EARLY LEARNING COALITION
OF ORANGE COUNTY

NOVEMBER 2026
Provider Newsletter



COACHING CORNER

Practical, easy-to-implement coaching tips that providers and teachers can use in their classrooms.





NOVEMBER COACH

Edilka Ruhlman Moya
Provider Services Specialist
Early Learning Coalition of Orange County

Small Moments, Meaningful Connections

This November, focus on making everyday interactions more intentional! Whether you're caring for infants, supporting toddlers, or guiding Pre-K learners, small moments can make a big difference.

Try this CLASS-aligned tip: Pause, connect, and extend!

Follow children's cues, respond with warmth, and build on their communication.

- With infants, engage in back-and-forth interactions.
- With toddlers, offer choices and encourage language.
- With Pre-K children, ask open-ended questions that inspire them to explain their thinking.

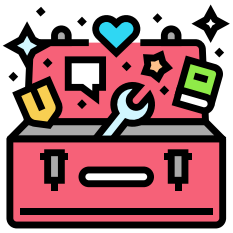
Remember, meaningful interactions don't require extra activities, just **intentional moments of connection** throughout the day!

Reflection Question: How can you turn one everyday routine into an opportunity for meaningful interaction this month?

Wishing you well,
Edilka

BRAND NEW

Social-Emotional and Behavior Support Toolbox





June Matthews, LCSW
Early Childhood Mental Health Coordinator
Early Learning Coalition of Orange County

BRAND NEW

A Calm Classroom Starts with a Calm Teacher

When challenging behavior happens in the classroom, an adult's first impulse is usually to focus on the child and correct the behavior. A more effective first step in behavior management is for the adult to check their own emotional state before addressing the challenging behavior. These few extra seconds make a big difference in a difficult situation!

Children look to the adults around them for cues about safety, emotional regulation, and how to respond to stress. When educators react with frustration, urgency, or anger, children's challenging behaviors are likely to increase.

On the other hand, a calm and composed adult can help children regain a sense of safety, which leads to better self-control and problem-solving skills. An adult's calm is contagious. **Adults must regulate their own emotions before they can help children regulate their emotions and behaviors.**

Adults who remain calm during challenging moments can respond to challenging behavior more effectively. They have more positive relationships with children, and the classroom environment feels more emotionally safe.

Try These Calming Strategies Before Addressing Challenging Behaviors

- Pause and breathe. Take one to three slow, deep breaths before responding
- Notice your body. Relax tense shoulders, unclench your jaw, and soften your facial expression.
- Use positive self-talk. Remind yourself, "This child is having a hard time, not giving me a hard time".
- Connect before correcting. Approach the child with calmness and understanding that this is hard for them. Show empathy and be present. When they feel connected and calmer, you can then solve problems or teach expectations.

Promoting Family Engagement in Early Learning Programs

November is Florida Family Engagement in Education Month!

DIVISION OF Early Learning
LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.

Family engagement plays a vital role in high-quality early learning. When families are actively involved, children experience deeper connections with educators and smoother transitions into school settings.



Build Trusting Relationships with Families

- **Welcome:** Create an environment that warmly greets families and keep an open-door policy.
- **Communicate:** Share weekly newsletters and use families' preferred languages when possible.
- **Celebrate Family Connections:** Display banners and signage and showcase family-centered activities.
- **Host Family Fun Nights:** Plan themed evenings with games, crafts or movies.

Empower Families as Partners in Learning

- **Encourage Volunteer Involvement:** Spotlight family events and meaningful involvement on your website and social media.
- **Provide Flexible and Responsive Support:** Offer evening or weekend events to fit different schedules.

Together, we create brighter *futures for every child.*

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LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.

#familyengagement

CCR&R
Child Care Resources and Referral

Be sure to **follow our Social Media channels** all month long for fun ideas to help parents and caregivers boost learning at home.

Facebook
Instagram
LinkedIn
X





MarcoPolo Learning

Elevate Teaching & Boost Family Engagement with MarcoPolo For Educators

An innovative, digital platform to make your planning easier, engage children in new fun ways, and supercharge family engagement

MarcoPolo Educators

For Teachers

An educator-platform with award-winning digital content that elevates teaching

- A library 1,200+ videos that are high-quality, research-based, and developmentally appropriate for early childhood
- Rich resources such as Educator Guides, Photocards, and Printables with embedded professional development
- Differentiated instruction & content in English, Spanish, and a Modified version to support diverse learning needs



MarcoPolo Families

For Families

A child-facing app that connects school-to-home and provides extensive access to more learning opportunities

- Family engagement activities designed to empower caregiver-child conversations and enhance learning
- Contextualized learning games that build foundational literacy, math, and social emotional skills
- Developmentally appropriate videos that spark curiosity and support 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and more



Click here for more information

Questions? Please contact Christine@marcopololearning.com

Gentle Reminder: Liability Insurance Requirements

ELCOC reminds all School Readiness (SR) and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) providers of the importance of maintaining **continuous liability insurance coverage throughout the contract period**, including weekends, holidays, and facility closures.

Providers must maintain a **minimum of $100,000 per occurrence and $300,000 in aggregate coverage**, in accordance with applicable contractual requirements.

To help prevent coverage lapses and maintain compliance, please monitor your policy expiration dates, renew coverage before expiration, and promptly submit updated insurance documentation to ELCOC.

Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to compliance!



Keep Contact Info Current: OCTOBER GENTLE REMINDER

Please make sure your phone number and email address are current in your provider profile.
This ensures you continue receiving important updates, announcements, and communications from the Coalition.

