



EARLY LEARNING PARENTS' PAGES



The official newsletter of the Office of Early Learning



SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION



March is a great time to start looking into summer camp options for your child. Many summer camp programs open registration in March. Summer camps usually fill their available student spots quickly. Starting your search earlier can help make planning for the summer more easy! When you are considering a summer camp for your child that meets the needs of your family you can use the [Selecting A Summer Camp for your school age child](#) to help you make the best decision. A [Spanish version](#) is also available.

Contact your local [early learning coalition](#) to get more information on available summer camps in your area.

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IRISH-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH



The U.S. Congress made March Irish-American Heritage Month in 1991. Many cities have St. Patrick's Day parades to celebrate. Check with your local news station, newspaper or your child's school for more information.

Your child may enjoy hearing you read a story about St. Patrick's Day. St. Patrick's Day books for children can be found here. You can find books for St. Patrick's Day being read aloud here. You may enjoy making recipes at home with your child to celebrate Irish-American Heritage Month.

You can find more information on St. Patrick's Day and Irish culture here.

Pediatricians Prescribe Reading Aloud



prescriptions to new parents instructing them to start reading with their babies from birth. The benefits of reading to your child are so important that many pediatricians continue to prescribe reading to your child at well-child check-ups as your child gets older.

Pediatricians are spreading the news that reading aloud, talking, and singing with your child is as much fun as it is rewarding. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends reading to children as the #1 prescription for preventing reading failure in the future.

Reading to your child helps their brain develop so they can learn to read. As you talk, read, and sing with your baby or toddler, they are making connections in their brains. These connections form the basis for language, literacy, and social-emotional skills at an important time in their brain development. In addition, these activities strengthen the bond between you and your child.

Pediatricians know this and many write

Starting a daily routine of reading with your children at bedtime or nap-time is a powerful way to build healthful habits that last a lifetime.

Pediatricians and education professionals tell parents that the return on this investment is huge! Resources for more information: Build Connections Toolkit from AAP Reading Aloud Helps Kids Thrive



It's that time of the year to have fun with a cat in a hat or get set for a pet or eat green eggs and ham! Dr. Seuss' Day is March 2. Dr. Seuss is the author of over 60 beloved children's books. Dr. Seuss was the pseudonym for the author, Theodor Seuss Geisel. He also wrote books as Theo. LeSieg and as Rosetta Stone. *What Pet Should I Get* was the last book written by Dr. Seuss and it has been recently discovered and published.



For [activities](#), [printable activity sheets](#), [recipes](#), [crafts](#) and many other ideas to celebrate Dr. Seuss' Day with your child visit [Seussville for Parents](#).

Florida's Prepaid College Program

Every day that you send your young child off to preschool you're preparing their minds academically for a lifetime of opportunity! It is these early lessons in the foundational bricks of letters, numbers, and even social skills that will help them for years to come in their academic journey.

But what about preparing financially for college or vocational training? [Florida Prepaid College Savings Plan](#) is committed to helping families explore the options for saving early for college, to avoid loan debt and stress later. We share their mission of making education accessible and affordable, and encourage you to explore Prepaid Plans now that the annual Open Enrollment window is open.



The Open Enrollment period to purchase a Prepaid Plan is Feb. 1-April 30, and prices have dropped to their lowest levels in five years - starting at \$44/month. Families can enroll in a Prepaid Plan for free, a \$50 savings, by using promo code VPK1920, through February 29, 2020. After that, the code will save you \$25 off the enrollment fee.

A Prepaid Plan allows you to lock in future college costs for less so your child's college tuition is ready and waiting for them. You can simply pick a Prepaid Plan to fit your budget and savings goals. There are no worries about the ups and downs of the stock market or how much tuition might go up. Prepaid Plans are guaranteed by the State of Florida.

Explore the Florida Prepaid website for more information - including the [online pricing tool](#) to determine what the various plans cost based on your child's age. For more information see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).



