



**ELCPH Mission Statement**  
Creating a supportive community  
for children to be successful in  
school and life.



**ELCPH Vision Statement**  
Supporting quality education  
for every child.

## The Importance of Building Independence

Helping children build independence is one of the most valuable gifts families can provide. From an early age, children are eager to explore, make choices, and do things on their own. Encouraging this curiosity helps develop confidence, resilience, and essential life skills.

Independence begins with small, everyday opportunities. Simple tasks like putting away toys, choosing their clothes, or helping set the table allow children to practice decision-making and responsibility. While these moments may take extra time, they build a strong foundation for problem-solving and confidence.

**As children grow, independence also supports emotional development. When children are given the chance to try, make mistakes, and try again, they learn perseverance and adaptability. This process helps them feel capable and proud of their accomplishments.**

Families can support independence by offering guidance while allowing children space to learn. Providing choices, creating consistent routines, and celebrating effort over perfection all encourage growth. By nurturing independence early, we empower children to become confident, capable individuals who are ready to navigate school and life with curiosity and determination.





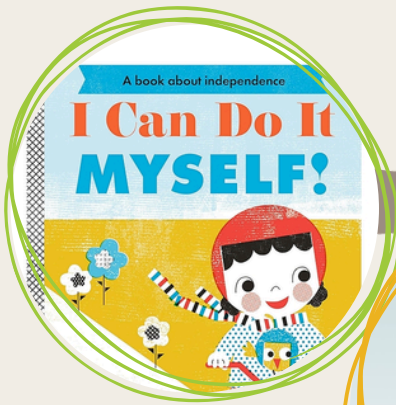
# Encouraging Confidence Through Reading

## Owlvivia's Reading Corner

Looking to keep literacy a priority over the summer break? Weekly visits to your local libraries in Pasco and Hernando counties, along with reading a story each day, are excellent ways to support early literacy development while also strengthening social-emotional skills.

Books provide children with opportunities to recognize, understand, and work through emotions by seeing characters experience situations similar to their own. Stories about sharing, trying new things independently, missing family while at school, and managing big feelings help children build emotional awareness and confidence. Reading these stories together also creates opportunities for meaningful conversations and modeling independence through everyday experiences.

The following recommended titles are great examples of books that support both literacy and social-emotional growth throughout the summer!



- ★ *I Can Do It Myself* by Stephen Krensky
- ★ *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires
- ★ *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae
- ★ *Llama Llama Time to Share* by Anna Dewdney
- ★ *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn

Giveaway!

Win a FREE 12-Month Highlights Magazine Subscription!

Click here for details!



Congratulations to Florida Aquarium pass winners Alexis A. and Jaki H.!

# Family Engagement

Learning to Be Independent



Click here to unlock 3 months of family engagement activities!



These family engagement activities for July, August, and September are designed to help children build confidence, independence, and school-readiness skills as they prepare for a new school year. Each day includes one simple activity that encourages children to practice important routines and responsibilities, such as following directions, making choices, dressing independently, cleaning up after themselves, and communicating their needs. Using everyday materials and routines, these experiences help children develop the confidence and independence needed to become successful learners.

## FREE Resources from MarcoPolo for Families

MarcoPolo for Families is another fantastic resource for parents aiming to enhance their children's confidence and independence. This educational app, compatible with most devices, offers a mindful way to learn important school readiness skills during the summer break.

Parents can use the complimentary family codes below provided by The Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando to unlock videos and activities that help children learn essential social-emotional skills.

### To access the free app:

1. Download the MarcoPolo for Families app using the QR code
2. Register with the provided class code





## Understanding the VPK Designation

**Choosing high-quality instruction:** Providers with favorable designations typically offer stronger classroom experiences and better readiness outcomes.

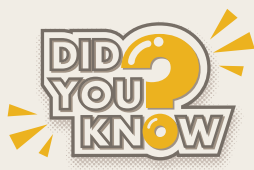
**Transparency matters:** Designations help you compare providers based on quality and performance.

**Be proactive:** If you see an "Incomplete" label, ask providers directly about how they support learning and why data may be limited.



To learn more about what the VPK Designation means for families, click to download flyer.

[VPK Designation Flyer](#)



**School Readiness: More families may now qualify for childcare assistance!**



Parents or guardians must be working or participating in an educational activity at least 20 hours per week.

**Gross income must be at or below 55% of the State Median Income (SMI).** Families must pay a co-payment for child care based on income and family size. **If you have applied in the past and were not eligible, now is the perfect opportunity to reapply.**

## ENROLL NOW

VPK Families for 2026-2027 School Year

Florida VPK supports the development of early literacy, executive functioning, and social emotional skills. To learn more about Florida VPK, please click Family Portal below!

[Florida VPK](#)

To learn more about School Readiness, please click Family Portal below!

[Florida School Readiness](#)

You may apply for School Readiness services through the Family Portal below. If you are eligible, you will be placed on the Wait List until enrollment takes place, depending on availability of funding.

[Family Portal](#)





# Child Development: Building Social and Emotional Skills for Back-to-School

As children head back to school, social and emotional skills play a key role in helping them adjust, connect, and succeed. Confidence grows when children feel prepared—whether it’s recognizing their name, following routines, or feeling comfortable in a new environment. Families can support this by practicing daily routines and offering encouragement.



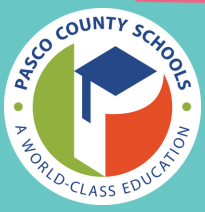
*Perseverance is especially important during this transition period. New classrooms, teachers, and expectations can feel overwhelming at first. When children are encouraged to keep trying—even when something feels difficult—they build resilience and a positive mindset toward learning.*

Responsibility becomes more meaningful during the school year. Simple tasks like packing a backpack, following directions, or cleaning up after activities help children feel capable and included.

“By reinforcing these skills at home, families help children walk into the school year with confidence, readiness, and a strong foundation for success.”



## Community Partners



Pasco Schools provides world-class education for all students to achieve success in college, career, and life.

[Click Here](#)



The Hernando County School District collaborates with students, parents, and other community stakeholders to effectively prepare all students for a successful transition into a diverse and changing world

[Click Here](#)

If you have questions or would like to suggest content, please contact Family Services Supervisor, Brenda Mayo at [b.mayo@elcph.org](mailto:b.mayo@elcph.org).