

# EARLY LEARNING PARENTS' PAGES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

[Military Families Connect](#)

[Oral Health & School Readiness](#)

[November Celebrations](#)

[Families Facing Flu Season](#)

[Step Up For Students Scholarship](#)

[Family is a Child's First Teacher](#)

[National Adoption Month](#)

## Celebrating Military Family Month and Connections



November is Military Family Month. If you are a military family, especially if one parent is actively deployed, it can be challenging to [stay engaged](#) in your child's learning and development. If you have young children, it is especially important for you to connect with your child on a regular basis. Consider using technology to help you be a part of your child's learning. Many apps are available that make staying connected easy.

[Babies on the Homefront](#) is a mobile app that helps military family members connect with their babies, toddlers and preschoolers. No matter where you are stationed, you can [read a story](#) or sing a song with your child at bedtime. You can give your child a thumbs-up, high-five or a kiss with child-friendly emojis. You can store videos of yourself singing, reading bedtime stories and telling stories about your childhood in the app for your child to view anytime.

[Parenting2Go](#) is an app that will help you strengthen relationships with your child, reconnect with them after a deployment and build upon your parenting skills. It helps you reconnect with your family after separations. It helps you switch gears between work and home to be actively present for your child. This app has tips for reconnecting with your family after a deployment and offers support when you are stressed by parenting demands.

Sesame Street offers many [resources for military families](#). These include apps that help your child explore their feelings and cope with changes – even when you are not at home. [The Big Moving Adventure](#) and [Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame Street](#) will allow you to help your child calm down when they are upset and offers a way for them to deal with challenges.

When you have young children, it may be difficult to stay connected as a family.

- Use technology to make it easier.
- Use apps and have frequent video chats to let your child know that you are an essential partner in their learning.
- Interact with your child as much as possible – the benefits for your child far exceed the time and effort it takes.

Click "Brush Up on Oral Health" to learn about Oral Health and School Readiness.



## Brush Up on Oral Health

### Celebrations in November

November is a month of celebrating traditions and learning about special groups who help make our country great. Use these special celebrations to introduce your children to different cultures and traditions. Be your child's role model for showing gratefulness or thankfulness throughout the month.

Veterans Day is November 11<sup>th</sup>. On Veterans Day, as a nation, we recognize and show gratitude to the men and women who have served or are currently serving our country to protect our freedoms. If you have active or retired military family members, show your child a picture of them in uniform and explain the concept of being a veteran or what it means to serve in the armed forces. The [armed forces](#) include the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard and National Guard. Read your child a children's book about Veterans Day to help them understand the importance of [Veterans Day](#).

Celebrate Native American Heritage Month and American Indian Week (November 23-30). In the [United States](#), there are 574 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages. Every tribe has unique traditions, their own culture, language and history. Help your child learn more about Native American heritage and culture through reading stories and looking at pictures together. Point out the different cultures of families they know and peers in their classroom and community.

Thanksgiving is a time to carry on traditions or begin new ones. For some families, it is a time to enjoy being together or for sharing a festive meal with extended family. Children as young as infants can enjoy these family times. [Infants](#) can recognize mom and dad's voice and respond with smiles to loved ones. [Toddlers](#) can participate in a traditional family meal and may discover new foods that are family favorites. [Preschoolers](#) will begin to identify themselves as part of a family; this is a time for parents to talk more about their family's culture and traditions. Teach gratitude to your child, as you show appreciation for all the things you celebrate in your life. [Thankful Hearts](#) is an activity you can help your child celebrate thankfulness and share the decorated hearts with family.

Use the [Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards](#) to support your child's learning. The standards are linked to activities, websites, Vroom tips and videos for families with children from birth to age 5. Resources are available to help you understand more about your child's development and for you to find a variety of ways to help your child learn at home.

The Office of Early Learning would love to see how your family celebrates.

Visit our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages for ways to share with us how your family will honor military families and veterans, learn about Native American Heritage and how your family spends time together for Thanksgiving.



