



Helping Hands

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



Family Engagement

Episcopal Children's Services

Volume 18, Issue 9

March 2024

Inside this issue:

Fun Easter Activities the Whole Family Will Love

Easter is a time for family and togetherness, and each year presents a new opportunity to make lasting memories. Here are some fun and exciting Easter games, crafts, and activities to get you and your family into the spirit of the holiday — no matter how you celebrate!

- *Read Easter Themed Books
- *Have Easter Themed Play-Doh or Lego Challenges
- *Have an Easter Egg Hunt
- *Color or Paint Some Flowers

To read the full article & see additional activities, please visit the website:
<https://www.readbrightly.com/indoor-easter-activities/>

For more information go to:

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

ELC Updates	2-3
New Worlds Reading Initiative	4-5
Chia Seed Slime	6
March is Disabilities Awareness Month	7
Celebrating Dr. Seuss	8
How to Utilize the ASQ Activities	9
Transition to Kindergarten	10
Parent Involvement	11
T.E.A.C.H.	12
Professional Development/VPK Corner	13

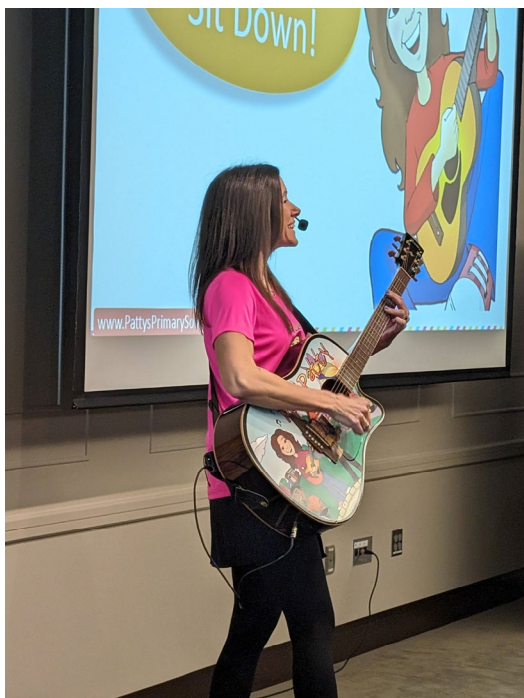


If you have a question, comment, or concern you would like addressed in an upcoming issue of *Helping Hands*, please send an e-mail to: Brianna.deosca@ecs4kids.org. We will do our best to find the answer, post the comment, and address the concern.
Thanks
Brianna DeOsca, Editor

ELC of North Florida Updates

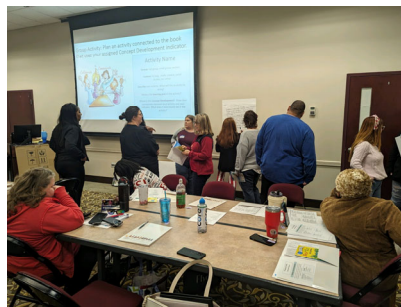
The ELC of N. Florida hosts successful Early Educators Conference

The ELC of N. Florida and Episcopal Children's Services put on its annual educators conference on Saturday, February 3rd at the Thrasher Home Conference center in Orange Park. 240 attendees came out for a fun filled informative day. The keynote speakers were Patty Shukla and Dr. Teri LeDucca. Afternoon workshops were presented by the ECS education team staff. A big thank you goes out to Kaplan Early Learning Co. and Toni Boloutchi for once again being the sponsor of our annual Teacher of the Year awards. Thank you to all the ELC volunteers and ECS staff who worked to make this event a huge success!



ELC of North Florida Updates

A big thanks to all the ECS Education team staff for presenting conference workshops!



New Worlds Reading Initiative

<https://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7539/urlt/NWRIFlyer-English.pdf>



Reading shapes who we are.

Help your kids read on grade level with Florida's FREE at-home book delivery program.

- VPK - 5th grade students can apply to receive FREE books and reading activities every month from this state-created program.*
- Students can choose books that match their interests.
- Books and activities are available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and braille.

*Visit newworldsreading.com to see eligibility requirements.


Families can apply today:

newworldsreading.com/enroll



Play Reading Bingo

Instructions: Every time you read a book and complete an activity on your bingo card, cross off a square. Try to cross off all the squares by the end of the school year!

