



Helping Hands

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



Family Engagement

ECS4Kids (Episcopal Children's Services)

Volume 19, Issue 7

January 2025

January Activities For Children

The New Year is here! That means we have a whole year of fun with our families ahead of us! Whether you live in a place where the weather is cold and snowy or not, you can still do these **January Activities** for kids to make it feel more like winter!

- *Paper Plate Snowman
- *Polar Bear Hot Chocolate
- *No Bake Penguin Cookies

For more information check out the link below:

<https://thesimpleparent.com/january-activities-for-kids/>

ELC of North Florida Updates	2-3
Light Play	4
Be Like the Earth	5
Nature's Art	6
Neighborhood Clean Up	7
Turn 'No' into Go	8
Supporting Your Child's Decision	9
DIY Reuseable T-Shirt	10
T.E.A.C.H	11
Professional Development	12
VPK Corner	12

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:
Brianna.deosca@ecs4kids.org.
We will do our best to find the answer, post the comment, and address the concern.

Thanks!
Brianna DeOsca

Email Me



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ELC of North Florida Early Educators Conference

EARLY EDUCATORS CONFERENCE 2025

Saturday, January 25, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Thrasher-Horne Conference Center, Orange Park, FL

Learn, Connect, and Grow in a Day
Designed for Early Childhood Educators!

Highlights:

Keynote Speaker: Pamela Phelps, Ph.D. - "Let the Sunshine In"

Breakout sessions on leadership, creativity, and social-emotional development.

Lunch and door prizes included.

Earn 4.5 CEUs for professional development.

Featured Sessions Include:

Keynote Speaker: Pamela Phelps, Ph.D. - "Let the Sunshine In"

Director's Training: Brianna DeOsca, Kelley Warner, Susan Murphy, Katrina Willis - "Leaders vs. Managers"

Nurturing Social-Emotional Development: Robert Kozak, Jhordan Speed-Johnson, Alisha Dexter - "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch"

The Power of Sensory Play: Santanna Walker, Alexis Williams - "Enhancing Learning and Language for Infants"

Creating a Dream Classroom: Jazmine Jackson, Tatum Good, April Bradford - "Using Best Practices to Plan for the Future Year"

Toddlers Throughout the Day: Joan Whitson, Sherry Tindall

DIY Strategies for Transitions: Krystal Berry, Christina McDonald - "Celebrating the Heart in Teaching"

Misbehavior vs. Developmental Delays: Pamela Phelps, Ph.D.

Creating Purposeful Centers: Danesha Davis - "Scream the Theme"

Facilitating Language Development: Bethany Walker - "Using Signs and Gestures"

Inspiring Creativity in Preschool Classrooms: Alisha Rotella - "Process Over Product"

Reimagine Read-Alouds: Hillary Hocking, M.Ed. - "With Marco Polo Learning"

Having Hard Conversations: Dr. Teri DeLucca - "Say What You Need to Say"

ELC of North Florida Early Educators Conference

About Our Keynote Speaker



Pamela Phelps, PH.D.

With over 50 years of experience, Dr. Pamela Phelps is a leader in early childhood education. She directs the nationally recognized Creative Pre-School in Tallahassee, a model for inclusion. As Vice-President of The Creative Center for Childhood Research and Training, she provides training, consultation, and advocacy locally and internationally.

Registration Details:

Registration opens December 30, 2024.
Breakout session selection required at registration.
Visit elcnorthflorida.org to register.
FREE to attend! Space is limited, so register early.

For questions, contact **Quin Callis** at **904.726.1500 ext. 2218**.

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/elc-of-n-florida-early-educators-conference-tickets-1119134012959?aff=oddtcreator>

Be Like the Earth

Krystal Berry, Education Specialist

Source: https://www.pinkoatmeal.com/earth-day-yoga/?fbclid=IwAR0Ghn9ev5cgr5NBvZHALQP4NJY1s_zG_ycG-3XZyaLq2YWcoFh2BilpZ2k

There are many ways to bring the Earth into your home without making a mess; try some Earth Yoga! Learning and practicing new yoga poses with your little one can help you both to de-stress, find a way to calm your body, and build a love for physical activity. Engaging in yoga requires no expensive equipment, is good for your health, and good for the Earth because you're not creating waste. If you're unfamiliar with yoga that's okay because listed below are some common yoga poses. Feel free to create your own with your little one based on their needs and abilities!

