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## August Parent Link



The Early Learning Coalition would like to wish everyone a wonderful first day of school and a happy school year!

### Tips for a Safe School Year

Now that school is in session and your children are getting familiar with new surroundings, here are a few safety tips for children to follow before, during and after school.

#### Transportation

If your child is walking to school, remind them to always stay on the sidewalk. If no sidewalk is available, have them walk facing traffic.

Remind them to look both ways before crossing a street to make sure no cars are coming.

If possible, practice their walking route with them before school starts.

If your child is riding a bicycle to school, have them always wear their helmet and teach them the rules of the road for bicycle riding.

If your child is riding the school bus, teach them the proper way to get on and off the bus, and to stand at least six feet away from the curb.

#### School

Encourage your child to use playgrounds with a soft surface and avoid concrete, grass or dirt surfaces when possible.

Make sure your child's clothing is without drawstrings at the hood or neck area.

For more information on school safety, visit the **National Safety Council's website**.

References:

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Back-to-School Safety Checklist-

<http://www.cpsc.gov/nsn/schoolsafety.pdf>

National Safety Council Back-to-School Safety Checklist-

[http://www.nsc.org/safety\\_home/SafetyObservances/Documents/Back%20to%20School/Back](http://www.nsc.org/safety_home/SafetyObservances/Documents/Back%20to%20School/Back)



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## UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation is seeking grant applications. Could you qualify?

The UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation (UHCCF) is seeking grant applications from families in need of financial assistance to help pay for their child's health care treatments, services or equipment not covered, or not fully covered, by their commercial health insurance plan. Qualifying families can receive up to \$5,000.

### How does it work?

The detailed process can be found on the UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation [website](#).

1. Applicant meets criteria and submits online grant application.

2. Regional Board of Directors meets and decides on applications. If a grant is approved, grant payment works as follows:

3. Approved services/items are rendered by a provider, such as doctor, therapist, pharmacy, etc., and the provider bills your commercial benefit plan first, then bills you any remaining amount.

4. Commercial Health Benefit plan pays the provider directly. If no coverage or if the coverage is maximized, provider bills family directly.

5. The family is responsible for maximizing insurance, receiving bills/invoices, highlighting approved grant items and mailing it to UHCCF.

### How to apply for the grant?

First, review the information to make sure you understand what the grant is and how it works. Then review the application criteria and application checklist, which can be found by clicking [here](#). If you meet the Foundation's criteria, apply for the grant online by visiting the UnitedHealthcare website at [www.uhccf.org](http://www.uhccf.org).

**Note:** Before you are offered the full online grant application, you must pass the pre-screening questions.

### References:

*UnitedHealthcare Children's Foundation Inc. -*

<http://www.uhccf.org/index.html>



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## On the Web: HashTip - Tips for Moms, by Moms

As a parent, it's understandable you want to give your children the best but with so many products and services available in the marketplace, the choices can be difficult. However, a referral from a friend or relative who has used a product or service may be helpful before you make that final purchase. Now, HashTip is here to help you with those confusing purchases.

### What is HashTip?

HashTip helps connect consumers by interests to share tips on children's products, services, and activities. Parents can add/share tips and create/follow TipBooks on HashTip for various categories. These tips can also be shared via Facebook and Twitter by adding the tag "#tip" in your status update or tweet.

If you are wondering if that new toy for your toddler is worth buying, check out [www.Hashtip.com](http://www.Hashtip.com) and read what other moms have to say about it.

### Reference:

HashTip- <http://www.hashtip.com/hashtip/dashboard.htm?methodToCall=show>

## News and Updates: Have you enrolled in VPK yet?

The Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program provides FREE prekindergarten education to children turning 4 years old by September 1. The program prepares children for continuing success in school and enhances their pre-reading, pre-math, language and social skills. Children who participate in high-quality VPK programs are more likely to succeed in school.

For more information on how to register for VPK, please visit [www.vpkhelp.org](http://www.vpkhelp.org) or visit one of the following locations:

**Naranja Neighborhood Service Center**

13955 S.W. 264 St.

Miami, FL 33032

Phone: 305-258-5471

**Frankie Shannon Rolle Neighborhood Service Center**

3750 South Dixie Highway

Miami, FL 33133

Phone: 305-694-3510

**Miami Gardens Neighborhood Center**

16405 N.W. 25 Ave. Room #101

Miami Gardens, FL 33054

Phone: 305-626-7969



## ReadingPals- An Early Literacy Initiative

Nearly a third of Florida's third graders attending public school cannot read at the minimally proficient levels. Sadly, those children are four times more likely to drop out of high school.

**What is ReadingPals?**

In an effort to ensure that more children are reading at grade level by the end of third grade, The Children's Movement of Florida and partners are excited to announce **ReadingPals** -- a three-year initiative focused on engaging, training and deploying volunteer "reading pals" in 10 Florida regions.

**Who is involved in ReadingPals?**

Partners include The Children's Movement, local United Ways, school districts, Women's Leadership Councils, Early Learning Coalitions, and Children's Services Councils among others. Together, the partners focus on improving the reading abilities of students from prekindergarten to third grade in lower-performing schools.

**Where is this initiative taking place?**

ReadingPals is being launched in 10 Florida regions through local United Ways, including Miami-Dade County.

