



Helping Hands

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



— EPISCOPAL —
Children's Services
BELIEVE. ACHIEVE. SOAR.

Family Engagement

Episcopal Children's Services

Volume 18, Issue 11

May 2023

Inside this issue:

10 Holidays and Events to Celebrate in May With Your Children

Maybe we love May. Actually, there's no maybe about it. The grass is green, spring is in bloom, and the kids can taste the end of the school year! Macaroni Kid has listed ten occasions, events, and holidays happening this month that you can celebrate with your family! Here are a few of the events.

- National Bike Month
- Mental Health Awareness Month
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Screen Free Week

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To read the full article & see additional activities, please visit the website:

<https://highlandsranch.macaronikid.com/articles/6266b5074268b6126deb65e3/10-holidays-and-events-to-celebrate-in-may-with-your-kids>



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

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

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.

ABC Spray and Erase Activity Joan Whitson, Program Support Specialist

Resource: <https://thetoddlerplaybook.com/literacy-activities-for-toddlers/>

Start by writing a letter on the whiteboard. Then, give your toddler the spray bottle and encourage them to spray the letter on the board and make it disappear! You can also write the child's name or a sight word instead of a single letter to extend the fun. This is a simple (sneaky) activity that helps children develop letter recognition skills while they work on their fine motor strength and coordination. After all, using a spray bottle is hard work for most toddlers – but it's a great workout for the small muscles in their fingers and hands! If your toddler is struggling too much with the spray bottle, you can also give them a wet paintbrush and encourage them to "trace" the letters. Some older toddlers might be ready to write some of their own letters on the whiteboard independently. Yay! Go them! Feel free to hand over the spray bottle *and* the dry erase markers and let them go to town.

You'll Need:

1. Spray bottle with water



2. Whiteboard with dry erase markers.



3. Baby wipes for clean-up



Another variation is to take the toddlers outside. Write letters on the pavement with chalk and have the children spray the letters you call out.

CLASS Connections:

Facilitation of Learning and Development: Active facilitation by the teacher and children's active engagement. In this activity the teacher is actively involved in the activity by writing the letters on the board and assisting the child as needed. The child is actively involved by squirting the water, saying the letter or word, and wiping the board.

Quality of Feedback: Scaffolding and Providing Information. The teacher can provide the toddler with verbal and physical assistance helping the child squirt the water bottle and verbally provide individualized feedback and affirmation. "You are putting in a lot of effort into squirting the bottle, keep it up." The teacher can expand and elaborate on the activity by naming each letter plus words that start with that letter and show them objects that also start with that letter.

Rainbow Salt Writing Tray Joan Whitson, Program Support Specialist

Resource: <https://www.raisingdragons.com/rainbow-salt-tray-writing-ages-3-6/>



Sensory writing trays are a creative way for preschoolers to practice learning their letters, letter formation, numbers, and shapes. This activity helps children develop the skills and confidence to form the connecting lines and curves, as well as the vertical, horizontal, and zig-zag lines that form the basis of letters. Who doesn't love rainbows? This rainbow salt activity is a great way to learn the colors of the rainbows while having children practice their writing.

HOW TO MAKE A RAINBOW SALT WRITING TRAY:

Cut strips of construction paper about 2.5 inches thick in red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple.

- Line them up just slightly overlapping and tape them together with clear tape.
- Flip the taped pieces over so that the tape side is on the bottom and place on the baking sheet.
- Sprinkle salt on top of the rainbow paper (we used about 1/4 cup).
- Write some simple sight words on index cards using black marker.

Once setup is complete, give the child a paintbrush and ask them to write the words one at a time on the index cards. Once a word is complete, they can gently shake the tray back and forth, so the word disappears. You can also focus on writing individual letters, numbers or even shapes!

Materials Needed: Construction paper in rainbow colors listed above, baking sheet, scissors, tape, salt, paintbrush, index cards, black marker.

