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Early Learning Parents' Pages

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING

Start Early and Don't Miss a Day!

One of the first signs of your baby's emergent literacy development is when they seem to understand what you are saying. And really, from the moment your baby begins to coo or babble, they are communicating. Remarkably, a baby's brain possesses boundless potential; its capacity for storage is limitless. So, the more varied and enriching experiences and conversations you provide your baby, the more their brain expands and advances. Early literacy includes the development of language, listening, speaking, viewing, reading and writing.

Here are a few more ways to inspire your child's early literacy development:

Infants

- Engage in conversation with your baby throughout the day by having conversations with them while describing what you are doing.
- Sing songs and read nursery rhymes to your baby.

Toddlers

- Provide opportunities for your toddler to write by scribbling on a large piece of paper with a jumbo or large crayon. Ask your toddler "Can you tell me about the picture you drew?" or "What did you draw or write?" Next, draw a picture of a dog on your toddler's paper. If your toddler tells you it is a dog, write the word "dog." This supports their emergent literacy skills.
- Sing the song "I'm a Little Tea Pot" with your toddler. Encourage your toddler to learn to sing and move with each action in the song.

Preschoolers

- While you're driving or riding on public transit, sing, read signs and talk about the words you see in the environment, such as store and street signs. Ask your child, "Do you see the letters in the words on the sign?" This provides a fantastic way to expose your child to the alphabet and words.
- Read a book for 15 to 20 minutes with your child every day. This helps them learn to listen and builds their vocabulary.

You can also use the following resources to support engaging with your child:

- The Division of Early Learning's [Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards](#) (FELDS) provide information on the progression of learning and development from birth to age five. The Language and Literacy domain has suggested activities that encourage your child's communication and early literacy development. You can also talk with your child's teacher about activities to do at home to support skills they are currently learning in the classroom.
- Florida Commissioner of Education Manny Diaz, Jr.'s [Commissioner's Book of the Month](#) promotes literacy and reading engagement while helping children succeed academically and in life through a monthly reading challenge.



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Screening and Progress Monitoring

Developmental screening and progress monitoring help show how children develop and progress in their growth and educational development. When conducted regularly, both offer valuable insights into a child's progress over time.

Children from birth to age 5 who participate in the School Readiness (SR) program undergo annual developmental screenings. Parents complete an electronic Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) on each child when completing the enrollment process. Screenings identify whether children are meeting milestones appropriate for their age or whether they may need targeted assistance. To learn more about the ASQ, contact your [local early learning coalition](#).

Children in Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program participate in the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) or FAST Star Early Literacy. This ongoing progress monitoring helps teachers understand children's educational needs as the teachers monitor children's learning progression throughout VPK.

To learn more about the FAST Star Early Literacy, visit the [Family Guide to Star Assessments](#) and the [FAST Star Early Literacy Family Letter - What Families Need to Know](#).



Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) is a free program that connects families living in or moving to Florida with community resources.

Child Care Resource and Referral:

- Informs families on how to identify quality child care environments.
- Helps families with the School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten application process.
- Educates families about a child's basic needs, financial assistance options, community resources and agencies that support family well-being.
- Connects families to specialists and resources for supporting children with special needs.
- Shares resources that support the needs of military families.

How do I receive CCR&R assistance?

Contact your local [early learning coalition](#) and speak to a CCR&R specialist. You may also call the state office on their toll-free family line at 866-357-3239.

National Grandparents Day is September 8

Grandparents play various roles in their grandchildren's lives, and the bond with a grandparent can have a profound impact on a child. National Grandparents Day is Sunday, September 8. To celebrate, help your child show their appreciation and love with heartfelt gestures. Have them draw a picture, create a card or make a phone call or video chat. If the grandparents live nearby, plan a visit or maybe even a picnic. Grandparents cherish acknowledgment from their grandchildren.

Encourage grandparents interested in volunteering in the classroom to contact the school or talk to your child's classroom teacher to learn about ways they can assist during the school day. Volunteer opportunities can include support during small group, at recess or even reading a story to the class. Grandparents bring unique and enriching perspectives, love and wisdom.

Mark your calendar. National Grandparents Day is a great opportunity to honor the positive role grandparents play in the lives of grandchildren.