



# Helping Hands

We are offering a *helping hand* to School Readiness Providers  
A publication from Childcare Resources & Referral

## Pre & Post Assessments

Pre & post assessments are required by State Law and your provider contract for each of your birth to five school readiness children (subsidized children). The importance of the pre-assessment is that it provides a baseline of each child's current developmental level. We are encouraging all providers to complete the pre-assessments by October 1. Post-assessments will need to be completed by May 31. The Putnam/ St. Johns Focus group has recommended the **Portage Assessment** for all providers who are not currently using an assessment tool. During the **September 18th** provider meeting a short presentation on the tool will be given. ECS staff is hosting the **Portage & Portfolio training and You** at various locations to provide technical assistance on this assessment tool. We encourage teachers to attend these roll-out sessions. Please directly contact the staff member who is hosting the training to sign-up as space may be limited! If you have any questions, on this subject please contact Kirsten McCrimon at (904) 838-5252.

### Portage Roll-out Training Dates

#### St. Johns County Offerings

If extension is given call **(904) 726-1500** otherwise call the contact number listed.

- ☺ 9/13 Turning Point Christian Academy  
6:30pm Yvonne (904) 347-4034
- ☺ 9/19 Bethune Cookman SR 207  
7:00 pm Kirsten ext 228
- ☺ 9/20 Bartram Trail Library 11:00 am  
Sara ext 274
- ☺ 9/29 SE Branch Library US 1 S 6:30 pm  
Brianna ext 284

#### Putnam County

Call **(386) 329-4878** to contact with these trainers.

- ☺ 9/11 LTBD 6:30pm  
Sherry ext 2887
- ☺ 9/13 Capital City Bank Reid St  
6 pm Sylvia ext 2885
- ☺ 9/20 Capital City Bank Reid St  
6pm Joanna ext 2886
- ☺ 9/26 Crescent City Library  
6pm Deanna ext 2887

### Episcopal Children's Services

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# Games to Play with Toddlers 12-16 months

## Coming to life

Pretend your child's favorite teddy or doll is real — make him walk, go to bed, or dance across the room. Include him in everyday activities — sitting him at the table for dinner, for example, and putting a bib on him. Talking about what you're doing will help your toddler with his language skills. Act out happy and sad times, too, so he can learn about feelings and emotions as he's developing his imagination.

## Push me, pull you

If your toddler is pulling herself up and trying to walk, help her practice with a pushing and pulling game. Use a moveable object such as a child-size chair or

plastic stacking box filled with soft toys. While she holds the edges for support you can hold the other side and keep it steady. Then slowly pull the box toward you to encourage her to step forward. Soon she'll start to push while you gently pull. This will build her confidence for the day she finally walks on her own.

## Clap happy

By now your toddler can hold his hands open, but it may be a while before she claps independently. For now, clap them together for him, or let her hold your hands while you pat them together. Sit him facing you on the floor or on your lap, and sing clapping songs like patty-cake. These will boost his language skills

as well as his hand-eye coordination.

## Who's hiding here?

Just as she loved peek-a-boo as a baby, your toddler will love to play simple games of hide-and-seek. First thing in the morning take turns hiding under the bed sheets; at bath time, use a big towel. For extra fun and giggles you can gently prod her as she hides. "Hmm, is this a leg? Or is it an arm?" Games like this help teach your toddler that just because she can't see something, doesn't mean it isn't there. For a change, while she's wrapped up in the towel, carry her into another room. She'll be delighted when she pops her head out to discover she's in a new spot.

# ABC Silverware: A Letter Recognition Game

Pre-school children begin learning their alphabet with letter recognition. They learn through many different activities especially ones that are found in different play centers.

The following is such an activity. It can be introduced during circle time and placed in housekeeping. Throughout the week the activity can be revisited during circle time. Invite and encourage children to play the game

while playing in the housekeeping center.

## **ABC Silverware**

(Activity taken from "Alphabet Learning Center Kit, Nancy Fetzer & Sandra F. Rief)

**Materials Needed:** 26 plastic spoons, 26 plastic forks, Permanent marking pen, 2 Cans for storing the spoons & forks, Tub for storage

**How to Construct:** Write or label with stickers the lower-case alphabet letters on the spoons. Write or label with stickers the upper-case alphabet letters on the forks.

**Task:** Children pull a spoon from the spoon can and a fork from the fork can. They match the spoons and forks for each letter of the alphabet.

# It's O.K to make a mess in preschool

It's ok to make a mess in Preschool. The children will love it! Here are some tips.

Experiment with different painting tools. Different sized brushes, sponges, hay or dried grass, twigs, palm fronds, sponge brushes, feathers, feather dusters, tooth brushes, Q-tips, corn on the cob, etc. Let your imagination run wild!

Try painting on different textures such as cardboard, bubble wrap, paper bags, plastic bags, sand paper, rocks, shells, tree bark, pine cones, foil, etc.

Put the cookie cutters away for awhile and use rolling pins, non-serrated edged plastic knives, forks, sea shells, buttons, etc.

Write recipes on chart paper, add pictures, and use them when you

"mix things up" with your children.

Encourage Children to freely explore & experiment, don't always provide models or examples for them.

Remember...as they knead, pinch, pound, squeeze, stroke roll, sift, spray, mix, measure, discuss, observe, shake pour, etc. **It's the process that counts not the product!!!**

# VPK Today

Welcome Back VPK!