Earth Yoga Poses:

- Tree Pose (pictured below)
- Mountain Pose - Bring your fingers together above your head forming a circle (the world) with your arms.
- Water Pose - Sit with a tall spine with your legs straight out in front of you. Gently rock back and forth like you are floating on water.
- Butterfly Pose – While seated, move your legs up and down like a butterfly fluttering its wings.



Image: <https://kristinmcgee.com/yoga-for-kids>

CLASS Connection

Regard For Child Perspective: Allowing your child to choose what poses to perform and coming up with their own emphasizes children's interest and creates a sense of independence and autonomy.

Facilitation of Learning and Development: Children's active engagement in the activity provides learning opportunities such as integrating learning and providing intentional guidance.

Source: <https://happytoddlerplaytime.com/make-your-own-nature-paint-brushes-for-kids/>

Help your child find alternatives to consuming while also building their love for art and nature by making your own natural paint brushes. This type of paint brush will give your child a chance to experiment with new textures and brush strokes and allow them to think outside the box for creativity. To make your own paintbrushes, take a walk outside and look for items that could be 'handles' and 'fibers' such as long sticks or sturdy stems, frizzy petals or pine needles, long green leaves or curled brown leaves, etc. Attach the natural 'fibers' to the 'handles' with a rubber band or twine and use to paint. Notice how different fibers produce different results? What happens if you use a whole flower head or only make dabs instead of long strokes? Be sure to ask your child questions during your walk such as predicting what effects the different materials might have and allow them to describe their picture to you.



CLASS Connection

Instructional Learning Formats: By providing a variety of modalities – finding new materials while walking outside, using alternative paintbrushes, using language to facilitate conversation – students are engaged in an activity in various ways and build stronger connections to the learning objective.

Concept Development: Using discussions and activities to promote students higher order thinking such as using open-ended questions (what will you do with that, what are you making, how do you think this will look, what else can you do with it) and making connections to the real world (making your own paintbrush) promotes students critical thinking skills.

Neighborhood Clean Up Krystal Berry, Education Specialist

Source: <https://new.miamisprings.com/community-clean-up-story/>

Teaching students to care for their community through a neighborhood clean up is a great way to build a sense of ownership and commitment. Help your students organize a neighborhood clean up or take a trip to the park or beach and spend an hour cleaning up. It doesn't take much more than a bag for collection, gloves for protection, and time to dedicate towards living in a cleaner environment. Be sure to monitor students and remind them to be safe and on the lookout for hazardous materials during clean up. If possible secure a trash grabber stick or use a broom and dustpan to avoid handling litter. During the clean-up, discuss cause and effect such as littering, which creates a dirty environment and can cause pollution and cleaning up which creates a clean and safe environment.



CLASS Connection

Regard For Student Perspectives: By allowing students to organize and complete a neighborhood clean-up, students are practicing leadership roles and demonstrating responsibility.

Concept Development: As students prepare for and complete their cleanup, they will engage in a planning process that requires coming up with a solution to a problem, creating strategies to support their objective, and using critical thinking to evaluate cause and effect.

Turning 'No' into Go: Action Plan for Noncompliance

Rebecca Huth,
Inclusion Coordinator

Resource: <https://www.jackson.k12.ms.us/cms/lib/MS01910533/Centricity/Domain/963/C9%20Noncompliance.pdf>

In order to understand why noncompliance is happening, think of the function of the behavior. Understanding the function for this behavior is important to decide effective intervention strategies to implement on an action plan. Let's look at strategies for noncompliance for each function. This can be helpful with developing a behavior plan for school- and/or home-based strategies.

Sensory:

- If noncompliance is due to over-stimulation, prepare students before they have an encounter.
- Identify what is making the child uncomfortable and teach them coping skills and relaxation strategies.
- Allow breaks or an alternative activity in a quieter area.
- Gradually increase tolerance by exposing child to different levels of experience.
- Make the task more enjoyable for them (noise canceling headphones, sensory item, adaptive seating).
- Try a calming activity prior to high energy activity.
- Visual checklist.

Escape:

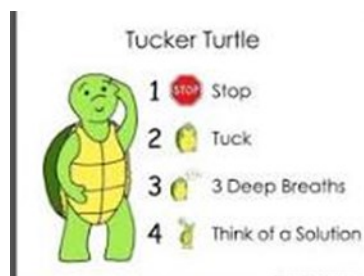
- Teach ways to ask for help such as a visual or code word.
- Teach the child to identify feelings and solutions to each feeling.
- Reward system/positively reinforce when child is compliant.
- Chunk activity into more "doable" parts.
- First/Then visual board.
- Develop a behavior contract and use social stories.
- Provide controlled choices or complete task with a preferred peer.

