

Service Learning: Citizenship in Action

By Suzanne Adinolfi, Ph.D., Northwest VPK Regional Facilitator



Preparing young children for a successful life requires early educators to provide meaningful educational experiences that support academic achievement while simultaneously preparing them to be caring and responsible members of society. Service learning is a method of teaching that combines service and learning goals that reinforce and enhance one another. It provides opportunities for young learners to make important connections between curricular content, early learning standards and their community. There are five components to implementing service learning with young children:

1. Need Identification- challenges children and teachers to investigate community needs that might be addressed through a service project
2. Preparation- involves developing a deeper understanding of the issue and creating a step-by-step plan to address it within the context of the existing curriculum
3. Action- affords children opportunities to engage in hands-on learning as they implement their plan
4. Reflection- encourages children to share their thoughts and feelings about their involvement in the project as well as what they have learned
5. Celebration- provides an opportunity for children to demonstrate their accomplishments and the knowledge gained along the way.

The benefits of service learning are well documented. The practice promotes social responsibility, positive citizenship, problem solving, empathy and compassion. As children work together to address authentic needs in their community they are empowered to practice new skills and knowledge in meaningful ways.

Suggested resources:

Lake, V. E. & I. Jones. 2012. Service Learning in the PreK-3 Classroom: The What, Why, and How-To Guide for Every Teacher. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

Lake, V.E., & Adinolfi, S.D. 2017. "Young Children Take Action: Service-Learning with Preschoolers." Young Children 72 (2): 80-84.

INTUITIVE MATH IN EARLY LEARNERS

By Cassandra Jackson, VPK Educational Policy Consultant

“Young children are natural learners. They construct their own understanding about quantity, relationships and symbols. They approach new tasks with curiosity and a sense of experimentation. Counting is a natural task, *more* is a word 2-year-olds know readily, and the process of adding and subtracting can describe and explain to children situations that they encounter in their world. When a new idea or piece of information doesn’t make sense to a child, Jean Piaget theorized that the experience creates dissonance—mental conflict that the child seeks to resolve. Thus, the child develops and assimilates knowledge, making it her own.” So wrote Juanita Copely in her popular book, *The Young Child and Mathematics, Second Edition*. Copely went on to ask



“Do we need to directly teach young children all they need to know about mathematics? Do we need to start from the beginning, drill in those basic facts and fill in all the holes in their understanding? Do we need to tightly define as developmentally appropriate only very easy mathematics concepts?”

“The answer to all of these questions is a resounding *No!* Instead, we need to remember that young children possess a vast amount of intuitive, informal mathematical knowledge. Our job is to assess their prior knowledge, build upon their strengths, facilitate their learning and enjoy the process.”

Dr. Juanita Copely has written a number of books about early mathematics and is considered a national expert in her field. Her research on early childhood math and on effectiveness of professional development models for teachers in mathematics has been published in scholarly journals and presented at national early childhood and mathematics education conferences. Dr. Copely served on the Office of Early Learning’s panel of experts in the development of our revised Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards Birth to Kindergarten (2017).

2017 60th Annual FLAEYC Conference



The Florida Association for the Education of Young Children is thrilled to be hosting the 60th Annual FLAEYC Conference Dec. 8-10, 2017, in Orlando, Florida. This year brings many changes. During the conference, FLAEYC will be celebrating the launching of their new structure and re-affiliation under their national affiliate, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and their regional affiliate, the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA).

Online registration available through Nov. 21 at <https://flaeyc.org/annual>.

RULES

Remember to check our site regularly for a listing of proposed rules and notices.

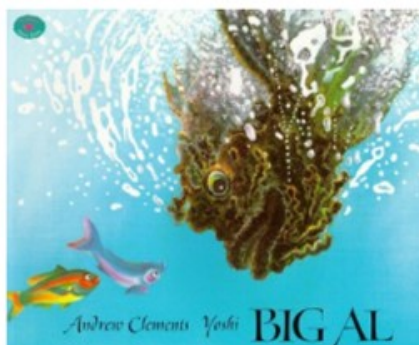
<http://bit.ly/2gkcQIN>

Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! 2018

The Just Read, Florida! Office and the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), in partnership with other FDOE offices, the Office of Early Learning, school districts, early learning coalitions and numerous other state agencies, are pleased to announce the tenth annual statewide *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!* The event will take place the week of **Jan. 22-26, 2018**.

Please join us in celebrating literacy by participating in our simultaneous reading activity on **Wednesday, Jan. 24, at 9:00 a.m. (EST)**.

This year's book selection for preschool age children (3- to 5-year-olds) is *Big Al* by Andrew Clements.



A child's early experiences with books and language lay the foundation for success in learning to read. When you read, talk or play with children, their brains are stimulated and build the connections that become the building blocks for reading.

Please visit www.floridaearlylearning.com for additional Celebrate Literacy Week activities including *Big Al* expansion ideas to incorporate in your classroom.

"Who dares to teach must never cease to learn." ~John Dana Cotton

Be in the Loop!

VPK Learning Circles are ongoing opportunities for early childhood professionals to share strategies, research and best practices in VPK classrooms. Learning Circle activities include

- Practicing new ideas and skills.
- Professional networking.
- Sharing resources and experiences.
- Discussion and brainstorming solutions for challenges faced in the field.

Who should attend?

VPK providers, directors, teachers and administrators who would like an opportunity to network with other professionals in early childhood education.

Who do you contact for more information about Learning Circles?

Your local VPK regional facilitator organizes and facilitates the Learning Circles. You can find contact information for your regional facilitator on the OEL website at <http://bit.ly/2o6PGpW>.



	October Circles	October Participants	Total Learning Circles in 2017-18	Total Participants in 2017-18
Face-to-Face	15	106	174	708
Web-Based	0	0	2	9

Professional Development

Florida's Office of Early Learning in collaboration with the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) offers a variety of online and instructor-led training opportunities. To register for any of these training opportunities, please visit DCF's training website at <http://bit.ly/1oHgYPm>.

Online Courses	October Completers	2017-18 Total Completers
Standards for Four-Year-Olds	214	1486
Integrating the Standards: Phonological Awareness NEW!	38	135
Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors	354	1891
Language and Vocabulary in the VPK Classroom	66	376
Mathematical Thinking for Early Learners	75	407
Working to Create Positive Learning Environments: Preventive Strategies NEW!	35	220
Developing the Socially and Emotionally Competent Child NEW!	44	150
English Language Learners in the VPK Classroom	39	223
How to Administer the Florida VPK Assessment NEW!	52	382
VPK Assessment Instructional Implications NEW!	16	150
VPK Director Credential Course	58	368

Instructor-led Courses	October Classes	October Participants	2017-18 Total Participants
Standards for Four-Year-Olds	4	12	61
Integrating the Standards: Phonological Awareness	10	22	182
How to Administer the Florida VPK Assessment	12	37	303
VPK Assessment Instructional Implications	10	42	193
*EMEL: Making Sense of Sets and Numbers	22	157	409
*EMEL: Counting and Operating with Numbers	11	96	258
*EMEL: Patterns, Measurement and Data	11	97	284
*EMEL: Shapes and Spatial Relationships	2	7	111

*EMEL– Early Mathematics for Early Learners