

HAPPY PROVIDER APPRECIATION WEEK!



Dr. Scott Fritz
CEO, Early Learning
Coalition of Orange County

Provider Appreciation Week takes place during the first week of May.

But we think it should be YEAR-ROUND!

THANK YOU for making a lasting difference in the lives of our young learners.

Your care and support help children every day!

Click [HERE](#) to watch the video with **ELCOC CEO Dr. Scott Fritz!**

EARLY LEARNING STUDENTS RECEIVE DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

Setting children up for educational success starts with identifying developmental needs early. **Thank you to all the childcare providers** who notified families to take part in "Pathways to Progress: Early Childhood Development Day".



ELCOC partnered with **AdventHealth** and **Orange County Public Schools** to offer free developmental screenings for early learning students in Orange County.

Children received **play-based screenings in hearing, speech, and motor skills**. Families then received guidance and support for next steps.

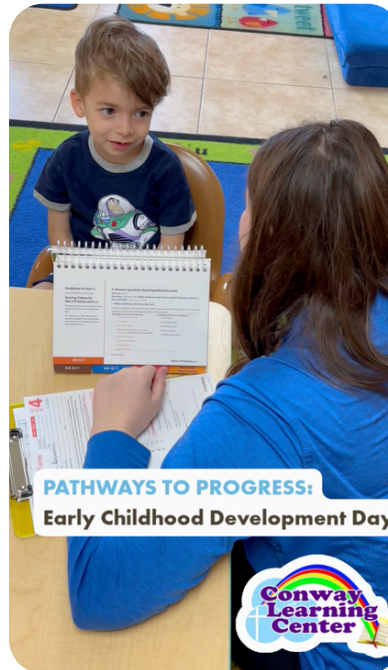
Three sessions were held.

Check out the list of participating childcare providers on next page!

Session 1: March 28 at Conway Learning Center

Session 2: April 25 at First Step Kids Academy

Session 3: May 2 at West Lakes Early Learning Center



Pathways to Progress: Early Childhood Development Day PARTICIPATING CHILDCARE PROVIDERS

Session 1, March 28 at Conway Learning Center

Aunt Delores' Child Care Center
Conway Learning Center #1
Conway Learning Center #2
Journey Early Learning Center
Ladybird Academy Lake Underhill
Ladybird Academy Wyndham Lakes
Potter's House Academy and Preschool Center
Primrose School of Lake Nona
Treehouse Educational Center ORL
Trinity Child Development Center

Session 2, April 25 at First Step Kids Academy

All Saints School
Creative World at Avalon Park
Creative World School UCF
Good Shepherd Early Childhood Educational Center
Kids R Kids Avalon Park
O2B Kids Avalon Park
Primrose School at Avalon Park
Starchild Academy – Waterford Lakes

Session 3, May 2 at West Lakes Early Learning Center

Amazing Explorers Academy Hamlin
Bethany Learning Daycare
Green Day Early Learning Center
Good Homes Preschool
Kidz Zone Learning Academy
Kiddie Academy of Winter Garden
Kiddie Academy of Oakland
Lady Bird Academy of Winter Garden
Little Angels Childcare
Maitland Community Preschool
Piaget Academy Inc.
Primrose of Ocoee
Roll With It Daycare
Storybook School Oak Ridge
The Learning Experience of Horizon West
Treasure Kids Academy
Trinity Christian School
Today's Kids Day Care Center
TT's Mentoring and Development Services

BACKPACKS TO SUPPORT SUMMER LEARNING



ELCOC staffers handed out **9,000 backpacks** filled with summer learning materials for early learning students!

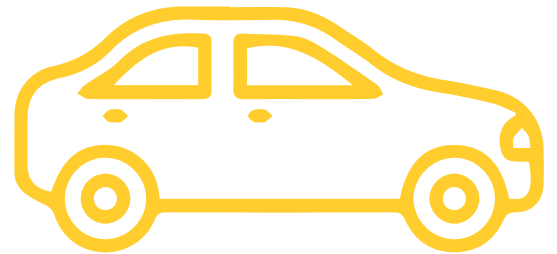
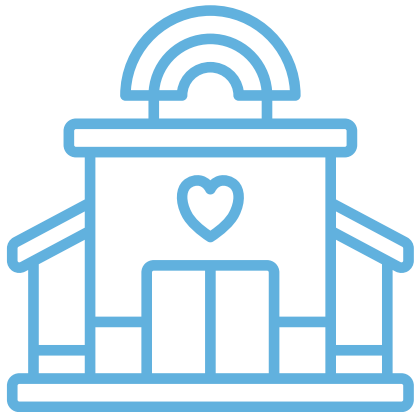
Childcare providers started picking up the backpacks at ELCOC headquarters on April 23.

Each backpack includes hands-on materials from **Lakeshore Learning**, a special ELCOC edition of Highlights magazine from **Highlights Early Learning**, and **MarcoPolo Learning** access to MarcoPolo World School: Transition to Kindergarten and Beyond, an app-based program designed to support kindergarten success.



