

Early Learning Parents' Pages

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING



Disability History and Awareness

Increasing Awareness, Respect and Acceptance for People and Children with Disabilities

Disability History and Awareness Weeks are a time to recognize and reflect the strides made for individuals who have disabilities and/or special healthcare needs. The Division of Early Learning is proud to celebrate the first two weeks in October, beginning October 3, as Disability History and Awareness Weeks.

Disability History and Awareness Weeks promote expanding student knowledge, understanding and awareness of individuals with disabilities, disability history and the disability rights movement. Florida's program for exceptional children was established in 1960 and has expanded significantly since that time. Check out [Legislative History of Florida's Exceptional Student Education Program](#).

The Florida Department of Education and Division of Early Learning provide year-round services and support for families with children who are at risk for developmental delays or have disabilities and/or special healthcare needs. A few of these services are outlined below:

- [Inclusion Warm Line Services](#): Provides assistance, information and consultation to families as well as early care and education providers related to disabilities and special healthcare needs.
- [Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Specialized Instructional Services](#): An educational program option for parents of four-year-old children with special needs.
- [Florida Early Steps Directory](#): Operated by the Florida Department of Health, the directory helps parents find referrals to statewide services, such as education, training, resources and information in local community.
- [Child Find](#): Administered by the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System, Child Find promotes public awareness for programs and services available to young children who have or are at risk of developing disabilities.



Meet ‘Kay Kay’ McCrary



Ms. Kaderon “Kay Kay” McCrary has served children in Santa Rosa County for 33 years, having served as both a School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) teacher as well as assistant director at Kids Discovery 6. She is often requested by other centers in the community to demonstrate best practices to empower new teachers in the field of early education. According to many supervisors, co-workers, children, and families, Ms. Kay Kay is the “best teacher ever.” Florida’s Early Learning Chancellor Matt Mears recently visited to present her with a Certificate of Appreciation for her dedicated service.

Have you thought about becoming an early learning educator like Kay Kay?

The most important development takes place in the early years of a child’s life, from birth to 5 years old. Being an early childhood educator is a rewarding opportunity where you can see developmental gains and share in a child’s greatest achievements every day.

If you are interested in becoming an early learning educator here are a few resources to get started!

- DCF Child Care, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-care/>
- DCF Child Care Training and Credentialing Requirements, <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/child-care/training.shtml>
- DCF Training and Registry, [Florida Early Childhood Professional Development Registry](#)



To View Open Positions:

Go to the following website: [DCF Employment Bulletin Board](#) or check with your local coalition for other opportunities.

An Important message for Providers:

If you are looking for quality early childhood educators, here are the directions for posting open positions at your program on the [DCF Employment Bulletin Board](#) using the [Department of Children and Families Employment Database](#).



You can still register for 2022-2023

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, visit the [Family Portal](#) to complete the application process.

Parents may also contact their [local early learning coalition](#) for additional information and assistance.

Prekindergarten Matters

Research shows children who participate in high-quality prekindergarten programs:

- ✓ Perform better on standardized tests.
- ✓ Have better school attendance rates.
- ✓ Develop lifelong important life skills.
- ✓ Are less likely to drop out of school.



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](#).



Parent choice is a VPK priority

- ✓ Program options
- ✓ Finding a VPK program
- ✓ What to expect from VPK
- ✓ Applying for VPK
- ✓ Parent responsibilities
- ✓ Information and resources
- ✓ Transition to Kindergarten resources

Florida Center for Reading Research



Are you looking for resources to support your child's pre-reading skills? Check out the [Florida Center for Reading Research](#) (FCRR) website and explore all the activities that will empower your child to gain a strong foundation in reading. Many of the interactive resources are available in English and Spanish.



Explore the [FCRR YouTube Channel](#), which is full of videos to support your child's reading and literacy skills.

Baby 
NAVIGATOR[™]
What every parent needs to know



How can you help your baby's learning?

Join Baby Navigator for age-appropriate tips and resources.

Learn the milestones that matter most.

Click here to access resources and tools to celebrate and support your baby's early learning: [Baby Navigator](#) Baby Navigator is available in English, Spanish and Creole.

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Manny Diaz, Jr.
Commissioner

Matthew H. Mears
Chancellor



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