



## Family Fun Day 6th Annual Summer Event

Each June, we get excited about one of our favorite traditions, our **Annual Family Fun Day!** This year marked our 6th Annual celebration, uniting families, community members, vendors, and staff for a day filled with fun, interactive activities, and meaningful connections. From hands-on experiences to free literacy backpacks, there was something for everyone to enjoy.

We are incredibly grateful to our sponsors for making the event such a success. Special thanks to **BayCare** for providing free autism screenings; the **YMCA of West Central Florida** and **Terrie Lobb Catering (TLC)** for keeping everyone fueled with hamburgers and hot dogs; **Frog Street Press, LLC** for keeping families refreshed at the Hydration Station; **Highlights Early Learning** for the delicious free SNO KONEs and popcorn; and **MarcoPolo Learning** for the yummy ice cream!

A special shout-out to Gregg Heinkel, Director of Special Programs at the ELC of Polk, whose planning and hard work truly brought everything together, making the event a memorable success for our families and community.

As we close the chapter on June, we're carrying forward a backpack full of gratitude, community spirit, and wonderful memories. Thank you for helping us make this summer kickoff one to remember!

The ELC of Polk Team  
With Joy, Into July! 🥰

## BULLETIN

Share a photo of your kiddos making summer memories with **Highlights!**

**Happy Father's Day!**





From dad jokes to bedtime stories, backyard adventures to big bear hugs, we're celebrating the fathers and father figures who help children learn, grow, and thrive every day. Happy Father's Day to all our Polk County Dad's!

And no Father's Day celebration is complete without a **few classic dad jokes**. Here are a few to celebrate our dads this month!

Highlights may feature your photo on the back cover of one of their magazines, in their newsletter, or on their @HighlightsForChildren instagram account. Whether you're reading together, exploring hidden treasures, or enjoying a special family moment, we'd love to see how Highlights is part of your child's learning journey!

🟡 Why don't eggs tell jokes? They'd crack each other up!

🐟 What do you call a fish wearing a bowtie? So-fish-ticated!

🌽🎉 What did the baby corn say to the mama corn? "Where's Pop Corn?"

#MyHighlightsKid Photo Submission

## HIGHLIGHTS & IMPACTS 🌟

### Celebrating 20 Years of VPK!



The Division of Early Learning is proud of the 20th year of Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK), an important milestone that commemorates the success of a program that continues to make a lasting impact on children, families and communities. To continue to celebrate, the division is sharing a **VPK 20th Birthday Toolkit** that includes fun ideas and resources to help schools, early learning programs and families join the celebration.

VPK 20th Birthday Toolkit

FAMILY NEWSROOM 📰

# Florida VPK

♥ **VPK Ready?**  
**Let's Get YOU Enrolled!**  
Apply for VPK using the link below to obtain your 2026 - 2027 VPK Certificate.

Apply Today!

**Florida VPK and Florida Prepaid Unite**

**BIG SAVINGS FOR BRIGHT FUTURES!**

*Start Early. Save More.*

✓ Applying to participate in Florida's VPK program is a great beginning to investing in your child's future!

Not only is VPK proven to help your child enter Kindergarten confident and ready to learn, but it also opens the door to valuable financial education opportunities that can support your family's future.

- Apply for VPK and receive a \$100 bonus to start saving for future education costs.
- Apply for VPK and be entered for a chance to win a \$1,000 college scholarship.

✓ Families who opt in to either opportunity are provided additional information about the options available through Florida Prepaid.

**FLORIDA PREPAID COLLEGE SAVINGS PLANS**

**Florida VPK 2005-2025**

Go to the website for more information on [Florida Prepaid College Savings Plans](https://myfloridaprepaid.com).  
(myfloridaprepaid.com)

🗣️ **VPK Literacy: Beach Walk Story**  
As you walk along the beach, invite your child to create a story about what they see!

### How to Play:

- 👉 Find something interesting, like a shell.
- 🗣️ Ask your child: "What do you think it's story is?"
- 👉 Encourage them to add details as you continue walking.

### Conversation Starters:

- ★ Where did this shell come from?
- ★ How did he make a tunnel in the sand?
- ★ Where do you think the seagull is flying?

