



## Linking Parents to Early Childhood Success February 2013

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with us!



Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe  
2555 Ponce de Leon Blvd. Suite 500, Coral Gables, FL 33134  
1100 Simonton Street Suite 1-204, Key West, FL 33040

### February Parent Link



### Celebrate Black History Month with Books and Activities

Black History Month is a time to recount amazing leaders and activists in our history. It is important to share these heroes with our children and celebrate a wonderful culture.

Here are a few children's books recommend by Reading Rockets:

- "A Chair for My Mother," by Vera Williams
- "Amazing Grace," by Mary Hoffman
- "My Daddy and I," by Eloise Greenfield
- "Fishing Day," by Andrea Pinkney

Remember, you don't have to buy these books, you can always go to your local library!

Other websites celebrating and embracing Black History Month include:

- PBS Parents, [Embracing Black History](#)
- National Geographic, [The Underground Railroad](#)
- Scholastic, [Culture and Change: Black History in America](#)

For more children's book titles and ideas for activities about Black History Month, visit [http://www.readingrockets.org/calendar/blackhistory/?utm\\_source=Twitter&utm\\_medium=Hootsuite&utm\\_campaign=RRSocialMedia](http://www.readingrockets.org/calendar/blackhistory/?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=Hootsuite&utm_campaign=RRSocialMedia).

## VPK 2013-2014 Enrollment is Open!

It's that time of year again! Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) registration has begun. If your child turns four (4) years of age before September 1, 2013, they may be eligible to enroll in VPK for the Summer 2013 or the 2013-2014 school year program.

Here are a few more details about the enrollment process:

- Proof of Florida Residency must be verified by a current and correct address.
- Bring a copy of one of the following items:
  - Valid Florida driver's license
  - Current utility bill (must have street address, city and zip code)
  - Rental lease agreement
- Proof of Child's Birth date, verified by one of the following items:
  - Birth certificate
  - Valid passport or certificate of child's arrival in the United States
  - Valid military dependent ID card
  - Immunization record indicating date of birth signed by a public health officer or licensed practicing physician

You must take these documents to one of the Miami-Dade County Eligibility Services offices. For a listing of these locations and more information on VPK, please visit <http://www.miamidade.gov/socialservices/voluntary-pre-k.asp>. You may also call 305-373-3521.

## ELCMDM On the Web: We are on Pinterest!

Have you visited our Pinterest lately? We have a variety of boards for all your early childhood interests, from books we like to family fun activities that don't require spending!

Follow us at [www.pinterest.com/ELCMDM](http://www.pinterest.com/ELCMDM)





## Ask Dr. Hughes!

Each month in Parent Link, Christine Hughes, Ph.D, a research and evaluation analyst for the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe will answer your questions about child development (from birth to 5 years old) on a variety of topics such as language, social skills, play, behavior, motor skills, learning habits, and more.

Please email your questions to [info@elcndm.org](mailto:info@elcndm.org) with Ask Dr. Hughes in the subject line. Also, include the city or location of your residence in Miami-Dade or Monroe County (e.g., Coconut Grove, Kendall, Key West). This information will be used instead of your name, example, "A mother in Miami Beach asked..."

Dr. Hughes earned her Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Miami, where she currently teaches part-time. Her research has focused on the development of at-risk infants and children in early intervention.

*The 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: A Message from Mr. Evelio Torres

Dear Friends:

To ensure that our [transition to the revised service delivery model](#) meets your expectations, we need your input on a number of important decisions. You can provide suggestions in a number of different ways.

Please join us at one of our upcoming Community Town Hall meetings to be held in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. You can also provide input electronically via our [info@elcndm.org](mailto:info@elcndm.org) e-mail address.

