In The Loop

The ELC Brevard Coalition publication and go-to resource for Teachers and Early Learning Partners

It’s Open Enrollment
Don’t forget to continually update your slot vacancy information!

SPRING EDITION

- Provider Services
- ELC News & Update
- Program Assessment
- Professional Development
- Early Intervention
- Monitoring & Compliance
- CLASS Group Coaching
- Crafty Corner
- Pre K Activities
- Teacher Resources
- ELC Brevard Updates
Greetings, and welcome to "In The LOOP". ELC Brevard's monthly publication and go-to resource for Teachers and Early Learning Partners

It's May already which means the end of the school year is fast approaching, and we are entering VPK Graduation season, so extra special CONGRATULATIONS to your VPK Graduates, their families and the amazing Teachers who have guided them through.

We are delighted to see so many Providers accessing the training opportunities and utilizing the Professional Development incentives currently available through ARPA funding. An investment in professional growth is an investment in QUALITY.

Extending Mothers Day thoughts and good wishes to all the Mothers and women who assume the role of mothers, past and present enjoy your special day.

This year Memorial Day falls on May 29th, so we pause to remember our fallen veterans and give thanks for their service.

Sincere thanks to our Board Members for all they do for ELC Brevard - they are greatly appreciated.

ELC Brevard Branding

It has been over a decade since we adopted the now familiar ELC Brevard Logo which featured the children and building blocks. However we are excited to share with you our newly designed Logo which will be rolled out over coming months as part of our overall rebranding. The new logo will be used across all platforms, publications, communications and merchandise.

Of Course there is a wonderful backstory to our new Logo, because we wanted something special, relevant and meaningful, that reflected Early Years Education and the children & families whom we serve. We also wanted it to encompass all the beauty, history and adventure of Brevard County, so Leadership invited our Staff Team to submit their ideas and designs and the final design was a collaboration of ideas from Provider Services Team members Priscilla Ramos and Chinaka Grizzle that were brought together as one image with final edits by Amaris Rosario our Chief Finance Officer, so it truly was a team effort!

- Our new logo depicts the rising sun behind the map of Florida, with Brevard county highlighted in red.
- The brightly colored children's books represents our commitment to children, families and attests to our mission which is rooted firmly in Early Years Education
- Finally, the rocket not only symbolizes the launching of young minds, it evidences our home as the 'Space Coast' because we are home to The Kennedy Space Center, Cape Canaveral and the NASA Rocket launches for the USA.
Save The Date:

Celebrating our Super Heroes! Come join us!!!!

The Friday before Mother’s Day is observed every year as Child Care Provider Appreciation Day. This day is all about appreciating you- our day care workers, educators, and teachers of young kids across the globe.

We will be celebrating our Brevard Superheroes on:

Date: Thursday, May 11th, 2023

Time: 12pm-2pm

Venue: Early Learning Coalition of Brevard
Melbourne Office
2671 W Eau. Gallie Blvd, Suite 102
Melbourne, FL 32935

Please R.S.V.P. by 5/8/23 on the ELC of Brevard Calendar-

https://www.elcbrevard.org/event/detail/pid/90/id/2243-instance/20230511
Spring Greeting to all our wonderful Teachers & Providers

We hope you all are doing well. May is here and it’s Provider Appreciation and Graduation Month. Let me begin by saying thank you for all you do for our children and families, also thank you for partnering with us on this early education journey. We appreciate you, and we wish you all a wonderful 2023 VPK graduation season. Congratulations to your VPK graduates.

CLASS Assessments are wrapping up for both VPK and School readiness. The Children’s Forum are conducting the observations, please make sure that any changes in your instructional staff or even director changes have been communicated to your contract specialist and our Provider Services coordinator, this will truly help our assessors tremendously when observations are taking place. If you have not attended Tuesday’s certified coaching hour or our certified coaching courses, please reach out to our professional development team. Our certified coaches can assist with preparing you for your upcoming CLASS assessments. Be ready and prepared.

Just a couple of friendly reminders, when registering for our training if you cannot attend, please contact us so we can permit other participants to join our training, this also applies to our face-to-face training please notify us if you are unable to attend. QPS monthly rosters are due the last day of each month, with the exception if you are currently on a Quality Improvement Plan you will not be able to complete the roster until your plan has been completed. Please update your teacher emails addresses on QPS as it helps us to have their personal emails for disseminating training information and for our newsletter distribution.

As always feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Professional Development team

Reminder

If you are a VPK provider who has Lenovo tablets we have protector cases for you to pick up at our Melbourne office.

