



Parents' Pages

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Keep Routines at Home and School

As the excitement of finishing the school year approaches, it is important to continue your child's routines both at home and school. Keep routines on a normal schedule and your child will be able to power through until their last school day. This will set the stage for a successful transition to summer fun and learning.

Consistent routines help ensure your child gets enough sleep and starts the day on the right foot. Create a calm and consistent bedtime schedule and limit screen time. Have them wake up at the same time and eat a nutritious breakfast to fuel their day.

Keep their minds active by creating a fun and meaningful reading list. For age-appropriate book ideas, look at the [Commissioner's Book of the Month](#) web page.

By staying organized and helping your child maintain a positive attitude, your child can finish the school year strong.



Provider Appreciation Day is May 9

Florida's child care providers, including those serving children in the School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten programs, will be celebrated on May 9. National Provider Appreciation Day, recognized every year on the Friday before Mother's Day, celebrates those who support early childhood care and development through their work. Child care providers are vital to shaping young minds, offering support and guidance and helping children learn and meet developmental milestones.

Take time to show your appreciation for all that your provider does. A simple thank you note or something your child makes demonstrates your appreciation and what your child has learned through their support.

Congratulations 2025 Voluntary Prekindergarten Graduates

The Division of Early Learning congratulates all of Florida's soon-to-be 2025 Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) graduates and their families! As a VPK parent, you can be proud to know your child has the early learning foundation to help them succeed in kindergarten, school and life. But keep the learning going! You can find resources, under Parents, on the [Division of Early Learning's website](#) to help you support your child's continued learning as they transition to kindergarten.

And parents, you need to get ready, too. Review the following information to help you navigate this exciting time.

Steps to Kindergarten

The first step to kindergarten is to pre-register your child at your local public school or school of choice. You can use the [MyFloridaSchools](#) website to find many school options.

Kindergarten registration:

- Visit the school to meet your child's teacher and administrator.
- Call the school to inquire when they will have back-to-school orientation and attend with your child.
- Read the registration information provided during your enrollment appointment.
- Gather the information you'll need to register.

Once your child is registered for kindergarten, join your school's contact list for important updates. Even before then, you can inspire excitement about kindergarten by driving the route to school, talking about meeting the new teacher, making new friends and describing what the first day may be like.

What to Expect in Kindergarten

Want to know more about what your child will learn in kindergarten? The [Florida Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking \(B.E.S.T.\) Standards for Kindergarten](#) will help you communicate with your child's teacher about classroom instruction, locate resources to support your child's learning at home and understand how the B.E.S.T. standards are essential for shaping your child's critical thinking, literacy and mathematical skills.

Transition to Kindergarten

We encourage you to visit the [Transition to Kindergarten Family Padlet](#) where many helpful resources are available to support you as you prepare your VPK graduate for kindergarten.

Summer Bridge

Beginning June 2025, families of eligible VPK children have an opportunity to participate in a Summer Bridge program provided by the local school district. The [Summer Bridge](#) program is designed for children who need additional support to be fully ready for kindergarten. Ask your VPK provider or your local [early learning coalition](#) to see if your child qualifies for this free program.



Print [this sign](#) from our website for a memorable photo opportunity.



Tips for a Good 'Head Start' for Your Child's Mental Health

Mental health and well-being begin in infancy as children learn to navigate, express and understand their emotions and form close and secure relationships with caregivers. A child's ability to connect with others helps them feel safe in exploring the world around them and influences their cognitive, language and motor skill development.

The mental health of parents and caregivers is equally important. Infants and toddlers especially depend on the strong attachments formed with those who care for them. Many activities that support strong mental health in children are similar to those for adults. Establishing routines is linked to positive mental health for everyone, as predictability and routines foster security and reduce anxiety. Eating well, spending time outdoors, getting enough rest and having a support network also contribute to positive mental health.

Some easy ways to support mental health for children, birth to age 5, include singing, cuddling and responding to their communication, such as holding them or picking them up when they show distress. Reading, playing games together and making social connections with friends are integral for children and help parents and caregivers connect with their children and others to build a support network.

