

# SPOTLIGHT

on Providers

Discovering Active Learning

**Circle of Security**

**Decreasing Challenging Behaviors**

Classroom  
Management Tips

**What Parents Need  
to Know About**

**STEAM**

Winter 2020

Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties Inc.

# SPOTLIGHT

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**Cover Photo:**

Evan Sabadishin (2 months)  
Son of Sherri Sabadishin,  
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# FROM THE Executive Director

**Dr. Steve Knobl**



Greetings and Happy New Year!

As we embark on a new year and decade, I am excited to share some of the programs and initiatives we have started, or plan to start during 2020. We have a newly approved 5-year strategic plan developed by our staff and Board of Directors that not only supports our Mission, but will create a comprehensive plan focusing on Providers, Families, and Leadership.

Our Provider Services team has several initiatives we've started in late 2019 and some new ones rolling out soon. The focus and attention of these initiatives is directed toward supporting you. We've brought back regional provider meetings in late 2019. I anticipate 2-3 meetings occurring on an annual basis in several communities. Bringing our staff closer to you is a goal we have to make it easier for you to participate. As we begin this new year, our staff is working to complete the provider profiles and the SR/VPK contracts. I continue to be impressed as I visit providers twice a month by the dedication I see in your teachers to the children we serve. This is a great opportunity for you to showcase your programs when Board members and staff are able to join me on these visits.

I have created a Program and Professional Development team that will collaborate with our Provider Services and Family Services teams. I am excited to announce that we are launching our "Promise Institute" in February. This will provide the community of early educators an opportunity to experience master's level trainers, obtain Continuing Education Units, and attend regional trainings to develop as professionals. We will also focus on our Sunshine Stars and other programs through the Institute. Very exciting!

The Family Services team has also been working on customer service initiatives with families and community partners. Our Eligibility teams have enrolled hundreds of new children during the first half of this fiscal year. We are serving more children than ever before!

Our Finance team has worked tirelessly on the reimbursement system. We realize this has been a very stressful and challenging 18 months for all of us with the portal system. We have been connected to OEL on a daily basis throughout this process. It is my hope that we're getting close to having a system that works and calculates correctly. We appreciate your hard work, patience and commitment to our children.

Finally, our plan is to release two (2) Spotlight issues annually. We're targeting the months of February and August as release times to align to the new calendar year and beginning of the school year. Our website has been remodeled and we are thrilled with the product. Please visit [www.phelc.org](http://www.phelc.org) to see the redesign and changes. Our social media platform has been overhauled and is focused on informing and interacting with you so please "like us" to stay updated.

I hope each one of you has an amazing 2020.

Warm regards,

Steve Knobl, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

# FROM YOUR Provider Representative



## Jan Jones, Pasco

### You Are Not Alone

How many different hats do you wear as the Director of your child care center? VPK teacher, bookkeeper, substitute teacher, nurse, cook, tour guide, maintenance crew, surrogate parent, etc. Regardless of the many tasks you perform in one day, directing your center can sometimes feel quite frustrating and even isolating. It can be easy to feel like you are alone on an island with a variety of day-to-day issues that are to be handled without assistance. Well, I have some good news...you are not alone! There are directors within our county that understand exactly what you do every day.

Over this past year, I've had the privilege of reaching out to directors near my center from time to time, as well as joining Dr. Knobl on a few Provider Visits. I have met some incredible professionals and their staff – many who've shared similar challenges and triumphs in directing within their child care centers. I am honored to be the ELC Private Provider Board Member for Pasco County and look forward to connecting with many more of you. Let's see what we can do to use our creativity through similar passions to support one another as Early Childhood Educators this year! Reach out to me any time at [jjones@beaonchurch.org](mailto:jjones@beaonchurch.org) or 727-862-7994.

Jan Jones, Director  
Beacon Child Development Center



On Tuesday, November 12, the Coalition's newest Board Member, Lavana Harvey (far right) joined Dr. Steve Knobl for Provider site visits. Lavana toured Excel Creative Learning Academy, Generations Preschool, Hope N' Play Preschool, and St. Thomas Aquinas Early Childhood Center. Welcome Lavana!



