

Early Learning Parents' Pages

November 2017



You can use **chores** to teach life skills.

How to raise thankful children.

Learn about **scholarships** for

Florida's children.

November marks Veterans Day,

Family Engagement and Military Family months!

Chores mean more than...

How many times have you asked your child to pick up his toys before going to bed only to have him go to bed with toys still on the floor?

Do you give in to arguments or pleas of "I'm too tired" or "I'm sleepy" instead of insisting that the chore be completed before bedtime? Most parents know that getting your child to do chores is a chore itself. **You** dread doing some chores and your child does, too. Maybe it's time to look at chores differently. Parents need to agree on tasks that are important to the family. An example may be it is important to be able to walk across the family room without stepping on something, so we must not leave toys, food, liquids or trash on the floor. If this is important to the family then everyone has a role to make sure the floor is clean. If you have a toddler, he might bring his toys to you so you can put them away. A preschooler's chore may be to pick up her toys and put them where they are stored (toy bins, toy box or closet). Older children can pick up toys and other materials and may help sweep or mop the floor. If every family member helps, the floor will stay uncluttered and be clean.

Many children think of chores as punishment when they are really building blocks of responsibility and independence.



Research shows that children who complete chores on a regular basis have higher self-esteem, are more responsible and better at dealing with frustration and delayed gratification. It is easy to connect these skills with skills they need to succeed in school.

Children who are not taught age-appropriate everyday living skills have trouble functioning with peers as they get older. Research from the [Center for Parenting Education](#) shows the best predictor of young adults' success in their mid-20s was the amount of household tasks they did when they were 3 or 4.

You want your child to be responsible and develop skills to function independently in the world, so you need to start at home by teaching her to do [self-care tasks and to help with household chores](#).

When do you begin to ask a child to do simple chores? You can teach your toddler to pick up toys and help you put them away. You can help him brush his teeth, wash his hands and brush his hair until he is able to do these self-care tasks by himself.

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OFFICE OF
Early Learning

LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.

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November is Family Engagement Month

November is a time to be thankful for families and let them know the importance of their engagement in the education and healthy development of their children. The Office of Early Learning and the Florida Department of Education urge families, as their child's first teacher, to be purposefully involved in their children's learning experiences and to support their health and well-being daily. Research shows that your child will benefit from your involvement in their education in many ways.

Family engagement...

- ✓ Helps children be ready for school.
- ✓ Supports school success.
 - Increases motivation.
 - Reduces behavioral problems.
 - Improves social-emotional development.
- ✓ Fosters skills in young children such as impulse control, attention, memory and planning skills.
- ✓ Supports healthy development of **all children** and is especially important for those less likely to succeed in school.



Family engagement does not have to be time consuming or expensive. During your daily routines, you can help your child learn new words and concepts by talking with her. While

helping her get dressed, ask her what body part goes into her shirt-sleeve or pants leg. Talk about the food she eats for snack or lunch. What color is the fruit? What shape is her sandwich? Help her count the number of grapes on her plate.

Ways to engage...

Sing songs to her as you bathe her or talk and sing to your baby as you change her diaper. Have your child help you sort laundry or match socks as you fold clothes. While riding in the car or on a bus, talk about things you see, the signs you pass or the colors of other cars and trucks. Read to your child every day, starting at birth. Reading is one of the most important things you can do to help your child **learn** to read. Play with your child as much as possible. Your child learns through play and your interactions with her as you play a game or play with a toy. She learns to stay engaged in learning as you talk and show her the many ways to play with a toy. [Vroom](#) and [Talk With Me Baby](#) have many tips and examples of activities you can do with your child throughout the day.

If your child goes to a school or child care program, talk to the teacher or care giver about activities that you can do at home to support the concepts she is learning at school or child care. Be a role model for your child by letting her see you read, by asking her questions about her day, and by having a positive relationship with other family members and her teachers or child care providers.

Engaging your child in learning by playing, talking, singing and reading with her daily may be the most important thing you can do for your child and perhaps the most fun you have each day!



More Information:

Office of Early Learning Family Resources

http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/parents/family_resources.aspx

<https://www.pinterest.com/flearlylearning/family-engagement-month/>

Florida Family Engagement in Education Month

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7739/urlt/FEMToolkitComp.pdf>

Zero to Three

<https://www.zerotothree.org/>

NAEYC: How to Support Children's Approaches to Learning? Play with Them

<http://families.naeyc.org/learning-and-development/child-development/how-support-children%E2%80%99s-approaches-learning-play-them>

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Military Family Month

In November, we celebrate **Military Family Appreciation Month** to honor the commitment and sacrifices made by the families of our nation's service members. Military families face significant challenges from extended deployments, injuries to body and mind, and loss. A loved one's service affects every family member. Even babies and toddlers who may seem too young to understand what happens around them are tuned into the behaviors and emotions of family members.

American military families around the world are honored throughout the year, but especially during November when there are family fun nights, community dinners and special events.

Military.com has compiled a list of perks for Military Family Appreciation Month and Veterans Day. Every year, the YMCA offers free services for armed service members. There's even a free app at Sesame Street for Military Families that covers parenting topics.

We all share responsibility for caring for our military families and veterans. What can you and your family do? If you know a military family, talk with them and ask, "How can we help your family?" They may need someone to babysit while they go shopping or have a doctor's appointment. Imagine how difficult it must be to spend months with your spouse away from home and no one is there to help you! Invite them to your home for dinner, take them out to a restaurant, or make dinner or a special treat and take it to them. Write a note or make a card thanking them for their sacrifices for our country. Use a public forum such as *Facebook*, *Twitter* or *Instagram* to thank them for their sacrifice and service.