If your contact information changes, remember to update your profile promptly so you don't miss any important information.
Thank you for helping us stay connected!

GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION
Thankfulness for Others



You can **enhance the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)** at your childcare center by using the **Highlights Early Learning KINDNESS CONNECTIONS bundle** in your lesson plans!

The PURPLE Preschool Enrichment Box contains **10 different lesson plans.**

Highlights Early Learning

KINDNESS CONNECTIONS:
Resources to support your lessons



1. Preschool Enrichment Box with detailed lesson plans
2. Teacher Portfolio
3. Student Journals
4. Several Books

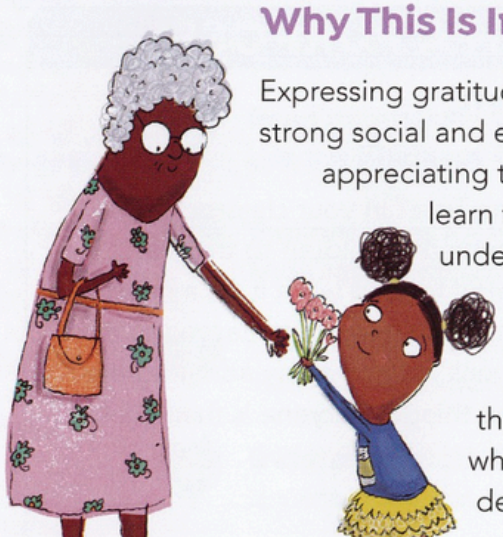
Each month, we will explore 1 lesson plan to showcase how your teachers can help students develop **kindness, empathy, and strong social skills** at your childcare center.



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Highlights Early Learning



Why This Is Important Developmentally

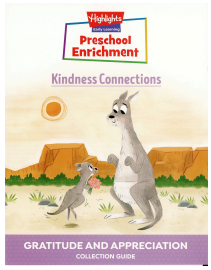
Expressing gratitude toward others helps children develop strong social and emotional skills. By recognizing and appreciating the people who support them, children learn to build positive relationships and understand the importance of kindness and reciprocity. This practice fosters empathy, enhances their ability to express emotions, and strengthens their sense of connection and community, which are crucial for their overall social development.

November Deep Dive: Steps for Success
GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

1. **Open the PURPLE Preschool Enrichment Box** and pull the GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION file.



2. **Open the COLLECTION GUIDE** booklet and read about engagement learning ideas!



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Circle Time Connections

Engage the children in a discussion about gratitude by reading "Grandma's Letter" during circle time and discussing the importance of thanking the special people in our lives. Then, help the children brainstorm who they want to thank and guide them in creating their own thank-you notes or pictures. This activity fosters a sense of community and encourages the children to express their appreciation in a supportive group setting.



Learning Lab Links

Creativity

Encourage artistic expression by having the children decorate their thank-you letters with stampers and stickers.

Design & Build

Challenge the children to build a small mailbox or post office using blocks, integrating the theme of communication and gratitude into their play.

Childcare Provider Spotlight

We're excited to feature
Golden Bear Academy
led by **Director Lorena Becerra**
at 421 S. Goldenrod Road in Orlando



Fast Facts:
161 Children Enrolled
27 Staff Members

Facebook
Instagram

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

Children are naturally curious, so we try to turn everyday lessons into opportunities to play, explore, ask questions, and make their own choices. Whether that is bringing a story to life with puppets, doing messy art projects, or heading outside for a quick sensory search, connecting activities to things they already love keeps them eager to learn. **We also pay close attention to their energy levels, using silly dance breaks or quiet breathing exercises whenever focus starts to drift.** Celebrating the little wins along the way makes a huge difference, too. When children feel seen, heard, and encouraged, learning naturally becomes something they look forward to every day and keeps our classrooms happy and bright.

BECKER'S

Thank you for gifting this center a $50 gift card to purchase supplies!

Golden Bear Academy





Childcare Provider Spotlight

Answers provided by
Director Lorena Becerra



Golden Bear Academy

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



We invited our families to collaborate over the weekend on a homemade family masterpiece to display in our "showroom." The response was incredible, with parents and children spending their weekend gathering materials, painting, and creating together. Working alongside their families gave the children a huge boost of confidence while sharpening their fine motor skills and exploring color mixing in a meaningful context. **When the kids walked into the center on Monday carrying their artwork, they weren't just excited—they were proud of what they had created with their loved ones.** It was such a sweet reminder of how much creative family engagement can thrive when home and school come together.

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

Caring for children takes a lot of patience, love, and energy. It is deeply rewarding, but it definitely takes a full tank, so we try to take care of ourselves and one another. At the center, we focus on teamwork, open communication, shared humor, and mindfulness to keep our daily environment positive and low-stress. **Simple things, like stepping in when a teammate needs support, leaving little notes of appreciation, or sharing a kind word**, go a long way. We also take time to recognize and celebrate each person's hard work. When our teachers feel supported and valued, they can give their best and show up every morning with plenty of patience and enthusiasm for the kids.



A Note from Melanie

Hello, providers!
My name is Melanie Kestory, and I'm the Chief of Strategy and Educational Support at the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County. I've worked in education for more than 20 years, and I'm passionate about helping children have caring, high-quality places to learn and grow.

I know how much you do every day for children and families, and I want you to know that I'm here to listen and support you. Whether you have a question, an idea, or a success to share, I would love to hear from you!

You can reach me at mkestory@elcoc.org or (407) 839-6526.
I look forward to getting to know you!

Warmly,

Melanie Kestory
Chief of Strategy & Educational Support,
Early Learning Coalition of Orange County