant/Toddler and Pre-school teacher of the year winners were honored and received their \$500 cash prize from Kaplan Early Learning and the Clay Electric Foundation.

Preschool Teacher of the Year



Infant/Toddler Teacher of the Year



ELC of North Florida Updates

you are
INVITED

To Chilling with the Cats Event at Ravine Gardens State Park in Palatka!

Friday, April 14th 9:30am. -11:00 am.

This is a field trip for providers hosted by the ELC of N. Florida

The cost is **free**. Every child will receive a free Dr. Seuss and Pete the Cat book and each center will receive a bag of assorted books for their

classroom. The event will include a story time featuring two special guests The Cat in the Hat and Pete the Cat followed by activities relating to books by those characters. Come dressed up in your favorite Dr. Seuss or Pete the cat clothes or hats. Ravine Gardens has an inside meeting room where the event will be held.

You must RSVP as space is limited. RSVP by emailing Joan Whitson at joan.whitson@ecs4kids.org or calling 904-342-2267 ext. 202. Please provide your center name, a contact person and how many children will be attending.



Rainbow Sticky Wall Alisha Dexter, Education Specialist

Resources: <http://www.prayingforparker.com/st-patricks-day-educational-ideas/>
<https://mamapapabubba.com/2013/03/12/sticky-wall-rainbow/>

Rainbows are a big hit in preschool classrooms so let's have some fun with our toddlers and let them create their own rainbows together!

Ingredients: Contact paper, Cotton ball or packing peanuts, Small strips of tissue paper in different colors, painter tapes, different color maker

Directions: Draw a simple rainbow shape with corresponding colors. Cut out contact paper and attach it to the wall with painter tape. Make sure that the sticky side is facing out. Cut tissue paper into small strips and place the cotton balls or packing peanuts in a dish. Let the toddler enjoy.



CLASS Connection:

Infant: Facilitated Exploration: Involvement/Expansion of Infant experience => As you play and talk with infants imitate actions and expand on the experience.

Toddler: Regard for Child Perspective:

Child Focus/ Support of Independence: Help toddlers make choices and decisions while playing with sensory materials. Self-help and give them responsibilities as they play.

Facilitation of Learning and Development:

Active Facilitation and Expansion of Cognition: Provide opportunities for exploration and ask questions to direct the toddler's attention. (How did you make that? Why did you choose to use that color? What happens to a rainbow when it goes away?)

Child Active Engagement: As the toddlers actively participate, build on what the toddlers are doing.

Creating Natural Art Jena Waters, Program Assessment Specialist

With "screen time" on the increase; children and adults having their eyes and ears on all things virtual for several hours a day, not to mention the everyday stresses that can occur.

It is now more important than ever to add some mindfulness (*intentionally focusing your awareness on the present moment*), exercises & activities for you and children to do, to calm your minds and bodies. Spending time in nature seems the most "natural" thing to do.

The practice of creating a mandala from objects found in nature, is very a calming and centering activity. It's also a great way to reconnect children and yourself to nature! By spending time creating the circles and patterns involved in a mandala, you will be encouraged to slow down and pay close attention to the materials you will be using.

Before your Mandala creation begins, discuss the activity and process with your child/ children. Explain that you will be going outdoors and walking around the play yard, looking for and gathering natural objects such as flower petals, shells, pinecones, sticks, leaves, moss, rocks, acorns. Supply the children with a small container to place their items in – this process is the beginning of your relaxation journey; Speaking in a calm voice, talking about what they and you found. Examining them thoughtfully and placing them in a container to take back inside. Your child will adjust themselves to fit your pace and demeanor.

Here are some easy-to-follow steps on how to make your own Mandala Art:

1. Create your mandala circles in an area or the play yard, which will allow them to go undisturbed, so that you can revisit it, like an art gallery, but on the ground. Make sure everyone has ample space to make their own creation.
2. Choose the central piece for your mandala and place it in the center of your working area. Try to select a large item to be the central piece, such as a pine cone or rock .
3. Choose another collection and form a ring/circle around the central piece, for instance, like leaves surrounding a pinecone in the center. The focus here is to make sure you make a complete ring around the first piece.
4. Continue this pattern adding new circles made from the different items you collected until you believe your piece is complete. A minimum of 5 rings is usually required for visual impact. Take a photo of the children by their creation, so that you remember your mandala sharing it with family and friends through your favorite media share on-line.

