



February 2017

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Early Learning Parents' Pages

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N-E-W-S

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

Coalition Collaborates with Sheriff's Office to Provide Car Seat Checks

ELC of Nature Coast and Citrus County Sheriff's Office Ensure Car Seat Safety

The [Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast](#) and the Citrus County Sheriff's Office are teaming up to provide parents with a free car seat safety check on Saturday, Feb. 18, 2017. Parents can head over to the Community Resource Office at Whispering Pines Park in Inverness from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. to find out if their child's car seat meets safety standards. No appointment is necessary. Questions? Call Michele at (352) 560-6024 or Sue at (352) 563-9939 ext. 235.



11th Annual "Discovering the Joy" Conference Returns to Flagler

Conference Will Feature Two Keynoters

On Saturday, Feb. 18, 2017, the [ELC of Flagler and Volusia](#) will host the 11th annual "Discovering the Joy" Conference at Palm Coast High School in Palm Coast. At the one-day conference, early childhood providers can gain knowledge in areas of health and safety, science, parenting, special needs, early literacy, early math, social emotional development, music and movement, and behavior management. This year's conference will feature back-to-back keynote presentations by The Learning Station, which will take attendees on a musical journey, and Keith Pentz, who will help providers learn how to immerse themselves and their classrooms in science. [Click here](#) to view the event flyer.



Coalition Names 2016 Preschool Teacher of the Year

Nominees Recognized at Early Educators Conference

The [ELC of North Florida](#) has selected 2016's "Preschool Teacher of the Year" recipient, a prestigious award acknowledging the quality, creativity and hard work of early childhood educators. This year's Preschool Teacher of the Year winner is St. Johns County's Marie Klingner of Memorial Lutheran Chapel School in St. Augustine. Marie creates "teachable moments" all day and her consistent support enables children to reach their highest potential. She and other fellow nominees for the award were recognized at the Early Educators Conference with a luncheon and awards ceremony sponsored by Kaplan Early Learning.



"Hanging of the Hands" Returns to State Capitol for

Children's Week

Children's "Hand Art" Display Throughout Capitol during Children's Week

The annual *Hanging of the Hands* is a colorful activity that will take place Sunday, Mar. 26, from noon to 4 p.m. in the State Capitol Rotunda. Many coalitions participate. Individuals may also. To participate, children should cut out paper hands and decorate them prior to connecting them vertically in lengths of eight to 10 feet. **Submit artwork before Mar. 10** to have it displayed in the Capitol Rotunda as a reminder to legislators and advocates about the importance of children's issues. Parents can share photos of their children's creative process or their final masterpiece via social media using the hashtag #GiveUsAHand and tagging @ChildrensWeek. Until Mar. 24, everyone who shares their hand-art via Facebook, Twitter or Instagram using #GiveUsAHand and @ChildrensWeek will be entered to win one of three great prizes. The contest categories are "Best Individual Hand-Art," "Best Group Piece" and "Most Creative." To learn more, visit the [Children's Week website](#).



Lee County School District Wins Grant from Southwest Florida Community Foundation

The Community Impact Grant Will Help Early Childhood Centers Prepare Kids for School

The Lee County Public School District received a \$40,840 community impact grant from the Southwest Florida Community Foundation. The funds will support the district in working with early childhood centers to make sure children are ready for their first day of school. The school district has appointed a committee of school staff, area pre-kindergarten centers and the [ELC of Southwest Florida](#) to compose a list of standards for early childhood centers and look at the expectations and pre-assessments used in kindergarten.

The ELC will use a quality rating system to designate which centers meet the district's guidelines. "The designation will indicate the prekindergarten provider is successful in preparing children for kindergarten, and the provider will receive additional incentives that will support a smooth transition for children and families between the pre-school and kindergarten years," a news statement from the district states.



Celebrate Literacy Week a Success

Highlights Included Simultaneous Reading Activity and Guest Readers

Coalitions across the state of Florida participated in the annual "Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!" event from Jan. 23-27. The week promotes the importance of early literacy by bringing in community volunteers to read to preschoolers in early learning centers. Volunteer readers included ELC board members, local radio show hosts, professional and college athletes, "real-life" storybook characters, and



many more. To see photos of Florida students celebrating Celebrate Literacy Week, look up the special hashtag #CLW2017 on Twitter, Instagram or Facebook.

Pictured on the right: [ELC of Florida's Heartland](#) board member Ron Mills reading I Don't Want to be a Frog by Dev Petty to children at Port Charlotte Methodist Church.

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