



Parents' Pages

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Kindness Counts Every Day

As a parent, you are your child's first and most important role model for kindness and empathy. Just as teaching your child to count and recognize patterns expands their math skills, demonstrating patience and helpfulness during your daily routines will show them that kindness counts.

The following are some simple ways to show your child the importance of kindness every day:

- Showing them ways to help others with household tasks.
- Modeling random acts of kindness.
- Using appropriate phrases when speaking to friends and adults with words such as "yes please" and "thank you."
- Encouraging them to share and be kind to their classmates.

Reading books such as "I Am Me" written by Tristan Towns and Lacey Howard from Florida Department of Education [Commissioner's Book of the Month](#) is another good way to teach your child the power of positivity, caring and gratitude. Through your guidance, your child can experience positive social interactions with peers and express themselves appropriately when responding to others.

Random Acts of Kindness Day occurs each February. You can search for ideas online to further illustrate the concept with your child.



**Registration for the 2025-26
Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)
program year is open! Visit the
Family Portal to complete an
application for your child.**





Read Aloud Every Day

World Read Aloud Day is an annual event to promote the importance of early literacy. On February 5, this global initiative celebrates 15 years of encouraging families and educators to read aloud to boost a child's reading skills, growth and development. Let World Read Aloud Day inspire your child and others to pick up a book and share a story aloud! Helping your child become a confident reader is truly one of the best gifts you can give.

Here are a few fun, interactive activities your family can do together:

- Choose characters in the story to read their lines with different voices.
- Pause at pivotal moments in the story and make predictions of what may happen next.
- Draw favorite scenes or characters from the story.
- Explore outdoors and read at a park or at a favorite hangout spot.
- Schedule a time during the day to read aloud at least one book.

You can use these additional resources from the Florida Department of Education to help your family read more at home:

- [Getting Started-Reading Aloud to Children](#)
- [Helping Your Child Become a Reader](#)

Mary McLeod Bethune

Black History month, celebrated every February, is an important opportunity to commemorate the significant contributions of African Americans to Florida's history and culture, such as Mary McLeod Bethune who founded Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach. She was also a prominent civil rights advocate and accomplished author.

Born July 10, 1875, in Mayesville, South Carolina, she was one of 17 children and the only child that attended school. After graduating from Scotia Seminary in North Carolina in 1893, she graduated from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago in 1895. Her passion for education led her to become a teacher. In 1904, she opened a school that was among the limited institutions where African American students had the opportunity to earn a college degree. Today, that school, now known as Bethune-Cookman University, has been in existence for 120 years.

Interesting Facts for Kids:

- Mary McLeod Bethune participated in many political movements and national services including becoming President Franklin D. Roosevelt's special advisor on minority affairs.
- Today, there are 19 schools named in her honor in the United States of America and four of them are in our great state of Florida.
- The Mary McLeod Bethune postage stamp was issued in 1985.
- In 1974, her primary residence, located on the college campus, became a National Historic Landmark.



Throughout the month, participate in community activities to celebrate African American heroes and their inspiring contributions.

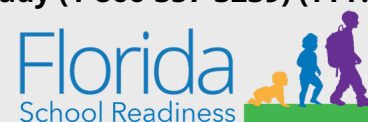


Child Care Resource and Referral

See below on when to contact your Early Learning Coalition.

- Check status of a School Readiness (SR) or VPK application.
- Request an update on SR waitlist.
- Get customized child care listings and community resources that meet your needs.
- Request an SR or VPK provider or coalition transfer.

Apply for the SR program online from a computer, tablet or cell phone. To learn more about this program and how to apply, contact your local [early learning coalition](#) or call the Child Care Resource and Referral State Network at **1-866-FL-Ready (1-866-357-3239) (TTY:711)**.



Children's Dental Health Month

February is Children's Dental Health Month, so take some extra time this month to talk with your child about the importance of dental health. Good dental care is vital for a child's health and well-being. Left unchecked, tooth decay can have adverse effects on a child's ability to speak clearly and eat properly as well as pay attention and learn.

Use warm water and a wash cloth or gauze to clean your infant's gums, which will help develop healthy baby teeth. When the first teeth appear, use a soft baby toothbrush with a pea-sized amount of children's fluoride toothpaste to clean their teeth and gums. As they get older, help them learn how to brush their teeth and talk to them about why it is important to brush twice a day. Make and keep regular dental check-ups, starting within a few months of when their first teeth emerge. Then, maintain and model a healthy diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables, limiting sugary snacks and beverages.

Healthy teeth and gums impact the overall well-being of your child so make dental health a priority. For more information on dental health, visit the [Florida Health](#) website.



Learning Math = Fun!

Have you ever stacked blocks with your toddler and counted them together? Or sang, "One, two, buckle my shoe?" Simple activities like these do more than just entertain, they help your child develop important math skills. In fact, math skills start forming in infancy, often through activities you are already doing.

Want to make learning even more fun? Try these easy, everyday activities that foster learning and engagement while entertaining your young child:

- Explore different shapes during your next grocery store trip.
- Search for patterns in your environment (think flower colors or rows of cans at the store).
- Play a game of mimicking clapping patterns.
- Sort laundry by color or match socks together.

Don't miss an issue!
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The following are some great books to read with your budding math scholar:

- "Mouse Count" by Ellen Stoll Walsh
- "Zac the Robot: A Book About Shapes" by Stephanie Lanier

Incorporating learning into everyday moments will make a big difference in your child's development of math skills.

For more ideas, read the components included in the Mathematical Thinking domain at [Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards](#).



 **Manny Diaz, Jr.**
Commissioner of Education

 **Cari Miller**
Chancellor of Early Learning



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Early Learning
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