November is Family Engagement in Education Month and a time to celebrate the important role parents and families play in their children’s education. 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 family child care home, but there are many ways you can be engaged and support their learning. Communicate with your child care provider or the teacher to learn more about the progress your child is making with the skills they are learning each week and practice those skills at home.

Some schools and providers 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’s Child Care Resource and Referral Program can connect you with resources you may need to help support family engagement. Online resources, such as Vroom, Text4Baby and Let’s Play, offer age-appropriate, developmental, and fun activities for parents and grandparents to do with children. Remember, the best way to be engaged in your child’s learning is to talk, read, sing and play every day.

For more information on the importance of family engagement in the development of young children, watch this video.
NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH IN FLORIDA

November is National Native American Heritage Month. Throughout the state of Florida, families can learn about Florida’s Native American communities by exploring the heritage sites, parks and museums. Your family can find a location nearest you here. Share your experience on social media using #FLOEL, and #NAHM.

VETERAN'S DAY

November 11th is Veteran’s Day. This day celebrates the end of World War I. On Veteran’s Day the citizens of the United States honor military veterans, and active duty military service men and women. Take time with your child and write a thank you letter to a Veteran. With A Million Thanks you can send your letter to a Veteran!

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving for many families is a time where everyone gets together to share a delicious meal and visit with one another. For young children this can be overwhelming. Take time to make sure your child gets the most out of Thanksgiving. Make getting ready for Thanksgiving fun by having your child help you shop for food prepare the meal, and set the table. When working together, talk with your child about what you are thankful for and ask them what makes them feel thankful.
Dinner with Family

Many families have busy schedules with little time for interacting with each other. If both parents work or are in school and the children are in care, the evenings may be the only time the whole family is together. If your family is busy, find ways to focus on being together at least once a day. Your evening meal is the perfect time to share what is happening daily, making it important to have family dinners together.

A Harris Poll survey was conducted on behalf of Boys Town that revealed 98% of the parents surveyed felt eating family meals together were important because:

- It provides an opportunity for family members to catch up on each other’s lives.
- Families can talk about schedules and events for the week, making sure activities are coordinated and everyone has transportation.
- Parents can teach group decision-making and communication skills to their children.
- Everyone can learn and practice mealtime manners.
- Every family member can help create and develop family traditions; this makes kids feel important and included.

You can help your child learn important social skills such as communicating, listening and showing gratitude. Being grateful for the food and family you have can be a topic you discuss at dinner. Share what you have done during the day or talk about the good things that happened with each other. Even the youngest members of your family will want to share and be included in your conversations.

As a family, take the Boys Town Dinner Table Pledge and plan for having dinner together as often as possible. For more information on the importance of family dinners please visit: https://www.boystown.org/parenting/studies/At-the-Table.aspx.

Boys Town has developed “At the Table” a guide that provides tips and activities for families to use during meals. In the guide you will find lots of resources and activities to engage your child at the dinner table. It is the perfect time to teach your child good manners by modeling them and praising your child when they use them.
Family engagement is important for your child’s readiness for school. If you read with your child at home you are already engaging your child in learning. Research shows the many benefits of reading with children and considers it the single most important way to support your child’s language and literacy development. It is never too early to begin reading with your child.

Whether your child is a newborn, a baby or a toddler, they will enjoy and learn from the interactions with you as you read them a story.

Read Aloud 15 Minutes advises parents to read aloud to their child starting at birth at least 15 minutes a day. You will see the amazing growth your child makes in learning new words, recognizing letters and eventually words when you consistently read with them every day. Show your child how exciting it is to read by using expressions, using funny voices and sound effects as you read. When the dog in the story barks, you can bark like a dog. Point to the pictures and talk about what you see. Ask your child questions about the story or ask them what they think will happen next. When your child gets older, point to the words or letters and relate the sounds of the letters to the words.

