

The Heartbeat

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF POLK COUNTY NEWSLETTER

ELC OF POLK LAUNCHES KINDNESS INITIATIVE IN POLK COUNTY



Earlier this month The Early Learning Coalition of Polk County introduced its **“Be Kind! Polk”** initiative to a well-attended presentation. We were so excited that several of the

attendees included local city, county and business leaders along with other supporters. They listened closely as they learned about the importance of positive early social emotional development and how it can greatly affect a child's first four years of life.

The audience also learned that kindergarten teachers in Polk County ranked kindness as an essential trait that preschoolers needed to have to be kindergarten ready. It was also pointed out that not practicing kindness could present problems down the road. They were reminded of a recent incident of violence that had made the national news.

At the conclusion everyone was introduced to the initiative's logo with its four foundational points as a reminder of where kindness should be practiced: in family and inner circle, in the workplace, in self-care and finally in community. **CEO Marc Hutek Ed. D.** hoped that the initiative's four foundational points could provide an effective plan that could positively affect all the sectors of our life and make the world around us better.

"I really believe that although kindness may seem very simple and ordinary, it's really something that impacts all sectors of our society," said Hutek. "We should be modeling kindness for our children daily and if they see it all around them, maybe they'll realize this is the way the world was intended to be."





For more meeting highlights, click the video above!



UNITED IS THE WAY



We did it again! This year ELC Polk employees' contributions came to a **\$22,102.59** total exceeding our goal. We are proud of our giving record and were recently distinguished by the United Way of Central Florida as its 2024 Medium Business Campaign Champion. We also embrace the UWCF's new tagline "**United is the Way**" knowing from our own fundraising experiences!

SOUTHSIDE LEARNING CENTER CELEBRATES HEALTH LITERACY MONTH



Germes and how to prevent them were the focus recently at **Southside Learning Center** in Lakeland. Special guest **Lou Nino Vice President of Watson Clinic Surgical Services** came to read "*Cutie Sue Fights the Germs*" by Kate Melton. Afterward, she answered a lot of great questions from a very engaged VPK class. Being a registered nurse, Lou was able to provide great advice to the young preschoolers like washing their hands long enough to say the whole alphabet. For these students it would prove to be easy as they could also say it backwards!



NEMOURS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF ORLANDO GIVES THE GIFT OF MENTAL WELLNESS





We recently received a special gift from our friends at **Nemours Children's Health**. They came to personally deliver 250 Calming Sensory Kits that included a snack, water, fidget toys, bubbles, and a coloring book that children will be sure to enjoy.

We were also thrilled that each kit had a wonderful pinwheel family engagement activity! A huge heartfelt ELC thank you to this wonderful community partner!

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TIP: TEACHING CHILDREN RESILIENCE



Resilience is an important trait to instill in children and this Sesame Street song “Don’t Give Up” sung by Bruno Mars explains it in this catchy little tune. Sing along with your child!

POSITIVE PARENTING TIP: HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD AVOID MELTDOWNS



Sometimes an emotional meltdown can happen at the most inopportune times and dealing with one can certainly be challenging. Parents have all experienced meltdown moments, **but they can be equally frustrating for a child.**

What if you could have calm discussions about them before they even happen? To prevent a meltdown there are lots of opportunities throughout the day to teach children how to act appropriately. Here are some great ideas that will help to reinforce more positive behavior.

[Learn More](#)

KINDNESS CONNECTIONS: THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING



Listening is an important skill for children to develop not just for following instructions but also for **listening and responding properly to others in social settings**.

Below are a few discussion questions from **Highlights Early Learning** that will help you and your child focus on why listening is so very essential for communication. The Obstacle Course activity will also provide some fun while practicing listening for specific instructions.

- Create a simple obstacle course where the children have to listen for specific instructions (i.e. “crawl under the table,” “hop over the line”) and freeze at certain points.
- Ask “Why is it important to stop and listen before moving?”
- Ask “Can you think of a time when listening carefully helped you understand something better?”





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childcare expenses?

elcpolk.org

Sponsored by the Early Learning Coalition of Polk County and the State of Florida, Division of Early Learning.



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OF POLK COUNTY

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