

VPK 2026-2027: Time to Get Started!

If you're planning to offer **VPK for the 2026–2027 program year**, now is the **perfect time** to get your **contract and application** completed so everything is in place for a smooth start.

STEP ONE: Start with Your VPK Contract

Contracts have already been initiated

Take a few minutes to:

- Review your contract
- Sign it and include your title
- Submit it for certification



While you're there, don't forget to:

- Let us know if you'd like to receive an advance payment
- Select if you plan to offer Summer VPK 2027

STEP TWO: Your VPK Application



Once your contract is submitted, go ahead and **start your VPK application**. Getting this done early helps avoid last-minute delays.

HELPFUL REMINDERS

Getting your contract and application completed early:

- Keeps you on track for approval
- Helps ensure compliance
- Sets your program up for success

HOURS & DATES

- Florida's School-Year Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) = 540 instructional hours
- Programs may begin on or after August 11, 2026
- Programs must end by June 30, 2027

If you have any questions, your Provider Relations Specialist is here to help!

NEW RESOURCE FOR STAFFING

A new resource to help keep classrooms fully staffed!

The Early Learning Coalition of Orange County is partnering with **Tandem-Child Care Staffing**, a platform that connects childcare centers with qualified substitute teachers when they need them most. While participating providers will pay the substitute staff they hire, **the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County** will cover the annual Tandem subscription fee. This tool will make it easier for childcare centers to access reliable staffing support while staying focused on serving children and families.



 **ELC Orange's Substitute Pool**
Powered by  tandem

• NOW LIVE FOR ELC-CONTRACTED PROVIDERS IN ORANGE COUNTY

Book a compliant substitute in three easy steps.

1 

Create a free profile

It takes just a minute at
www.join-tandem.com.



2 

Post your first job

Tell us the role, schedule, and requirements.



3 

Get a compliant sub booked

On-demand, on the days you need.

 **3 accredited trainings**
free for staff

 **Quarterly webinars**
on best practices

 **Fee-free access**
to Tandem



Scan to join

Click **HERE** to
sign up and
create a profile

IMPORTANT REMINDER

All providers are **required by state mandates** to maintain liability insurance and automobile insurance if transporting children.



If there is any lapse in coverage, the Early Learning Coalition is required to withhold reimbursements for services provided during the period of no insurance coverage.



DIVISION OF
Early Learning
LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.

WHAT'S NEXT**STAFF TRAINING DAY**

The Early Learning Coalition is proud to support your program's professional development on your **Staff Training Day**.

This is known as the **13th day** in your **Provider Contract**.

Click **HERE** to select your preferred date.

Friday August 7, 2026

In-Person:
Conscious Discipline

Tuesday Sept. 8 2026

Live Virtual:
PD Training & Self Paced

Monday Oct. 12 2026

In-Person:
Scribbles Matter

Monday Jan. 25, 2027

Virtual:
Conscious Discipline

Friday March 12, 2027

Live Virtual:
PD Training & Self Paced

Friday April 23, 2027

In-Person:
Conscious Discipline
& Infant/Toddler Training



Thank you for your commitment to high-quality early childhood education in Orange County!

For more info, please contact:

Greter Guzman at gguzman@elcoc.org

Xiomarys Vazquez at xvazquez@elcoc.org

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY



2026 Pre-K Interaction Essentials for Educators

11 Week Virtual Training Workshop

August 4, 2026 to October 21, 2026

Interaction Essentials for Educators focuses on the effective interactions described and measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

In this Virtual Training workshop, teachers will:

- Strengthen understanding of how effective interactions help connect, engage, and inspire learning
- Build intentional interaction habits to improve educational outcomes
- Participate in a community of educators to share challenges, strategies, and successes
- Participants will earn 24 in-service hours and 2.4 CEUs

***To obtain CEUs, you must attend all sessions.

Click [HERE](#) to register

\$100 Registration Fee

Space is limited up to 40 participants



TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

ONLINE Self-Paced Training in English and Spanish

Teachstone® self-paced options are designed for providers who prefer flexible, independent professional learning pathways. Providers selecting these options will **register directly through Teachstone®** and will be responsible for all registration fees, course costs, and associated materials.

CLASS® 2nd Edition: Introduction to Interactions for Educators

Click [HERE](#) to register

\$85

0.6 CEUs

Empower educators with the tools and knowledge to be a champion of CLASS in their organization. This estimated 6-hour self-paced online course is designed to help educators gain confidence and understanding in the CLASS observation process while unlocking the transformative potential of educator-child interactions in their daily practice. Get ready to explore the transformative power of CLASS, so every child thrives!