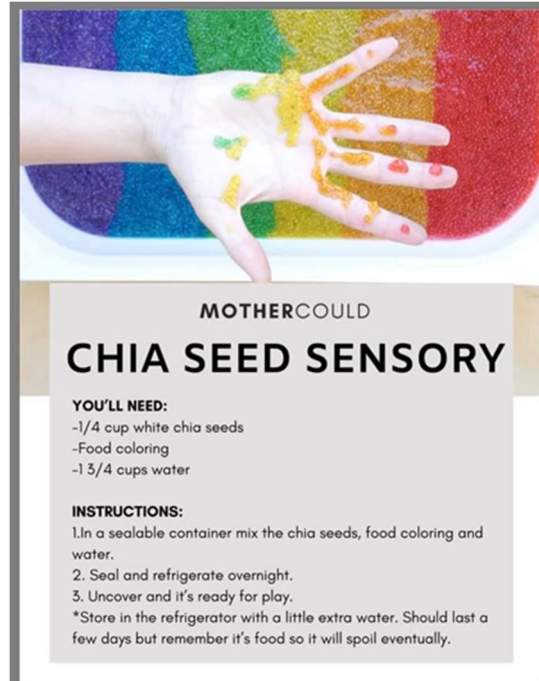
Read a nonfiction book	Read a fiction book	Learn a new word from a book	Read outside	Read with a silly voice
Read a book with someone else	Read in your pajamas	Learn a new fact from a book	Draw a picture of your favorite book character	Read to a pet or stuffed animal
Read on the weekend	Re-read a book		Read before breakfast	Read a book you checked out from the library
Draw a new cover for a book	Read on a rainy day	Make up a new ending for a book	Read a book with an animal in it	Read out loud
Read under the table	Read in your bed	Read 3 days in a row	Tell someone about a book you read	Read a book in a new genre

Happy reading! For more activity ideas, visit newworldsreading.com.
Share your board with us on social media! #NewWorldsReading



Chia Seed Slime: Taste Safe Sensory Play Jazmine Jackson, Education Specialist

Resources: [COLORFUL CHIA SEED SENSORY PLAY \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)



Gather your little ones and get them engaged with this fun and safe sensory activity! In a sealable container, mix a quarter cup of white chia seeds, one and three quarters cups of water, and food coloring of your choice. Create as many colors as your child would like. Seal the containers, refrigerate overnight, and your chia seed slime will be ready to play with! You can add spoons, scoops, plastic toys, or fake plants to the slime for additional enhancement. As children explore the slime, describe the texture, temperature, and colors. Repeat the words and sounds used by the child and expand/extend on their communication. Provide information such as "This is made from chia seeds. Seeds are where plants come from", or "Our slime is rainbow colored. We see rainbows in the sky". Encourage children to think and problem solve by asking questions like "What do you think the chia seeds grow into?" or "How can we separate our slime into two?" Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty with the children! Get involved in order to support learning and development. Describe yours and your students' actions as you scoop, squish, and pour the chia slime.

CLASS Connections:

Facilitated Exploration / Facilitation of Learning & Development: Joining in and following the children's leads, providing hands-on materials for exploration and learning, providing and embedding information, and encouraging thinking skills.

Early Language Support / Language Modeling: asking open-ended questions, engaging in back-and-forth exchanges, self- and parallel talk, repetition and extension, describing and labeling objects/events.

March is Disabilities Awareness Month Jazmine Jackson, Education Specialists

Resources: <https://youtu.be/CUy9Dos9264>

Preparing Young Children for the Inclusion of Children with Disabilities into the Classroom | NAEYC

This is a time where you can take an important role in teaching children about compassion and inclusivity. Inclusive classroom settings benefit all children! Children who participate in inclusive settings are more empathetic and accepting of others with differences. Nonverbal communication is commonly used amongst individuals with disabilities. This month, let's take some time to learn and teach your students some basic American Sign Language (ASL). Teachers should view the video a few times prior to sharing it with students and practice the signs, paying particular attention to terms that may be useful in your classroom or home. Afterward, watch the video with your students and practice their favorite signs. Ask children what additional signs they would like to learn. Write their suggestions on chart paper and take time to learn them throughout the week. Ask your students what other ways they can be kind and inclusive in the classroom. Write their ideas on chart paper and display in the classroom, reminding students of the ways they can be kind to one another.