Limited Supply 3 protector covers per VPK provider.

Please reach out to your reimbursement contact. Thank you!
I hope you all have had a great VPK year—hard to believe it is May!

I have emailed all VPK providers their window for FAST using Star Early Literacy progress monitoring (PM) 3 window. As a reminder the dates in Renaissance are default dates, when running reports you will need to change to reflect your VPK program PM3 dates.

Happy graduation to all your VPK children!

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Early Intervention Notice

**Do you have children at your center who receive therapy services?**

**Do you have children at your center who you wished received therapy services?**

Are you looking for opportunities for your teachers to learn more about therapy services available for children?

Would you like someone to attend your staff meeting to talk about these topics and child development?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, Space Coast Early Steps has you covered.

Contact Lori Duester at 321-233-3497 or email Lori.Duester@spacecoastes.org to talk about your training needs or to schedule a training.

For referrals call: 321 634-3688
As the Early Intervention team travels into your classrooms to observe children struggling with challenging behaviors, we find ourselves offering the same suggestions to many teachers. That suggestion is **POSITIVE FEEDBACK**. If you make Positive Descriptive Feedback part of your classroom culture, you will see **FEWER NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS** and **IMPROVE YOUR CLASS OBSERVATION SCORES** at the same time!

According to https://challengingbehavior.org/

“Positive descriptive feedback is an evidence-based practice that is meant to be part of the teaching process. It encourages learning. **We use the word “feedback” rather than praise or reinforcement because children need to understand what they have done and why we are acknowledging it.** Statements like “good boy,” “excellent job,” and “well done” are examples of praise that provide non-descriptive feedback. The child may respond positively to this kind of praise, but it does not help the child understand anything about his behavior or skills. Positive descriptive feedback provides information about the behavior and is a powerful strategy for teaching new skills.”

These are some recommendations and considerations for using positive descriptive feedback in the classroom.

**Individualize the feedback!**

► Use the child’s name.

► Be on the look-out for children who practice skills and competencies you are teaching.

► Learn a phrase you can use as part of your feedback in the home language of the child who is a dual language learner.

► Describe the behavior by including it in the feedback statement.

► This tells the child exactly what behavior is being acknowledged and is part of the process of teaching that behavior.

► Identify and provide feedback about skills. For example: “Excellent idea. You solved the problem of everyone wanting the tall blocks by sharing.” or “What a good friend. You helped Alicia when she fell.”

► Provide feedback that describes the process the child used. For example: “You really concentrated on making that raceway, so it was an exciting game.” or “Well done. You followed all the instructions so carefully” or “You counted exactly the correct number of napkins we needed for lunch.”

**Be consistent and be equitable.**

► Make sure all the adults in the classroom know how and when to give positive descriptive feedback.

► Pay attention to how and how often you and others give positive descriptive feedback. Are all adults in the classroom providing more positive feedback than correction?

► Ask yourself whether positive feedback is delivered equitably. Are all children acknowledged when they demonstrate a skill, follow directions, meet expectations, or are engaged?

**Acknowledge publicly when appropriate.**

► Public acknowledgment can reinforce the skill or process for the child you are acknowledging and provide a model for other children. For example, you might acknowledge Elinor for using her “inside” voice when you want the other children to lower their voices.
Congratulations to our Star Teacher of the Month, Miss Shawna Mcque from Junior Bears Childcare!

Miss Shawna has been with Junior Bears for over six months, and she has truly proven herself to be an extremely dependable and wonderful asset to us all.

Miss Shawna has recently finished her CDA, however she is still focused on her Professional Development because she consistently attends classes to improve herself, build on her skills, and strengthen her abilities in the Classroom.

Miss Shawna is so loved by all of the children in all of the classrooms, equally she is loved and respected by their families and her coworkers. She is one of the most thoughtful and caring teachers because she is always putting the needs of the children first. Miss Shawna goes above and beyond to make sure all of the kiddos are happy and having fun.

She loves bringing in new books to read to the children and activities for them to play with and learn from. Miss Shawna is a very hard worker and helps any classroom whenever it is needed. She is always willing to come in early, stay late and she does not leave until every task is completed.

We are grateful for all that she does for all of the children and are so glad that she is part of Junior Bears Childcare.

We want to recognize the amazing Teachers in your centers who have gone above and beyond.

Email your nominations with a photo and biography to ldiggs@elcbrevard.org before the 20th of each month.

