



OCT - DEC 2026 ISSUE 8

Newsletter

early
learning
coalition
OF PASCO & HERNANDO
A Space To Grow
www.elcph.org



Setting Limits with Love

Children are more likely to understand and respect boundaries when expectations are consistent. When limits change from one situation to another, children may become confused or continue testing the boundary. For example, if toys are expected to be put away before starting a new activity, try to follow that expectation each time. Consistent limits help children know what to expect and understand that boundaries are predictable.

Rules should also match your child's developmental level. Younger children typically respond best to simple, immediate directions, while older children can understand more detailed explanations and participate in conversations about rules and consequences.

Whenever possible, explain the reason behind a rule. Connecting boundaries to safety, health, respect, or family values helps children understand that limits are meant to guide and protect them. For example:

"Let's wash our hands before we eat so we can get the germs off."

Finally, acknowledge your child's feelings while maintaining the boundary. You might say, "I know you want to keep playing. It's hard to stop when you're having fun, but it's time for bed." Empathy does not mean changing the limit. Children can learn that their feelings matter while also learning that some expectations still need to be followed.

ELCPH Mission Statement

Creating a supportive community for children to be successful in school and life.



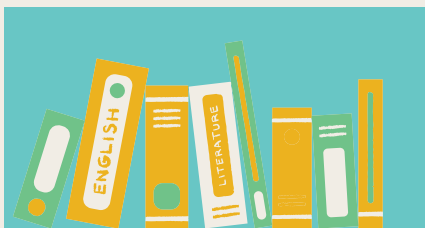
ELCPH Vision Statement

Supporting quality education for every child.

Rather than, "Don't throw your toys," say, "Let's keep the toys on the floor." Positive directions tell children what they can do and make expectations easier to understand.



For a young child, "Feet stay on the floor" may be more effective than a long explanation about why climbing on furniture is unsafe.



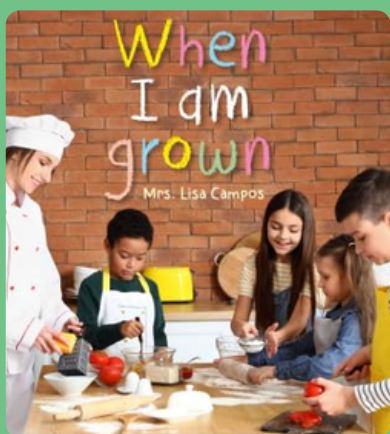
Owlivia's Reading Corner

Books for **Big** Feelings

Reading with your child as often as possible supports early literacy skills, but did you know it can also support social-emotional development? When children are experiencing big emotions, stories can be a wonderful way to help them recognize and understand their feelings, see positive ways to respond, and connect what happens in a story to their own experiences.

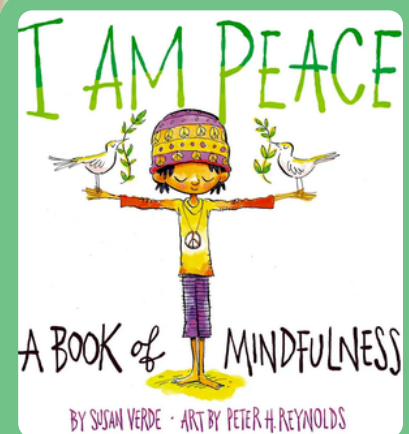
As you read, pause to talk about the characters' feelings. Ask questions like, "What could they do to feel better?" Then connect it to your child by asking, "Have you ever felt that way?"

When I Am Grown

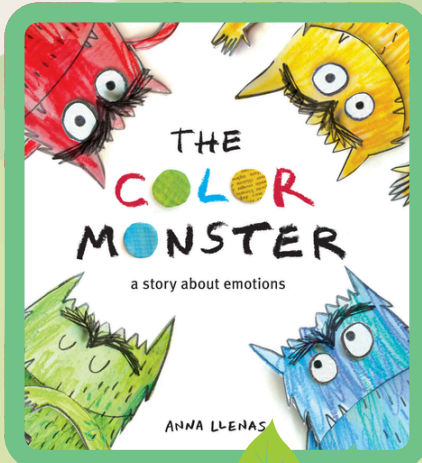


Look for these books at your local Pasco and Hernando County Libraries!