Early learning programs, like [School Readiness](#) and [Voluntary Prekindergarten](#), support positive mental health outcomes. In addition, [Head Start programs](#) specifically provide mental health support through unique comprehensive services for children and families. Talk to your local [early learning coalition](#) to learn about these and other community programs that can boost your family's overall well-being.



Make Mother's Day Fun with Learning-Focused Activities

This year, Mother's Day is May 11th. Celebrate by spending quality time with your child doing fun activities to strengthen your relationship while creating lasting memories. The following activities are based on standards listed in the [Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards](#):

- **Physical Development:** Have a mommy-and-me dance party. Play music and encourage your children to jump, spin or clap along. Moving in different ways helps build coordination and motor skills.
- **Approaches to Learning:** Set up a simple obstacle course with pillows, boxes or furniture. Encourage your children to find creative ways to get through it, helping them develop problem-solving skills and persistence.
- **Social Skills and Emotional Competence:** Make a "Mom and Me" feelings book. Have your child draw pictures or use photos to show different emotions, such as happy, sad or excited. Talking about feelings builds self-awareness and social skills.
- **Language and Literacy:** Read a favorite book together and act out parts of the story. This activity strengthens listening skills, vocabulary and comprehension.
- **Mathematical Thinking:** Make a snack together and count ingredients like crackers, berries or cheese slices. This builds early math skills, such as one-to-one correspondence.
- **Scientific Inquiry:** Go on a walk outside and explore different textures. Let your child feel and describe rough tree bark, smooth leaves and soft grass. Observing and describing sensations builds critical thinking skills.
- **Social Studies:** Look through family photos and talk about relatives. Discuss who they are, where they live and what they do to help children understand family relationships and community roles.
- **Creative Expression:** Make a homemade Mother's Day card using crayons, stickers or finger paint. Creating unique designs builds fine motor skills and encourages creativity.

Summer BreakSpot

During the summer, children who rely on their schools for breakfast and lunch may need help accessing nutritious meals. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Summer Food Service Program, also known as the Summer BreakSpot, helps by providing free, nutritious meals to children and teens right in their communities.

Sign up to receive [SummerBreakSpot notifications](#) to learn when BreakSpot locations open near you. When schools are released for the summer, the website will stay up to date with locations.

Summer BreakSpots will be located throughout neighborhoods in locations such as churches and schools. Some Summer BreakSpots are mobile and visit different areas throughout the day. If transportation is a concern, contact nearby sites and ask if they offer transportation.



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June Upcoming Events

Celebrating Fathers

Family engagement is vital to early development, and the Division of Early Learning recognizes and celebrates the essential role fathers, grandfathers and father figures play in a child's life. Look out for fun, engaging learning activities to celebrate Father's Day on June 15.

Summer VPK

If you reside in Florida and your child is 4 years old on or before September 1, and did not attend a school year VPK program, your child is eligible for the Summer VPK program. Eligibility extends to some 5-year-olds based on their birth date.

If your child attended a school-year VPK program, he/she is **not eligible for the summer VPK program unless extreme hardship is applicable**. For more information, see our article in the next Parents' Pages or email VPKQuestions@del.fldoe.org.

Family Fun Activities

- *(Toddlers and Preschoolers)* **Mother's Day Cards:** Mother's Day is a great time for your child to showcase their artistic side and their love for you. Using their handprints, fingerprints and photographs, create a Mother's Day card to commemorate the special day.
- *(Preschoolers)* **Family Comic Strip:** Discuss with your child a theme for a comic strip based on your family. Come up with the Who, What, Where, When and Why. Make a quick three-part story with beginning, middle and end. Provide paper and crayons and help them to draw the story out with simple narrations. For a Mother's Day creation, your child can draw a picture of you as the superhero saving the day!
- *(Preschoolers)* **Paper Bouquet of Flowers:** Dads, gather construction paper, scrap paper, wrapping paper or any other paper items you have around the house. Draw and cut out flowers from the materials. Fold a full sheet of paper into a cone and tape it together to make a vase. Tuck the homemade flowers in the paper vase and let your child present them on Mother's Day.



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Commissioner of Education



Cari Miller
Chancellor of Early Learning



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