Bonus thoughts:

- Create one using fine line markers or watercolors.
- Create a mandala to be a permanent piece of art and glue to heavy card stock paper
- Use man-made collections to create mandalas such as toy cars, marbles, or buttons, and place on individual cookie sheets or trays.

Explore and enjoy the process- the possibilities are limited only by your imagination!



Green Slime for St. Patrick's Day Ariel Jones, Education Specialist

Resource: Elements of the article is taken from <https://littlebinsforlittlehands.com/st-patricks-day-slime-recipe-holiday-sensory-play/>

Kids love to play with homemade slime in their favorite slime colors! Slime making is even more fun when you add in a St Patrick's Day theme with confetti and glitter. Three simple ingredients {one is water} are all you need. Add color, glitter, sequins, and then you are done! Before we get started, here are a few scientific facts about slime. Slime is an excellent chemistry demonstration and kids love it too! Mixtures, substances, polymers, cross-linking, states of matter, elasticity, and viscosity are just a few of the science concepts that can be explored with homemade slime! What's slime science all about? The borate ions in the slime activators (sodium borate, borax powder, or boric acid) mix with the PVA (polyvinyl acetate) glue and forms this cool stretchy substance. This is called cross-linking! The glue is a polymer and is made up of long, repeating, and identical strands or molecules. These molecules will flow past one another keeping the glue in a liquid state. Until... You add the borate ions to the mixture, and it then starts to connect these long strands together. They begin to tangle and mix until the substance is less like the liquid you started with and thicker and rubbery like slime! Slime is a polymer. Picture the difference between wet spaghetti and leftover spaghetti the next day. As the slime forms, the tangled molecule strands are much like the clump of spaghetti!

Follow the steps below to create your own St. Patrick's Day slime for children. Tip: Allow children to make their own small batch of slime to play with or take home.

YOU WILL NEED:

1/2 Cup of Clear Or White PVA School Glue

1/4 Cup of Liquid Starch

1/2 Cup of Water

Food coloring, confetti, glitter, and other fun mix-ins

HOW TO MAKE GREEN GLITTER SLIME:

STEP 1: In a bowl mix 1/2 cup water and 1/2 cup of glue (mix well to combine completely).

STEP 2: Now's the time to add (color, glitter, or confetti)! Remember when you add color to white glue, the color will be lighter. Use clear glue for jewel toned colors!

You can never add too much glitter! Mix the glitter and confetti and color into the glue and water mixture.

STEP 3: Pour in 1/4 cup of liquid starch. You will see the slime immediately start to form. Keep stirring until you have a gooey blob of slime. The liquid should be gone!

STEP 4: Start kneading your slime! It will appear stringy at first, but just work it around with your hands and you will notice the consistency changes. You can also put it in a clean container and set it aside for 3 minutes, and you will also notice the change in consistency!



Plant Seeds of Good Behavior Jhordan Speed-Johnson, Inclusion Specialist

Reading Material: https://challengingbehavior.org/docs/whatworks/WhatWorksBrief_18.pdf

There's a big difference between *logical consequences* and *punishment*. Logical consequences are related to a child's actions and help them learn from their mistakes by promoting responsibility. Punishment uses control and negativity to enforce compliance. Essentially, logical consequences teach young children the importance of following expectations and punishment teaches them dishonesty or avoiding detection.

So, how do you effectively implement logical consequences?

- Present them as a choice (one you're willing to follow through on) to the child and related to the activity the child's doing. (*If you want to eat snack, you must wash your hands. The longer it takes for you to wash your hands, the longer it'll take for you to get your snack.*)
- Be considerate of your tone.
- If the child refuses, be consistent and enforce the consequence.
- Routinely go over the expectations and the logical consequences prior to an activity, so children are informed and prepared.

Suggestions	
<i>Problem Behavior</i>	<i>Logical Consequences</i>
The child makes a mess.	The child must clean up the mess.
The child runs indoors.	The child must go back and walk.
The child throws a toy.	The child loses privilege to play with toy.
The child won't follow directions.	The child can't participate.
The child won't follow carpet expectations.	The child will sit directly beside teacher or must sit in a chair.
The child plays too roughly on the playground after multiple teacher redirections and hurts another child.	The child must apologize to their peer and sit out for a few minutes (Age equals how many minutes they sit out. Example: A three-year-old sits out three minutes). Then they must tell you a way to play safer.

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 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

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.