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Read December's issue of Parents' Pages [here](#).

N-E-W-S

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

ELC of Southwest Florida Contributes to Success of Foster Care Program

Collaboration results in more foster children receiving child care

Friends of Foster Children Forever acknowledged the [Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida](#) at their annual luncheon for their successful collaboration resulting in more foster children receiving child care. According to the National Fact Sheet on Education Outcomes in Children in Foster Care, the national average of Foster Care Children enrolled in child care is six percent. Together, Friends of Foster Children Forever and the ELC are at 25 percent based on referrals over the past two months.



Registration for Early Educators Conference 2017 Now Open

Guests invited to wear crazy hats

The [ELC of North Florida](#) will hold their Early Educators Conference Saturday, Jan. 21, 2017, at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church (Sullivan Hall) in Fleming Island. Lisa Murphy, founder and CEO of Ooey Gooney, will host the all-day conference and teach attendees how to create a play-based early childhood environment. To go with the play theme, attendees are asked to come wearing a crazy hat. To register, visit elcnorthflorida.org.



Coalition Breaks New Ground With Use of Child Caregiver Monitoring Devices

The program will impact about 200 children during the first year

The [ELC of Escambia County](#) will be the first to use Language Environment Analysis (LENA) systems in child care centers to track interactions between caregivers and infants



and toddlers. The LENA device records up to 16 hours of audio, which researchers at the LENA Foundation will then use to analyze the number of conversational turns that took place with the child. Steve Hannon, president of LENA Research Foundation, noted that children who are in child care spend as much as 60 percent of their day there; so it is important to ensure those environments are language-rich.

Invitation to Take Part in 2017 Black History Month Contests

**Three students will earn a
four-year Florida College
Plan scholarship**

Governor Rick Scott and First Lady Ann Scott announced the 2017 Black History Month contests for students and educators. The theme for this year's essay and art contests is "A recognition of the African-American role in shaping Florida today." The contests are open to students in kindergarten through 12th grade, and all entries must be received by Friday, Jan. 20, 2017. Essay contest winners will receive a four-year Florida College Plan scholarship from the Florida Prepaid College Foundation. Students, parents, teachers and principals are also invited to nominate full-time educators in elementary, middle and high schools for the Black History Month Excellence in Education Award. For more information or to submit entries, go to www.FloridaBlackHistory.com.



Child Care Providers in Flagler and Volusia Counties Rewarded for their Effort

**Providers successfully completed the Performance
Funding Project to qualify for the bonus**

Last month, numerous child care providers in Flagler and Volusia counties received funding from Florida's Office of Early Learning and the [ELC of Flagler and Volusia Counties](#) for successfully completing the Performance Funding Project. This program is a voluntary statewide initiative that gives eligible child care and education providers the opportunity to earn additional funds for improving school readiness outcomes. Providers had to show improvement in scores using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System to qualify for funding. Pictured are staff from St. Mark Christian Day School in Palm Coast as well as staff from Itty Bitty Learning Center in Bunnell. These two facilities were among those that received funding for competing the project.



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