As you are returning from summer vacation, we welcome you back to another great year. As we make our way together, we will provide this page specifically on VPK Today. It will offer news pertaining to suggestions, benchmark focus & reminders, teaching strategies, standards, news on monitoring and much more. This is your newspaper, and so we welcome your input too. If you have an idea or suggestion for other providers, please submit it to me, and we will include it here. If you would like to extend an invitation to others to see your center and share your strengths, you can issue the invitation here as well.

Some points to consider for this year are making a display that reminds the parents that it is ok to play in VPK. You may want

to make this big and bright and display it prominently throughout your classroom. Another possibility is to coin "play" as cognitive development when you speak about it to the parents. You also may want to consider making "descriptive cards" for each learning center that describes what the children are doing, and what they are learning and how it is influencing their cognitive and social/emotional growth and development. Have each card explain the purpose and desired outcome of the interactive learning experience, and which domain of VPK it is representing. This may help in educating about the process as



well as developmentally appropriate practice. Should you need any assistance with your program, its goals, objectives, and practices, please contact Ann at [aflipse@ecs4kids.org](mailto:aflipse@ecs4kids.org). for assistance in your classroom. Your program will be monitored by VPK staff.

## Friendly VPK reminders:

VPK Fax # 904.726.1522

\*Rosters are due by the 2nd business day of every month.

\*To ensure payment, please fax your rosters & mail the originals (don't forget to sign them also).

\*Parental choice certificates do NOT need to be submitted every month, but may be requested by VPK staff throughout the year.

\*A delayed enrollment must be completed for

## Getting Ready to Read

As we get our classrooms ready, I wanted to remind you of the importance of a print rich environment. This would include both a picture and word label on learning tool bins and on objects such as tables, chairs, bookshelves, etc. It is also valuable to provide pictographs or pictures telling about rules and safety, etc. along with the print beside it. Pictures are the child's first reading experience, and when paired with print, it helps children learn that print has meaning and of course receptive learning is taking place. This helps children get ready to read.

Linguistic awareness is also essential for reading readiness. Children need to be able to differentiate the sounds in words. This can be done by practicing onset rime, such as enunciating the 1st syllable before the 1st vowel & (rest of the word). For example have children practice saying words this way f ox, then say fox; st ar, then say star; b ee, then say bee, and so on. Plenty of rhymes everyday also build this understanding of phonemes and vocabulary. Clapping syllables is helpful as well. Clap for sun and clap for



shine and say sunshine; clap pan and clap cake and say pancake, and so on. Paired with the picture of each item and the word, then a picture of the actual compound word itself will offer understanding of compound words and the knowledge of them for meeting a benchmark standard. Alliteration also helps children separate sounds and builds vocabulary, offering language play while developing these needed skills.

These can be incorporated during every circle time routine and throughout the various activity centers. Also don't forget emergent writing! Providing a well stocked writing center, with alphabet stencils, number stencils, letter stamps, paper, envelopes, a variety of writing tools- crayons, markers, pencils, even laminated writing tablets with a wipe on /off marker will provide opportunities for writing. Keeping paper and crayons or a little lap chalkboard and chalk in each center, such

as the math center will offer the opportunity to write numbers. Providing paper in the block section encourages drawing the buildings they make, as well as signs for their constructions, too!

Interactive Story Time with a story reading format is also advantageous and essential to emergent literacy. By activating prior knowledge, you are able to build on what the child knows. Children are now more receptive and you have provided a way for them to link old and new information together= the essence of learning. Ask children what they think the book will be about, as you read stop at relevant parts and ask them what they think will happen next, ask questions at the end, and have children retell the story, and act out parts of the story in dramatic play for comprehension connections. In addition, be sure to have a good time!



## Local Professional Development Opportunities (Training Calendar)

### St. Johns County

- ☺ September 17: Let's Celebrate Our Diversity  
6-8pm Bartram Trail Library
- ☺ September 19: Play is the thing!  
6-8 pm St. Augustine Work Source SR 16

### Putnam County

- ☺ September 15: Book, Book, Book What do you want to know about the power of books? 10 am—12 noon  
St. Johns Chevrolet Conference Room 1601 Reid Street

To **register** for one of these great training opportunities please follow the directions on our website. The website also will provide a complete list of trainings and descriptions offered each quarter. <http://www.ecs4kids.org/>.

### DCF Trainings

Did you know the DCF website <https://training01-dcf.myflorida.gov/dcf/cct/inf0001.html> provides a host information regarding professional development opportunities and regulations? Some of the trainings available is the Early Literacy, 45 hour DCF modules and much, much more!

### Do you have a training need?

One of the many services ECS staff offer to providers is that we offer on-site professional development through on-site coaching sessions and staff trainings. We also have provider resources available for check-out. If you are interested in learning about the services that we offer to providers in Putnam and St. Johns County, please contact Kirsten (904) 838-5252.

## Do you want to stay connected? Attend a Provider Meeting!

Provider meetings are hosted by ECS staff for child care professionals who wish to stay informed regarding new policies, procedures, and other information that directly impacts the child care industry. As a participant you have the opportunity to speak to many representatives of ECS including Provider Services and the Education Staff. Another benefit of attending provider meetings is the networking opportunities. Provider meetings are open to all childcare personnel in Putnam and St. Johns County. We hold day and evening meetings. Kaplan provides food for the meetings, so please RSVP by September 17. Call Kirsten (904) 838-5252

September 18

11:30 am SE Branch Library in

St. Augustine

Or

7:00 pm Capital City Bank (Reid St)

Palatka

Warm Line 1-800-238-3463

Do you have a concern about the health, development, disability, and special needs of a child? If so call the Warm Line. The purpose of the warm line is to provide advice to child care personnel concerning strategies, curriculum, and environmental adaptations that allow a child to derive maximum benefit from the child care experience.

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