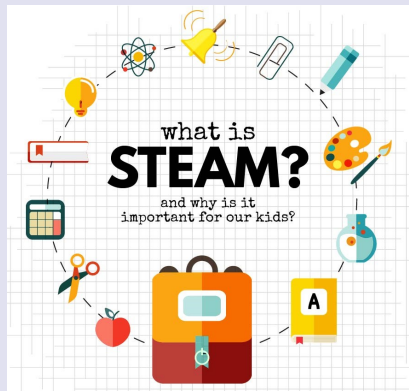
# What Parents Need to Know about STEAM

By: Motia Hamze  
PreKindergarten / VPK Teacher,  
Primrose School at Collier Parkway  
[www.PrimroseCollierParkway.com](http://www.PrimroseCollierParkway.com)

Lately, everyone seems to be talking about STEAM. This acronym- which stands for science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics – has become a hot topic in the world of education and in the business community. The practice of teaching by incorporating these concepts into multi-disciplinary lessons is revolutionizing education approaches across the country, even for children in preschool.

While young children may not be able to understand multiplication or how computers work, they can develop a strong foundation for future learning by exploring STEAM skills and concepts through play and discussion, and then applying those skills through more play.

There are many reasons why STEAM subjects should be addressed in early learning



settings. A key component of STEAM is process skills, such as making observations, hypothesizing and critical thinking. These skills help young children grasp math and science concepts early in life while building a base for more complex concepts for years to come.

For young children:

Science encourages investigation and answering questions, often involving experimentation.

Technology refers to using simple tools like crayons and rulers, as well as more complex ones like microscopes and computers.

Engineering refers to recognizing problems and testing solutions.

Art encourages creativity and allows children to illustrate concepts they are learning.

Mathematics deals with numbers, but also patterns, shapes, organizational skills and much more.

Research has shown that even very young children are capable of mathematical reasoning and can understand more advanced math skills than previously thought.



Young children are also able to ask questions and make predictions about the world around them. In short, children are fully capable of learning foundational STEAM concepts and parents and teachers should help children develop these skills at an early age.

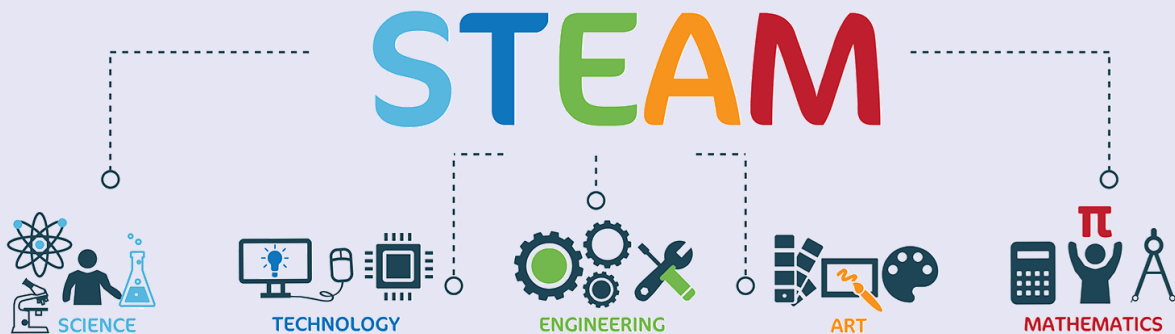
STEAM learning can also take place outside the classroom. For example, parents can encourage children to channel their inner engineer through a boat race activity. Have children use a variety of recyclables – cork, foil, tape, craft sticks, straw, an old swim noodle and paper for a sail to build a boat that can sail across the bathtub, a pan of water or a puddle.

After creating the boat, have children blow “wind” toward the boat to see how fast their creation travels. Parents and children can host races between multiple boats and discuss which boat is faster and why.

Young children grasp concepts through exploration and trial and error, so they should learn STEAM concepts at their own pace and in ways that are natural to them. To ensure that children are learning at their own pace, Primrose offers a balance of play with guidance from teachers and repeats STEAM lessons so children can master skills as they are ready.