Visit <http://www.va.gov/vso/> for a list of veteran service organizations in need of your support.

Be Thankful for Veterans

Nov. 11 is Veterans Day – a day to honor all past and present members of the United States military services. Your community may have a special parade or other event to show appreciation for those who have served our nation. Talk with your child about the reasons we recognize these special individuals and the sacrifices they have made for our country.

Veterans Day began in 1919 as Armistice Day when President Woodrow Wilson designated Nov. 11 as the day to commemorate the end of World War I. Fighting ceased at the 11th hour, on the 11th day of the 11th month. In 1938, the day became a federal holiday and, in 1954, Congress changed the name to Veterans Day to honor all who have served in the U.S. military.

The Gratitude Campaign encourages everyone to show

Scholarships for Florida children

The **Gardiner Scholarship** helps families personalize educational plans for their **children with certain special needs**. Students age 3 through 12th grade may be eligible if they are diagnosed with anaphylaxis, autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, deaf, dual sensory impaired, Down syndrome, hospital or homebound, muscular dystrophy, Phalen McDermid syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, Spina bifida, traumatic brain injury, visually impaired, Williams syndrome or an intellectual disability. Students deemed "high risk" due to developmental delays and who are not older than 5 on Sept. 1 may be eligible for the year they are applying. The scholarship amount varies according to grade, county and disability. For most students in 2017-18, the average is **\$10,000**. The Gardiner Scholarship allows parents to direct funds toward a combination of programs and approved providers including private schools, therapists, specialists, curriculum, technology – even a college savings account.

Another option is the **income-based Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC)**, a program that offers parents a choice between two scholarships: one worth up to **\$6,343** (grades K-5), **\$6,631** (grades 6-8) and **\$6,920** (grades 9-12) to help cover **private school tuition and fees**, and one worth up to **\$750** to assist with **transportation costs** to attend public school in another county. These scholarship amounts are for the 2017-18 school year. If a family's household income qualifies for the free or reduced-price school lunch program (185 percent of the federal poverty guidelines), or if the family receives SNAP (food stamps), TANF or FDPIR, the student may be eligible. Children who are homeless, or in foster or out-of-home care, may qualify for these scholarships.

There are two Scholarship Funding Organizations approved to administer the Gardiner and Florida Tax Credit Scholarships:
A.A.A. Scholarship Foundation - <http://www.aaascholarships.org/>
Step Up For Students - <http://www.StepUpForStudents.org>



gratitude for the service of veterans and active duty military. Whenever you meet a veteran or active duty service member or pass one on a sidewalk, in an airport, on a bus or anywhere else, just say, "Thank you!" Watch the Express Your Gratitude video with your child and discuss the meaning of thankful and gratitude.

If you want your family to do something extra to show your appreciation to members of the military for their service to our country, you can send a "Care Package" to a service member. Visit a local veteran's hospital or clinic with your child and take thank-you letters or cards or make special treats for the veterans who are there. Honoring veterans and active duty service members on Veterans Day will teach your child the importance of being grateful for the service of those who serve our country.

Flyer about writing to military service members:

<https://www.operationgratitude.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/LetterWritingFlyer-1.pdf>

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Chores mean more...

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Your preschooler's chores may be to put away toys, put dirty clothes in the laundry basket, brush her teeth and wash her hands before meals. You can give her simple chores such as feeding a pet or wiping the table after meals.

Modeling the task you want your child to do and helping him with the task first as "partners" will be fun and help him learn the correct way to finish the task to your expectations. Use the "I do, we do, you do" method. If he throws his dirty laundry on the floor beside the laundry basket, show him how you put your clothes in the basket, then have him help you put dirty clothes in the basket. Next, ask him to show you how he can put his clothes in the basket. If you use this method with each chore, it will be easy for your child to learn how you expect each chore to be done.

You should expect everyone in the family over age 3 to add to the family by doing chores. Make it part of the daily routines. Your child may not be happy about doing chores, but remember to show your appreciation when he completes them and soon he will complete his chores to be a contributing member of the family. Teaching your child these life skills and a sense of responsibility is a gift that will last a lifetime.



Raising thankful children

Think about something in the past for which you are thankful. How did you express your gratitude? Gratitude, gratefulness and thankfulness have to do with more than just "magic words." Children will often say "thank you" because they are prompted by adults, but is learning to say thank you the same as being **thankful**?

Thankfulness can be taught to children and reinforced through words or actions. Here are some tips to teach an attitude of gratitude:

- ✓ Thank children, even if they are doing chores.
- ✓ Tell and read stories about generous people and characters.
- ✓ Encourage children to send pictures or notes to friends and relatives, explaining that they would be happy and grateful to receive their art.
- ✓ Suggest children draw a picture or write a note of thanks or help them make phone calls to long distance family who gave them a gift.
- ✓ Take time each day to discuss one thing you are thankful for.
- ✓ Make giving and volunteering a habit; talk about the process and ask children to select clothes or toys to give to children in need.
- ✓ Be patient. Gentle efforts and examples will instill gratitude as a way of life.



Coming in December

- Family Traditions
- Selecting Toys and Gifts for Young Children
- Talk With Me, Baby
- Hygiene Happiness (Washing Hands and Brushing Teeth)



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