I Am Peace

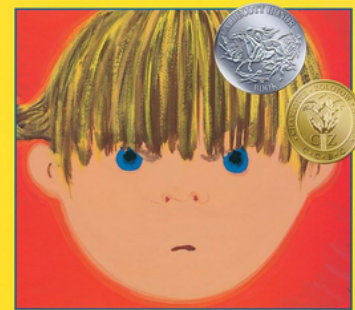


The Color Monster



Felix and the Picnic

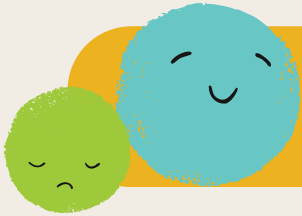
When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry...



When Sophie Gets Angry

Family Engagement

Strategies for Emotions



Click here to unlock 3 months of family engagement activities!



These family engagement activities for October, November, and December focus on helping young children understand and manage their 'big feelings.' Each day offers a simple opportunity for families to talk, play, connect, and practice social-emotional skills together.

Families will explore emotions, calming strategies, communication, kindness, patience, problem-solving, sharing, taking turns, and setting healthy boundaries.

Holiday activities are included while recognizing that busy celebrations can bring many different feelings for young children. Families can use everyday routines, play, books, conversations, and simple household activities to help children learn that all feelings are okay, but not all behaviors are okay.

Children will practice naming their emotions, expressing their needs, respecting personal space, and learning what they can do when feelings become overwhelming. These small moments of connection help children feel safe, understood, confident, and ready to build positive relationships with others.

You Could Win a MarcoPolo iWonder & Learn Kit!

Bring learning to life with hands-on activities, creative supplies, and guided video lessons through a MarcoPolo iWonder & Learn Kit! The kit includes art and craft supplies, tangrams, activity dice, math tools, letters, dough, scissors, and more—plus a 1-year app subscription to help families create fun, meaningful learning moments at home!

ENTER HERE!





Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program

- **Free VPK:** Prepares 4-year-olds for kindergarten and beyond.
- **Eligibility:** Florida residents who are 4 years by September 1.
- **Flexible Enrollment:** Children born Feb. 2–Sept. 1 may postpone VPK until age 5.

**School Readiness
Funding is available to
those who qualify.
Who is eligible?**

**Applied before and weren't
eligible? Now is the perfect
time to reapply!**

- **Gross Income:** At or below 55% of State Median Income
- **Work/School:** Parent or guardian must work or attend school 20 or more hours per week.
- **Special Circumstances:** Additional eligibility may apply for children with special needs or families facing homelessness, domestic violence, or other qualifying circumstances
- **Copayment:** Families pay a copayment based on income and family size.

Friendly reminder to parents!

**To help us maintain accurate attendance records,
please remember:**

Please do not sign your child in or out on days when the school is closed or your child is absent.

**Thank you for
helping us
keep accurate
attendance
records!**



**When signing your child in or out,
please enter the time as accurately
as possible. For example: 8:04 a.m.,
9:12 a.m., or 4:26 p.m.**

Please avoid entering the same general
or rounded times each day, such as:
7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m., or 4:30 p.m.

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!



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



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





Developmental Screenings: Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)

If you are a School Readiness family, you will be asked to provide consent and complete a developmental screener called the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) in the Parent Portal during School Readiness enrollment and annually at redetermination.

The ASQ is a developmental screening tool that helps families better understand how their child is developing. It looks at areas such as communication, movement, problem-solving, and social-emotional skills.

Your participation is important!

Parents and caregivers know their children best. By completing the ASQ, you provide valuable information about what your child can do at home and in everyday situations. The results can help identify your child's strengths and determine whether additional support, resources, or follow-up may be helpful.

Parents will have 20 days to complete the screener once it is available in the Parent Portal. We encourage you to complete it as soon as possible. For ease of completion, parents are strongly encouraged to complete the ASQ using a desktop computer.

Completing the ASQ is not a test. It is a helpful tool for learning more about your child's development and connecting families with appropriate resources and support when needed.



The ASQ is not required for children enrolled in VPK. However, VPK families who are interested in completing the ASQ or learning more about developmental screening may contact **Melissa Hayes directly at m.hayes@elcph.org**



Community Partners





Simply Healthcare Plans, Inc. offers coverage to FHK-eligible children in all 11 regions of Florida, representing 67 counties.

[Click Here](#)



Healthy Horizons[®] in Florida

Medicaid managed care coverage for eligible children, pregnant women, and individuals with disabilities

[Click Here](#)

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