To learn about Primrose School at Collier Parkway, visit [www.PrimroseCollierParkway.com](http://www.PrimroseCollierParkway.com) or call 813-242-7800. For more helpful parenting tips and information, visit their blog at [www.PrimroseSchools.com/blog](http://www.PrimroseSchools.com/blog) and sign up for the Pointers for Parents newsletter.





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## Circle of Security® PARENTING SERIES



By: Dawn Harvey-Espinoza  
ELC Training Specialist

The “Circle of Security,” an 8 session training, has inspired a group of early learning professionals to connect on a whole different level by improving relationships.

This new and inspiring training is a must for anyone who works with children. The results were overwhelmingly positive. “Eye Opening” as one of the early education teachers stated. I must agree with her, this training is truly an “Eye Opening” journey. It’s a journey that all teachers and parents need to take.

Listed below are some of the comments made by those who took the 8 session training.

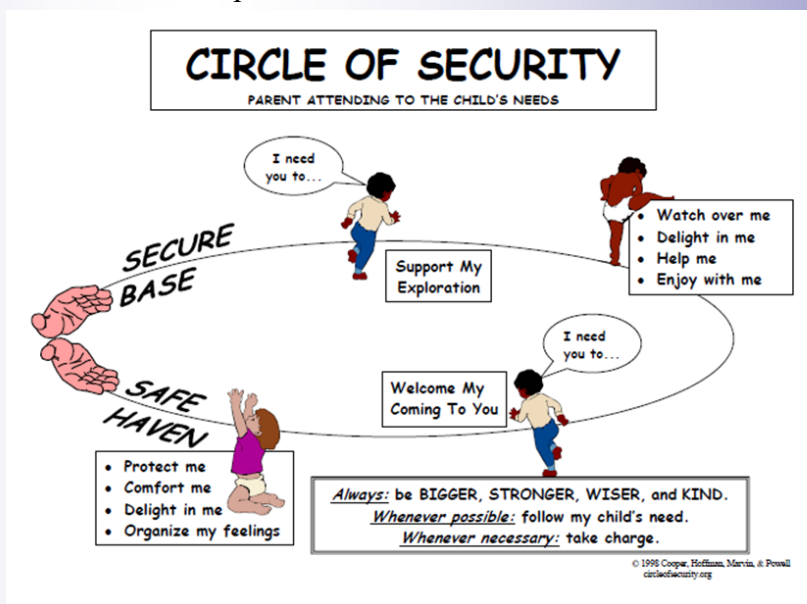
*“This training has impacted both my home life and my classroom... I observe more and complain less.”*

*“It has really opened my eyes. I am more aware of how the children feel and why they feel. The biggest thing that I have noticed is recognizing my shark music. I acknowledge it and it calms me. I will continue with what I have learned.”*

This training was originally written as a parent training. However, it has been proven to benefit those who are caregivers and teachers. The mission of the Circle of Security® Network (COSN) is to help children and families with a history of trauma and/or disrupted relationships in a cost-effective manner through research-validated assessments and intervention in the areas of attachment, child development, and neuroscience. Central to the intervention program is the Circle of Security map, which helps parents and teachers to discover, interpret, understand and respond to

children's challenging behavior and mysterious cues. The Circle of Security framework communicates to us how parents and teachers can read the emotional needs of children and respond appropriately. At times we all feel lost or without a clue about what children might need from us. Imagine what it might feel like if you were able to make sense of what your children were really asking from you.

The Circle of Security® Parenting™ and Childcare program is based on decades of research about how secure parent-child and teacher-child relationships can be supported and strengthened. I would strongly encourage all early learning educators to make it a priority to take this training.