CLASS Connections:

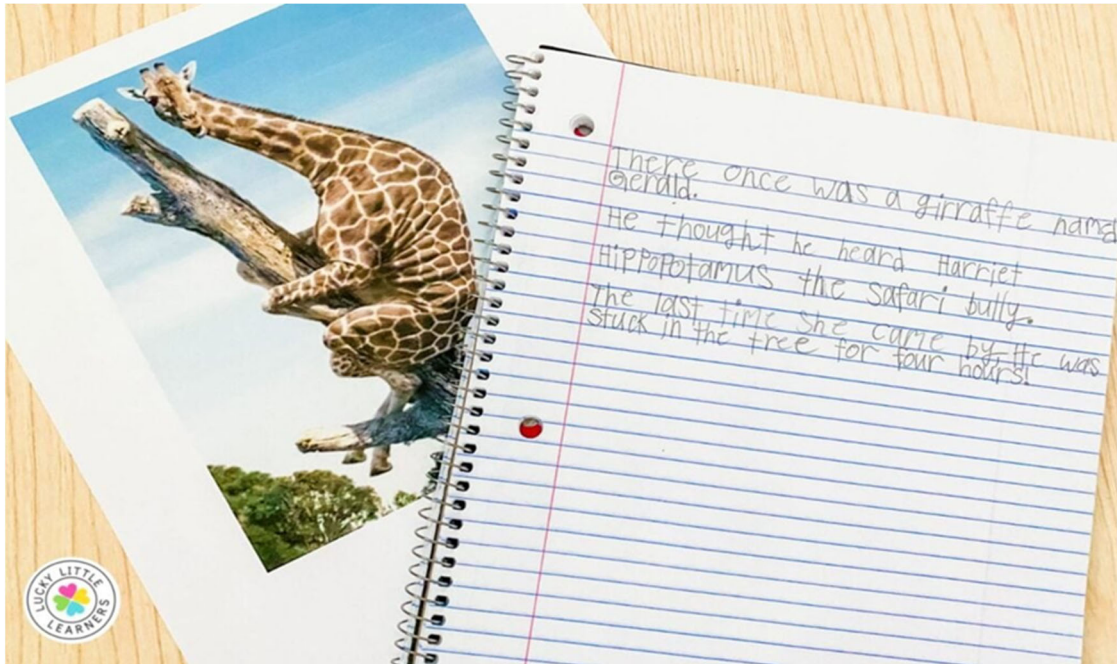
Instructional Learning Format: Variety of modalities and materials. Using a variety of materials like the salt and brushes will work to effectively interest students and help gain their participation.

Quality of Feedback – Scaffolding: The teacher often scaffolds for students who are having a hard time understanding a concept, answering a question, or completing an activity. For example, if a student is having difficulty writing the letter "a" you can say "Remember it looks like a circle with a tail on the side" and model it for them.

Concept Development: Connecting concepts and integrating learning with previous knowledge. This activity can be used to further extend new sight word knowledge while reviewing past words and letters learned.

Language Modeling: Frequent back and forth conversations can be had discussing each sight word and using them in sentences while the student is writing.

Resource: <https://luckylittlelearners.com/15-fun-literacy-activities-for-2nd-grade/>



Sometimes students struggle to think of what to write about. Because of this, many teachers provide prompts. But still, these students struggle to get pencil to paper. Here is an idea called ridiculous writing that has proven to get even least confident writers writing. Kids will love writing a story about this, or for the more reluctant writers, just describing what they think is happening. To find pictures to use, simply google, "silly pictures for kids to write about". After writing, have an author share chair!

Class Connections:

Regard for Student Perspectives: Student expression. This activity elicits students' ideas and perspectives and allows for creative expression. By allowing children then to share their stories out loud you are supporting their autonomy and leadership.

Positive Climate: Describes the warmth and connections shared by teachers and students. This activity will foster humor and laughter which will then create a fun learning environment for the students.

