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Early Learning Parents' Pages

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING

Summer Break Ends, New School Year Begins!

As the summer break comes to an end, think about ways to help your child prepare for their first day at a new School Readiness or Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) provider or their return to a preschool setting. Plan activities that get your child, whatever their age, thinking about their upcoming experience and ready to learn.

Infants and toddlers

- Visit the zoo or farm and tell your baby the name of each animal you see. Talk to your baby about the color of the animal and the sound the animal makes.
- Walk outside with your toddler, let them touch soft, green grass and observe the colors of the flowers as they look around to explore.
- Play a game of Hide and Seek with your toddler. You can play this fun game at home or outside in your yard.

Preschoolers

- Locate a community park that has splash pads for your child to walk through. Ask your child to count the number of spaces where water comes out as they play and cool off.
- Sit outside and observe the stars in the sky together. Ask your child to count the stars they see.
- As you prepare for bedtime, read a book to your child, talk about memories created as a family and about new adventures they will have at school.
- Talk with your family and decide together on additional activities and outings.

Before the first day

- Make plans to visit the school to meet your child's teacher and administrator. Call the school to find out when they will have their back-to-school orientation and plan to attend with your child.
- Read the registration information provided during your enrollment appointment.
- Practice the morning routine of preparing breakfast and driving to school.
- Talk to your child about how they feel about their upcoming new experience.
- Plan to be an active participant in your child's education. Inquire about the parent teacher association, volunteer opportunities, how to sign up for field trips and ask the teacher what their preferred form of communication is, which may be email or a classroom app.
- And on the first day, help soothe anxiety your child may feel by hugging them when you say goodbye.

Taking these kinds of steps before your child's first day will help you both feel ready. Young children are resilient, curious and eager to learn. With your continued support they will adjust to their classroom environment, and you will feel confident that they are prepared for this exciting new step.

Visit the [Division of Early Learning's website](#) to learn about the [Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards \(FELDS\)](#). The eight developmental domains contained in FELDS are the foundation for classroom instructional guidance that Florida teachers use to help children develop the skills they need to learn, graduate and succeed beginning with their first early learning experience.



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Tips to Prepare for Natural Disasters

Hurricane season began on June 1. If you haven't already, check your supplies and create a plan to keep your family safe in the event you are impacted by a weather-related event. Early planning allows you to act quickly and gives your family a sense of security knowing you have communicated what to do in an emergency. There are many online resources to help your family prepare.

Here are some general tips to include in your plan:

Know the risks: Be familiar with and learn what specific needs your family should address. Practice leaving from the various exits of your home. If your children are old enough, make sure they know the names of trusted neighbors and where they live. If your neighborhood has previously been impacted by a natural disaster, talk to neighbors about lessons learned. Teach your children how to call 9-1-1 if they find themselves alone and needing help.

Before the storm: Prepare for your family's unique needs with a customized plan and checklist. If your child has medical or special needs, plan to have plenty of medication and needed equipment ready. Take your child to buy supplies for an emergency preparation kit. In a waterproof box, include birth certificates, medical records and insurance documents. Pack clothes, diapers, wipes, blankets and pillows. Include favorite toys and family games in addition to non-perishable foods, water, boxed juices, bug spray, sunscreen, flashlights, weather radios, batteries and other items your family will need. Make sure you know evacuation routes for your area and be prepared to relocate if advised by local officials.

During the storm: The toys and games packed in your emergency kit will help entertain your children if you go to a shelter, motel or relative or friend's house.

After the storm: Tune into your local news to learn about any precautions advised by local authorities. Remember that your children may be frightened or confused, so reassure them how your family prepared. Take advantage of local health professionals and counselors who can help your family cope and connect to local resources. The most crucial step is to stay safe and calm knowing you have taken action to prepare your family the best you can. Find additional information by reviewing the [Florida Emergency Preparedness Guide](#).



The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants and young children undergo developmental screening on a regular basis. By asking your doctor for a developmental screening on your next visit, you can learn about your child's strengths and ways to support their healthy development and get ready for learning, whether at a child care site or a school. If you have concerns about your child, contact their doctor. You may also contact [Help Me Grow Florida](#). They can answer your questions, help complete a screening, and connect you to local resources.