

EARLY LEARNING PARENTS' PAGES



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

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April is Autism Awareness Month

Autism is a developmental disorder linked to problems with social interactions and communication. Autism affects the way the [brain processes information](#) and how the nerve cells in the brain connect and organize. It is difficult to diagnose autism, but pediatricians and parents can look for specific indicators of autism in young children.

During the first three years of your child's life, watch and listen closely as they interact with you and others. Learn about milestones your child should reach in the way they play, learn, speak, act and move. It is important for you and your child's pediatrician to keep [track of these milestones](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises families to ["learn the signs and act early"](#). You can keep track of your child's milestones on the [CDC's free Milestones Tracker App](#). If you are concerned about your child's development contact your child's pediatrician.

Download the CDC's Milestone Tracker App to track your child's milestones at <http://bit.ly/CDCmilestonetracker>.

The [First Words Project](#) from the Florida State University College of Medicine offers resources you can use to compare your child's social communication development to what is typical for their age. You can access videos, growth charts and two ["Lookbooks"](#). Each of the Lookbooks examines a child's progress at the age of 16 months. One looks at 16 gestures children typically use by the age of 16 months. The other one shows 16 actions with objects that young children typically use by this time.

Find [more information](#) on autism and young children at <http://bit.ly/autismspeaksparentguide>.



Week of the Young Child

April 11 -17, 2020 is designated the Week of the Young Child. During this week organizations and educational programs share the impacts their programs have on the lives of young children. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) uses this week to shine a spotlight on early learning programs, young children and their families and the ways communities promote and support early learning. NAEYC has resources for families and child care providers to use as they celebrate the [Week of the Young Child](#).

[Each day of the week](#) has a focus on a specific way children learn. Consider using some of these resources with your child and explore ways to make learning exciting and fun!

Music Monday: Music is a wonderful way to introduce your child to new words, explore literacy skills such as rhyming and beginning sounds and learn math skills as you count the beats in songs. Listen to different types of music and talk with your child about the different music you hear. Your child will [develop language](#) and [literacy skills](#) as well as [math skills](#) as you sing, dance or [listen to music together](#). Make up and record your own unique version of a song or write your own, and share it on social media using the hashtag #woyc20.



Tasty Tuesday: Create [healthy](#) snacks or [meals together](#) and encourage your child to taste different types of fruits and vegetables. Share the recipes and photos of your creations on social media using the hashtag #woyc20.



Work Together Wednesday: Learning to work and play with others is an important social skill for young children. Find a project you can do with your child that helps them practice ways to problem solve and collaborate. [Play a game](#) in which they must take turns or put together a puzzle. Use blocks or empty boxes to [build a structure](#) together. Build and share pictures of your creations on social media using the hashtag #woyc20.



Artsy Thursday: [Encourage your child to use their creativity](#) and make something together. The time your child spends [creating something](#) has a big impact on their social, cognitive and emotional development. Use items you usually have at home like paper, crayons, glue, tape, paper towel rolls or cotton balls and create an art project you can work on together. Offer your child support and encouragement, but allow your child to do most of the work on the project. If you have art museums in your community, take your child to [visit a museum](#). Talk about the different types of art on display.



Family Friday: Find ways to do an activity as a family. You are your child's [first and most important teacher](#). Any activity you do together as a family encourages your child to learn new skills, concepts and vocabulary. [Spending time in nature](#) is a perfect way to encourage your child to explore and investigate the world around them. Go outside and [blow bubbles](#). Let your child chase the bubbles or let them blow the bubbles. Take a walk in your neighborhood or go to a park or nature museum and observe nature. Ask many open-ended questions to guide your child as they explore. Tell them to look for things that are alike and different or things that are alive and non-living. Ask them, "How is a rock different from a bug?" or "How is a bug like you and different from you?"



Be sure to share your activities on social media using the hashtag #woyc20.



Earth Day 2020

PRINTABLE BOOKMARK

Celebrate Poem in
Your Pocket on
April 23, 2020



This bookmark is for

Caterpillar

Brown and furry
Caterpillar in a hurry,
Take your walk
To the shady leaf, or stalk,
Or what not,
Which may be
the chosen spot.
No toad spy you,
Hovering bird of prey
pass by you;
Spin and die,
To live again a butterfly.
~ Christina Rossetti

Happy
"Poem in Your
Pocket Day"



From your friend

writeshop.com

Every year on April 22, over a billion people around the world come together in their towns and cities to celebrate, create change and make the planet a better place. Earth Day started in 1970, making 2020 its' [50th celebration](#)! Earth Day reminds us of ways we can help our planet with [everyday tips](#) and information on: [climate change](#), [power](#) and [water](#) control, [pollution](#) issues, [saving our animals](#) and [forests](#), and many more. Find Earth Day events near you and register your own event on the [Earth Day website](#).

Help your young learner find new ways to change the impact we have on our planet. Have them [save water](#) with ideas such as turning off the sink while brushing teeth or setting time limits on showers. Create a family plan to [reduce power at home](#) by simply turning off lights when leaving a room or unplugging devices when they aren't being used. Reducing, reusing and recycling are other great ways to help. You can reuse plastic bags or donate clothes and items you do not need. You can [start a garden](#) to grow your own food or make a [compost](#) to enrich the soil. Share fun [facts about Earth Day](#) and have [activities, worksheets and crafts](#) to do with your child.