# SPOTLIGHT Corners

## **Professional Development:**

It is with great pleasure that the Coalition will be launching the Promise Institute in the winter of 2020. This will provide the community of early educators an opportunity to experience master's level trainers, obtain Continuing Education Units and attend training in a reasonable distance from work and home. In addition, quality initiatives through the institute will include:

## **Infant Toddler Initiatives:**

- **LENA-** An Infant Toddler Initiative providing technology based programs to accelerate the language development of children birth to three and close opportunity gaps. This program will support domains associated with the CLASS assessment tool.
- **NCDA-** A pilot cohort of teachers who would like to obtain their National Child Development Associate with an emphasis on Infant and Toddler coursework through a partnership with the Lastinger Center at the University of Florida.

## **Business Leadership Initiative:**

- **Smartcare-** The Coalition will financially support approximately 25 additional centers/homes in obtaining a license to utilize Smartcare, a child care management system. Smartcare provides a cohesive child care center software solution for managing a single center or a multi-site system.

## **Early Literacy Initiative:**

The Coalition will embark on a journey through Early Literacy where we engage in programming specific to promoting reading success upon school entry. We will support early education practitioners. Through innovative programs, research, advocacy and partnerships, we will design and implement unique and highly effective tools and training that will open doors for our children served by the Early Learning Coalition.

Opportunities for both Early Care and Education settings, as well as Family Child Care Home settings are coming soon....



**SPOTLIGHT recognizes Sunshine Stars Participants!**  
**Here are the high achieving – banner flying – Centers & Homes:**

**A Caterpillar Preschool**

**Beacon Community Child Development Center**

**Bright Beginnings**

**Bright Beginnings Too**

**Carol's Smart Start, Inc.**

**Cedarview Learning Center Too, Inc.**

**Children's Nest Childcare**

**Dayspring's Little Scholars**

**Discovery Point 39**

**Discovery Point 47**

**Discovery Point 58**

**Discovery Point 68**

**Early Achievers Academy**

**Early Life Academy**

**Eden Christian School**

**Elfers Christian Preschool**

**First Steps Preschool**

**Great Hope Preschool**

**Growing in Grace Preschool**

**Heritage Academy**

**Hernandez Aracelis Family Child Care Home**

**Kids World**

**Kids World of Hernando**

**Leading By Example**

**Longleaf Learning Center**

**Mrs. B's Day Care**

**Mrs. B's Day Care Too**

**Pitter Patter Kids Preschool**

**RCMA Bade City Child Development Center**

**Small Steps Discovery Center II**

**St. Thomas Aquinas**

**Sugar & Spice Learning Center**

**Sugar & Spice Preschool**

**The Cherry Tree**

**TodayCare Children's Center**

**Wee Kids Preschool**

**Wiggle Worms Learning Center**

**World of Knowledge Montessori**

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**[www.phelc.org](http://www.phelc.org)**

# SUNSHINE STARS



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*Exclusive access to trainings  
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***Contact Katie Leslie at [k.leslie@phelc.org](mailto:k.leslie@phelc.org) for more information.***

# Decreasing Challenging Behaviors

Written by: Debra Hoskins, VPK Lead Teacher of First Friends Preschool – Spring Hill



**Behavior  
Management**  
starts with us

Children often use challenging behavior when they don't have the social or communication skills they need to engage in more appropriate interactions (Fox & Clarke, 2006). Some classroom management systems use the loss of activities or rewards to motivate the class (e.g., "three strikes and you're out"). This is more applicable and appropriate for students who have learned social rules and the consequences of rule violation. It's NOT effective for teaching young children the rules or appropriate social behavior. Reframe your system so that children are acknowledged for following expectations and earn a reward. Teaching

expectations and rules, providing choices and positive reinforcement for desired behavior, and building strong relationships are all keys to reducing challenging behavior in the classroom.

Expectations are general ways you want people to act. They apply to all children and staff, across all settings. Expectations should be positively stated, posted (at child level with a visual), few in number (5 or fewer), reviewed daily as a group, and discussed throughout the day (OSEP, 2017). Some examples of expectations can include: Be Kind, Be Safe, Be Honest, etc. Classroom Rules will help to clarify expectations for specific settings. They may only apply in certain settings, such as in science center versus circle time. As with expectations, rules should also be posted and include a visual to help young children better understand. Rules should be taught systematically, and reinforced at high rates initially, and at lower rates as the year progresses (OSEP, 2017). Involving the children in developing the rules can be helpful.

