



July 2018

- Nurturing your child's curiosity
- First Day of VPK
- Summer is a time for learning
- Back to school sales tax holiday



[Click to read the July issue.](#)

N-E-W-S

Early learning highlights from North, East, West and South Florida

Stroll and Read with ELC

Children will receive free books

On Aug. 25, the [Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend](#) will host the Stroll and Read with ELC at Cascades Park. Bring your little ones to enjoy reading at the park! Every child will have the opportunity to take home a free book of their choice.

[Click here](#) to read more.



Pen pal program encourages reading in children

Children develop literacy skills with buddies

The [ELC of Southwest Florida](#) is recruiting volunteers for the Literacy Buddy program. The program encourages reading and develops language skills by allowing children to build their own home library. The early learners write a letter to the volunteers in exchange for a new book.



**EARLY LEARNING
COALITION**
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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Brevard's one-stop shop for 'all things early learning related'

Child care services personalized for each county

The [ELC of Brevard](#) has everything you need for children from birth to five years old. Services include Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) vouchers, developmental screenings and payment assistance for daycare. Their school readiness program assists about 3,700 children a month by helping working families find affordable child care.



There are 30 early learning coalitions across the state of Florida representing all 67 of the state's counties. However, each one is unique to meet the needs of their community. Sky Beard, the executive director of the ELC of Brevard, said "Every community has access to the services so we all follow the same state and federal rules and regulations, same statutes, but the benefit of the model is that we can each personalize those services to our own communities' needs because what might be important or critical in Brevard County may or may not be the same in Volusia County."

LAUNCHING A CHILD'S FUTURE

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Pilot program aims to cut Polk County's obesity rate by teaching preschoolers about 'anytime foods' and 'sometimes foods'

Polk County's estimated obesity rate is 37%

The Healthy Habits First Five Years of Life program is teaching preschoolers in Lakeland, Florida, about their well-being. With Polk County's estimated obesity rate of 37 percent, the program trains preschools and day care centers to encourage healthy decision making when it comes to food choices and physical activity. Nemours Florida Prevention Initiative received a \$20,000 grant from the GiveWell County Foundation's George W. Jenkins Fund to take the pilot program to Polk County. The Nemours organization plans to train about a dozen trainers from the [ELC of Polk County](#) and Lakeland Regional Health.



"We want to increase awareness of positive health habits and reduce obesity and, eventually, mortality rates," said Kelly Rogers, program manager with the Nemours Florida Prevention Initiative. "Over the long term, this could reduce health care costs as these kids become our next generation of adults."

[Click here](#) to read more.

Amscot Presents Mini-Grants To 10 Tampa Bay Nonprofits

Coalition among recipients of mini-grant

Among the organizations receiving mini-grants from Amscot Financial is the [ELC of Pasco and Hernando Counties Inc.](#), Spring Hill. The coalition administers early learning programs for nearly 13,000 children in its community annually. The coalition offers the School Readiness program which provides financial assistance for working families. They also assist four and five-year-old children enroll in the State of Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program



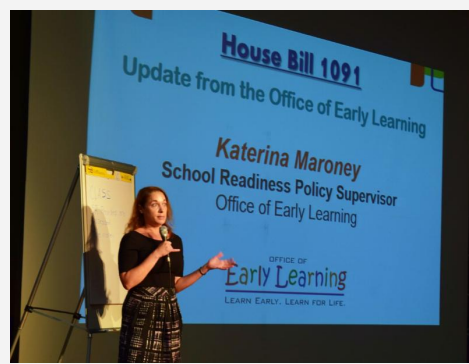
[Click here](#) to read more.

ELC of Duval County Holds Town Hall Meeting

Discussion on House Bill 1091

On June 26, the [ELC of Duval County](#) hosted a town hall meeting to discuss House Bill 1091. The Florida Legislature passed this bill to increase the quality and accountability of the School Readiness program.

The [Classroom Assessment Scoring System](#) (CLASS®) will be used as the program assessment tool. CLASS primarily measures the quality of the classroom interactions between the teachers and children. The Office of Early Learning and Florida's early learning coalitions will lead the implementation of this legislation.



Pop-up Neighbor event in Bradenton

For three hours, everyone in the laundromat had their fees paid

On July 14, the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and The Laundry Project teamed up to hold a #PopUpNeighbor event at SuperMatt Laundromat/Lavandería in Bradenton, Florida. Pop-Up Neighbor events are unexpected opportunities where caring volunteers make real connections with individuals and families while alleviating the cost of laundry. For three hours, everyone who walked into the laundromat had their laundry fees paid, thanks to the generosity of The Patterson Foundation.



The [ELC of Manatee County](#) provided books for the children, The Food Bank of Manatee provided food sacks and fresh produce for all the laundromat patrons, the Manatee County Public Library was there with information on how to get a library card, Manatee County Rural Health Services provided information on health resources, Volunteer Readers kept the book nook alive sharing books and stories, and UnidosNow provided information on college and career readiness and other programs as they empowered Latinos to achieve their American dreams. The Patterson Foundation provided breakfast and lunch, and the volunteers and laundromat patrons offered bundles of goodwill, baskets full of smiles, and a sense of community that will last far longer than the fresh scent of the dryer sheets.

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