Concept Development: Creating. Encourage brainstorming about what could be happening in the picture. When children write stories they are planning and producing their own work.

Understanding Early Steps Rebecca Huth, Inclusion Specialist

Resource: <https://floridaearlysteps.com/about/>

Florida's Early Steps Program evaluates and provides early intervention services to eligible infants and toddlers ages birth to three for developmental delays, disabilities, and at-risk conditions. Early intervention services are provided where the child lives, learns, and plays so developmentally appropriate learning opportunities are incorporated into everyday activities and routines. Click [here](#) for more information.

*ASQ screening scores along with CDC milestones are used to determine if a referral to Early Steps for further evaluation is recommended. *

What Services Does Early Steps Provide?

- Assistive technologies
- Developmental monitoring, screening, and evaluation.
- Hearing and vision services.
- Individualized early intervention sessions.
- Occupational, physical, and speech therapies.
- Professional support and service coordination.



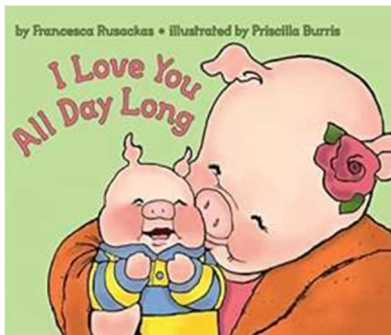
What is the Enrollment Process for Early Steps?

- Child is referred to Early Steps
- Local Early Steps office will contact families and schedule evaluation and/assessment.
- Once evaluations are completed, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) will be creating withing 45 days of the referral.
- Once the IFSP is completed, the team will meet and conduct the entry Child Outcome Summary process (COS). This is designed the measure the child's skills in the areas of: positive social-emotional skills, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of behaviors to meet their needs.
- Early intervention services are provided in the home and community where the child lives, learns, and plays. Services begin within 30 days of completing the IFSP.
- The IFSP is reviewed at least every 6 months to ensure progress is being made.
- When the time is right (typically a few weeks prior to the child turning 3), the child will transition out of Early Steps with tools and activities for continued development or the child will be transferred to the public school system to be evaluated for special education services.
- An exit COS will be completed as part of the transition process.

Resource: <https://happilyeverelephants.com/home/books-for-starting-kindergarten/>

Books For Parents to Prepare Children for Kindergarten

For children who are uncertain and scared about going to kindergarten these books will offer reassurance and courage.



I Love You All Day Long By Francesca Rusackas

Do I have to go? Owen asks. Yes, says his mom. But she sends him off with more than just his lunch. She promises that no matter where he is and no matter what he's doing—whether Owen is making a new friend or spilling his juice—she'll love him all day long, from the moment they part until the moment Owen is back in her arms again. This book shows how the enduring love of a parent stays with a child whether they are together or apart.



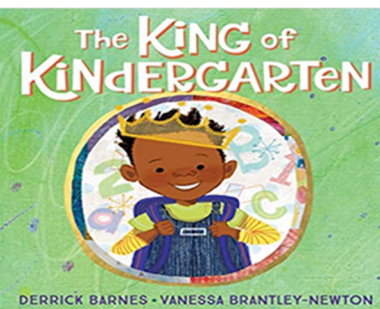
The Night Before Kindergarten By Natasha Wing

It's the first day of school! Join the kids as they prepare for kindergarten, packing school supplies, posing for pictures, and the hardest part of all—saying goodbye to Mom and Dad. But maybe it won't be so hard once they discover just how much fun kindergarten really is!



First Day of School By Mercer Mayer

Little Critter is a bit nervous about starting school today. There's a lot to be done before he can even get on the bus—he must pick out his clothes, find his backpack, pack the perfect lunch, and say good-bye to Mom. Join Little Critter as he gets ready for this exciting day. Lift the flaps and find out what surprises are in store for Little Critter on his first day of school!