**How can you get involved?**

Volunteers are needed in each of the 10 regions for one hour per week (for at least 25 weeks) to read in individual or small group settings. Volunteers will be trained and provided background screenings before entering the program. The one hour volunteers give each week will have an effect that lasts a lifetime.

To learn more about the ReadingPals program, please sign-up at:

<http://childrensmovementflorida.org/action/literacy/>, or email [john.knight@childrensmovementflorida.org](mailto:john.knight@childrensmovementflorida.org).



## Ask Dr. Hughes

Dear Dr. Hughes,

My 2-year-old son avoids wearing clothes at all costs! He takes them off just

minutes after putting them on. At first it was okay because he was at home with me, but he is going to start daycare soon and it's a battle every time we go out. Is this normal? What do you recommend to encourage him to keep his clothes on?

- Miami Springs Mom

Dear Miami Springs Mom,

Getting your son or daughter dressed can be a source of frustration for parents. It happens often, and it can be especially tough if your child is using clothing as his way of asserting his independence. For a 2-year-old, it is certainly normal that he does not particularly like wearing clothes, especially if he has spent most of his time at home in just a diaper, until now. Understanding what is appropriate to wear in different situations is actually a learned skill, usually taught to us by our families based on what is socially accepted in our culture.

If you would like your son to become more comfortable wearing clothes because he is about to start an early learning program soon, then I suggest you begin this process gradually. Work on wearing a onesie or romper (one piece of clothing, easy and quick to get on), and after he gets used to that, begin to add other items (socks, shoes) or separate pieces of clothing (a shirt and shorts). Use positive feedback when he cooperates. When he struggles against the clothes, also respond with encouragement: remind him that he can be just like someone he admires (Mom or Dad, a big sibling or cousin) if he wears his clothes, or that he will feel so proud when he wears this outfit to school, etc.

Go slowly - don't hurry him in getting dressed - and it may help to give him some choice in what he wears. For example, you could choose two outfits, then present them to him to make the final decision. He will end up wearing something you like, and feel more empowered because he chose it.

Remember that 2-year-olds will try to be independent and act only on their own desires, but the more you put clothes on him, the longer he will wear them, and soon your son will get used to wearing clothes all the time.

Good luck!

Dr. Hughes

*This column is not intended to be a solicitation of business or the furnishing of self-help advice. Readers are strongly urged to consult independent and qualified professionals before making any decisions. The views expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe.*

## ELC and You: President's Message



Dear Friends:

I want to wish you, your staff, parents, and especially children, a great first day of school. We are excited to begin another school year with you as a partner.

We realize how much you care and just how hard you work for our community's children. Thanks to your efforts, today we have more children than ever before attending a high-quality early care and education program.

We wish you the best for a productive 2012-13 school year. As always, please let me know what we can do to help you meet your goals. My e-mail address is [etorres@elcmdm.org](mailto:etorres@elcmdm.org).

All the best,

Evelio C. Torres

President & CEO, Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

## Local Events for the Whole Family!

Breast Milk Storage Guidelines Workshop

Hosted by Healthy Start Coalition's Breastfeeding Task Force  
Participants will learn tips for supporting breastfeeding mothers to continue providing breast milk to their babies after returning to work or school; and information related to proper storage and handling of human milk will be reviewed. Certificates will be provided to Certified Lactation Counselors (CLCs) as proof of education hours.

**Date:** Thursday, August 30

**Time:** 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

**Location:** Healthy Start Coalition of Miami-Dade, InterAmerican Plaza Building, 701 S.W. 27 Ave., Suite 1401 (14th Floor)

To attend this workshop, please register via the Breastfeeding Task Force website at [www.hscmd.org](http://www.hscmd.org), click on "Training Registration" and scroll down to the date of the meeting.

For more information, call 305-541-0210.

#### **Car Seat Inspections and Passenger Safety**

Training for parents/caregivers and service providers on how to properly install car seats and transport children safely in motor vehicles. Families in need of car seats, with defective or recalled seats, or with the wrong seat for their child will be offered a new car seat.

**Date:** Thursday, August 30

**Time:** 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

**Location:** Mailman Center, 1601 NW 12 Avenue, Miami, FL 33136

For more information, email Lyse Deus at [lyse@jhs-miami.org](mailto:lyse@jhs-miami.org) or visit [www.jhsmiami.org](http://www.jhsmiami.org).

#### **The Children's Trust Family Expo**

Enjoy a fun-filled day with hundreds of indoor exhibitors, special appearances by your favorite characters, and much more.

**Date:** Saturday, September 15, 2012

**Time:** 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

**Location:** Miami-Dade County Fair and Expo Center  
Coral Way and 112 Avenue  
Miami, FL

**Cost:** FREE

For more information, call 211 or visit [www.thechildrenstrust.org](http://www.thechildrenstrust.org).

### About the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring high-quality early care and education for children in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. Through a variety of affordable and innovative early education and voluntary prekindergarten programs, the Coalition serves more than 50,000 children ages birth to 5-years-old and their families. Founded in 2000, the Early Learning Coalition is among 31 similar organizations in the State of Florida established following the enactment of the School Readiness Act, which consolidated Florida's early learning services into one integrated program. For more information, visit [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org).

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