

# PRE-K SPED NEWS

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## Director's Corner

### VPK for PreK SPED Students? Yes!

In this issue, you will read about VPK programs that are available for children who turn 4 years old on or before September 1, 2018. But did you know that any child may be entered into a lottery at their home school? If you are interested in your child possibly participating in the VPK program next year, please enroll at your home school before February 22. If your child is selected through the lottery, an IEP team meeting will be convened to review your child's needs and whether or not they might be met in the VPK setting.

VPK SIS is also a good option for parents to consider. VPK SIS (Specialized Instructional Services) will pay for individual or small group services such as ABA, speech/language therapy, occupational or physical therapy. To be eligible, the child must have an IEP and the services you are seeking to have covered must be on the IEP. For more information, call 866-357-3239.

### Seeking Role Models for 2018-2019? Yes!

Beginning in March, PreK SPED teachers will be seeking 3 and 4 year olds (before September 1, 2018) to serve as role models in PreK SPED classrooms near you. There are screening requirements for some of these programs. If you have other children or know of children who could benefit from a half-day or full day prek program, please reach out to your neighborhood school or call our office at 305-271-5701.

**Dr. Ann Marie Sasseville**  
Executive Director  
PreK Program for Children with Disabilities

## Behavior...Books...and Bagels!



Our coffee and chat sessions for parents were very successful! We loved meeting parents and presenting valuable information that will help make family daily routines more effective at home. We discussed topics ranging from communication systems to task boards that would make morning and evening routines flow smoothly. We were happy to see so many parents take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to learn new strategies. The added bonus? We were able to provide participating families with some great books to take home and share!

## Communication Counts!



Children spend many hours each day at school following routines and participating in structured activities. But at home, there may not be as much structure. Although your child may have more "free time," there are still plenty of opportunities to facilitate communication within the home environment. The following environmental strategies provide simple adjustments at home to provide more opportunities for your child to communicate and use his/her language.

- ✓ **Forgetfulness** – purposely forget to provide everything needed

**Example:** provide all materials needed to paint with watercolors (i.e. paints, water, paper) but do not provide the paintbrush. This will cause the child to comment on not having the item or request the needed item.

- ✓ **Visible but unreachable** – out of his/her reach but still within sight

**Example:** place toys/objects in clear plastic bins or containers on high shelves so the child can see what's inside but unable to get. You can also use sealable baggies that a child is unable to open.

This allows the child to request what they see or want.

- ✓ **Violate expectations/sabotage** – deliberately interfering

**Example:** place a doll's shoe on the doll's head or push a car backward. This will allow the child to comment or protest on that action.

- ✓ **Piece by piece** – toys that have many pieces; small snack foods; often a highly motivating and easily facilitated way to begin

**Example:** provide fish crackers or cereal one at a time, give the child one puzzle piece or Mr. Potato Head piece one at a time. This will allow the child to request each item using the preferred means of communication.

**Remember, Communication Counts!**

# Congratulations to our Pre-K SPED Teachers!

Elizabeth Cepero, William Lehman Elementary – Rookie Teacher of the Year  
Nicole Alvarez, Flagami Elementary – Rookie Teacher of the Year  
Massiel Torres, Maya Angelou Elementary – Rookie Teacher of the Year



## FAMILY CORNER

If you are on a budget, there are great free places to visit and things to do both indoors and outdoors in Miami. Our near perfect weather makes Miami the ideal place to create great childhood memories during every season of the year.

Celebrating Miami's unique history, [HistoryMiami Museum](#) is a cultural Smithsonian institute. Dig up Miami's history FREE on the second Saturday of each month from 10am to 5pm, with activities starting at 12noon until 4pm.

Children and adults have the opportunity to learn about Miami's communities and the past through exhibitions, art, and even city tours offered by the museum. You can also take part in a community mural activity, enjoy music, or listen to storytelling about Miami's vibrant history and culture. Children under the age of six are always FREE.

Visit the [Museum of Contemporary Art](#). This whimsical art museum is absolutely FREE on the first Saturdays of every month from 2pm-4pm for kids under 12, city employees and residents of North Miami Beach. Kids ages 6-12 are invited to tour the MOCA exhibitions and learn about the elements of art by painting, drawing and sculpting. Families are also welcome to come by on the last Friday of the month at 8pm for a FREE outdoor jazz concert during which the galleries are open on a donation basis.

Do not miss hiking through America's first national preserve, [Big Cypress National Preserve](#) - a natural wonder that is also FREE. There are many outdoor things to do here that will get everyone in the family excited about nature like canoeing, kayaking, bike riding down the everglades' crafted scenic paths or coming close to manatees, eagles, and other wildlife throughout our mangroves and swamplands. This magical preserve is a vast place to explore that offers a fascinating time for the whole family.

## Voluntary Prekindergarten? YES!!

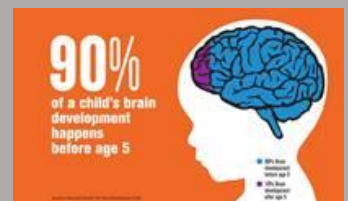


Did you know that 90% of brain development occurs before the age of 5? Providing a stimulating and caring environment for your young learner will ensure school success for years to come. Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) is currently enrolling for their Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) programs for the 2018-2019 school year. This free program prepares 4 and 5 year olds for kindergarten and beyond and is available in over 180 schools countywide. Children must be 4 years old on or before September 1, 2018 to enroll. A list of the participating schools is available on their website at <http://earlychildhood.dadeschools.net>.

MDCPS' VPK Program uses a lottery to select students. After submitting a completed school registration packet to their home/neighborhood school before the February 22, 2018 deadline, families will be entered into the VPK lottery. The lottery will be held on Friday, February 23, 2018. Children whose names are drawn in the lottery will be selected to attend the program. Open seats will be available at select schools after the lottery date, so parents whose children were not selected in the lottery should contact the Department of Early Childhood Programs at 305-995-7632 for assistance in finding an opening. Parents may obtain their required state VPK Program Certificate of Eligibility online at the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe website: <http://www.vpkhelp.org>. If you have a 4 or 5-year-old, make sure you visit your MDCPS neighborhood school and enroll your little one for VPK today!

### Guest Columnist:

Judy Palenzuela,  
District Coordinator  
Department of Early  
Childhood Programs



## BOOK NOOK

"BUENAS NOCHES, MIAMI"

BY LISA MARTINEZ

"ABC IN MIAMI"

BY ROBIN SEGALL