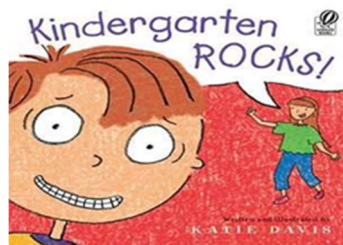


The King of Kindergarten By Derrick Barnes

Mommy says that today, you are going to be the King of Kindergarten. The hero of this story is ready to make his mark. He's dressed himself, eaten a pile of pancakes, and can't wait to be part of a whole new kingdom of kids. The day will be jam-packed, but he's up to the challenge, taking new experiences in stride with his infectious enthusiasm. Afterwards he comes home excited to tell his proud parents about his day.

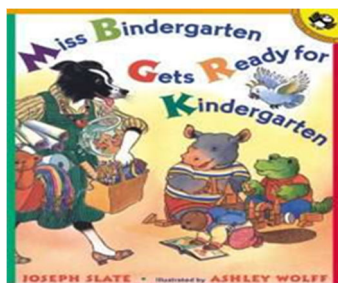
Resource: <https://dayearlylearning.org/blog/10-books-help-prepare-child-kindergarten/>

Books For Teachers to Prepare Children for Kindergarten



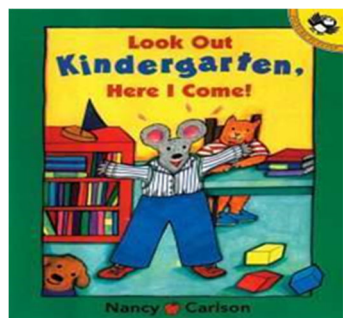
Kindergarten Rocks! By Katie Davis

Dexter already knows everything there is to know about kindergarten. His big sister, Jessie, told him all about it. So, Dexter is not scared. Not even a little bit. But his stuffed dog, Rufus, is scared. Actually, he's terrified. But Dexter—er, Rufus—has nothing to fear: As he'll soon find out, kindergarten rocks!



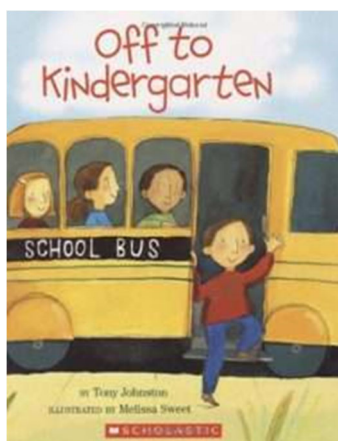
Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten By Joseph Slate

It's the first day of kindergarten and Miss Bindergarten is hard at work getting the classroom ready for her twenty-six new students. Meanwhile, Adam Krupp wakes up, Brenda Heath brushes her teeth, and Christopher Beaker finds his sneaker. Miss Bindergarten puts the finishing touches on the room just in time, and the students arrive. Now the fun can begin!



Look Out Kindergarten Here I Come By Nancy Carlson

The first day of kindergarten is finally here, and Henry can't wait to paint pictures, sing songs, and practice counting. When he gets to school, though, he's not so sure he's ready for kindergarten. But before long Henry discovers that the only thing, he's not ready for is how much fun he's going to have at school! This gently humorous, encouraging story will give children about to enter kindergarten an extra boost of confidence.



Off to Kindergarten By Tony Johnston

Nervous about starting kindergarten, a boy decides he needs to take all kinds of things with him just in case: his bear, books, paints and an easel, cookies for himself and for all his new friends, and a change of clothes. And what about his sandbox and his swing set? I think I'd better get a truck / to haul my stuff to school. Accompanied by clear, energetic illustrations, the simple, playful rhyme expresses every kid's fear and excitement about leaving home. Young listeners will enjoy the wild exaggeration and feeling superior as the boy packs up more and more, and they'll recognize his big step forward when he leaves his stuff at home and boards the school bus all by himself.

