

Early Learning Parents' Pages



November 2016

We are celebrating family this November. Learn more about family engagement, family traditions, thankful families and military families.

Family Engagement Month

Celebrate the important role parents and families play in their children's education during Family Engagement in Education Month.

When schools and families work together to support learning, children are more motivated to succeed in school and in life.

As a parent, it may seem hard to find time to spend at your child's school or home care center, but there are many ways you can be engaged and support your child's learning. Communicate with your child care provider or teacher to learn more about the progress your child is making with the skills she is learning each week and practice those skills at home.

Parents are their child's first and most important teacher, so it is important your child is learning new skills from you each day and not only from her teacher.



Arrange meetings or communicate through emails or texts with your child's teacher or child care provider when you have questions or concerns about your child's development or behavior.

Most early childhood educators have information and activities that you can do at home to support your child's learning and social development.

Some schools and providers may offer workshops or parenting classes, which can help you learn more about parenting or supporting your child's learning. In addition, many early learning coalitions in Florida offer parenting classes and workshops for families.



Your local early learning coalition has a Child Care Resource and Referral Program that connects you with resources you may need to help support your family, including health, housing and child care assistance.

Online and phone resources, such as [Vroom](#), [Text4Baby](#) and [Let's Play](#), offer age-appropriate, developmental, fun activities for parents, grandparents and children.

Remember, the best way to be engaged in your child's learning is to [talk](#), [read](#), [sing](#) and [play](#) every day.

In This Issue

Family Engagement Month

Family Traditions

Thankful Families

Children and Restaurants

Military Family Month

Veterans Day

Health and Safety Checklists

December Upcoming Events

OFFICE OF
Early Learning
LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.

Early Learning Parents' Pages

Sharing Family Traditions with Children

Family traditions are important to many families and serve as a way to create stability and a sense of belonging for children. Family traditions may be tied to holidays, birthdays, or weekly or monthly events. These traditions help children learn important cultural and social values. Holiday traditions convey a clear message about what families value.



Children feel secure and develop a sense of stability when each birthday or holiday has specific activities or special food that is important to the family. It is especially important to carry on traditions at times when lots of changes are going on in the lives of family members.

When a family moves away from their extended family, the parents may arrange for children to video chat with other family members on holidays or birthdays and include old traditions or make new ones.

Children can feel useful if parents give them special tasks to try during a family tradition. Children develop a sense of identity when they begin to understand the "family identity" that is often at the core of family traditions. The roles and responsibilities of family members show children that each member is important.

Family traditions often involve generosity and giving of our time and talents to others. These and other cultural values are passed down from one generation to the next. Your family may collect food or clothing for homeless families or buy gifts for needy children in your community as part of your holiday traditions.

Share your family traditions this holiday season and teach your children to embrace traditions and the importance of family.

Thankful Families, Thankful Children

Your family is celebrating a special event or holiday and a relative brings your 3-year-old a gift. Do you force your child to say "thank you" or give the relative a hug?

Being appreciative and thankful is difficult for young children to understand and it is difficult for shy children to show appreciation to people they do not see on a regular basis. If your child is not familiar with his relatives and you tell him not to talk to strangers, he may be confused why he must tell a stranger "thank you."

Emotions and social behaviors are sometimes in conflict at certain stages of a young child's social-emotional development. You want your child to learn good manners and to show appreciation when someone does something kind or thoughtful, but you do not want him to be scared or confused in these situations.

Teaching your child to say "thank you" is easy and is much like teaching a script.

*Thank
You*

Continued on pg. 4

Young Children and Restaurants

Have you ever been asked where you would like to be seated in a restaurant and replied, "Please, seat us at a table in a section with no children"? Now that you are a parent, you do not want others to cringe when they are seated next to your family.

How do you take your family to a restaurant when you have a baby, toddler or preschooler who does not like to wait patiently for the family to enjoy a meal?

You do not have to dine out only at fast food restaurants, but you should select ones that are kid-friendly. Kid menus and activities are important when choosing a restaurant for your children.



Choose the right time and day to go to the restaurant. A busy weekend between 6 and 9 p.m. is not the best time to take young children to restaurants. Instead, go out to eat on a week night or eat early around 5 p.m.

Continued on pg. 4

Early Learning Parents' Pages

Military Family Month

November is designated as [Military Family Month](#). Military families sacrifice a lot to support family members who are deployed in service for the country.