Make reading time a special time for your child. Find a comfortable spot and hold them on your lap or have them sit next to you as you read. When they are old enough, let them turn the pages and pick out the books they want you to read. Take your child to the library and let them select books to check out and take home to read. Read signs to them as you ride in the car or bus and ask them to point out certain letters or words when they see them on signs you pass. Soon they will be finding words and letters that they know everywhere you go!
November is National Adoption Month

Florida’s Explore Adoption program is Florida’s adoption initiative that offers families information and resources to learn more about adoption. During November, Explore Adoption focuses on encouraging adoptions of children who may be older, have special needs or have been in foster care. When children in the foster care system are no longer able to return to a parent or family member, that child needs a family. If you can provide a child with a safe, loving household and have the desire to share your life with a child who is dreaming of a home, you may be the answer to a child’s dreams.

Explore Adoption will assist you in making a child’s dream a reality. Whether you want to adopt one child or a sibling group, Explore Adoption will provide you with assistance and resources to find the child or children that will complete or complement your family.

If you are thinking of adopting a child who is older or has special needs, adoption assistance is available to help with the costs of any special care or expenses. Florida offers supports and resources to families who adopt one or more children. A monthly subsidy for health care, free tuition at any state university, community college or vocational school in Florida, federal tax credits and adoption assistance for families who adopt a child with special needs. You don’t have to be perfect to adopt a child, you just have to be the perfect match. If you have the ability to love a child, and can provide the basics for a child and make a lifelong commitment, you can be an adoptive parent. You may become the “dream mom” or “dream dad” for a child or children and make their dream of a perfect family come true. For more information on adoption please visit http://www.adoptflorida.org/index.shtml.
Many families have experienced trauma in their lives. Trauma affects adults and children who are exposed to distress and suffering. When children are exposed to toxic stress or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), they may suffer from negative effects that can last a lifetime. Trauma informed care takes into account these effects and is designed to alleviate as many of the stressors as possible in the lives of families. If you, a family member or someone you know is suffering from toxic stress, contact the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) staff at your local early learning coalition for information, resources or a referral to a local agency for assistance.

For more information on Trauma Informed Care contact the FSU Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy: http://floridatrauma.org/tisgate.php.

Special Dates in December

December is Safe Toys and Gifts Month

- Dec. 2 Special Education Day
- Dec. 10 Human Rights Day
- Dec. 17 Maple Syrup Day
- Dec. 21 Winter Solstice
- Dec. 25 Christmas
- Dec. 27 Visit the Zoo Day
- Dec. 30 Bacon Day

- Dec. 4 Cookie Day
- Dec. 11 Kaleidoscope Day
- Dec. 19 Oatmeal Muffin Day
- Dec. 22-30 Hanukkah
- Dec. 26 Candy Cane Day
- Dec. 28 Chocolate Day
- Dec. 31 New Year’s Eve
For years, Florida Prepaid and LEGOLAND® Florida have been supporting kids’ big imaginations and helping families achieve their college savings goals.

This year, Florida Prepaid and LEGOLAND® Florida are partnering to make college dreams a reality for 10 lucky Florida students. Now through November 24 at 5 pm, enter to win one of 10 Florida Prepaid/LEGOLAND® Florida scholarship prize packs.

Ten (10) Grand Prize winners will receive a 2-Year Florida College Plan Scholarship, plus two tickets to LEGOLAND® Florida to celebrate their win!

Additionally, once registered, you will be automatically entered to win one of four LEGOLAND® Florida weekly prize packs.

Florida Prepaid and LEGOLAND® Florida are proud to foster kids’ innovation and provide them an opportunity to continue their education! Learn more about the Florida Prepaid Plans here. Enter today at: www.myfloridaprepaid.com/scholarship.

Did You Know?

64% of jobs by 2025 will require education beyond high school – including 32% needing at minimum an associate’s degree.

Source: Board of Government, 2016

$1.6 million is how much more a person with a bachelor’s degree can earn in their lifetime vs. someone with only a high school diploma.

Source: "U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics"

A student earning a 2-year associate’s degree from any public Florida College is guaranteed admission to a State University in Florida.