



Linking Parents to Early Childhood Success March 2013

Connect
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

March Parent Link



Healthy Children: Nutrition information for your two-year-old

By the age of two, your toddler wants to be a star in the family. He will try to copy everything and everyone in the household, eating habits included. It is important to remember that although your two-year-old can now grab a spoon and feed himself, there are some foods that can still be a choking hazard to him. The [Healthy Children website](#) provides a list of foods your two-year-old should eat and should avoid (along with other great topics for families).

Here are a few of the items your toddler should be very careful with:

- Whole raw carrots
- Spoonfuls of peanut butter
- Marshmallows
- Whole grapes
- Raw celery

For a complete listing and for other great resources for parents, please visit the article by clicking [here](#).



Step Up for Students Scholarship

A scholarship for your child? Florida has help for schoolchildren who are low-income, in foster care or homeless. Today, more than 50,000 low-income students in Florida are receiving a Step Up For Students Scholarship. Could your child be next?

Many families still don't know this option exists, but Florida has the nation's largest K-12 scholarship program giving low-income families the ability to choose the school that best meets their children's needs. Families who qualify for the free or reduced-price school lunch program, children who are in foster care or who are homeless, could be eligible.

Applications for the 2013-14 school year have started. Renewal families were invited to start applying early February and new families in early March. Please visit www.StepUpForStudents.org to apply. To learn more, please visit www.StepUpForStudents.org, call 877-735-7837 or email info@sufs.org.

On the Web: Little D's Nutrition Expedition

Little D's Nutrition Expedition games are designed to identify and classify foods into the five food groups and tell you about their health benefits. You and your little one will enjoy playing these FREE games, along with other nutritional activities [online!](#)

▼ Little D's Nutrition Expedition® Games

Little D's Nutrition Expedition® nutrition program is designed for lower elementary students. Though students of all ages can enjoy playing Little D the Dragon's games, they are designed to reinforce major objectives of this classroom program. These include identifying and classifying of foods into the Five Food Groups and identifying the health benefit of each food group.



Help Little D collect as many foods as he can on his way to the picnic! [play game now >](#)



Challenge yourself to match falling foods fast! [play game now >](#)



Race against time to collect food for the Banquet! [play game now >](#)

ELC and You: Information about our Service Transition

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

As you may already know, effective **July 1**, the Early Learning Coalition will be operating under a new service delivery model. This means we will be your **one stop** for all VPK and School Readiness early childhood services.

To better serve you, we will have four new service centers across Miami-Dade and three service centers in Monroe. Our goal is to give you easy access to our staff and our services, including:

- School Readiness eligibility and redetermination
- VPK registration
- Child Care Resource & Referral

The service centers will be located across each county to ensure you can visit at your convenience. Please be on the lookout in the coming months for more information about these centers, including locations and new extended hours.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, we want to hear from you. Please send your inquiries to info@elcmdm.org.

Regards,

Evelio Torres and the ELC Team



Legal Services: Response to Intervention (RTI) Should Not Delay Evaluations

Many children have problems achieving grade-level results in learning or have behavioral problems that interfere with their learning. Federal laws on education, like the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), offer some guidance on when children should be evaluated for special education, but we often encounter children who are not being properly identified.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a program used to provide targeted learning and behavior strategies to children who are struggling. However, it should not be used to delay an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education. This can be especially damaging for children with severe learning or behavioral disabilities.

Every child is entitled to free and appropriate public education, regardless of RTI or other intervention programs at the school. If you feel that your child has a learning disability or behavioral problem that is not being helped by the interventions at the school, you have the right to request an evaluation. If the school tries to delay the evaluation, you should file a due process request and seek the help of an attorney right away.



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@elcmdm.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.



Local Events for the Family!

An Easter Family Picnic

Have fun with the whole family as you hunt for Easter eggs, play games and do arts and crafts.

When: Saturday, March 30
Time: 1 p.m.
Where: Rolling Oaks Park
18701 N.W. 17 Ct.
Miami Gardens, FL 33056
Cost: FREE

Orange Bowl Health and Wellness Fair
Local community organizations join together for a day of health and wellness.

When: Saturday, April 6
Time: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Where: 100 Level/Club House and Field
2269 N.W. 199 St.
Miami Gardens, FL 33056
Cost: FREE

For more information, email cassie@peoplegrowers.com.

Day of the Young Child: Planting Seeds for the Future
Join us, Miami-Dade College, The Children's Trust and other local partners in celebrating Day of the Young Child. Find creative activities, story telling and Earth Day fun for the whole family.

When: Saturday, April 20
Time: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Where: MDC Homestead Campus Central Lawn
500 College Terrace
Homestead, FL 33030
Cost: FREE

For more information, call 305-237-5134 or 305-237-1632.



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.

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.

[Forward this email](#)



This email was sent to cvila@elcmdm.org by info@elcmdm.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).
Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe | 2555 Ponce de Leon Boulevard | Suite 500 | Coral Gables | FL | 33134