### 😊 Learning Along the Way

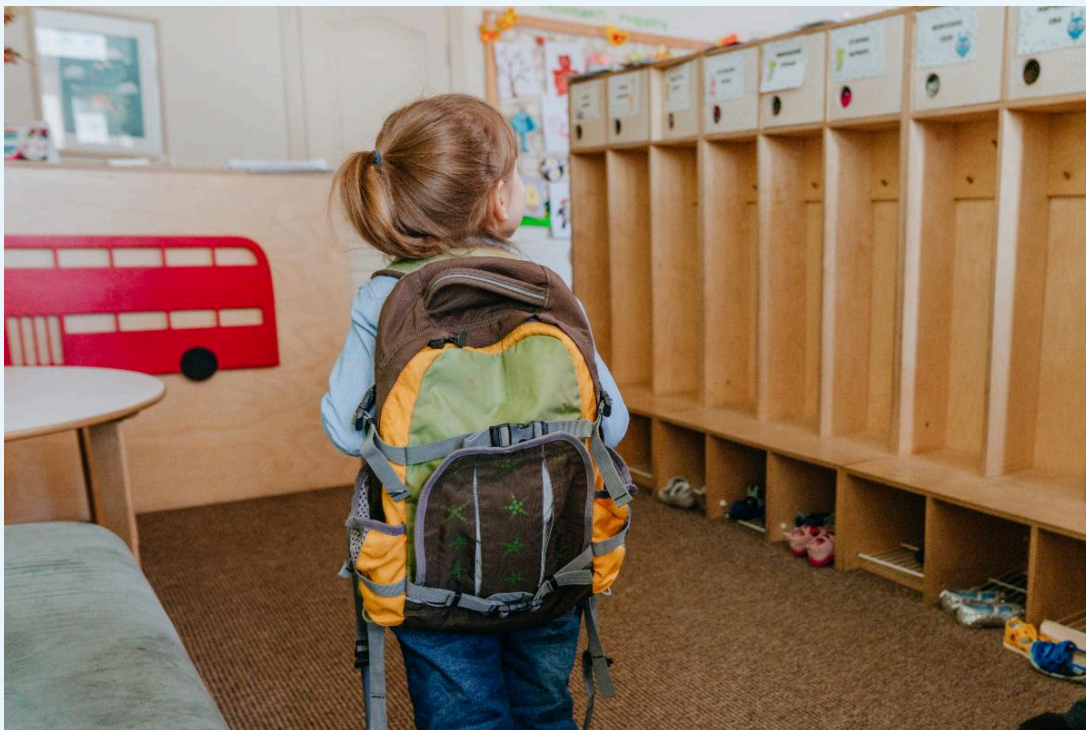
- Builds vocabulary
- Encourages imagination
- Strengthens storytelling skills
- Support listening and conversation

## 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

## 💡 ARTICLES & TIPS



### **13 Tips for Starting Preschool**

Is your child entering a preschool program for the first time? Use these tips to help both you and your child make a smooth transition.

[Read More](#)



### **Learning Through Play: Birth to 12 Months**

As babies grow, they learn to use their bodies to make discoveries. Find out what your baby is learning as they play with you, and activities you can do to support their development!

Read More

## 👁️ LOOKING AHEAD: JULY & AUGUST

**POLK SHERIFF'S Charities, Inc.**  
**BACK TO SCHOOL BASH**  
**SATURDAY, JULY 11<sup>TH</sup> 2026**  
**9:00 A.M.—12:00 P.M.**  
AT THE  
**POLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SOUTHWEST DISTRICT**  
4120 US HWY 98 SOUTH, LAKELAND, FL 33812  
**BOOK BAGS & SCHOOL SUPPLIES** WHILE SUPPLIES LAST  
CHILD MUST BE PRESENT TO RECEIVE SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Hosted by Heartland for Children  
**BACK TO SCHOOL BASH**  
for Crystal Lake Elementary  
A Community Partnership School  
**FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 2026**  
10:00AM - 1:00PM  
FREE School Supplies for CLE Kids (Grades PK-5)  
Lunch, Games, Giveaways, Hair Cuts  
Ice Cream Truck, Inflatables and More!  
Crystal Lake Elementary - PE Pavilion  
700 Galvin Dr. Lakeland, FL 33801  
Visit our partner & vendor  
booths for information,  
resources and giveaways!

Central Florida Health Care | Heartland for Children | POLK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS | SEU | United Way

## PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES 🛠️

### New Worlds Reading: Free Books for Florida Students



Did you know that Florida offers a FREE home literacy program for eligible VPK through 5th-grade students?

New Worlds Reading is Florida's free at-home literacy program that mails free books and reading activities directly to eligible children. The program is designed to help children strengthen their literacy skills and foster a lifelong love of reading.

Who is eligible? Students in VPK who are not yet making age-appropriate progress, identified by:

\* Scoring below the 40th percentile on FAST Star Early Literacy

\* Or are exempt from taking FAST Star Early Literacy

Apply Today!

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 expenses while preparing children for school.

[Learn More](#)



♥ **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.

[Learn More](#)



♥ **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.

[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](#)



Early Learning Coalition of Polk County | 115 South Missouri Avenue Suite 201 | Lakeland, FL 33815 US

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



Try email & social marketing for free!