The relationships that we build with children, families, and colleagues are at the foundation of everything we do (Fox et al, 2003). It is important to build these relationships early on rather than waiting until there is a problem. Children learn and develop in the context of relationships that are responsive, consistent, and nurturing. Children



Continued on page 5

with the most challenging behaviors especially need these relationships, and yet their behaviors often prevent them from benefiting from those relationships. Adults should model social skills with each other, as well as provide positive feedback to each other.



One of the most powerful strategies is providing positive reinforcement. It's important to provide children attention when they are engaging in appropriate behaviors (Hemmeter et al, 2011). Teachers should also monitor their own behavior to ensure that they are spending more time using positive descriptive language and less time giving directions or correcting inappropriate behavior.

Challenging behavior usually has a message such as I am bored, I am sad, you hurt my feelings, I need some attention, etc. Behavior that persists over time is usually working for the child. Educators should focus on teaching children what to do in place of the challenging behavior. Using strategies such as teaching expectations and rules, providing choices and positive reinforcement, as well as building strong positive relationships, can immensely decrease challenging behavior in the classroom.

#### References

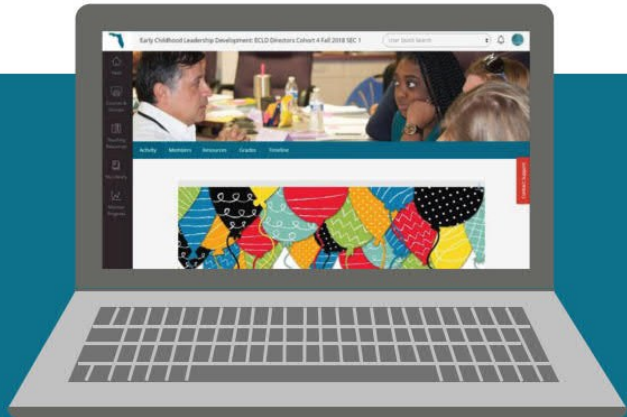
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## EARLY LEARNING FLORIDA REGISTRATION DETAILS

Registration Opens: 1/8/20

Registration Closes: 1/29/20

Term Dates: 2/3/20 - 4/5/20



### I HAVE NEVER TAKEN AN EARLY LEARNING FLORIDA COURSE ON FLAMINGO

#### STEP 1:

Visit the Early Learning Florida website by going to:  
**[www.earlylearningflorida.com/register](http://www.earlylearningflorida.com/register)**

#### STEP 2:

On the **LEFT** side click the  
“**Create New Account**” button.

#### STEP 3:

Fill out the provided form to  
create your account.

**NOTE:** If you already have an Early Learning Florida account, you will receive an error and will be prompted to login.

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**[www.earlylearningflorida.com/register](http://www.earlylearningflorida.com/register)**

#### STEP 2:

On the **RIGHT** side click the  
“**Sign In**” button.

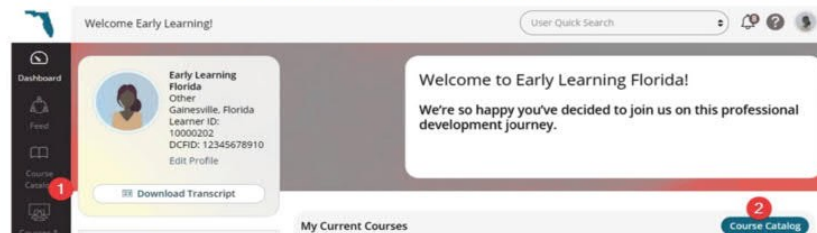
#### STEP 3:

Log in to your existing account using  
your registered email and password.

**NOTE:** If you forgot your password, you can reset it using the “**Forgot Password**” link below the login form.

### FINAL STEP

Enroll yourself into a course using the Course Catalog menu on the left side **or** Course Catalog on the user Dashboard.



# Discovering Active Learning

By: Joan Kurtz, Eligibility/Resource and Referral Specialist

What does active learning in the classroom look like?