### [Veterans Day Books](#)

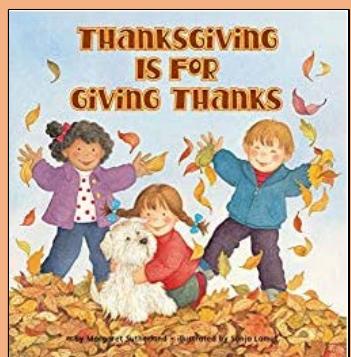


Veterans Day

### [Native American Heritage Books](#)



### [Thanksgiving Books](#)



## Facing Flu Season

You probably have been teaching your children ways to avoid the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and now you have to face the influenza (flu) season. Luckily, the same methods for avoiding COVID-19 also apply to avoiding the flu. The COVID-19 precautions, like frequent hand-washing, wearing face coverings and staying away from people who are sick, also work to reduce the likelihood of you or your child getting the flu. Different viruses cause the flu and COVID-19, but some of the [symptoms are the same](#) since both are respiratory illnesses. With the flu, your child may have a sore throat, a cough, a fever or chills, fatigue, headaches and a runny nose. Health experts believe it is possible to have the flu and COVID-19 at the same time.

According to information from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and [Child Care Aware of America](#), this year it is more important than ever to have your family members get a flu vaccine. They advise parents to reduce the spread of flu by getting their child and themselves vaccinated. Children are most likely to get the flu and expose family members to the flu during this time. If you have an infant six months or younger or a pregnant person in your family, you should take extra safety precautions to minimize their exposure to the flu. Infants younger than six months cannot receive a vaccination. According to the CDC, the flu is more likely to cause severe illness in [pregnant women](#) than in women of reproductive age who are not pregnant. Watch the video, [Flu Prevention for Families](#), to learn how to keep your family healthy during flu season.

## Step Up For Students Scholarship

Do you know a student in grades 3-5 struggling with reading? The [Reading Scholarship Accounts](#), managed by [Step Up For Students](#), can help.

To be eligible, Florida public schools require current enrollment of students in grades 3-5 for the 2020-21 school year and one of the following criteria:

- Scored a Level 1 or 2 on the Florida Standards Assessment/English Language Arts (2018-19 test) or,
- The student was identified in the 2019-20 school year as having substantial deficiency in reading based on their most recent available screening and progress monitoring assessment or,
- The public school the student is enrolled in was identified as one of [Florida's 300 lowest performing elementary schools](#) during the 2018-19 school year or,
- The public school the student is enrolled in was identified as one of Florida's elementary [schools earning a D or F school grade](#) in the 2018-19 school year.

Students who are classified as English Language Learners and are enrolled in a program or receiving services designed to meet the instructional needs of English Language Learner students will receive priority.

The scholarships are worth \$500 each and are used for reimbursement for tuition and fees for a part-time tutor, fees for summer or after-school education programs or instructional materials and curriculum related to reading or literacy. Students can use scholarship funds to buy approved technology items including laptop computers, desktop computers and tablets.

To learn more about the Reading Scholarship Accounts and other scholarships offered by Step Up For Students visit [www.stepupforstudents.org](http://www.stepupforstudents.org).



## Family: A Child's First Teacher

The month of November is Family Engagement in Education Month. It is a time for examining the ways your family engages in learning and in staying healthy and happy.

Research shows that a child's family has the most consistent and powerful effect on their health and development. You can make a real difference in your child's future. You may think that you do not have any additional time to teach your child at home, but you are already doing this every day! You are a role model for your child. Beginning at birth, your child watches everything you do and hears everything you say. As an infant, your child learns to talk by imitating the words you speak. They learn to relate to other people by the way you interact with them and others. Being mindful of the powerful messages you send to your child through what you say and how you act can have a big effect on their success in school and in life.

When you establish daily routines and family times for activities, you are teaching your child about time, health and social skills. Daily routines help them connect actions to specific times, such as bath time is at the end of the day and then comes bedtime.

During all of your child's daily routines, it is important to form a "serve and return" or responsive relationship. This means that you respond to your infant's smiles, cries and attempts to speak. As your child gets older, you respond to their questions and ask questions or expand on what they want to know. It means that you take time to explain things to your child and encourage their learning. The time and the quality of the time you spend with your baby, toddler or preschooler will have a direct effect on their development and their success in school.