Tell us how and why your Teacher is a SHINING STAR! who has earned his or her place in the TEACHER OF THE MONTH HALL OF FAME

Congratulations Miss Shawna

We love you!!
There is always an opportunity for interaction. Some opportunities are easily recognizable: times of play, free choice, centers, small group. We often see teachers engaged in activities alongside children during these times or hear questions being asked. Other opportunities might be a little less obvious. These are the times of your day that you might see as mundane moments that merely require your supervision or monitoring. The times where you’re going through the motions. “I’m doing this thing so I can move on to the next thing.”

In a previous blog, colleague and early childhood environment extraordinaire, Heather Sason, discussed how your classroom environment can help promote effective teacher-child interactions. In this blog, I propose we explore some of the often overlooked times in your day that are ripe for interactions with children and that do promote exploration, learning, and development!

What distinguishes an interaction as a high-quality, effective interaction that promotes learning and development? Intentionality! When I hear “intention,” I think “purpose.” To teach with intention means to teach with purpose. Think about the language used in the CLASS® manual for the dimensions: Facilitation of Learning and Development (FLD) and Facilitated Exploration (FE). Expansion. Engagement. Encouragement. These terms provide a picture of an experience that is dynamic, energetic, pleasant, and full of growth! And, full of purpose.

“That’s great, Megin...but what does this even look like? What do I DO?” Ok, let’s get down to good stuff; three often underrated opportunities for FLD and FE:

### Diaper Changes and Potty Breaks

Many of the teachers in my CDA with CLASS courses often describe “everyday” acts that are actually amazing strategies to promote learning and development. Here are a few examples:

- **Involving the Child**

  You might allow a child or infant to hold their socks and say something like, “Would you like to hold these socks while I change your diaper? This sock has stripes like this one. They’re the same! They are a match!” Not only is this an example of a child’s active engagement during a routine, it is also a great example of expanding a child’s cognition by describing the concept of “matching.”

- **Mimicking**

  Many teachers describe copying the facial expressions an infant or toddler makes while lying on the changing table. A toddler smiles, you smile. When an infant sticks out their tongue, you might also stick out your tongue slightly. If you have not tried this, I highly recommend you do.

- **Following Children’s Lead or Interest**

  You might be thinking, “how can I tell what a child is interested in during a diaper change or bathroom break?” One way is eye gaze. During a diaper change, you might notice a child gazing at a picture on the wall and say, “I see you’re looking at the picture of the butterfly! Would you like to read a book about butterflies when we’re done changing your diaper?”

A lot can happen in a 5 minute diaper change or potty break!

### Transitions

Transitions can feel tense or chaotic at times. Or, because we try to keep transitions brief, it can feel like there isn’t enough time to squeeze in any learning. Use transition times to your benefit as fun, lighthearted learning opportunities:
• **Singing**
Singing during clean-up keeps toddlers involved and actively engaged in their task. Singing is also a powerful tool for language and brain development.

• **Asking Questions**
Asking questions keeps children engaged during a transition and promotes thinking skills. While children are lining up to go outside, you might ask them, “Remember when it rained this morning? After it rained, we had puddles all over the bike track. What do you think might happen if you ride through the puddles?” When you ask these kinds of questions, you are intentionally supporting thinking and prediction skills. The beautiful thing about expanding children’s cognition is that the focus is on the expanding, not necessarily an activity itself.

**MEALTIMES AND FEEDING**
How many times have you cut food for a toddler? Or watched a one year old use their fingers to try and pick up the food on their tray? Filled a bottle for an infant? My guess is… a lot! During these times, there is often some conversation. But, there is also an opportunity to move from being “involved” to being “intentional.” Here are a few more of my favorite strategies from teachers in the CDA with CLASS program:

• **Talking About Colors, Flavors, or Textures**
Comparing and contrasting what children are eating encourages them to analyze similarities or differences: “These apple slices we have for lunch are red, and they are crunchy. Was the applesauce we had at breakfast crunchy? Right, it was smooth and kind of squishy. But they are both made from apples! How do you think the applesauce got that way? Have you ever seen an apple that was a different color?” There is quite a bit happening in this seemingly simple exchange. Not only is the teacher encouraging children’s thinking skills by asking questions and pointing out differences in the foods the children are eating, but also making connections to children’s real lives by asking about their similar experiences outside the classroom.

**Speaking of Asking Questions...**
By asking purposeful questions, not just rote, teachers can expand children’s cognition, extend their experience, and embed information about concepts. For example, with older toddlers, cutting food into halves or quarters provides an opportunity to talk about, or embed, information on measurement and numeracy: “Evan, you cut your sandwich in half. How many pieces do you have now? That’s right, two pieces! You started with one big sandwich, but now you have two. What happens if you cut them again? How many will you have? Let’s find out!”

