



CARING FOR KIDS

A Quarterly Newsletter from Child Care Resource & Referral

Please join us for our Quarterly Provider Meeting!

You Are Invited!
Please join us for our Quarterly
ELC of North Florida Provider Webinar!

When: Wednesday, January 22, 2025
1:00 pm

Participants will receive important updates on the following:

- o SR Education Department- SR CLASS Assessments, training opportunities, updates, and requirements
- o CCRR, Provider Services, Contracts, and Family Services- Provider Portal review, updates, and requirements

Please **RSVP** via **GoSignMeUp** by Friday, January 17, 2025

1. Go to the registration site at: <https://ecs4kids.gosignmeup.com>
2. Navigate to the **Orange Box** titled ELC of North Florida Provider Webinar 2024-2025 Q3.
3. Click on "Add to cart".
4. Click on "Checkout".
5. Login using your Username and Password or create an Account if you do not have one.
6. Make sure all information is correct and click on "Proceed to Next Step".
7. You will then be taken to the confirmation page where you can review and print your training confirmations!

You will receive the link to access the live webinar by noon Tuesday, January 21, 2025.

Important Updates for SR Providers

DEL recently shared important updates for providers who are contracted for School Readiness services. There are some time sensitive updates for Pre-Service Requirements that you should be aware of in order to remain in compliance with DEL and DCF.

Please click on the link below (then click on link titled "Important DCF SR Email 121423") and review the attachments carefully, especially the Pre-Service Training

Requirements. This email includes all guidance we have on these changes. If you have any questions after reviewing the documents, we suggest contacting your DCF Councilor for further guidance.

<https://www.ecs4kids.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Important-DCF-SR-Updates-12.14.23-email-1.pdf>

Screening & Inclusion

Please be sure to check your portal account periodically and complete any outstanding ASQs and ASQ-SEs!

If a child has been terminated from your program, or never attended your program, you can update their status in your Provider Portal.

Inclusion Services Reminder: Keep in mind that Inclusion Services should be a first step, not a last resort. If you or your teachers need assistance with accommodations, classroom behavior management, referring to FDLRS or Early Steps, please contact your Inclusion Specialist as soon as possible. Many times, the referral process to an outside agency can take several weeks and we want to be sure children receive interventions as soon as possible and prior to a provider ending a child's enrollment.

Read the 'overall' questions carefully and ensure you are choosing the correct response for the child. When answers to questions indicate there is a possible need for the child, we follow up with providers as needed. Many times providers then report they had chosen the wrong answer at the time of completion. Ensuring the accuracy of the answers during initial completion will help us determine the actual need of the child and eliminate the need for us to reach out to you for more information. **Please note that any comments left on a screening will be visible to parents. Ensure any sensitive topics have been discussed with parents/guardians prior to completing the screening.**

Thank you for your partnership in helping every child succeed! If you have any questions, please contact your Screening /Inclusion Specialist or Rebecca Huth at Rebecca.Huth@ecs4kids.org.

SR/VPK CLASS Assessments

CLASS assessments are underway! Keep in mind that **ALL VPK classrooms** must be assessed.

The Contract Minimum Threshold (CMT) is 4.0, meaning your site must reach a score of 4.0 or higher in order to contract for SR and VPK services.

With the additional requirement of VPK and previously biannual provider assessments, **please note that we may not be able to schedule your CLASS assessments in the same time frame each year.** We will notify providers of the tentative timeframe of their assessments, but *all tentative timeframes are subject to change.*

Please make sure you are taking advantage of the CLASS resources and assistance offered to you by your Education Specialist.

If you have any questions, please contact your assigned Education Specialist.

[Provider Resource Site!](#)

Questions?? Please check out our new Provider Resource website! This site will be updated continuously, so add this webpage to your 'favorites' and check back often for updates!

[Click Here for Provider Resources](#)

