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Early Learning Parents' Pages

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Tips for Talking With Your Preschooler

If your child is participating in Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) or attending one of Florida's quality child care centers, help your child practice their language skills by encouraging them to talk about their new and exciting learning experiences.

The following are some suggestions to guide you in having meaningful conversations with your child:

- **Ask open-ended questions:** Avoid asking "yes" or "no" questions and encourage your child to elaborate on their answers by asking open-ended questions. For example, you could ask, "What did you enjoy the most at school today?"
- **Actively listen:** Give your child your full attention, maintain eye contact and avoid distractions that may interrupt the conversation. This is a great way to model active listening skills for your child.
- **Use visual aids or props:** Consider using props, such as school supplies, pictures or books about school to facilitate your talks with your child. These tangible items can spark their imagination and help them express their thoughts more easily.
- **Role-play scenarios:** Engage in pretend play where you and your child act out different situations they might encounter at school. This can include meeting new friends, participating in class activities or asking the teacher for help. Role-playing can boost your child's confidence and prepare them for challenging situations they may face at school.
- **Keep communication ongoing:** Continuously check in with your child and ask about their experiences, challenges and achievements at school. Not only will these ongoing conversations build on your child's language development but will also go a long way toward building a strong bond with your child.



Do you have questions about your child's development? Florida's Early Steps program provides early intervention services to children from birth until age three. These individualized services may take place in your home or school and include occupational, physical and speech therapies, hearing and vision services and more.

To find out more about eligibility and enrollment, visit the [Florida Early Steps](#) web page.

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Use These Tips For a Successful School Year

A new school year is both a momentous occasion and one that can make parents and children experience some hesitation. Below are some tips to help both you and your child feel confident and in step together.

Communicate: Preschool programs usually notify parents about potential routines throughout the school day. Regularly read and share these routines with your child to boost their anticipation for the day.

Plan together: Work together to select clothes for the following day. This will also give you more opportunities to have meaningful conversations that build their developing language skills (see page 1, "Let's Talk About It!").

Establish a routine: Take time to plan and create a reasonable daily schedule that works for your family. This will help you and your child know what to expect, help them feel comfortable with their routine and environment and give them a sense of security.

Get to know your preschool: Now that your child is in preschool, your family has become part of a whole new community. Support your child's future by asking about volunteer opportunities.



Florida Head Start
State Collaboration Office

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Friends and Family Can Support Your Child's VPK Experience

Now that your child has started VPK, consider recruiting siblings, cousins or neighbors who are VPK alumni to help your child start talking and thinking about their upcoming adventure. Set up "an interview" and give your child these questions to ask:

- What did you like most about VPK?
- Was snack time or lunch a part of your day?
- Did you meet new friends?
- How often did you go outside to play?
- What types of things were in your classroom?

Once your child has settled into their new routine, use questions like these to spark important ongoing conversations. These conversations can take place after you pick them up at the end of the day, during dinner or at bedtime so they can start dreaming about the next day.



If you are looking to add to your home or school library, check out Florida Education Commissioner Manny Diaz, Jr.'s [Commissioner's Book of the Month](#). This monthly reading challenge promotes literacy and reading engagement while helping children succeed both academically and in life.

Additional resources to support early literacy:

- [New Worlds Reading Initiative](#)
- [Helping Your Child Become a Reader](#)
- [Florida Grade-Level Reading Campaign](#)
- [Just Read, Families!](#)