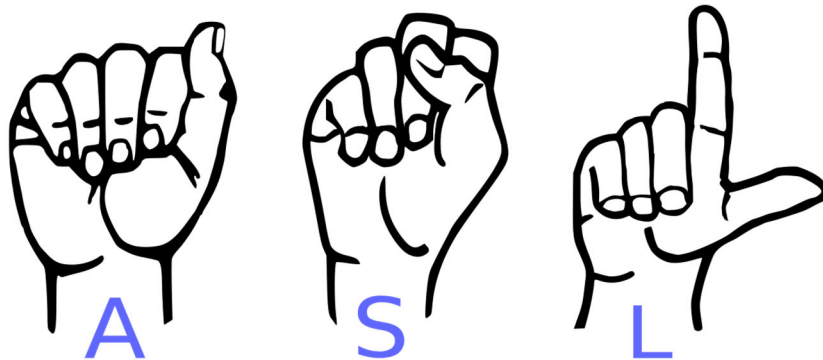
CLASS Connections:

Positive Climate – fostering a sense of inclusivity and stressing kindness in your classroom culture

Teacher Sensitivity – displaying awareness of students with special needs and accommodation

Behavior Management – displaying desired behaviors and using the chart paper as a subtle behavioral cue

Language Development – possible vocabulary expansion and open-ended questioning



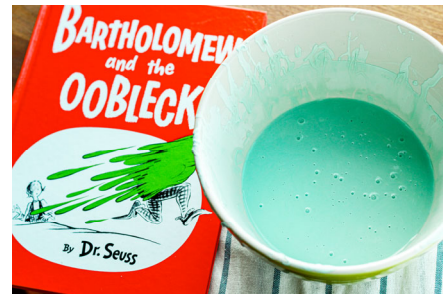
Celebrating Dr. Seuss Brianna DeOsca, Education Specialist

Resource: <https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/64339/dr-seuss-day-party/>
<https://www.instructables.com/Oobleck/>

Let's have a birthday party for one of the most loved children's author, Dr. Seuss! Born on March 2, 1904, Theodor Giesel first started out as a political cartoonist and then became a worldwide children's author writing over 50 books. Dr. Seuss books are great for building phonological awareness and oral language comprehension. Teachers can read aloud and ask for the children to listen for certain sounds, point out rhyming words, act out syllables, and so much more. Not only does his books encourage and promote early literacy and language, but it can also open the world of science to young learners. Take the book *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*. Oobleck gets its name from the Dr. Seuss book *Bartholomew and the Oobleck* where a gooey green substance, Oobleck, fell from the sky and wreaked havoc in the kingdom. Grab the below ingredients and make some with your class today!

Recipe:

- 1 cup water
- 1.5-2 cups corn starch
- a few drops of food coloring of your choice (green if you want the real deal!)



How to make it:

1. Start with the water in a bowl and start adding the corn starch to it. You can use a spoon at first, but pretty quickly you'll be moving on to using your hand to stir it up.
2. When you're getting close to adding 1.5 cups of the corn starch, start adding it in more slowly and mixing it in with your hand. The goal is to get a consistency where the Oobleck reaches a state that is the liquid and yet solid.
3. Sometimes you will need more cornstarch. If so, keep adding more than the initial 1.5 cups. If you add too much, just add some water back into it. You will have to play with it to get the consistency.
4. Now that the Oobleck is just right, it's time to add some color. We save this step for later because it's a fun challenge to stir in the food coloring. You will have to slowly mix the Oobleck around to get it thoroughly mixed.

Class Connections:

Concept Development - Use the experiment to ask how/why questions and have the children use prediction/experimentation skills.

Regard for Children Perspective - Have the children mix their own ingredients in a bowl with a plastic spoon to give the autonomy and independence. Also, you can follow the children's lead and listen to their ideas of what they think about the Oobleck.

Language Modeling - Self and parallel talk can be used throughout this activity. Describe what you are doing as the children follow you and repeat/extend on their statements.

How to Utilize the ASQ Activities Rebecca Huth, Inclusion Specialist

Resource: <https://agesandstages.com/free-resources/articles/asq-learning-activities-support-child-development/>

The ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE are shared if the child scores close to or below the cutoff (concern/monitoring) areas. These activities enhance the growth and development of the child and are perfect to share with parents to support developmental or social-emotional skills. The ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE activities serve as a natural follow-up for children when scoring in monitoring or concerning zones.