VPK FAST 2024-2025 - Helpful Reminders

1. **VPK FAST Training for VPK Test Administrators:** If you have any new Test Administrators for the 24-25 program year, they must complete the VPK FAST training in Ren-U. This training is required to be completed before assisting with the assessments.
 2. **What do I do with the Training Certificates and Forms?**
Forms need to be signed in pen, combined into one pdf file including the course Certificate of Completion, saved as **First name_ Last name VPK FAST 24-25** and uploaded to the Document library in the provider portal in the folder labeled **24-25 FAST Test Administrators**.
 3. **Progress Monitoring Window dates:** Please remember if there is a calendar change or closure, this may change your Progress Monitoring dates
 4. **STAR Test Activity Report:** Please remember to check your STAR Test activity report prior to the end of the Progress Monitoring Window to ensure all children have been tested.
 5. **Non-Participating Status: Non-English Speaker and Failed Practice Test :**
Before marking a child as Non-Participating for Non-English Speaker or Failed Practice, the child must be tested 3 times before being marked as Non-Participating.
 6. **Testing Newly Enrolled children:** Any child that is enrolled in the VPK Program during the Progress Monitoring Window must be tested. Even if they are enrolled one or two days before the end of the testing window. Please ensure that the child's enrollment is added to the provider portal in a timely manner. It may take 24-48 hours for the child's information to update in Renaissance.
- Non- Participating Status: Absent during testing window:** If the child is absent during the time that the children are tested but returns before the end of the Progress Monitoring Window, the child must still be tested.

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

Family Engagement: Tips to Share with Families



Winter 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/>

School Readiness Program

School Readiness Services (also known as subsidized child care) is available in Clay, Nassau, Baker, Bradford, Putnam and St. Johns Counties through Episcopal Children's Services. Families must qualify and there is often a waitlist, so it is important to apply for services as soon as possible. All registration is done entirely online so any parent/guardian wanting to apply for the School Readiness Program will need to apply at the following link:

[Click Here To Apply](#)

Please note: All applicants will be required to upload *ONE* supporting document per adult in the household to verify eligibility. A list of acceptable documents will be available during the application process based on the information provided in the application. Applications cannot be approved without the supporting document.

CCR&R One Stop Offices

Bradford County One Stop

Phone: 904-964-1543
1080 North Pine St., Starke, FL 32091
Fax: 904-964-5863

Putnam County One Stop

Phone: 386-385-3450
821 State Road 19 South, Palatka, FL 32177
Fax: 386-530-2692

St. Johns County One Stop

Phone: 904-770-2565
5 Clark St., St. Augustine, FL 32084
Fax: 904-429-7604

Clay County One Stop

Phone: 904-213-3939
1845 Town Center Blvd., Suite 150,
Fleming Island, FL 32003
Fax: 904-278-2099

Nassau County One Stop

Phone: 904-432-0009 ext. 2626
96042 Lofton Square, Yulee, FL 32097
Fax: 904-277-7219

Baker County One Stop

Phone: 904-259-4225
418 8th St., Macclenny, FL 32063
Fax: 904-259-9169

Child Care Resource and Referral offers free information and referral services to families who are looking for child care. There are no charges/fees associated with a provider listing in the CCR&R database or for referrals to your program. Our agency maintains a database of all legally operating child care programs in Clay, Nassau, Baker, Bradford, Putnam and St. Johns Counties and we are required to update this information annually. This information is maintained in the Statewide Provider Portal.

The Provider Portal is an online database for child care providers and Early Learning Coalitions. This database administers the School Readiness, CCR&R, and VPK Programs.

We encourage you to complete this process and share your child care program's information with us as it will be used on a statewide level to give state officials, agencies, the legislature and the governor's office a picture of Florida's child care community. Completing the provider update process is also a great opportunity to market your program, at no cost to you, to a wide range of families who may or may not know about the services you provide. Our office provides information and provider listings about available child care programs to families seeking child care. It is critical that this information be accurate to match families up with programs that most closely match their needs.

If you have not already completed the registration process for an account, please start the process now by going to the following link:

[Click Here for the Provider Portal](#)

After you register for an account, an ECS staff member will activate it. Once your account is activated you will be able to complete the Provider Portal Profile, which is the online version of the Provider Update Form.

Once a Provider Portal Profile is completed, it can easily be updated on an annual or as needed basis so that your programs most up-to-date information is readily available to families seeking assistance with finding a child care provider. In the future if you become a contracted School Readiness or VPK provider, information already entered into the Provider Portal Profile will prepopulate into your contract. The staff of CCR&R strives to provide families with the most up to date and accurate information possible about provider services.

It is important that you call us as changes occur to report changes in your hours, vacancies/enrollment, rates, recent training, and any special services you may be providing. We want to help you succeed in your business of providing quality child care and early education services. For any additional questions, please contact Sarah March at 904-726-1500 x 2206 or Sarah.March@ecs4kids.org

Training Tidbits

Check out the great trainings we are offering this quarter! If you need in-service hours, CEUs for your CDA renewal, or want to keep up with the current information in the field of Early Childhood Education, visit our website to see what we have to offer! Also visit the links to other sites with information about available training opportunities and scholarships.

EARLY EDUCATOR'S CONFERENCE REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!



CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR THE CONFERENCE

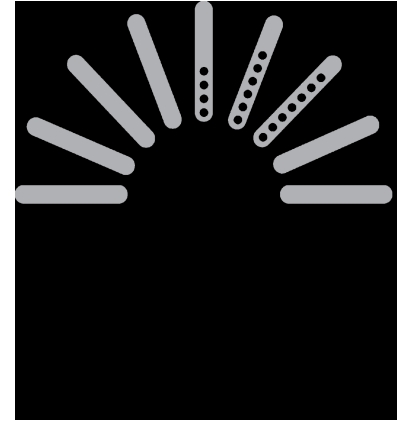
Click Here for ECS Trainings

Click Here for CDA Info



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.

Click Here for TEACH Info

Join our ECS Facebook Group

Join for updates, information, and inspiration for early childhood educators!
Click below:

Join ECS In The Know

Numbers & Websites to Know

DCF Child Care Training Information Center: 1-888-352-2842 or click here: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/childcare/training>

Licensing/Accreditation information: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/services/child-family/child-care/about-child-care->

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

If you suspect or have concerns that a child is being abused and/or neglected, you should report it **immediately to the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873)**. Florida law requires that **ANY** person in Florida who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused, neglected, or

[licensure](#)

Central Directory/FDLRS: 1-800-654-4440
(child screenings/evaluations)

Florida KidCare

Florida KidCare is our state's children's health insurance program for uninsured children under age 19. Eligibility for Florida KidCare is based on child's age and family income.

To receive more information, visit www.floridakidcare.org or call 1-800-540-5437.

abandoned by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver or other person responsible for the child's welfare **MUST** immediately report that knowledge or suspicion to the Florida Abuse Hotline of the Department of Children and Families.

Online Reporting Form:

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/services/abuse/abuse-hotline>

Learn the signs of Child Abuse at:

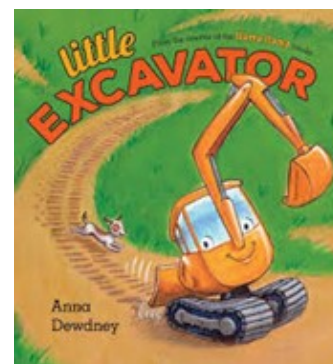
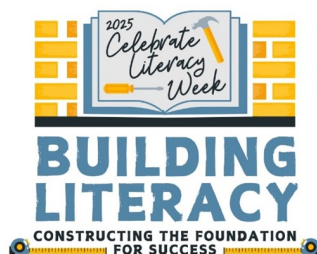
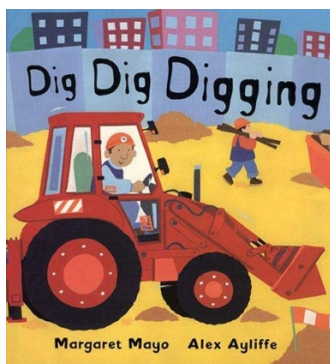
https://www.myflfamilies.com/sites/default/files/2023-05/Dev_and_SignsOfAbuse.pdf

Warm Line: 1-800-238-3463

Do you have a concern about the health, development, disability, or special needs of a child? If so, please call the Warm Line: Clay, Nassau, Baker, Bradford-Ext. 2146; Putnam & St. Johns- Ext. 2227. The purpose of the Warm Line is to provide advice to childcare personnel concerning strategies, curriculum, and environmental adaptations that allow a child to derive maximum benefit from the childcare experience.

Do You Suspect Fraud?

Whether it's a member of your family, a neighbor, friend or someone you don't know. Public assistance fraud is not a victim-less crime. Real people, real families are hurt when public benefits are provided to unqualified individuals who use fraudulent information or references. School Readiness is supported by state and federal taxes and because of this, we are obligated to be good stewards of the funding. If you are aware of an individual committing fraud against the School Readiness and/or Voluntary Prekindergarten Programs, please contact ECS by either calling 1-800-238-3463 ext. 2246, or by emailing fraud@ecs4kids.org. Information provided will remain confidential.



Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! 2025 – Building Literacy, Constructing the Foundation for Success!

Celebrate Literacy Week is scheduled for the week of January 27- February 3, 2025. The Preschool book is and the Infants and Toddlers book is *Little Excavator* by

Anna Dewdney. The statewide simultaneous reading activity is scheduled for Wednesday, January 29, at 10 am (EST).
<https://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/just-read-fl/celebrate-literacy-week/>

Visit our website



DIVISION OF
Early Learning
LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.



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