There are many resources available to help you make the most of your daily interactions and routines with your child. The resources below will help you find age appropriate activities for supporting your child's learning and development:

- The [Vroom app](#) is a free app that offers brain building tips specific to your child's age. Vroom tips, sent daily with an activity you can do with your child at home or on the go, can be moments taken that make big learning gains. You can download tips, available in English or Spanish, from the Vroom website, use the daily app or sign up for a weekly tip by text.
- The [Milestone Tracker app](#) is a free app from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that allows you to track your child's developmental milestones from age 2 months to 5 years. It has tips, available in English or Spanish, for encouraging your child's development and has suggestions of what to do if you have concerns about their development.
- The [Just in Time Parenting Newsletter](#) is a free newsletter for parents, available in English and Spanish. It is accessible by email and is specific to your child's age and developmental needs.



"Research consistently confirms that family engagement is one of the most powerful predictors of children's development, educational attainment, and success in school and life."

- Global Family Research Project

### Learn about CLASS Scores

If your child is enrolled in a preschool program that is contracted with the local early learning coalition to provide services for children through the [School Readiness Program](#), their child care provider will have a CLASS score. CLASS scores are based on the effectiveness of the teachers' interactions with children. These positive interactions support children's learning and development. The CLASS scores are based on an assessment tool, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®). [Click here to find more information about CLASS scores.](#)

## National Adoption Month

November is National Adoption Month. If you are thinking of growing your family, think about adopting a young child, teenager or siblings who need a forever home. Adopting can have many [benefits](#) for both you and the child, but the love and home you are able to give is the most important.

The Florida Department of Children and Families has [resources and information](#) about exploring adoptions. The [adoption journey](#) is paved with beautiful memories. These are the steps along the journey:

- Call Florida's Adoption Information Center (1-800-96-ADOPT) for information on starting the process.
- Complete a one- to two-hour orientation that includes talking with counselors and adoptive parents to answer questions you may have.
- Participate in a home study to review safety and security measures.
- Submit application to adoption specialist for approval.
- Attend social activities (e.g. picnics or events for foster children) and meet the amazing children who are looking for their forever families.
- Match with a child through regular visits and take time to learn about them. Spending time together helps to create a special bond.
- Complete the adoption to have the child officially become part of your family.

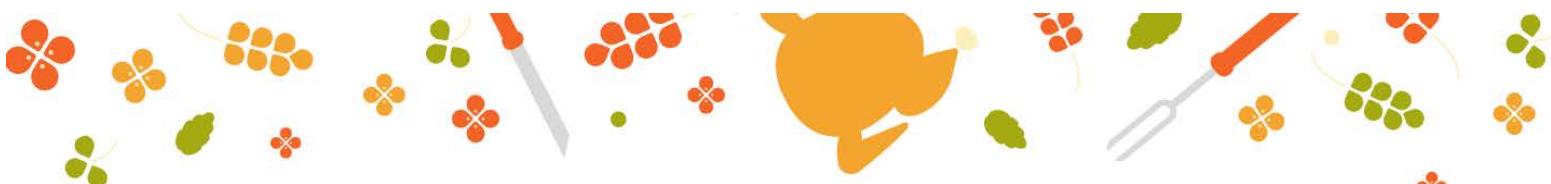
If you are not sure if adoption is right for you, that is OK too.

There are resources, [state and national](#), that can give more information to answer questions you still have.

If you find you are not ready to adopt but want to support a child, [becoming a foster parent](#) lets you help a child by offering to walk beside them during a difficult time.



Whichever road you chose, there is no wrong choice. Giving back to a child in need is all that matters.



## Special Days

November 10<sup>th</sup> Young Readers Day



November 13<sup>th</sup> Caregiver Appreciation Day

November 20<sup>th</sup> World Children's Day

November 21<sup>st</sup> National Adoption Day

Richard Corcoran  
Commissioner of Education  
Shan Goff  
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](http://www.FloridaEarlyLearning.com)