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# Early Learning Parents' Pages

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING



## Congratulations 2023 VPK Graduates!

Congratulations to Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) 2022-2023 program year graduates! Children who participate in VPK are more likely to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Florida's VPK program has served more than 2.6 million Florida children since its inception in 2005-2006. The [Division of Early Learning's website](#) has resources to help all of Florida's youngest learners and their families get the best start on a successful school career.

## Thank Your Teachers!



While we celebrate our teachers every day, May 8-12 is Teacher Appreciation Week. Take time to recognize your child's teachers. Here is an idea for creating a personal thank you card:

- Have your child pick a colored sheet of construction paper.
- Fold the construction paper in half.
- Write the words "Thank you for helping me learn and grow!" on the front of the card. If your child is an emerging writer and is beginning to use letters to write words or parts of words, allow your child to write the message.
- On the inside of the card, let your child draw a picture using markers or crayons.
- Talk to your child and ask, "What did you write on your card?" and "Who did you create this card for?"

The [Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards webpage](#) provides standards-based activities you can complete with your child to support their understanding of language, literacy and art.

This activity relates to language, literacy and creative expression through the arts for 3- and 4-year-olds, helping them listen, follow directions and express opinions.

A banner for VPK registration. On the left, there are wooden blocks with the letters V, P, K, and an exclamation point. In the center, a blue box contains the text: "Registration now open for 2023-2024 Voluntary Prekindergarten!" with two yellow stars. At the bottom, there is a row of six diverse young children. To the right of the banner, there is a yellow box with the text: "There's still time to find your child's path to success!" and "Apply today!" in red and black text.

**LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.**

## Early Childhood Educators Continuously Learn, Just Like the Kids They Serve!

Florida's School Readiness providers and educators are dedicated to ensuring our state's young future leaders are provided the highest quality of child care and early learning. It's important that providers and educators also continually learn and develop their skills in the classroom through continuing education and professional development. The Division of Early Learning (DEL) provides access to training both online and in-person to accommodate the busy schedules of our early care and education teachers.

DEL has partnered with Florida State University to develop the FSU 10 Components of Quality Care for Infants and Toddlers along with the FSU 10 Components Train-the-Trainer program. The training focuses on the critical components of early learning for infants and toddlers, including topics such as Early Language and Literacy and Family Engagement.



Graduates of recent training held at the Early Learning Coalition of Brevard County.

Taking part in professional development allows educators an opportunity to network with others, enhance their teaching skills and understand new initiatives as well as how to incorporate them in their classroom and school environment.

If you are an early childhood educator looking for professional development opportunities in your area, contact your local early learning coalition for a schedule of upcoming trainings.



Any child placed away from parents or guardians by a child welfare system into foster care is eligible for Early Head Start for ages birth to 3 and Head Start for ages 3 to 5. These programs provide comprehensive services to children and families, including mental health, disabilities, health and nutrition, family engagement, and education. Head Start programs are located throughout the state and are accepting applications for the 2023-2024 school year. For more information and to find your local program, email Kimberly Singer at [Kimberly.Singer@del.fldoe.org](mailto:Kimberly.Singer@del.fldoe.org).

### Alphabet Magnets for Learning at Home

Exploring with alphabet magnets not only makes great refrigerator decorations but is also a fun way to develop a child's understanding of the alphabetic principle, which is the understanding that written letters represent spoken sounds.

Teach letter-sound relationships and play word-building games from your refrigerator door. Using alphabet magnets at home to learn letters and words is a great way to support school readiness.