Attention:

- Ignore noncompliance and praise positive behavior.
- Frequent positive feedback (receive praise for positive behavior rather than negative).
- Give lots of attention when the child is compliant.
- Group with positive role models.
- Social stories.
- Class helper/special job.
- Positive notes or phone calls home.

Tangible:

- Give early warning time to return tangible items or transition from preferred activity (visual timer).
- Delay privileges until item is returned.
- Reward other students for demonstrating appropriate behavior.
- Controlled access to tangible items or activity.
- Social stories.
- Develop a plan to earn the item or activity.
- Refer to a visual schedule to know when it is their turn and what is coming next.



Supporting Your Child's Decisions Krystal Berry, Education Specialist

Source: <https://www.edutopia.org/article/6-books-young-students-about-making-choices/>

It's easy for a child to feel overwhelmed about an upcoming change. One way parents can help children feel more confident about the experience is to support children's decisions. We all make hundreds of decisions every day, though for a child this may not always seem obvious. It is important to allow children to make decisions by providing them with the opportunity. For example, when putting on shoes in the morning, first ask children which pair they would like to wear today, support their choice, and then ask if they want to start with the left foot or the right foot. Parents can also model decision making by weighing their own choices out loud such as, should I make chicken or noodles for dinner tonight, I wonder if I should stop at the grocery store on the way to work or after work? Using dialogue to make decisions helps a child learn to process the information they need, weigh the pro's and con's, and overall feel confident about their choice. These skills will help children transition from preschool to kindergarten and prepare them for higher levels of independence and increased self-esteem.

Here is a list of some kid-friendly books about making choices, curated by Kristin Rydholm:

Charlie Chooses By Lou peacock

This or That? A Story About Choosing By Kell Andrews

I Voted: Making A Choice Makes A Difference By Mark Shulman

88 Instrument By Chris Barton

The Favorite Book By Bethanie Deeney Murguia

Choices By RoozeBoos



DIY Reuseable T-Shirt Bag Krystal Berry, Education Specialist

Source: <https://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-and-experiments/make-a-cloth-bag>



Teaching children to do more with less is a great skill. For example, you can make reusable grocery bags out of old t-shirts and minimize plastic waste while also keeping old clothes out of landfills. This quick activity can give everyone in the family a chance to help out with chores too, because each child can use their own bag(s) to help carry in groceries, or they can be decorated to be fancy shopping bags or overnight bags when going on trips or slumber parties!

Here's how to make yours:

- Cut the sleeves off an old t-shirt.
- Draw a square around the collar and cut it out – be sure to cut the front and back of the shirt together. Once cut this will create the 'handles'.
- Cut the bottom of the shirt into 3" vertical strips that are 1" apart and tie together. This makes the bottom of your bag. Turn inside out so the knots are inside the bag.
- Decorate if desired using permanent markers, fabric paints, iron-on appliques, etc. If using a graphic tee, start with the t-shirt inside out so that after completing step 4, the graphic is on the outside.



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.

T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships

<https://teach-fl.org/>



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

Daneshia Davis, Professional

Development Coordinator

904-726-1500 ext.2299

904-310-2105 (cell)

VPK Corner Sarah March, Contract Coordinator

Renaissance Reminders for Progress Monitoring

PM2 is required for all providers.

The Parent Report must be shared with the parents within 7 days of the date of the test. The signed report and the Star Activity Test report must be kept on file at the provider's facility for 5 years. This was confirmed by DEL that these documents are included in the record retention policy.

When running the Star Activity Test Report for your center, please ensure that you are selecting Star Assessment as the Assessment type and use the Custom dates (your PM period start and end dates) so it will show the correct information for your classroom(s).

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.

VPK Provider Applications

As a reminder, it is a VPK contractual requirement that the VPK provider application (VPK 10,11A,11B) is updated with any changes to instructors, directors, substitutes, classrooms and calendars as soon as possible when they changes occur, but no later than 14 days of when the changes take place so that information can be verified and approved by ECS staff. This ensures that your program remains in compliance throughout the program year. The VPK – APP is also closely connected to VPK child progress monitoring windows as well as CLASS assessments, so it is imperative that all information is updated accordingly and in a timely manner.

Contract Department

* 8649 Baypine Rd 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, 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.