Resource: <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/grocery-store-literacy>

A simple trip to the grocery store can turn into a real learning experience for your child. Below are some easy ways to build literacy while getting your shopping done at the same time!



Ideas for Toddlers

- Point out word and picture relationship on cans, signs, etc. "See the picture of peas? This word says peas. The picture and word tell us what's inside" Skill: [Print Awareness](#)
- Make 'his' shopping list with pictures of a few items for him to look for in the store. Skill: [Vocabulary](#), matching skills and visual discrimination- [Letter Knowledge](#)
- Talk about how you're going to use the grocery items. "We have some peanut butter, bread, and apples. When we get home, we're going to make sandwiches and slice the apples. Then we're going to eat them for lunch." Skill: sequencing- [Narrative Skills](#)
- Point out and describe something in the produce section, then look for other things that fit that word. "I see tomatoes- they're red. Can you see anything else that's red?" Give her the name of red items she doesn't know. (Buy one and have it for lunch). Skill: [Vocabulary](#)

Ideas for Preschoolers

- **Her shopping list:** Let her scribble a list while you're making yours (children copy the actions of the grownups in their lives). Share the shopping list. Let her have a few items on her list to look for and check them off when you find them in the store. Skill: [Print Awareness](#).
- **Play "I Spy"** with the sound of the letter in your child's first name. "I spy something that starts with the sound 'puh' like Paul." "Yeah- potatoes!" Let's see how many other things we can spy that start with your sound." Skill: [Phonological Awareness](#)
- Let her pick the sound you'll look for in the store that day. On the trip home, see how many things she remembers. Skill: [Phonological Awareness](#)
- **Rhyming "I Spy":** "I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with silk" Give another hint if necessary for success. "It goes on cereal." Take turns being the person spying and the person guessing. Skill: [Phonological Awareness](#), [Vocabulary](#)
- **Shop the alphabet.** Starting with an 'a', see how far up the alphabet he can spot the letters sequentially. Or find all the letters in a word you choose- like his name. Skill: [Letter Knowledge](#)

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

VPK FAST UPDATES:

New training will be available about or around May 1, 2024. The new training will also include 2 forms that will need to be completed by the test administrator. These forms will need to be signed in ink. **NO** electronic signatures. Once these have been signed, they will need to be emailed along with the course Certificate of Completion to Roushawn.saunders@ecs4kids.org.

For the Summer VPK programs, the VPK FAST testing will take place on a separate site from the School Year Program. The Summer VPK Renaissance site is:

<https://global-zone51.renaissance-go.com/welcomeportal/8670797>.

We recommend you bookmark this site as Summer Renaissance to differentiate from the School year site.





Reminders for Progress Monitoring Window 3

Please check our website for your PM3 start date and end date through our new automated system that is updated weekly! All you will need is the email used as the FAST contact in your provider profile and your Provider ID.

<https://www.ecs4kids.org/programs/vpk/providers/progress-monitoring/> Please remember, any changes to your classroom calendars can impact your progress monitoring dates, please verify these dates anytime you have a calendar change. Please ensure all children are being tested within the PM3 Window. You may test a child as many times as you want within or after the Progress Monitoring dates, however, only the first completed test during the testing window will count. Please check your STAR Test Activity Report to make sure all children have been tested. When using the STAR test activity report, please make sure you are using the CUSTOM DATES to ensure the report will show the correct PM window information. Any child that is enrolled at your facility during that progress monitoring window needs to be tested during that window. Also, any child that is not able to be tested or failed the practice test more than 3 times per the Non-participation status reasons, please mark their Non-Participation status in Renaissance.

Parent Reports

Parent Reports must be shared with the parents within in 7 days of the date of the test. Proof that the report was given to the parents within the 7 days, can include a spreadsheet with parent signatures showing the parent received the letter, a copy of the signed parent letter, or other form of documentation.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Roushawn Saunders by email at Roushawn.saunders@ecs4kids.org or by phone at 904-726-1500 ext. 2241



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.