**Verbal Encouragement**
Encouraging a child trying to pick a small piece of their food, for example, “those bananas are slippery, aren’t they? You almost got it, Michaela! Keep trying!” Verbal encouragement motivates a child to expand or persist in their experience, and therefore your interaction with them! By intentionally ceasing these moments of an infant’s or toddler’s day, teachers can facilitate exploration, learning, and development. Sometimes, these learning moments may not look all that “academic.” Infants and toddlers may not be able to respond in full sentences, but that’s ok! That doesn’t mean there is no cognition happening. Remember, infants’ and toddlers’ receptive language far exceeds their expressive language.

Play = learning. The longer a child plays or engages, the more learning that is taking place. The longer you engage with them, the longer they will stay engaged.
Your daycare may already have a dress code that gives specific or broad guidelines for how employees should dress for work, and that should also be documented in your center's policies and included in your staff induction or onboarding process. However, guidance may still be unclear, employees may be non-compliant, or policies are poorly enforced.

Uniforms can be an excellent way to address the following common problems.

1. **Employees aren't dressing modestly / You want to present a more professional front:** Employees may not be coming to work in mini skirts, but they may still be wearing inappropriate attire such as short shorts, ripped pants or jeans, form fitting or transparent leggings (yoga pants) or shirts that expose a lot of skin. This is a common problem because child care workers have to bend over a lot during the day to pick up children, toys, or to do cleaning. Cleavage, backs, and the midriff are the most commonly exposed areas. Tattoos and undergarments may also be exposed if an employee is not properly dressed. A uniform can quickly alleviate these problems.

2. **Employees are coming to work in special clothing or weekend attire:** Employees are wearing clothing that they are afraid might get ruined. If this is the case, their work in the classroom will absolutely be affected because of concerns about soiling special or branded attire. Consideration should also be given to manicured nails or excessively long nails that could present as hazardous or present other health and safety risks.

3. **Parents and children have difficulty identifying staff members:** You may hope the parents and children become familiar with the staff who work at the daycare. However, many daycares experience high turnover of Staff or are just such large establishments that is is difficult to recognize or distinguish staff. You want children and parents both to be able to quickly identify the people in charge. During drop-off and pick-up times this can become especially difficult because there are many parents in the building / reception area.

4. **Employees are not respected by the parents or children:** While other factors may be involved, the way an employee dresses may have a lot to do with whether or not they are respected by the people around them. If employees have a professional appearance, parents are less likely to question their decisions and children are more likely to view them as people in authority who should be listened to.

5. **There is disunity among employees:** If employees are not getting along or having difficulty functioning as a team, you may want to consider ordering uniforms. When employees are dressed the same, a team environment is created that often helps to focus people on working together.
Newspaper Puppies
Newspapers are one of those resources that are usually looming around the house somewhere, waiting for a purpose again. This simple to set up, newspaper puppy papercraft is a fun and very cute art activity for your toddler. This is perfect if you are looking for an easy toddler craft!

Materials: Newspaper, Sheet of paper, Scissors, Glue, Small piece of pink paper, 2 x googly eyes (the stick on ones are great for this), Marker

We chose to use a white piece of paper to keep up with the monotone theme of our creation. One of the standout features of this paper craft activity, is how simple yet effective it is. Simply draw out your puppy design onto your paper with your marker.

Egg Carton Critters
Preschoolers can easily upcycle egg cartons into insects and animals like turtles, caterpillars, and frogs. They'll paint the cartons, then add details like googly eyes, pom poms for turtle heads, pipe cleaners for caterpillar antennas, or green craft foam for frog legs.

Craft Stick Octopus
Arrange craft sticks into an asterisk-like shape, gluing into place. Top with craft paper and googly eyes for the face. Add beads along each stick to represent suckers on arms. Make a few and glue to a blue background, representing an undersea habitat for your octopi.

Paper Plate Fish Craft
Kids paint a paper plate to use as the base of their fish project. Once dry, they will attach folded craft paper circles to serve as colorful scales. Glitter and googly eyes finish the look.

Paper Towel Butterflies
All you need for a bunch of butterflies is some ordinary white paper towels, food coloring, and pipe cleaners.

Fold the towel over and over until you have a small square. Dip sections into bowls with food coloring, spread open to dry, and cinch with pipe cleaner antennas.