Many military spouses give up their own careers to shoulder the burden of frequent moves, taking care of their homes and children on a daily basis, and being a single parent during their spouse's deployment.

Military family members may have to deal with the absence of a spouse, mother or father during holidays, birthdays and other important days in their lives.

When you think of the sacrifice, patriotism, courage and resilience of the people who serve in the military, you must also remember their families are doing the same at home.

Many communities offer [special support](#) and assistance to military families and host special events for them during the month of November. [Early learning coalitions](#) throughout Florida offer support and information for military families with young children, 5 years and younger, and the Office of Early Learning offers [resources](#) and [additional support](#).

Zero to Three has many [resources](#) for child care providers and other early childhood professionals as they learn about the unique circumstances, strengths and challenges of military families.

[Flyers](#) specific for military families on topics such as relocation, transitioning to civilian life, creating routines, stress and behavior and more are also available. You can access [brochures](#) focused on supporting young

children of military families or download "[Babies on the Homefront](#)," a free app available in English and Spanish.



Veterans Day

Veterans Day is a day designed to honor all past and present members of the United States military. On Nov. 11, each year, cities and towns in all states host parades and celebrations to honor all who have served.

Veterans Day began in 1919 as Armistice Day when President Woodrow Wilson designated Nov. 11 as the day to commemorate the end of World War I. Fighting ceased at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month. In 1938, the day became a federal holiday and in 1954 Congress changed the name of the holiday to Veterans Day.



Take your children to a local celebration and talk with them about the importance of showing thanks for those who help keep our country safe and free.



Discuss ways to show gratitude for the service of veterans, such as [writing cards or letters](#) or drawing pictures to [thank members of the military](#) for their service to our country. Your family can send a [care package](#) to a service member or learn more about the "[Gratitude Campaign](#)," a movement to show your gratitude for the service of veterans and active duty military personnel, whenever you meet one or pass one on a sidewalk, in an airport, on a bus or anytime in your daily life.

Watch the video, [Express Your Gratitude](#), with your child and discuss the meaning of thankfulness and gratitude. You can also take your child to a local veteran's hospital or clinic to give letters of thanks to veterans or make special treats.

Whatever your family does to celebrate Veterans Day, remember to teach your child the importance of being grateful for the service of those who served our country.



Early Learning Parents' Pages

Thankful Families, Thankful Children

Continued from pg. 2

Whenever you give your child a toy, a snack or help him in any way, ask him to say "thank you" and praise him when he does. Modeling this behavior is one of the most effective ways to teach your child to say "thank you."

Being [thankful or appreciative](#) is an emotion that your child feels. You can help him identify this emotion and give him the words to express this feeling. Saying phrases, such as "Thank you for helping mommy pick up the toys. It makes me feel happy when you help me," will assist your child with labeling his feelings and connect the feeling of happiness to helping others or getting help from others.

Understanding how others feel and how actions have an effect on others can be hard for young children, but some children as young as 2 are capable of empathy or understanding the feelings of others. Voicing your child's feelings for him helps him understand the emotions he feels and, in turn, helps him begin to understand the emotions of others.

[Support your child's social-emotional development](#) this holiday season by teaching him to say "thank you" to family.



Young Children and Restaurants

Continued from pg. 2

Take small snacks that you can give your child while you are waiting for food. If your child usually eats dinner at 6 p.m., but you do not arrive at the restaurant until 5:30 p.m., you still have to wait to be seated, order food and wait for it. Small snacks will help when she gets fussy or impatient.

Make a "restaurant toolkit" to take with you. Include wipes, bibs and age-appropriate toys or activities. If your child is especially restless, family members can take turns walking her outside or around the restaurant.

Being prepared and planning ahead will help your child and family have a pleasant experience at restaurants.

Health and Safety Checklists

In late October 2016, Florida's new Health and Safety Checklists and Inspections rule became final. It requires at least one inspection each year for all child care providers offering the School Readiness Program. The inspections will begin in mid-November.

[Learn more](#) about the changes.



December Upcoming Events

- December 21 is the first day of winter! Discover fun activities to try as a family this season.
- National Handwashing Awareness Week teaches parents and children why washing hands is important to staying healthy!
- Exciting New Year's resolutions for children and families to try.



Rodney J. MacKinnon
Executive Director

OFFICE OF
Early Learning
LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE

250 Marriott Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Toll-free 866-357-3239
www.FloridaEarlyLearning.com