



# Helping Hands

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



## Family Engagement

Episcopal Children's Services

Volume 17, Issue 11

May 2023

Inside this issue:

**May is Family Wellness Month** which was created to encourage families to improve communication and make lifestyle changes that promote the emotional, mental and physical health of the entire family. Big or small all steps toward wellness are important and can bring your family closer together. Here are just a few ways to celebrate Family Wellness Month:

- Volunteer Together
- Family Game Night
- Grow A Garden
- Connect with extended family
- Take care of yourself and each other

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For more information:

<https://www.brighamandwomensfaulkner.org/about-bwfh/news/10-ways-to-celebrate-Family-Wellness-Month>

### 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

Join us for a fun filled event that you will not want to miss!



### 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](http://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: Teachstone/CLASS Infant

When Infants have a secure connection to caregivers that they frequently spend time with, who provide a climate, free from stress-inducing negativity, the safer they feel, and they become more actively engaged to learn from their surrounding environment.

Thinking about this topic and going even deeper- we all thrive on less stress-inducing negativity don't we? We all become more engaged in our surrounding environment. We want to explore all the colorful, intriguing materials, and objects that we may not "see" when we are in a state of fear and upset. Because it is when we feel safe and secure, that we "open-up" and trust that everything is going to be ok when we do. Whether we are a seasoned, knowledge-filled caregiver, or we are just starting our journey, it is always best practice to do a little self-check in, on the relational climate we are providing in our classroom. updating ourselves on the latest information being provided to us, and in this case, to positive interactions and relationship building with young children. The bonus of all this information being absorbed, is sharing our knowledge with others that are new to the field, so they can see that they play a vital role in providing a solid, loving foundation for positive mental health and growth in the lives of our young ones. Paying it forward is a win, win!

### **Here are some ways to create a more positive relational environment in your classroom:**

- Get Physically close to infants and share in their experiences; from tummy time, playing with toys on the floor, to feeding, all infants benefit from your attention to them.
- Freely show affection, physically and verbally – helping infants feel connected to you by using affectionate tones when talking to them, making eye contact, rubbing their backs, and a good hug!
- Smile and laugh with infants – showing positive emotions lets infants know you enjoy being with them, creating a positive experience for both of you.
- Showing respect for infants – Just like us, infants need to be treated as a person not an object, it helps them/us feel valued. Start by frequently using their names and using polite language, such as "please and thank you".
- Let children know what you are going to do to them before you do it – Verbally prepare infants before you act upon them; picking them up to diaper change, feed or move them and wiping their noses.
- Remember that infants cry to communicate their needs – Infants are not yet able to regulate their emotions – they need us to help them feel soothed and happy!
- Do a "self-check" often – Some days are just plain HARD. Know that it is normal to feel stressed. Check in with yourself throughout the day and ask for a short break away from the classroom if needed; taking a walk outdoors, get a cup of coffee or chat with a co-worker friend !

## Wings and Flowers of Love Sherry Tindall, Education Specialist

Resource: <https://mamapapabubba.com/2013/05/20/footprint-butterfly-flower-pot/>

Nothing says I love you like flowers, so then give mom a sentimental flowerpot that both child and mother can spend time planting the perfect I love you plant, everything from Gerber Daisies to Bright Red Geraniums. Look below and get started.

Materials needed:

Clay Pot (One big enough for the PreK child's footprint)

Foam paintbrushes

Acrylic paint

Black Sharpie

Matte spray on clear coat

Instructions: (Best to do outdoors with a water supply nearby)

Take acrylic paint and paint bottom of the foot and press it onto the flowerpot. Press both left and right foot. Have various colors of paint for children to choose from. Once the paint has dried have the child draw in the butterfly's body. Next, once everything is good and dry the teacher can spray on a clear matte coat. And there you have a Mother's Day gift that will allow parent and child time to plant together. Before giving mom, this unique gift have children display their pots during circle time and discuss why they chose the colors they did and how will they give it to mom or their significant person.

What CLASS dimensions are covered in this gesture of love. Concept Development, Instructional Learning Format, Regard for Student Perspective and Language Modeling. Concept Development is covered in the area of creating, ask the children to brainstorm how they can make a butterfly on the pot using the paint, then plan how they will paint the pot and then begin the process and create a thing of beauty.

Instructional Learning Format is covered by using interesting and creative materials.

Regard for Student Perspective is seen in providing children with the color of paint they want to use to make their butterfly.

Language Modeling is covered when the children gather their pots at circle time and discuss the why and how they made their pots of love. Put some CLASS into this year's Mother's Day Gift.



## Paper Plate Pinata Katrina Willis, Education Specialist

Resource: [www.kidsactivitiesblog.com](http://www.kidsactivitiesblog.com)

History: Many think that the 5<sup>th</sup> of May is Mexico's Independence Day. This is not true—that day is celebrated on September 16<sup>th</sup>. Cinco de Mayo, a Mexican American holiday celebrated mostly in the United States and parts of Mexico, commemorates the victory of the Mexicans over France at the Battle of Puebla.

This pinata is colorful and fun to make! Each student can make his/her own pinata—you can hang them around the room for decoration, and then allow each student to take theirs home and break them there. This pinata activity does not require a lot of crafting supplies.

**What you will need:** paper plates (2 per student/pinata), glue, different colored tissue paper, and candy

**Directions:** Gather your group of students that are interested in making a pinata. Share the above facts about the history of the Cinco de Mayo holiday, then begin the craft. Using the tissue paper (colors of your choice), make some fringe. The best way to do it is to fold it over a few times and then cut up and down. Then place both paper plates together and staple one end (it should resemble a tambourine), see image 2b. Once the paper plates are stapled, decorate the foundation of your pinata by gluing your tissue paper fringe on. Allow the glue to dry, and then stuff it with candy. Finish by stapling it completely around and then running some string through the top middle.

Note: depending on the quality of the paper plate, you won't want to stuff it too much so it can withstand a few bangs without it completely falling off the string the instant it's hit. Throughout the activity be sure to ask open-ended questions while interacting with the students. And perhaps share more history about this festive holiday. If you have any students of Mexican heritage ask them (or their parents) if they would share some of their family's cultural customs/traditions with the class/center.



## 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**

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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

### VPK 22-23 Provider Applications

23-24 VPK provider applications are available. Providers need to have an Active 2023-2024 profile in order for the VPK provider application (VPK-10, 11A, 11B) to 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.

### Contract Department

8649 Baypine Road, Ste. 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, 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.