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Early Learning Parents' Pages

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING

Get a Jump on the School Year!

While summer is a great time to take on outdoor adventures with your family, it is also the best time to start planning for the school year.

Florida VPK Will your child turn 4 by September 1? If so, it's time to enroll in the 2023-2024 Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program. Provided at no cost to families, VPK offers parents a choice of both public and private providers and either a Summer or School Year program. Apply in the [Family Portal](#) or contact your local [early learning coalition](#).



Do you need to find or switch child care providers? Take time now to lock in your child's spot in the right School Readiness (SR) program for your family. Florida's SR program offers financial assistance to help children from low-income families access high-quality child care and education so their parents can work or participate in job training. The program supports parents with information about child development, recognizing parents as their child's first teacher.



Looking for more early care and education options? Connect with the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Network to learn more about VPK, SR, Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, financial assistance options and community resources. Contact your [early learning coalition](#) or the Division of Early Learning at 1-866-357-3239 for assistance.

Summer Science Makes for Dynamic Discoveries

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. This summer, spend time with your child outdoors and allow them time to safely explore and discover.

You may observe your child:

- Birth-8 months – laughing at certain noises.
- 8-18 months – crawling to explore their environment.
- 18-24 months – beginning to use objects as tools.
- 24-36 months – paying close attention to things they see, hear or feel on a nature walk.
- 36-48 months – experimenting with mixing and pouring sand, water and other similar elements.
- 48 months – identifying sounds without seeing where they're coming from.



Learn more ways you can help grow your child's scientific inquiry development at [Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards](#).

LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.



Summer Reading for Family Fun

Planning a summer vacation? Grab a book or two that showcases the adventure ahead to help build your child's background knowledge and spark interest before your trip. For example, if planning a camping trip, look for books about wildlife you may encounter, books with camping tips or books that feature family adventures in the great outdoors. Take a journal along to document your adventures and to encourage your child to practice writing.

Not planning to travel? No problem! Create a "staycation kit" by choosing a location or theme and compiling related books and items for pretend play. A camping staycation kit could include camping-themed books, a sleeping bag to read in, a flashlight for reading in the dark, a tent to pitch in the living room and snacks. No bug spray necessary! A beach-themed staycation kit could contain beach-themed books, a towel to read on, sunglasses, shells, flip-flops, a frisbee – let your imagination guide you!

Whether going on a summer vacation or staying close to home, books are a great tool for building background knowledge, which is a key aspect of reading, as it helps children make connections to the text and the topic at hand.

Use Summer Play to Watch Your Child's Development



As you spend time with your child this summer, observe their interactions and note any questions you may have about their development. If you have questions or concerns, a developmental screening can help identify any delays in your child's growth development, connect you with needed support and help your child better prepare for the upcoming school year.

If you are not sure where developmental screenings are offered, contact your local [early learning coalition](#). You can also dial 2-1-1 to reach [Help Me Grow](#), a contact line that will help you connect to developmental screenings or agencies that provide them and resources to support your child's development.

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 are confused or concerned about the results of your child's developmental screening, speak with your child's health care provider, your local [early learning coalition](#) or [Help Me Grow](#) for more information and answers to your questions.

SUMMER
BREAK SPOT



Sites throughout Florida offer free, nutritious meals for children during the summer. Visit SummerBreakSpot.com to find a site near you.