

The Heartbeat

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF POLK COUNTY NEWSLETTER

SECOND ANNUAL EARLY LEARNING CONFERENCE IS A SOLD-OUT TURNOUT!



Our Second Annual Early Learning Conference proved to be a day of quality learning with impressive presenters and great discussion. We welcomed **Ron Mohl of Lakeshore Learning**, who opened the conference with his thoughts on the profound

impact of early childhood educators on our children. At the end of the conference, he turned his focus to the educators themselves by urging them to practice self-care to sustain their energy and passion in teaching.

During lunch **Laureen Reynolds of Highlights Early Learning** also gave our conference attendees an uplifting presentation on how teaching students kindness and social emotional skills can change a child's life and even a community.



Throughout the conference attendees learned about best practices presented by outstanding presenters that included some from our very own talented staff. High quality learning was greatly emphasized but also the importance of being kind to others, and to ourselves. We hope that when each of our everyday heroes left, they felt more supported and empowered!



**DREAMERS BILINGUAL ACADEMY WELCOMES POLK COUNTY COMMISSIONER
MARTHA SANTIAGO**



VPK students at **Dreamers Bilingual Academy** in Winter Haven recently welcomed **Polk County Commissioner Martha Santiago** who came to help celebrate Hispanic History Month with a special reading of *“The Piñata That the Farm Maiden Hung”* by Samantha R. Vamos. She did an excellent job of engaging the students by focusing on various Spanish words that the children learned from the reading.

Afterward students got to enjoy creating their own individual piñatas that they proudly displayed. Muchas gracias to preschool owner **Mariela Garcia** and her staff for hosting such a wonderful event!





[Watch video on Facebook](#)

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TIP: PRACTICE MINDFULNESS TOGETHER



Our families live in a constant world of distractions with so many electronic conveniences but sometimes it's important to pause and take a step away and focus on a mindful moment. According to the American Psychological Association, mindfulness can reduce a child's worry and temper tantrums.

When children are taught to pause and check in with their feelings and notice the world around them, they can learn to manage their own stress. In the link below are some helpful PBS shows and games that will provide useful lessons that you can practice together!

[Learn More](#)

POSITIVE PARENTING TIP: HOW TO GIVE CLEAR DIRECTIONS



Have you ever felt frustrated when you thought you gave your child clear directions and yet they were not followed? With small children there may be many reasons why they don't follow through. Paying attention to directions is important in a child's early development and certainly a skill that will prove to be beneficial in years to come. The link below has some great suggestions to help your child become more successful in following directions.

[Learn More](#)

**KINDNESS CONNECTIONS:
COMPASSION FOR ANIMALS**



When children practice treating animals with compassion they can learn lots of ways to be gentle and caring that can extend to how they treat people. Here are some suggestions provided by Highlights Early Learning:

- Take a short walk outside to observe animals or insects. Discuss how the children can show kindness to these animals in their natural habitat.
- Watch short, child-friendly videos of people helping animals. Discuss what the children saw and how the helpers showed compassion.

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF VPK!



For more information on this free program that will guarantee your child's future success visit: <https://elcpolk.org/families/voluntary-prekindergarten-education-program/>



WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

Screening for Type 1 Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes is a lifelong autoimmune condition causing the destruction of the cells in the pancreas that make insulin. This means the body can't control blood sugar (glucose) on its own. Without management of high blood glucose levels, over time it **can lead to serious and life-threatening health complications.**

Studies indicate that screening for autoantibodies through **a simple low to no-cost blood test can effectively identify those who will develop type 1 diabetes,** potentially before the need for insulin. It can also identify the stage of the condition.

Type 1 diabetes often starts in kids ages

4-6
years old

10-14
years old

but it can happen at any age.

BENEFITS OF SCREENING YOUR CHILD EARLY

While type 1 diabetes cannot be prevented, early detection can help families to:

- Reduce the risk of life-threatening complications and hospitalization
- Plan and manage a potential diagnosis and treatment strategy

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF DIABETES

- Irritability/behavioral changes
- Increased thirst or hunger
- Increased urination/bedwetting
- Unexplained weight loss
- Fruity-smelling breath
- Blurred vision
- Fatigue

TYPE OF DIABETES

Type 2 diabetes is a metabolic disease influenced by a range of genetic and lifestyle factors that and can usually be prevented. Unlike type 2, **type 1 diabetes** is an autoimmune disease that cannot be prevented by lifestyle or dietary changes. While researchers don't know exactly what causes type 1 diabetes, those that seem to be more at risk have a close family relative with the disease or other autoimmune conditions.

SCREENING RESOURCES FOR TYPE 1 DIABETES

The screening can identify proteins in the blood (ICA, GAD, IAA, IA-2, ZnT8) that may signal the body's immune system is attacking cells in the pancreas that produce insulin. **Talk to your child's health care provider about screening options.** Other free screening resources include:

TrialNet: [TrialNet.org](https://www.trialnet.org)

Offers screenings at locations and free home test kits for relatives of people with type 1 diabetes.

Autoimmunity Screening for Kids: [AskHealth.org](https://www.askhealth.org)

Provides free at-home screening test kits to children starting at age 1, and adults.

EARLY STAGES OF TYPE 1 DIABETES

STAGE 1

- Immune system mistakenly starts to attack insulin-producing beta cells
- 2 or more autoantibodies detected in blood
- Blood sugar levels are within a normal range
- No visible symptoms

STAGE 2

- Immune system continues to attack beta cells
- 2 or more autoantibodies detected in blood
- Blood sugar levels are higher or lower than a normal range
- No visible symptoms

STAGE 3

- Too many beta cells are damaged, body can't make enough insulin
- 2 or more autoantibodies detected
- Blood sugar levels higher than normal range, symptoms are obvious, serious health complications may occur, insulin dependence begins

UNDERSTANDING THE SCREENING RESULTS

NEGATIVE (0-1 autoantibodies)

If your child is under the age of 15, you may consider having them rescreened every year.

POSITIVE (2 or more autoantibodies)

Talk to your child's health care provider about confirmatory testing, establishing a monitoring plan, and options for management.

Learn more about diabetes and resources for assistance at
[FloridaHealth.gov/Diabetes](https://www.FloridaHealth.gov/Diabetes)



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