IMPORTANT REMINDER

All providers are **required** to maintain active liability insurance and automobile insurance if transporting children, in accordance with state requirements.



If there is any lapse in coverage, we are required to disallow reimbursements for services provided during the period in which insurance was not in place.



DIVISION OF
Early Learning

LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.

WHAT'S NEXT

2026–2027 School Readiness (SR) Match Program:

Due to changes in this year's state budget, non-federal match funding was not included. **As a result, the SR Match Program will not be available for the 2026–2027 program year.**

This change is based on state-level decisions and is not determined locally by ELCOC. The State of Florida did not include non-federal match funding in the approved budget, and under Department of Early Learning (DEL) guidelines, the program cannot be offered without that funding in place. **As a result, ELCOC cannot operate the program this year or accept applications.** This decision is based on state-level funding and is outside of ELCOC's control.

If you have employees currently participating in the 2025–2026 SR Match Program, please note that funding will end on June 30, 2026. We will follow up separately with any important next steps related to the closeout of this program cycle.



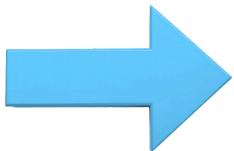
Important VPK FAST PM3 Testing Reminder:

VPK PM3 testing is coming to an end. It is critical that FAST PM3 is administered during VPK instructional hours and within the established testing window to avoid invalid scores and to ensure all scores count toward VPK program designation calculations.



School Readiness (SR) Contract Workshop:

A **virtual SR contract workshop** will be held on **May 13 at 4:00 p.m.** for providers preparing for the upcoming 2026-2027 contract year. **Watch your email for the link!**



New Contract Workshop Requirement for 2026–2027:

Beginning with the 2026–2027 contract year, **providers will be required to complete a contract workshop annually** in order to be eligible for both School Readiness (SR) and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) contracts.

Provider Webinar:**2026-2027 Quality Initiatives**

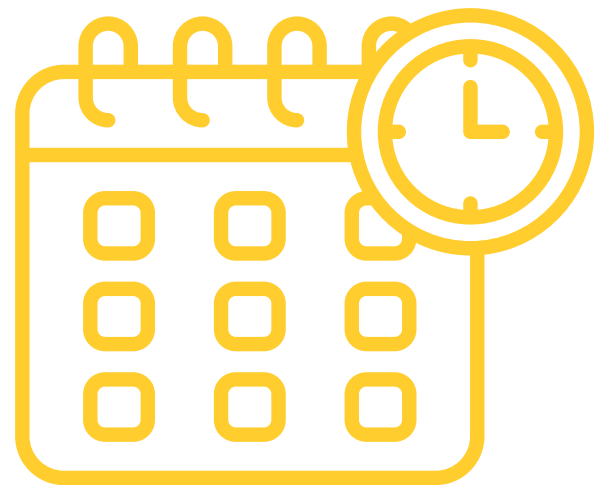
Hear from guest speakers as they unveil new resources and supports available to help elevate your program and enhance quality.

May 28 from 1 p.m. to 2:30 pm

Click [HERE](#) to register!

WHAT'S NEXT

Click [HERE](#) to review the **ELCOC Calendar of Events**.

**Financial Webinar:****Understanding School Readiness (SR) Payments:
Certificates, Co-Pays, and Calculating Family Costs**

Hear guest speakers explain everything you need to know about SR payments.

June 18 from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Watch your email for the registration link!





Family Services Event

SLIDE INTO SUMMER SAFARI

 Let's go on an exploration!

Saturday, May 16, 2026
12pm to 2pm

Grand Avenue Neighborhood Center
800 Grand Street Orlando, FL 32805



- Free Food and Activities
- Free Educational toys for **FIRST 300 families with children, infants to 5 years old**

EVENT SPONSORS & PARTNERS



#growingfamilyengagement

This program is funded in full or in part by Orange County, Florida.

Click **HERE** for Spanish & Creole Flyer

SUMMER >>> **BRIDGE**

for Eligible VPK Completers

About >>

This program offers targeted support, emphasizing early literacy instruction, to assist eligible VPK students in developing the skills necessary for kindergarten success. We encourage you to enroll promptly.

June 2, 2026 – July 21, 2026

8:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Participating Schools >>

Azalea Park Elementary
Lakeville Elementary
Washington Shores PLC
Water Spring Elementary
Wetherbee Elementary

Eligibility >>

Children must have scored below the 25th percentile on the PM3 FAST assessment or were unable to take the assessment. Parents must provide documentation of eligibility, either an assessment report or a letter from the VPK provider indicating non-participation.

Children scoring below the 30th percentile may also be considered, pending availability.

Closures >>

- Closed every Friday
- Closed the week of June 29 – July 3



OC PS Orange County
Public Schools

Click **HERE** for Spanish & Creole Flyer

Florida VPK and Florida Prepaid Unite

BIG SAVINGS FOR BRIGHT FUTURES!