Bumble Bee and Bug Bracelets
Newspapers are one of those resources that are usually looming around the house somewhere, waiting for a purpose again. This simple to set up, newspaper puppy papercraft is a fun and very cute art activity for your toddler. This is perfect if you are looking for an easy toddler craft!
Crafty Corner

Mothers Day Card ideas
May 14th 2023

Check PINTREST for amazing Mothers Day Card Ideas

Pom Pom Flower Craft
Preschoolers will love gluing the pom poms on this cheerful flower craft. Affix a magnet to the back to display them on the fridge. Add a picture of the kiddo in the center for a perfect keepsake for Mothers Day or Memorial Day.

Memorial Day
Monday 29th May 2023
Magnificence !!!

Patriotic Sun Catchers

Pop- Pom FLAG painting

Egg Cartoon American Flags
The Melbourne Regional Chamber of Commerce hosted the Nonprofit/ small Business Council Panel, Those involved included Emma Reynolds and Caitlin Rice & ELC's CEO Laura Gambino was in attendance. The event was sponsored by Skypeak Financial.

Kim Kohler EIS Team -April 29th 2023 @ Helping Hands Family Festival, raising awareness to Special Needs in our community.

ELC Staff Team in the Melbourne Office Wearing BLUE in support of Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month in April.

ELC's Professional Development Team
Send an EXTRA special shout out to the 32+ Teachers who have joined our recent virtual CLASS Group Coaching Trainings (MMCI) for Infant/ Toddler and Pre K Teachers, & the 30 Teachers who join us weekly for our Certified Coaching Hour.

We support your commitment to YOUR Professional Development & we appreciate your dedication in joining us online after working a full day.
YOU are the real SUPER HEROES!

ELC's Early Intervention Team
Continue to deliver quality Tucker Turtle Trainings at centers across the County!

Yury Manzanares, Sonia Montalvo & Meghan Mosebar, ELC newly certified CCR&R Specialists' We celebrate you!
Saturday, May 27, 2023 - Lost Sock Memorial Day
Apparenty, this really is "A Thing"... A draw full of odd socks and stockings that no longer have a partner.. lost in the wash or just disappeared, it's one of life's mysteries. What better way to celebrate than to wear odd socks to school, or bring those odd socks into the classroom, get out the art box, and make wonderful sock hand puppets with the kiddos... pure genius, nothing is wasted in the classroom!

Friday, 12th May 2023 - International Nurses Day
International Nurses Day is observed on May 12, 2023. It is celebrated around the world to mark the contributions nurses make to society. May 12 was chosen to celebrate the day as it is the anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, who is widely considered the founder of modern nursing. In the Classroom, lets turn our "Dramatic Play" areas into nurses stations complete with medical kits, dressing up clothes and teddybear patients!

Sunday, 14th May 2023 - Mother's Day
The modern Mother's Day is celebrated on various days in many parts of the world, most commonly in May, though also in March, as a day to honor mothers and motherhood. In the United States it was nationally recognized as a holiday in 1914 after a campaign by Anna Jarvis. Families tend to celebrate with their own traditions which may include meals out, kids & partners taking over Moms chores, cards and gifts but its really all about Loving & Thanking the amazing women who birthed or raised us.

Friday, 5th May 2023 - Cinco de Mayo
Annual celebration commemorating the anniversary of Mexico's victory over the Second French Empire at the Battle of Puebla in 1862, led by General Ignacio Zaragoza. The victory over the French army was a morale boost Mexico.

Monday, 15th May 2023 - Peace Officers Memorial Day
Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week is an observance in the United States that pays tribute to the local, state, and Federal peace officers. Police Week is the calendar week in which the Memorial falls. The holiday was created on October 1, 1961, when Congress asked the president to designate May 15 to honor peace officers. A great day to talk with students about Police Officers and their role in our communities.

Monday, 29th May 2023 - Memorial Day
Memorial Day is a United States federal holiday observed on the last Monday of May. Formerly known as Decoration Day, it commemorates U.S. men and women who died while in the military service. First enacted to honor Union soldiers of the American Civil War.

Try It Free Class: Space Coast Iceplex
Looking for something new and exciting to do this weekend? Join us for a FREE Try-It class this Saturday! Ages 3 and up. Adults are welcome. Skate rental is included. Space is limited to first 20 participants, so be sure to arrive early to sign in and reserve a spot. Dress warm, comfortable and don't forget gloves!

When: Saturday, May 20, 2023, 10:45 am - 11:15 am
Location: 720 Roy Wall Blvd, Rockledge, FL 32955 - Cost: FREE

Space Coast Burger Battle
Family Friendly All Day Food Festival!
• Saturday May 13, 2023 •
• 12-9 PM •
• WICKHAM PARK •
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