



### **“May” We Help You? Supporting the People Who Support Your Children**

This month, we celebrated Early Childhood Educators who care for and teach our youngest children every day. When these educators are supported, your children benefit directly.

At the **Early Learning Coalition of Polk County**, we are dedicated to strengthening childcare programs by providing guidance, resources, and support in areas such as early learning curriculum, social and emotional development, behavior strategies, and mental health and wellness. Our goal is to help educators create safe, nurturing, and engaging environments for every child.

For families, this means your child is surrounded by skilled early childhood educators who are supported, prepared, and equipped with the tools they need to help your child grow, learn, and feel secure.

The ELC of Polk not only provides high-quality support to early learning programs but also helps families navigate the path to quality childcare and education for their children. Together, we are building a stronger community for everyone.

With appreciation and purpose,  
The ELC of Polk Team

EARLY LEARNING COALITION  
OF POLK COUNTY

# 6TH ANNUAL FAMILY FUN DAY

## BUILDING BLOCKS OF KINDNESS

\*FREE FOOD

\*FREE GIFTS

FUN ACTIVITIES

\*While supplies last

June 6, 2026  
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

115 S. Missouri Avenue  
Lakeland, FL 33815

ELCPolk.org

\*Food sponsored by  
the Y

FREE autism screenings  
provided by  
BayCare Behavioral Health

SCAN FOR  
FACEBOOK  
EVENT

## HIGHLIGHTS & IMPACTS 🌟

### 🍉 A Melon-Filled Day of Family Fun!



## Thank you to the Florida Children's Museum!

The Early Learning Coalition of Polk was proud to sponsor an interactive music and movement experience on the Bonnet Springs Great Lawn at this year's Watermelon Festival. Children and families enjoyed music, movement, and joyful moments together.

We gathered alongside many incredible community partners who make a difference across our community. One of the highlights of the day was sharing our Watermelon Seeds of Kindness activity—a special moment that encouraged children and families to spread kindness where ever they go.

Thank you to the **Florida Children's Museum** for hosting such a wonderful event. We look forward to returning next year!

---

## Teacher Appreciation Week! 🎉



The **Early Learning Coalition of Polk County** continued Teacher Appreciation Week by celebrating our valued partnership with **Humana**. We extend a heartfelt thank you to the Humana representatives Jennifer Timothee-Olivera, Dr. Maylin Lopez Cortes, and Jodie Mortellaro for their continuous support!

**Humana generously donated 174 books** to help inspire a love of literacy, including reading the book *Llama Llama Loves His Teacher* by Anna Dewdney, with the VPK children at **Children's Village Enrichment Center**.

We extend our sincere thanks to everyone for a wonderful celebration of literacy!

Click below for a Read Aloud - Llama Llama Loves His Teacher

Llama Llama Loves ❤️ His Teacher - Read Aloud

---

☐ **LUAU INTO SUMMER!** ☐



Mahalo to the **Carol Jenkins Barnett United Way Children's Resource Center** for its end of year luau celebration! Family service specialists Crystal Butler and Luis Arellano connected families, sharing information about **ELC of Polk's FREE programs, services, and resources**. Children and families laughed, played, and made lasting memories together!

## FAMILY NEWSROOM 📰

### Kindergarten, Here We Come! 🎓





**Kindergarten here we come!** A huge thank you to our amazing childcare providers for sharing your special VPK moments with us on our Facebook page!

Through the Early Learning Coalition of Polk County families are connected to high-quality VPK and School Readiness programs where learning is fun, children grow with confidence, and families can choose the program that best fits their needs. ❤️ 🌱 💙

**Click below for helpful tips and simple ideas to support a smooth, and confident transition to kindergarten.**

[Click here for helpful tips to kindergarten!](#)

Florida **VPK**



## Florida Early Learning & Developmental Standards

Click below to learn more about the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for 4 Years Old to Kindergarten.

[Learn More](#)

### Rhyming Match Game

- 1 Place picture cards in front of the child. (Example: cat, hat, dog, sun)
- 2 Say the word: ("CAT" 🐱)
- 3 Child finds the picture that rhymes with. (👒 HAT)
- 4 Continue with more rhyming pairs:

dog 🐶 /log 🍷  
book 📖 /hook 🪝  
pig 🐷 /wig 🧢

### Skills Practiced

- ✓ Rhyming
- ✓ Listening
- ✓ Vocabulary
- ✓ Early Literacy Skills

### Here is more rhyming fun!

- 🏠 Rhyme Around the House
- 🐱 Create Silly Rhyming Words
- 🚗 Summer Road Rhyme
- 🍉 Grocery Edition: Can You Rhyme it?