Although this is a very difficult concept for early educators to wrap their mind around, active learning is a way for children to develop vital skills and knowledge and a positive attitude to learning. Teachers have been expected to only “teach”, but what we really need them to do is add “play”. This article will focus on the importance when engaging learners, even at a very young age, while scaffolding their learning along the way.

The Cornerstone of the High Scope Approach to early education, active learning is fundamental to the full development of human potential and is most effective when implementing developmentally appropriate practices with young children, active learning occurs when children are supported by adults. Adult support is achieved by joining into their play. Adults support children’s learning by asking open ended questions and providing a genuine interest in children’s thoughts and ideas. Adults can offer materials or ideas to extend the children’s experiences in learning but be prepared as active learning experiences can exhibit a higher volume in the classroom and young children moving about the room as they explore and learn.

Examples of active learning activities can range from project based learning to experiential learning.

- ◆ Exercising and challenging the learner’s capacities as they emerge at a given developmental level.
- ◆ Encouraging and helping the learner to develop a unique pattern of interests, talents, and goals.
- ◆ Presenting learning experiences when learners are best able to master, generalize, and retain what they learn and can relate it to previous experiences and future expectations.

These examples, among others, encompass the definition of active learning in the classroom. Active learning starts as children manipulate objects—for example, maneuvering a mirror to just the right spot for their pretend play. A child may ask themselves, “If I hold my hands out like this, will I go faster?”—As they play, active learners pose questions and seek answers.

In order for this to work effectively, certain things have to be in place in the classroom.

- ◆ Organizing environments play areas that are clearly defined and stocked with interesting, age-appropriate materials.
- ◆ Organizing routines so the sequence of the day’s events is carefully planned. Here, the teacher uses a handmade picture book to help children learn what part of the routine comes next.
- ◆ Establishing a supportive social climate relationship among adults and children that is relaxed and positive.
- ◆ Encouraging children’s intentional actions, problem solving, and verbal reflections.
- ◆ Planning experiences

In an effort to make an impact, let me leave you with this quote,

*“The educator is responsible for a knowledge of individuals and for a knowledge of subject-matter that will enable activities to be selected which lend themselves to social organization in which all individuals have an opportunity to contribute something, and in which the activities in which all participate are the chief carrier of control.”*

—John Dewey (1933, pp. 56, 59, 71)

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Melinda Velez at  
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call (727) 233-8291.**



On December 7th, The Early Learning Coalition joined the Boys and Girls Club of Hernando County for their Annual Breakfast with Santa. The day was filled with joyous smiles by children and parents. Thank you to the staff who assisted in the festivities.



### Join us for these fun-filled events:

**March 7** from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM  
Storybook Forest  
Crews Lake Park  
16739 Crews Lake Drive  
Spring Hill, FL 34610

**March 28** from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM  
4th Annual Pasco Summer Camp Expo  
Advent Health Center's Ice Hockey Center  
3173 Cypress Ridge Boulevard  
Wesley Chapel, FL 33544

### And more events to come...

Event requests can be sent to Mark Cerasaro,  
Mobile Outreach Specialist at [m.cerasaro@phelc.org](mailto:m.cerasaro@phelc.org)

**For More Professional Development/Trainings and Events,  
visit our Event Calendar at [www.phelc.org](http://www.phelc.org)**



THE STADIUM RESTAURANT



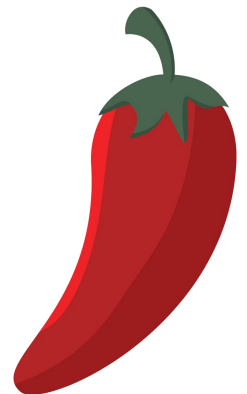
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## Winner!

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# Classroom Management Tips

By: Shelley Mott, Head Start Staff

No one has the perfect classroom, however, these are some discoveries I've made over the years which I have found will help and reduce some of the challenging behaviors we encounter. I wish I had known some of these when I was a new teacher, but here's what experience has taught me.

