



Our Role in Keeping Students Safe from Abuse

As educators, we all share the same goal of preparing our students for a productive adulthood. However, too many Florida students face barriers during their young lives that keep them from excelling in the classroom and beyond. One of the greatest barriers to academic success is child abuse and neglect.



During my years as a school counselor and educator, I witnessed how abuse and neglect can destroy a family and how students are often left with many short- and long-term challenges. Unfortunately, tens of thousands of Florida students will suffer abuse this year alone.

Since the beginning of the year, Florida's Abuse Hotline has already received more than 120,000 alleged reports of child abuse or neglect. Teachers and school staff play a critical role in identifying the signs of child abuse and reporting the situation to the authorities. However, many of you go above and beyond to provide time and resources to the whole family.

I truly believe your efforts protect Florida's at-risk students and build healthy connections among your students' family members. For information you can share with your students, visit the [National Child Abuse Prevention](#) website.

Thank you for doing your part to protect our most vulnerable Floridians.

Sincerely,

Pam Stewart
Commissioner of Education

Teacher Opportunities

Just for Teachers Newsletter Writers

A special thanks to the dozens of teachers who volunteered to write articles and blogs for our Just for Teachers audience. If you have not received an email from our staff regarding possible writing topics, please send us an email at JustforTeachers@fldoe.org.

Beginning in May, we will feature articles/blogs on a variety of topics from teachers across the state. If you have a topic you would like to see featured, please email us.

Tuition Waiver for Classroom Teachers

In 2010, the Florida Legislature authorized colleges and universities to waive tuition and associated matriculation fees for classroom teachers.

Florida College System institutions and state universities may waive up to six credit hours per term for teachers employed full time by a school district, including public charter school teachers. Qualified teachers may only enroll in undergraduate courses in mathematics, science or special education.

All undergraduate courses with levels one through four in a discipline with an approved prefix are eligible for the waiver on a space-available basis. The Course Prefix Listing Approved for the Teacher Waiver may be found at <http://www.fldoe.org/articulation>.

Please contact your institution of choice for specific enrollment information. A list of Florida College System institutions may be found at <http://www.fldoe.org/fcs/> and a list of state universities system institutions may be found at <http://www.flbog.edu/aboutsus/universities/>.

Free USA Today E-Edition Copies for Your Classroom

SA TODAY recently received a donation through USA TODAY's heritable Foundation to provide educational resources at no cost

April Observances

National Child Abuse Prevention Month



[National Child Abuse Prevention Month](#) is a time to acknowledge the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect, and to promote the social and emotional well-being of children and families.

You can find more information at [National Child Abuse Prevention Month](#).

School Library Month



April is also School Library Month! You can read Governor Rick Scott's proclamation recognizing the important work of media specialists and librarians at [School Library Month Proclamation](#).

Florida College System Month

to teachers. Receive complimentary access to USA TODAY for your classroom through the school year. This is a grant subscription that is available to all educators. [Register today!](#) Grants are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis.

STEM Tips Take Over Social Media

To encourage students to explore STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) courses, the department will begin posting daily STEM literacy tips for students.

If you would like to send in your STEM tip, please send an email to JustforTeachers@fldoe.org.

Here is one example: "Investigate multiple sources. After a lecture that is interesting or confusing, seek out further information at home. You can easily supplement your understanding with a couple of searches."

Florida Missing Children's Day Statewide Essay Contest

Have you heard about the Florida Missing Children's Day statewide student essay contest for fifth-grade students? Each school will be responsible for selecting one winner and that student's essay will be submitted to the Missing Endangered Persons Information Clearinghouse.

The statewide winner will read his or her essay during the Florida Missing Children's Day ceremony in Tallahassee on September 8, 2014, and will receive a trophy, a \$100 cash award and a Universal Studios VIP package.

The 2014 essay contest theme is "Think Before You Click: Staying Safe on the Internet and Social Media" and should encourage students to research personal safety and think about what they can do to minimize risk in their daily lives. Visit <http://www.fmcd.org/contests/> for essay contest guidelines. Each school's winning essay must be submitted by May 9, 2014.

2014 "Bug Week" Curriculum Available

The University of Florida's Annual Bug Week, beginning May 19, is a great time to introduce your students to all things creepy and crawly!

You can find free [resources](#) and [materials](#) on the [Bug Week website](#).

Want to stay up to date with education news in Florida? Then "like" the Florida Department of Education on Facebook and "follow" us on Twitter.



April is also Florida College System Month! Share our college tip of the day by visiting the department's Twitter feed at

www.twitter.com/educationfl.

Recent Blogs

Lattices and Leadership

By Dorina Sackman
Florida's 2014 Teacher of the Year

When I was named one of four finalists for the 2014 National Teacher of the Year, many at Florida Department of Education could tell you that the entire building heard my screams of joy upon hearing the news. After I got the call from Commissioner Pam Stewart, I remember instinctively screaming in my New York accent, "We did it! We did it! Oh my Gawd, Florida teachuhs! We are on the MAP!"

Continue reading Dorina's latest blog at [Just for Teachers blog](#).

Finding Hannah

Guest blog post by Ms. Taylor, a Florida teacher.

Hannah was my little helper at school. Only a first grader, she was smart and always wanted to hand out papers, get supplies, anything she could do to help. Her hand always shot up to answer questions. She told me she wanted to be a teacher when she grew up.

Continue reading this blog at [Florida Department of Children and Families blog](#).

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Thank you for your commitment to Florida's K-12 students.