Ways that they can be used:

Copy and share the [ASQ-3](#) and [ASQ-SE](#) (click on links) informational letters to parents to reinforce the importance of the learning activities and their child's development.

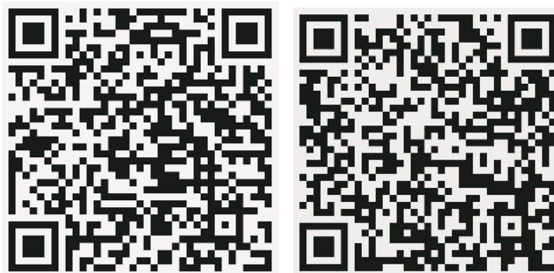
Consider using and embedding the learning activities in instructional and routine activities.

Activities can be shared when families share general concerns, regardless of their child's total scores.

Use activities to help guide conversations with parents about their child's development and upcoming milestones.

Scan QR Codes for ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE Activities

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Parent Tips for Preparing for a Kindergarten Transition Jazmine Jackson, Education Specialists

Resources: Your Child is Going to Kindergarten: Making the Move Together (hhs.gov)

As we continue on in the final quarter of the school year, it is a great time for families to get familiar with their child's future kindergarten program. If you have not already, take the time to learn as much as you can about the new school or schools in your district. Get involved with your community by talking with other parents, or attending meetings with parents/school, cultural and community groups, parent led groups, and/or the school board. Visit your child's new school and tour with your child. This is the perfect opportunity for parents to ask questions and share their concerns.

The Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center encourages asking questions such as:

How do I register my child?

What will the teacher expect my child to know and be able to do?

When will we meet my child's kindergarten teacher?

What is the school and kindergarten schedule?

What are visitor sign-in policies and safety procedures?

When possible, parents should spend time in the kindergarten classroom and allow their child to explore. Talk with them about what is the same and what is different from their current classroom. When parents meet with teachers for the first time, they should express what they feel their child's strengths are as well as areas for growth. If your child receives special education or health accommodations (i.e. Individual Education Plan or 540 Plan), ask how to ensure these services continue.

Transitioning to Kindergarten can be a bit scary for parents and students alike, but by preparing early, your child's move into kindergarten can go more smoothly.



Giant Bubbles! Jazmine Jackson, Education Specialists

Resources: The Best Homemade Bubble Recipe for GIANT Bubbles- A New Dawnn

It's March and Spring is coming! As we prepare for Spring Break, consider different opportunities to get your family outdoors. Here is a fun bubbles activity that is sure to keep your children engaged and exploring. Making giant bubbles is a great opportunity to engage in analysis and reasoning skills. Ask your children questions like, "What would happen if there was more/less soap?" or "How could we make a bubble around me?". Compare your giant bubbles to a bottle of regular bubbles or bubbles from a machine. Which bubbles pop faster? Which bubbles float higher? The possibilities for curiosity and exploration are endless with bubbles!

The Best Homemade Bubble Recipe for GIANT Bubbles

Make the BIGGEST and BEST bubbles with this homemade bubble solution! Most of the items you need you probably already have at home!

PREP TIME	ACTIVE TIME	TOTAL TIME	DIFFICULTY
5 minutes	10 minutes	15 minutes	Easy

Materials

- 2 quarts of water
- 1 1/2 cups Dawn Dish Detergent (the blue one)
- 1/4 cup of corn starch

Tools

- 3 quart bucket or larger
- Stick or large spoon to stir

Instructions

1. Fill the bucket with 2 quarts of water
2. Slowly pour in the Dawn Dish Detergent
3. Stir gently and slowly (you don't want bubbles to start forming)
4. Add in cornstarch and gently stir until dissolved
5. Let the mixture sit for about 10 minutes and then you're ready to use it



www.anewdawnn.com

CLASS Connections:

Positive Climate – spending your time close to children and showing a genuine interest in them; sharing in their excitement and activities

Concept Development – encouraging analysis and reasoning by asking questions and providing activities that get children to puzzle through problems, test out new ideas, and make comparisons.

Language Development – asking children questions that invite elaborate responses or put together language to communicate complex ideas. Intentionally introducing unfamiliar vocabulary to children in a way that they can understand.

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 2024-2025 profiles are now available. Please update your profile for the upcoming 2024-2025 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.