

EARLY LEARNING PARENTS PAGES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING

Scientific Inquiry through Exploration and Discovery
Using senses to explore and understand



Children are natural investigators and their levels of understanding deepen over time with varied experiences. Exploration and discovery are ways that young children learn about the world by using their senses and reflexes. The initial spontaneous responses of infants become more purposeful as they gain mobility. The expanding physical and motor capacities of toddlers enable them to engage in ever-widening explorations which can promote new brain connections. One of the eight areas of development, or domains, outlined in Florida’s Early Learning and Developmental Standards is scientific inquiry. Scientific inquiry addresses children exploring the world around them.

Scientific inquiry through discovery and exploration is demonstrated when children use their senses to observe and collect information from the world around them. Young children learn to use observational tools to extend their senses and to observe the natural world up close. When adults respond to children’s questions, it fosters inquisitiveness and scientific thinking. Older children become better at making predictions and trying to solve problems. When children have the opportunity for discovery and exploration, they are actively learning through first-hand experience.

Your child’s learning and development start at home. You are your child’s first teacher. Your child’s development of values, learning skills and social skills begins at birth. The Division of Early Learning encourages families to utilize the [First Teacher Books](#) for guidance on their children’s development and how to encourage them to explore, learn and grow.

Summer Reading Activities



Summer reading is not just for children who are already reading, it is for infants, toddlers and preschool children too. Summer reading activities are a great way to continue practicing early literacy skills such as direction of print, familiar words, learning rhyming words, nursery rhymes, and learning letters and letter sounds.

Here are a few summer reading activities you can do with your child:

- Visit a library and get a library card for your child to check out their own books.
- Read a new book or an old favorite with your child.
- Take a walk to look for signs of the season and talk about what you see.
- Start reading a story and stop before the end. Ask your child to predict the ending.
- Watch a nature program on television and talk about what you see.
- Play a game with your child like “Peek a Boo” or “I Spy.”
- Talk to your child about the signs you see as you drive in your community.
- Read a nursery rhyme with your child and talk about the rhyming words you read and hear.



Good nutrition is vital to growing brains. While school is out, Summer BreakSpot offers FREE, nutritious meals for children 18 and under!

For more information, check out the Summer BreakSpot website:

<http://www.summerbreakspot.org>.

For locations near you text “Food” or “Comida” to 304-304.

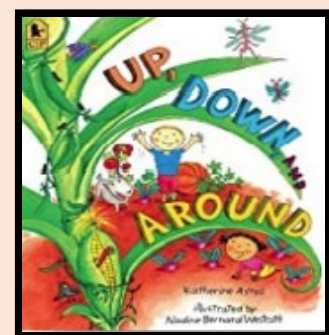
Scientific Inquiry



“I Love Bugs!”



“What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?”



“Up, Down and Around”

Importance of Developmental Screenings

Developmental screenings help identify any delays in your child’s social and emotional development or growth. These screenings help you get connected earlier to needed supports in your child’s life. The developmental screenings also help identify needed supports to prevent a child from falling behind because of a developmental delay and help them achieve age-appropriate milestones.

If you are not sure where developmental screenings are offered, contact your local early learning coalition to learn more about the free screenings offered in the School Readiness program. You can also dial 2-1-1 to reach the Help Me Grow contact line and they will help you connect with a developmental screening or connect you to an agency that provides them in your area. [Help Me Grow](#) has many resources that can help you support your child’s development.

You can also access a developmental screening tool called the [Ages and Stages Questionnaires](#). Because children learn and grow at different rates, even the most attentive parents can miss some important milestones. Completing a developmental screening will give you a “snapshot” of your child’s development. If you need further help or are concerned about the results of your child’s developmental screening, speak with your child’s health care provider, contact your local [early learning coalition](#) or connect with [Help Me Grow](#) for more information or answers to your questions.

Celebrate Dad



Fathers have a vital role in their children’s lives. A father’s involvement can create a better outcome for a young child’s social-emotional and early learning development. A fun cooking activity is a great way to spend time with your child. Cooking with children helps develop their math skills and helps them to learn how to follow directions. It also allows for some great conversations! Ask your child questions while cooking to encourage conversations. While making these fun snacks, ask questions like:

- How many ingredients are we using?
- What will we add first?
- Which ingredient did we use the most/least in this recipe?

Father’s Day Trail Mix

You can choose any items you want to use for your trail mix. Make sure you are aware of any food allergies before picking. First, you can select items such as cereal, raisins and pretzels. Separate each one into separate bowls. Next, help your child add one scoop of each snack into a snack-size plastic bag. Last, be sure to share this fun snack with them while watching their favorite movie or sitting outside at the park!



Celebrate dad this Father’s Day on Sunday, June 19, 2022.



VOLUNTARY
PREKINDERGARTEN
HANDBOOK:

What Parents Need to Know and
Understand about Florida VPK



Florida’s Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK), is a free educational program that prepares 4-year-olds for success in kindergarten and beyond. Children who live in Florida and are 4 on or before September 1 of the school year can enroll. Parents whose children are born between February 2 and September 1 of the calendar year may postpone enrolling their 4-year-old until the following year when their child is 5. To register your child for VPK, simply visit the Family Portal at <https://familyservices.floridaearlylearning.com>.

Parents, take time to familiarize yourself with the information and resources available to you in the [VPK Handbook: What Parents Need to Know and Understand about Florida VPK](#).



Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) is a free program that helps families:

- Identify and select quality early learning programs.
- Connect to local community agencies and resources.
- Engage in their children's education and learning.
- Locate financial resource options.

CCR&R loves to share information about Florida’s early learning world. This month, we want to highlight the Division of Early Learning’s Program Assessment. A Program Assessment is used to assess the level of quality your child’s early learning program offers.

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is the observation-based Program Assessment tool used to offer teachers insight, skills and strategies needed to improve their interaction with young children in their classrooms. Choosing a child care provider can seem overwhelming at times. Knowing the level of a program’s quality will help you make the best decision for your child’s education and future. To learn more about CLASS visit <https://bit.ly/3FxXdHG>.



Selecting a Summer Camp

You can access the “Selecting a Summer Camp” guide available on the Division of Early Learning website, in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), to help in selecting the right summer camp for your child. This guide from the [Florida Department of Children and Families](#) offers tools and tips for parents and caregivers on choosing a summer camp that meets your family’s needs. Your child’s summer camp experience should offer them a fun-filled experience in a safe and comfortable environment.

For more information on available summer camps in your area, contact your local [early learning coalition](#).

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