**Relationships-** First you need to give the children a lot of positive attention for even their most minimal effort. They must know you are there to help them. Greet them every morning and make it convincing that you are glad to see them. I have found that over time you really will build relationships. You can overcome negative mindsets with practice and persistence.

**Structure-** I cannot stress this one enough. Before school starts you need to have a plan about how you will structure your classroom. You need to have a schedule which flows the day and has little to no waiting time. Think about different transitions during the day to come up with predictable ways to implement them. Start with these on Day One. The more predictable your routine is the quicker your children will settle in. It provides security and familiarity for them.

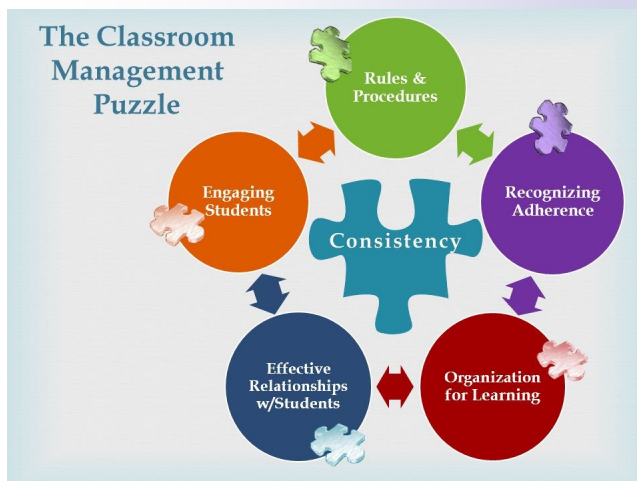
**Understanding-** Expect nothing from them at first. Consider that many of them may have never been away from their

families before and they likely will experience separation anxiety. Give them plenty of reassurance that their parent will return and give them many things to do to divert them while their parents are away. A visual schedule is essential. You will need to go over it with them often until they are able to understand and predict what happens and when. You can count with them how many activities need to take place before they can be picked up. Soon they will do it themselves as a means to reassure themselves.

**Busy kids are happy kids-** Make sure they have choices of several activities from the moment they step into the classroom. If they have nothing to do, they will think of things to do that you will not appreciate.

**Expectations-** Make your expectations clear from the start. Have them clearly written and have pictures to demonstrate. Model them and have the children model them as well. Go over them daily as long as necessary. Soon the children will show them to the other children when they need to.

These five are the basics of Classroom Management will work for the majority of the children in your care. Of course the children with exceptionalities will need more individualized methods to manage their behaviors. If your classroom has a calming atmosphere you will see the benefits towards all of your children.





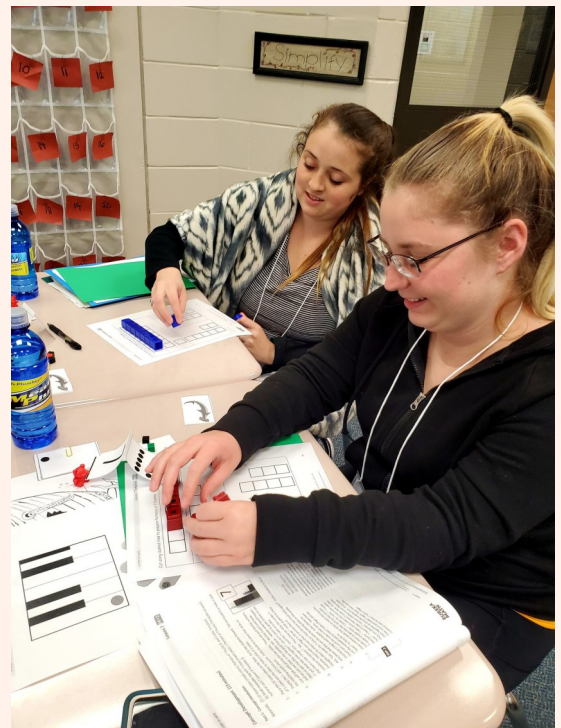
The 12th Annual Early Learning Conference at Bishop McLaughlin High School on October 19, 2019 was a tremendous success!