A CLASS® Primer for Teachers Online Course

Click [HERE](#) to register

\$55

0.3 CEUs

A CLASS® Primer for Teachers is an online course that introduces teachers to understanding why interactions matter, the purpose of the CLASS® Tool and CLASS® observations, and introduces teachers to the frameworks for the selected age level.

CLASS® Overview for Leaders

Click [HERE](#) to register

\$55

Discover the incredible impact of educator-child interactions and kickstart your CLASS implementation journey with CLASS Overview for Leaders. In just 2 hours, you'll explore the CLASS tool and see how fostering educator-child interactions drives continuous quality improvement in your program.



DISCLAIMER

Pricing, course availability, materials, and training structures are based on current Teachstone offerings available as of May 2026 and are subject to change without notice. All courses and materials are provided directly through Teachstone.



SHOW US YOUR STELLA SPIRIT!

Win the chance to have Stella the Star visit your Classroom!



EARLY LEARNING COALITION
OF ORANGE COUNTY

Our Chief Brightness Officer has her very own book, and we want to celebrate with you! Early Learning Coalition of Orange County-affiliated Child Care Providers are invited to participate in the Stella Spirit Contest by showing us how your classroom shines with Stella Spirit!



HOW TO ENTER

Get creative and snap a photo of your class showing off their Stella Spirit! **EXAMPLE:** Students holding paper stars, Students holding their favorite book. Let your creativity shine!

CONTEST DETAILS

Email your photos to: Stella@elcoc.org

Photo Submission Deadline: Tuesday, August 25 at 12:00 PM

ELCOC will select the winners based on creativity!



WINNING CLASSROOMS WILL RECEIVE

- A special Storytime with Stella the Star
- Visits will be scheduled by the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County starting in September and continuing throughout the 2026–2027 school year
- Multiple copies of Stella's new book to add to your classroom library

Good Luck! We can't wait to see your Stella Spirit shine!

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We're excited to feature
**Phoenix Tree Educational Foundation,
Inc. dba Deeper Root Academy**
led by **Director Dr. Angela Kennedy**
at 8001 Silver Star Road in Orlando.

Fast Facts:
23 Children Enrolled
4 Staff Members

[Click HERE](#)
to see
Facebook Page

[Click HERE](#)
to see
the website





Answers provided by
Founder Director
Dr. Angela Kennedy



What are your FAVORITE WAYS to keep children engaged, focused, and excited about learning each day?

Positive reinforcement, clear expectations, and opportunities for students to collaborate and share their ideas help maintain focus and enthusiasm. **Most importantly, we strive to create classroom environments where children are curious, encouraged to ask questions, and excited to discover something new every day.** In addition, faith is at the core of our belief. We enjoy integrating character development and biblical principles into daily learning when appropriate, helping students grow academically, socially, and spiritually while fostering a love for learning.

Can you share a SUCCESS STORY where a creative activity helped children learn a new skill?

We have been teaching our infants and toddlers numbers in both English and Spanish. The children love singing songs, dancing, and moving to music while they learn. To make the lessons more interactive, we recently introduced whiteboards during our number activities. **To our amazement, the children were not only able to identify the numbers, but one of our toddlers picked up a whiteboard and attempted to write them. He successfully wrote three numbers on his own!**



It was an exciting moment that showed us how creative, hands-on learning can help children build confidence and develop new skills.

Caring for children takes energy. What SELF-CARE practices help you and your teachers stay at your best?

As a leader, I encourage teachers to practice self-care by maintaining a healthy work-life balance, supporting one another as a team, celebrating successes, and communicating openly when they need assistance.

I also believe in creating a positive work environment where staff feel appreciated, respected, and supported. When teachers are cared for and refreshed, they are better equipped to create nurturing, engaging experiences for children.

Teacher of the Month NOMINATIONS NEEDED!

We are proud to recognize the amazing teachers making a difference in your child care centers!

We are **accepting nominations** right now for the **Early Learning Coalition of Orange County *Teacher of the Month*** for the 2026/2027 school year!

Winning teachers receive a personalized certificate and a partner-donated gift during surprise visits. Each Teacher of the Month WINNER is eligible for the **Early Learning Coalition of Orange County 2027 *Teacher of the Year Award*** presented in June 2027!

Click [HERE](#) to nominate the **BEST** teachers at your child care center!



PARENT NEWSLETTER



Parents' Pages

The Official Newsletter of the Division of Early Learning

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Click **HERE** for JULY Parent Newsletter