Start Early. Save More.

- ✓ Applying to participate in Florida's VPK program is a great beginning to investing in your child's future!

Not only is VPK proven to help your child enter Kindergarten confident and ready to learn, but it also opens the door to valuable financial education opportunities that can support your family's future.

- Apply for VPK and receive a \$100 bonus to start saving for future education costs.
- Apply for VPK and be entered for a chance to win a \$1,000 college scholarship.

- ✓ Families who opt in to either opportunity are provided additional information about the options available through Florida Prepaid.



Go to the website for more information
on [Florida Prepaid College Savings Plans](https://myfloridaprepaid.com).
(myfloridaprepaid.com)

Click **HERE** for more information

Professional Development for Child Care Teachers

Take classes with
I4EL: The Institute for Early Learning
to earn your
Child Development Associate (CDA) credential



WE OFFER:

- Self-Paced Courses
- Live Virtual & In-Person Training
- Career Pathway Support
- Scholarship Guidance

**Registration for our CDA July Cohort
opens May 19!**



CLICK [HERE](#)
to create an **ACCOUNT**
and get **EMAIL UPDATES**
so you remember to register!

For more info, EMAIL gguzman@elcoc.org

The Institute 4 Early Learning Presents: Self-Paced Conscious Discipline & Other Best Practices for Composure

Create a **CALMER CLASSROOM**
by taking a **FREE Self-Paced COURSE**

- Learn strategies to support composure and self-regulation in both children and adults
- Watch Video Presentations at your own pace
- Participants will earn 8 In-Service Hours upon successful completion



VIRTUAL COURSE available now!
TO REGISTER: Click the LINK

IN-PERSON COURSE

- Coming up Sat. June 6 & 13
at ELCOC Headquarters.
- Stay Tuned for
Registration Details!



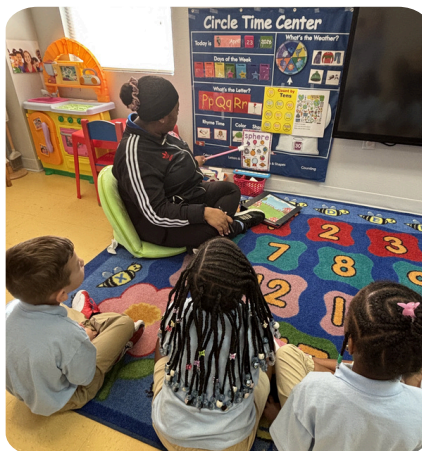
**Conscious
Discipline[®]**



We're excited to feature
Apple Academy led by **Director Rosa Vargas**
at 1400 Jordan Avenue in Orlando.

Fast Facts:
60 Children Enrolled
13 Staff Members

[Click HERE](#)
To learn more about
Apple Academy





How do you balance your administrative responsibilities while still staying connected with your children, staff, and parents? What STRATEGIES do you practice?

I make time each day to be present in classrooms, hallways, and the playground. Short but meaningful interactions, greeting children and parents by name, and checking in with the teachers. I use multiple communication channels like newsletters, emails, and bulletin boards to keep parents and staff informed. At Apple Academy, we have an open-door policy. Teachers know they can come to me with questions, concerns, or ideas at any time. I listen respectfully and follow up so they know their voices matter.

Can you share a SUCCESS STORY on how you improved your childcare center for children and their families?

When I began focusing on improving our childcare center, my goal was to create an environment where children and families felt valued. Through parent feedback, staff discussions, and classroom observations, I noticed 3 areas for more improvement: communication, consistency in classroom practices, and stronger emotional support for children.

The first action I took was to introduce weekly classroom updates, monthly newsletters, and more parent conferences. Second: teachers and staff received training in Developmentally Appropriate Practice and positive behavior guidance.

Our success came from putting relationships first between children, teachers, and families. When a childcare academy leads with care, consistency, and collaboration, everyone benefits.

Can you share how your teachers make CIRCLE TIME special?

What makes our circle time truly special is the intention and care our teachers bring each day. They understand that circle time is not just a routine; it is a moment to build community, foster learning, and strengthen relationships. When our children look forward to circle time and feel excited to participate, we know we are doing something right.

Regularly, I join circle time with the staff and children, not just for observations but to support, assist, and engage.

VPK GRADUATION PHOTOS NEEDED



Is your child care center hosting a **VPK Graduation ceremony?**

We would love to share photos of the graduating students in our upcoming PROVIDER Post Newsletter!

Please **EMAIL PHOTOS** to Erin Kent at **ekent@elcoc.org** so they can be included.

Congratulations VPK Graduates!

PARENT NEWSLETTER



DIVISION OF
Early Learning
LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.



Parents' Pages

The Official Newsletter of the Division of Early Learning

MAY 2026
VOLUME 12
ISSUE 5

Click **HERE** for Parent Newsletter