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# September 2017

## Early Learning Parents' Pages



Family meals are a big deal!  
How much screen time is too much? Baby safety tips.  
Dads, Take Your Child to School Day and more...

[Click to read the September issue.](#)

## *Resources for families with young children affected by Hurricane Irma*

### **Information to help children feel safe after a disaster**

The Office of Early Learning has compiled resources and information to help families who have been affected by Hurricane Irma.

You can find these resources on our web page [Helping Your Child Cope After A Hurricane](#), including guides on how to discuss the disaster with young children, health and safety information for evacuees returning to damaged housing, and ways to help children feel safe after the emotional distress they've experienced. You can also find a [Pinterest board](#) with more resources.

We encourage coalitions and providers to share the web page with families who may have questions about how to care for their child's needs in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma.



## *Office of Early Learning reminds you to "double check the back"*

### **Social media campaign seeks to raise awareness of vehicular heatstroke**

Vehicular heatstroke is one of the leading causes of death among children. It only takes 10 minutes for a vehicle's temperature to rise over 20 degrees, even with the windows cracked. With windows closed if the temperature outside is 60 degrees, the inside of your car or van can reach 110 degrees. Babies and young children are especially susceptible to heatstroke. A child dies when their body temperature reaches 109 degrees.



With these facts in mind, the Office of Early Learning is running a social media campaign throughout the month of September to raise awareness of the risk of vehicular heatstroke. The campaign will use **#doublechecktheback** to remind parents, child care providers and caregivers of the importance of double checking the backseat when traveling with a child.

[Click here](#) to read more and find resources to share with providers, parents and others.

**N-E-W-S**

Early learning highlights from North, East, West and South Florida

## *Coalition receives "Officer Friendly" donation*

**ELC of Flagler & Volusia receives a \$2,500 donation to partner with Ormond Police Department**

The [Early Learning Coalition of Flagler & Volusia](#) received a \$2,500 donation from The William J. Voges Foundation to partner with the Ormond Beach Police Department in bringing the "Officer Friendly" Program to Ormond Beach.

Each month starting in September, Ormond Beach police officers will visit selected early learning programs to read stories to preschool-age children. Stories will focus on building children's self-esteem, developing their social skills and creating positive relationships with police officers.

[Click here to read more.](#)



## *Coalition program works to end the "summer slide"*

**VPK Completers program reinforces learning during summer**

This summer, the [ELC of Indian River, Martin and Okeechobee Counties](#) was awarded a grant from the Martin County Board of County Commissioners to provide additional education to VPK students in an effort to prevent what is commonly known as the "summer slide."



Twenty participants who completed VPK in Martin County benefited from the opportunity to continue in an additional eight-week program that would reinforce what they had learned during the year.

The VPK Completers program provided three hours of instruction, four days a week, and was held at Apple Tree Academy in Jensen Beach, Florida. Areas of focus included phonological awareness, print knowledge, oral language/vocabulary, and mathematics, which are components of the VPK assessment designed to measure skills needed in kindergarten.

[Click here to read more.](#)

## *Times are changing in Jacksonville with mayor's lead on paid parental leave*

## Former coalition CEO praises mayor on equal parental leave

In a column in the *Florida Times Union*, Susan Main, former CEO of the [ELC of Duval](#), commends Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry for his plan to provide six weeks of paid family leave to all city employees, both men and women. The mayor has also made it clear that this plan will not cost taxpayers any additional money.

Studies show that equal leave gives parents more time to care for their new baby and increases bonding time, which benefits the healthy development of children.

[Click here to read more.](#)



## Coalition does fundraising with a twist

### Event at Painting with a Twist raises \$600

The [ELC of Okaloosa and Walton Counties](#) held a fundraising event at Painting with a Twist, an art studio offering easy-to-follow painting classes for groups and individuals, in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, on Aug. 18.

The coalition saw a large turnout as guests had fun painting together for a worthy cause. At the end of the event, the coalition was presented with a check for \$600, which will go toward funding early education for children in the area.



## Save the Date for "Stroll and Read with ELC"

### Coalition event encourages combines the outdoors with reading

The [ELC of the Big Bend Region](#) is hosting "Stroll and Read" as part of its My First Books program at Cascades Park in Tallahassee, Florida, on Sunday, Sept. 17, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Families will be able to stroll through the park while listening to readers, choose from provided books to read to their children, and at the end of the event, will be able to pick out a free book to take home. Admission is free for all attendees.

To learn more about the event, [click here](#).



## Coalitions, organizations gather for a lesson on conscious discipline

### Special guest Ginny Luther explained how to apply conscious discipline to early education

For three days in early August, 68 child care teachers, elementary school teachers and community professionals came together to learn and experience the social-emotional learning and classroom management of conscious discipline. The [ELC of St. Lucie County](#), the [ELC of Indian River, Martin and Okeechobee Counties](#), Tykes & Teens and the Christ Family Church in Fort Pierce, Florida, partnered to bring Ginny Luther, loving guidance associate and conscious discipline master instructor, to lead teachers and professionals on the journey to promote permanent behavior change.



Participants had fun while learning about the concept of conscious discipline, created by Dr. Becky Bailey, which equips teachers with skills to integrate social-emotional learning, discipline and self-regulation into their daily interactions with children. Based on current brain research, child development and developmentally appropriate practices, participants experienced activities and stories designed to make changes in their attitudes and behaviors, so in turn, they can change the lives of children.

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## *Longtime coalition board chairman steps down*

### **ELC of Southwest Florida's Board Chairman Gerry**

#### **Poppe is retiring**

The [ELC of Southwest Florida](#) said goodbye to longtime Board Chairman Gerry Poppe as he announced his retirement in August. Poppe, vice president and CFO of Waterman Broadcasting in Fort Myers, helped guide the coalition through many transitions. He will continue to be active in the coalition's Literacy Buddy Program, which provides children with books to take home and share with their families.



A reading nook located in the coalition's office has been named "Poppe's Place" in his honor. The nook offers a cozy place for children visiting the office to grab a book and read inside while their parents receive services.

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## *LENA Grow program will expand to Georgia*

### **Program first utilized by the ELC of Escambia will launch across Georgia**

The LENA Grow program, which uses "talk pedometer" technology to measure and provide teachers feedback on their communication with students to increase language interaction in the classroom, has announced its expansion to Georgia. The program will serve 800 children in 16 centers across the state during the first year.



The [ELC of Escambia](#) was one of the first to apply LENA technology in a classroom setting, with overwhelmingly positive results. The coalition also had a hand in naming the program, as it was planned as part of the coalition's Grow With Me Quality Improvement Initiative.

Bruce Watson, executive director of the coalition, expressed his enthusiasm in seeing the program expand, and encourages Florida to follow Georgia's lead in making the program a larger state-sponsored initiative.

[Click here](#) to read more about LENA Grow's launch in Georgia.

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## *Teachers complete coalition's Professional Development Program*

### **Program seeks to improve quality of child care throughout Polk County**

Martha Washington Butler, Ledia Whiteside and Tammy Francis with Trinity Believe Academy, Cheryl Taylor with Taylor Learning Center, Shanntae West with Bartow Educational Center, Felicia Hardy with Creative Minds Academy, Theresa Lobban and Agnes Young completed the [ELC of Polk's](#) Professional Development Program this semester.



The program, which consists of various courses and training opportunities offered through the coalition's Training Academy and other partnerships, gives providers the opportunity to further their knowledge and skills in early education with the goal of improving the quality of child care throughout Polk County.

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