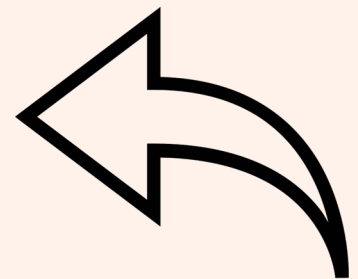
Over 600 teachers, vendors, presenters, volunteers and staff enjoyed the conference. Board Members (photo to left) (l-r) Colleen Kenney, Maritza Gonzalez, Dr. Maryam Belavilas, and Rebecca Wilkinson-Shields participated in a panel discussion with Dr. Steve Knobl and over 50 owners and directors.



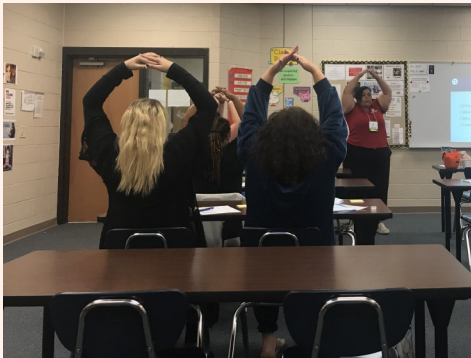
The winner of the Helen and John Long Memorial Scholarship was provided a \$500 scholarship to a teacher working on their college degree (photo above).

This year's winner was Samantha Taylor, a VPK teacher with Wee Kids of Pasco in New Port Richey. CONGRATULATIONS!





This years conference logo was designed by Jordan Sizemore and Nicolas Sudduth of Marchman Technical. The Coalition thanks them for their contribution.





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**Kristen Murray**  
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## PROVIDER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

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**Jenna Zimmer**  
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**Juverkis Cordero**  
**Provider Support Specialist**  
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**Jamie Hernandez**  
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## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING SPECIALISTS

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**Senior Training Specialist**  
Dade City Office  
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**Gina Kollar**  
**Infant/Toddler Specialist**  
New Port Richey Office  
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**Pam Dudek**  
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# Submission Information

*SPOTLIGHT on Providers* is published biannually by the Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. for the provider community. It is distributed electronically to all providers and is also available on the website at [www.phelc.org](http://www.phelc.org).

Authors are encouraged to submit readable, practical manuscripts that reflect and advance the knowledge base of the profession. Manuscripts should be prepared in current APA style (2009, 6th Edition). This style includes: typed, double-spaced, wide margins, and cover page with a working title, authors' full names, degrees, affiliations, and mailing address (including e-mail address) for the lead author.



Manuscripts published by PHELC address both the continuing interests of early childhood professionals and emerging ideas and issues in the field. Among topics considered are emergent curriculum for children from birth through age 8, effective assessment strategies, effective classroom practices that reflect sound theory and research, program administration, relationships with families, and public policy effecting early care and education. Current resources, about research and theory, must be cited as a basis for making recommendations for practice.

The length of journal manuscripts ranges from 1 to 3 pages, including complete references. **Manuscripts should be submitted to only one publisher at a time.** Sharp, high-resolution photographs and graphics (children's art work, charts) to support the text may be submitted for publication consideration as well.

Please submit manuscripts as e-mail attachments to expedite the review process. Send to [coalition@phelc.org](mailto:coalition@phelc.org) with the subject heading *SPOTLIGHT Manuscript*. Manuscripts are reviewed and processed electronically. Manuscripts that are submitted in hard copy will not be reviewed.

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Our Facebook page provides the community, providers and parents easy access to all of our upcoming events and trainings, as well as family oriented information and resources that the Early Learning Coalition promotes to help build a better early learning environment for our children.

The Coalition invites you to view videos of our community events, TV appearances and informational VPK videos, starring some of the Coalition's very own 4-year-olds from our contracted early learning programs and centers.

Our Pinterest Page is a wealth of knowledge when it comes to sharing ideas and best practices in Early Education. No matter if you are a parent, teacher or someone looking for resources on inclusion, we have a board for you.

**All this information and more can also be found on our website:**

**[www.phelc.org](http://www.phelc.org)**