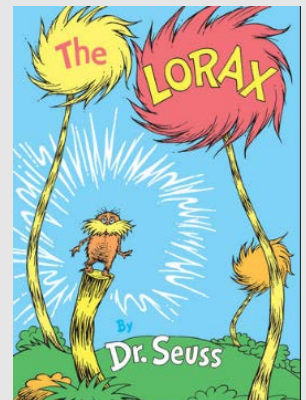
Just like Earth Day, Dr. Seuss's The Lorax helps children know that their actions have an effect on the land around them. [The Lorax Project Student Earth Day](#) lets you pledge to do more for the Earth while taking in the words of The Lorax, "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." The Lorax Project encourages children to think, talk and ask questions about Earth Day. It also supports [making a reading garden](#), picking up trash, [learning how to reduce, reuse, and recycle](#) or even planting a tree.

There is so much we can all do to protect our planet and it starts with you! Spread the message on social media with the hashtag #EarthDay, learn and share more [about Earth Day](#), talk with friends and family and take part in activities that help you [get](#)

[outside](#). The more we do now, the better our planet will be in the future! Find more information about Earth Day at <http://bit.ly/earthday50thcelebration>.

[The Lorax Project Student Earth Day](#) resources and activities can be found at <http://bit.ly/loraxproject>.

A read aloud version of "The Lorax" can be found at <http://bit.ly/ReadAloudLorax>.



"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." - The Lorax

Talking with Children about the Coronavirus

The Coronavirus has had a huge impact on families during the past few weeks. The [Office of Early Learning](#) and the [Florida Department of Education](#) are working closely with the [Florida Department of Health](#) to make sure families have the most current information on health and safety. Whether your family is self-quarantined or you are working and your child is in child care, they may be confused or concerned about the changes your family and community have made. It is best to explain the safety and health measures you and your child care provider have in place to protect your child from exposure to the virus. When your child knows that they are safe and feels secure at home or at their child care program, their days will be as normal as possible.

Explain why people are being asked to keep a personal space of six feet or more when they are around people they do not know. At the grocery store or when taking a walk, practice staying six feet from strangers and let your child help you measure six feet by seeing how many of your steps or their steps equal six feet. Discuss the reasons some people wear masks or gloves.

Make a game of [washing hands](#) at home by [singing songs with your child](#) or [counting to 20 together](#). Tell your child why you use hand sanitizer and wipe surfaces with sanitizing wipes when you take them out in public areas.

Encourage your child to ask questions and tell you how they feel about everything that is going on related to the virus such as school closures, limited or no playtime with friends or not being able to visit grandparents. Set up video chats with friends and family so they can stay in touch with the important people in their lives.

Resources for Talking to children about the Coronavirus:

- Zero to Three: Tips for Families Talking about the Coronavirus:
<https://bit.ly/familytipsduringcoronavirus>
- Why Can't I Go to School? Social Story from Conscious Discipline:
<https://bit.ly/COVID19SocialStory>



National World Art Day

National World Art Day is on April 15, 2020. Children naturally love art! Music, dance, painting and drawing are different forms of art. To celebrate National World Art Day you and your child can do a [variety of activities](#). Visit an art gallery or museum; support local artists; do an art project with your child or attend a local theatre production. No matter how you choose to celebrate National World Art Day remember to have fun.

A fun and creative art project you can do with your kids is [3D art](#) or making puffy paint.

What you will need:

- Food coloring or liquid watercolors
- 4 tablespoons of self-rising flour
- 4 tablespoons salt
- Water
- Paintbrush
- Cardboard



Directions:

1. Using a microwavable bowl, mix the flour, food coloring and salt. Add water to make a smooth paste. It's best to have one bowl per color.
2. Have your child create a masterpiece on cardboard. The more colors the better!
3. Once your child is done creating, microwave the cardboard for 20-30 seconds.

Take a picture of your child with their 3D art masterpiece and share it on social media with the hashtag #WorldArtDay. For more information on activities you can do with your child you can visit <https://www.education.com/activity/preschool/arts-and-crafts/>.

Child Abuse and Prevention Month

During April, you will see blue and silver pinwheels spring up all over your city. The pinwheels identify the businesses, state and local government agencies and non-profit organizations that partner with The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida to support great childhoods during Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention month. These businesses and agencies plant "pinwheel gardens" to show their support for healthy families. The "Pinwheels for Prevention" remind everyone that child abuse can be prevented by focusing on ways to build strong families throughout Florida. Families who know what to expect as their children grow and develop and have information on forming nurturing relationships with their children are less likely to abuse or neglect their children.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH



Pinwheels for
PREVENTION
Prevent Child Abuse
Florida

**In support of
happy, healthy childhoods**



www.PreventChildAbuseFL.org



Continue reading on page 6...

The [Ounce of Prevention](#) and the [Office of Early Learning](#) offer information and resources for all families on child development and social emotional development of young children.

[All families need a helping hand](#) from time to time. If your family needs assistance, or if you know of a family that could use some help or support, [Child Care Resource and Referral](#) programs are available throughout Florida. Their staff assists families in locating quality child care and child care assistance funds, assistance with housing, food, jobs, education and referrals to other local agencies or nonprofits such as [Help Me Grow](#) and the [United Way](#). Families can contact Child Care Resource and Referral staff at their local [early learning coalition](#). If your family needs assistance, or if you know of a family who may need support, please contact one of these agencies that help build [strong families](#) in Florida.

Plant a pinwheel or wear blue on Wear Blue Day, April 3rd, to show your support for Florida's families and the continuing effort to build healthy, happy childhoods for all of Florida's children.



Special Dates in April

- 1: National Walking Day
- 2: Children's Book Day
- 7: World Health Day
- 15: World Art Day
- 21: Kindergarten Day
- 22: Earth Day
- 28: Great Poetry Reading Day



Richard Corcoran
Commissioner of Education
Shan Goff
Executive Director



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