### ♥ VPK Ready?

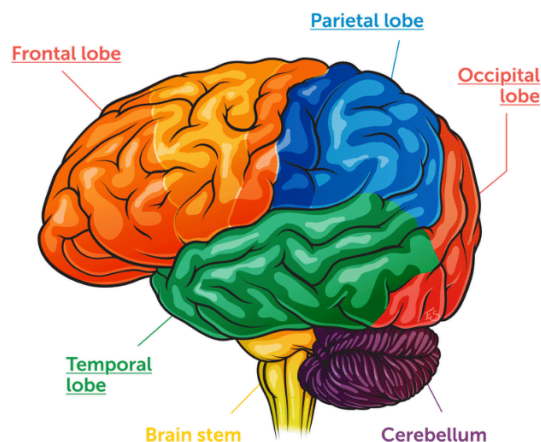
#### Let's Get YOU Enrolled!

Apply for VPK using the link below to obtain your 2026 - 2027 VPK Certificate.

[Apply Today!](#)

## ARTICLES & TIPS

### The Baby Brain Map



From nurturing little neurons to building strong foundations, every interaction helps prepare children for kindergarten and beyond.

**The Baby Brain Map** helps parents and caregivers understand how everyday moments support healthy brain development, emotional well-being, and learning during the most important early years. Read more to learn about the Baby Brain Map.

[Read more](#)

### Rethinking "Kindergarten Readiness": Conscious Discipline's Take



Rethinking kindergarten readiness Conscious Discipline explains that the term "kindergarten readiness" has created understandable controversy because it has traditionally focused mostly on academic skills like identifying letters, counting numbers, and holding a pencil.

While these foundational skills are important, parents, educators, and communities recognize they are only one piece of a much bigger picture.

[Read more](#)

 **LOOKING AHEAD: JUNE**

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF POLK COUNTY  
**6TH ANNUAL FAMILY FUN DAY**  
 BUILDING BLOCKS OF KINDNESS

\*FREE FOOD  
 \*FREE GIFTS  
 FUN ACTIVITIES

\*While supplies last

June 6, 2026  
 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

115 S. Missouri Avenue  
 Lakeland, FL 33815

ELCPolk.org

Food sponsored by [Logo]  
 FREE autism screenings provided by BayCare Behavioral Health

SCAN FOR FACEBOOK EVENT

POLK COUNTY  
**BUMPS & BABIES**  
 COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER  
 CELEBRATING FATHERS

27 | JUNE | 10AM - 1PM

STUART CENTER  
 1702 S HOLLAND PKWY  
 BARTOW, FL 33830

This FREE event will give help and information to moms, dads, and families. You can learn about programs in the community that can help you.

**FOOD | GAMES | PRIZES | & MORE!**

Scan or click the QR code to register for this event.



For more information:  
 Call or Text: Cindy (863) 220-3158  
 Email: ccluts@nealystartflp.org

**PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES**

**ELC of Polk Family Training Opportunities!**

**ELC of Polk** offers **family** training opportunities designed to build knowledge of child development in engaging and meaningful ways, through interactive, hands-on classes, families gain practical strategies to support their child's learning and growth at home. These fun and informative sessions empower families to feel confident, connected, and inspired!

Click below for more information on Family Trainings!

[Learn More](#)

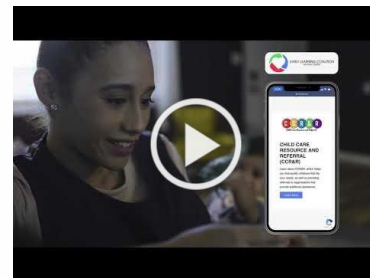
Open the door to your child's success with **High Quality** Early Learning!



♥ **School Readiness**  
**Get them ready!**  
 School Readiness is an early learning program that helps working families and families attending school with childcare



♥ **VPK Ready?**  
**Let's Get YOU Enrolled!**  
 The application window is now open! Apply for VPK using the link below to obtain your 2026 - 2027 VPK certificate.



♥ **Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)** is a service focused on helping families find quality childcare that fits their individual needs as well as providing referrals to other organizations.

expenses while preparing children for school.

[Learn More](#)

[Learn More](#)

[Learn More](#)

## MISSION

We will lead community efforts in supporting the success of children.

## VISION

Children will be prepared for school and life success.

[WANT MORE ELC NEWS?](#)



[VISIT THE ELC NEWSROOM](#)

---

**Have a photo or story you'd like to share with us?**

- Post to our [Facebook](#) page
- Direct Message us on [Instagram](#)
- Email pictures to [Layla Cribb](#)



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email & social marketing for free!