March is Read Aloud Month



Early literacy is critically important for the future success of our young learners. The Office of Early Learning and the Department of Education are working hand-in-hand to bridge PreK and K-3 early literacy policies and practices to better support a seamless approach to early literacy efforts statewide. Just this month we released our first social media post of a communications campaign to raise awareness of the importance of early literacy. Follow the [Florida Office of Early Learning](#) and the [Department of Education](#) on Facebook and Instagram for early literacy tips for families!

One of the questions parents ask teachers, child care providers and pediatricians most frequently is, "How can I help my child learn to read?" One of the best ways to help your child learn to read is to read to your child daily. The science on brain development reveals babies are learning every moment they are awake. The words your baby hears as you read to them and the pictures they see will help them learn the basic concepts of words and pictures.

Since March is National Read Aloud Month, it is the perfect time to start reading to your child daily. Zero to Three offers parents some ideas for choosing books to read with their child and making every day a reading day.

Birth to 6 Months: Find books made of vinyl or soft fabric or choose chunky board books to read to your newborn. They will want to grab the books and will probably attempt to chew on them, so you will need sturdy, washable books. Your baby will watch your face as you read, so use expressions to show your emotions such as smiling, opening your eyes wide and laughing at silly stories. Let your child explore the textures of the books. If you only read a page or two, your child will still enjoy the book. (Continue reading on page 5)



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6-9 Months: Use board books with simple, short stories and colorful pictures or with pictures of objects, animals or people. Show your baby how to open and close the book and let them play with the book. Talk about each picture as you read. Point to different objects or animals in the book and say the names of each object or animal.



9-18 Months: Use board books with simple stories. Toddlers usually enjoy books with rhyming words or repeated phrases and love to see pictures of babies, animals and familiar objects in the books. When your child is about 12 months old begin to ask simple questions about the pictures such as "Where is the baby?" or "Can you find the doggie?"

18-24 Months: Use longer stories or books with more variety of pictures. Toddlers seem to enjoy books with humor and silly rhymes. Toddlers have lots of energy and may need to move around as you read. Ask your child to make animal sounds and movements to match the characters in the book. Let them turn the pages of the book as you read. Ask questions about what they see on each page.

24-36 Months: Your child may be ready for books with regular pages. Show your child how to turn the pages without tearing them. Find books with dogs, cats, squirrels, doctors, police officers, moms, dads and different toys or vehicles that will be interesting to your child because they will be familiar to them.



4 - 5 Years-Old: Your child will enjoy stories about children and families, their favorite animals or pets. They like stories with humor and fantasy and are beginning to enjoy non-fiction books about topics they find interesting such as cars, trucks, holidays, animals and dinosaurs, Most preschoolers enjoy Dr. Seuss books. Visit your local library to find books for your child's specific age.





NATIONAL CRAYON DAY

March 31st is National Crayon Day! National Crayon Day is a day to celebrate the invention of crayons and the joy of coloring. Coloring develops your child's fine motor skills and allows your child to explore their creativity.

Here are a few activities you can do with your child at home.

Recycle

Old and broken crayons can still be recycled into multicolored homemade crayons. To do this, remove the paper from the crayon. Take a cupcake pan, cupcake liners, and place the broken crayons in the liners. You can melt these in the oven at 250 degrees for about 10-15 minutes. Remove the pan and let the pan cool completely. Once the melted crayons have cooled, you can remove the liner and new multicolored crayons are ready for your child to use.

Color

Simply, get some crayons and paper and let your child create a masterpiece! Make coloring more fun by joining your child while they color.

Read

You can read The Adventures of Harold and the Purple Crayon with your child. Find the book being read aloud here.

Learn

Do you know how crayons were invented? Share this book, The Crayon Man, or watch this video with your child to learn all about crayons.



Special Dates in March



2- Dr. Seuss Day
8- Daylight Savings Begins
11- Johnny Appleseed Day

14- National Pi Day
17- St. Patrick's Day
19- First Day of Spring

21- World Down Syndrome Day
30- Take a Walk in the Park Day
31- National Crayon Day

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