The details of our transition plan can be found on the main page of our website under the link [New Service Delivery Model - Job Fair @ The ELC](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

The Community Town Hall meetings will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on the following days:

### Monroe County

Venue: Burton Memorial Church  
Date: Wednesday, March 13  
Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Location: 93001 Overseas Hwy, MM 93, Tavernier, FL 33070

Venue: Early Learning Coalition (Monroe Office)  
Date: Thursday, March 14  
Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Location: 1100 Simonton Street, Key West, FL 33040

### Miami-Dade County

Venue: City of Miami Gardens  
Date: Monday, March 18  
Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Location: 1515 NW 167th St., Bldg. 5, Suite 200, Miami Gardens, FL 33169

Venue: Homestead Branch Library

Date: Wednesday, March 20

Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Location: 700 North Homestead Boulevard, Homestead, FL 33030

Venue: Early Learning Coalition (Miami-Dade Office)

Date: Thursday, March 21

Time: 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Location: 2555 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite 500, Coral Gables, FL 33134

Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

I remain at your service,

Evelio Torres



## The Evaluation and Individual Education Plan Process

*From the Desk of Champagne Girtten, Project Director, Children's Legal Advocacy, Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc.*

If parents think their child needs special educational services at any point in their education, they should request it in writing at the school and sign the consent form for the child to be tested. The school district has 60 school days to either conduct the evaluation or tell you in writing that they do not think your child needs one. If this 60-day deadline is not met or your child is denied an evaluation and you believe the denial is wrong, you have the right to request a due process hearing, a court hearing to discuss whether your child's rights under the law were violated. You should file it immediately and contact an attorney for assistance.

After the evaluation is complete (including hearing, speech, social history and psychological and academic testing), the School Support Team (SST) will meet to discuss whether the child is eligible for special education. Parents should attend as well. If the SST team decides that your child is eligible for special education, they will meet to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP). It is very important that you attend this meeting. The IEP contains the specific educational and behavioral needs of your child and the goals and objectives that the school will be working on with your child over the next year. It is a contract between you and the school. The goals should be specific, measurable and attainable, and should relate to your child's specific needs. You should review the IEP if you are unsure of it, before you sign it. If there are problems with the IEP at any time, if it is not being followed, or if anything changes, you can request a new IEP be developed. You can also file for due process or contact an attorney. A good IEP makes sure that students with disabilities receive the necessary support and services for the free and appropriate education they are entitled to under the law.

*This section of the Parent Link is designed to inform and remind providers and parents of their legal rights regarding the educational needs of their children. It is provided by the Children's Legal Advocacy Project at Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc., a private, not-for-profit law firm that provides free civil legal services to the low-income populations in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.*



## Local Events for the Family!

The Miami-Dade Public Library System is hosting the 13th Annual Art of Storytelling. There's something for all tastes and ages going on at a branch near you!

**When:** Tuesday, February 5, to Saturday, April 27

**Time and location:** Check with your local library branch for time of events and locations.

**Cost:** FREE

Visit the website for more information: <http://www.mdpls.org/aos/2013/aosAbout.asp>.

### Dr. Seuss' 109th Birthday Celebration

Join the Miami Children's Museum as they celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday!

**When:** Friday, March 1

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

**Where:** Miami Children's Museum

980 Macarthur Causeway

Miami, FL 33132

**Cost:** FREE to the public through the generous support of The Children's Trust.

For more information, visit [www.miamichildrensmuseum.org](http://www.miamichildrensmuseum.org).

### Pop Up Park Parent Event and Health Fair- Opa-Locka

Temporary parks with recreational activities, art and cultural programs, and health fair

**When:** Saturday, March 16

**Time:** 12 p.m.

**Where:** Intersection of Sames Street and Washington Avenue,

Opa-Locka, FL 33054

**Cost:** FREE

For more information, contact [chris@olcdc.org](mailto:chris@olcdc.org).



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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*As laws, details and personal situations vary from person to person and state to state, articles and content contained in the newsletter are not and cannot be used as a substitute for legal, parental, health, mental health, or any other advice.*

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