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Early Learning Parents' Pages

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING

Make Summer An Adventure

Take time this summer to venture outside and discover more of what Florida has to offer! Florida has many rivers, springs and lakes, and more than 800 miles of beaches for families to enjoy. Boating, canoeing, swimming, snorkeling, fishing or tubing are just a few ways to get out and enjoy outdoor activities as a family. Find a great park near you at [Florida Parks \(visitflorida.com\)](http://FloridaParks.visitflorida.com).

You don't have to plan a full-day outing in nature to keep up the summer fun. Simply walking around your yard, neighborhood or a local park is a great way to further your child's language skills as you talk about trees, plants, insects and birds – it's a great opportunity for your child to learn new words. Count, describe, sort and discuss what you see. Look for patterns and shapes. Give your child a bag or container and have them collect specific items such as rocks, leaves, sticks, feathers, shells and pine cones.

Ask questions about the items such as:

- Is this object living or nonliving?
- Which item is the longest or shortest?
- What is the heaviest/lightest item?
- Which item is most interesting?



Help Your Child Grow Inside and Out

During their first five years, children undergo more rapid changes in their physical development than at any other time in their lives. Changes occur in body proportion, coordination and strength as children develop physical, motor and sensory capacities that enhance exploration and mastery of the environment.

Looking for ideas on how to further your child's gross motor skills?

- Play tag or hide and seek.
- Play toss and catch games with different sized objects.
- Provide your child with a safe area to run and jump.
- Use sidewalk chalk to draw a hopscotch game.



When it's really hot outdoors, libraries and museums offer a cool alternative. Many museums throughout Florida provide hands-on activities to get children excited about learning.

Because it is important to read with your child every day, help them check out books from the library to take home. Take pictures of your family as you visit a library, museum, park and any other places on your travels. Put the pictures in a photo album and help your child write about each picture. Read the picture album together and talk about the pictures that represent your child's summer adventures.

LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.

Head Start Summer Checklist



Do you have a child aged 0-5 or are you a pregnant mother? Does your family receive SNAP, TANF or SSI?

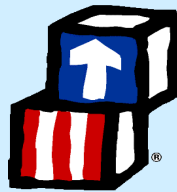
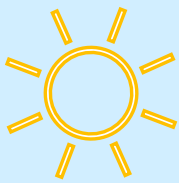


Do you care for a 0-5 aged child in foster care?



Does your family income fall under the Federal Poverty Guidelines?

If you answered yes to any of the above, call 1-866-357-3239 to learn how to apply for Head Start.



2023 Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday!

July 24 - August 6, 2023

During Florida's Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday, stock up on qualifying back-to-school supplies, clothing, computers and more exempt from tax. For more information and a list of qualifying items, visit floridarevenue.com/backtoschool.



Hooray for Summer VPK!

Congratulations to the graduates of Florida's 2023 Summer Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program! These children completed a fun but intense 300-hour summer program and, like their fellow School Year VPK graduates from the spring, are now better prepared for success in kindergarten and beyond.

VPK offers three different program options available from private and public providers: School-Year Programs (540 instructional hours), Summer Programs (300 instructional hours) and VPK Specialized Instructional Services.

These options provide greater opportunity and flexibility for families to take advantage of the early learning program at no cost to families. To be eligible, children must live in Florida and be 4 years old on or before September 1 of the current school year.

Seats are still available for the 2023-2024 program year. Learn more and apply now through your local [early learning coalition](https://earlylearningcoalition.org) or on the Parent Portal at <https://familyservices.floridaearlylearning.com/>.

Do You Have a Child Heading to VPK This Fall?

Visit our website at [Florida Division of Early Learning | DEL \(floridaearlylearning.com\)](https://floridaearlylearning.com) to get familiar with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards. These eight critical developmental domains are the foundation of the VPK program and guide teachers to help your child develop the skills they will need to enter kindergarten with confidence.