

Tune in, Talk more, Take Turns We're joining the 3Ts Initiative!

See you online Reserving with the ELCHC

Teaching healthy habits
Before, during and after COVID-19



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**PG 15** 

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If you would like to submit an article to be included in the Provider's PRODUCTION MANAGERS Focus, listed below are the submission deadlines and requirements Johnson, M.A. for the 2019-2020 publication year.

Articles should include the author's name, affiliation/title, and be typed in 11 or 12 point Arial, Calibri or Times Roman font. Any accompanying photos or artwork should be in high-resolution JPEG format (at least 300 dpi) and sent as a separate attachment along with the article (not inserted in the article or document).

Photo releases should accompany any photo submissions. Submit all to jsalmond@elchc.org by noted deadlines. Please note that submission of articles, information etc., does not guarantee publication.

Submission Deadline	For Issue
August 14, 2020	Fall 2020
November 6, 2020	Winter 2020
January 8, 2021	Spring 2021
April 9, 2021	Summer 2021

## Provider's **FOCUS** Magazine

## INTRODUCTION

The Provider's Focus Magazine is a quarterly publication of the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County (ELCHC). The ELCHC is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization located in Tampa, Florida. The Provider's Focus is printed in limited quantity and distributed across Hillsborough County, Florida. It is also available in digital format at www.elchc.org in the Publications area of the website.

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## We Stand for Equity

The death of George Floyd has placed a spotlight on the long distance that our community has to travel to reach true equity, diversity and inclusion. In the important mission that our organization performs in our community in promoting school and life success for **ALL** young children and their families through quality school readiness services and supports, it is important that we lead by providing clarity to our beliefs and values with a high degree of specificity at this time.

We have zero tolerance for racism and we believe in and will behave in ways that demonstrate that, as it relates to our:

## Community

- Black lives matter
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion as relates to race, gender, and sexual orientation matter
- We recognize that our communities have a long journey ahead to reach true equity, diversity and inclusion – We are committed to take that journey
- Change in order to ensure we live these values: is needed, is not optional, is not an event but a journey, requires courage, and starts with us and what we teach our children

## Families and Children

- All children are equal and deserve an equal opportunity to receive quality care and education
- All parents deserve to be and will be treated with equal respect

## Providers

- Our providers are key to meeting our overall mission we will treat each of our providers with equal
- We will incorporate our beliefs in equity, inclusion and intolerance of all forms of racism in our teachings, trainings, and all interactions with all providers - teachers, directors and owners

## Team

- Our team members are our most important asset and deserve to work in a workplace in which each
  - o is treated with dignity, respect and feels valued
  - o has equal opportunities to pursue their career and advance within the organization
- We will hire the best candidate for every open position, with efforts to ensure our team and leadership reflects the diversity of the community we serve

As the leader of our team, I am committed to lead and require that all of our leaders and team members to live these values every day.

The Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County is proud to announce a new initiative for families to help parents as teachers! We will be working in partnership with the TMW Center for Early Learning + Public Health, PNC's Grow Up Great initiative and The University of Chicago to introduce the 3Ts.

3Ts stands for: Tune In, Talk More and Take Turns. Parents can build their child's brain any time by using the 3Ts. Through a grant provided by the PNC Foundation, 3Ts is a digital interactive tool for parents that serves as a reminder for parents to use any moment as an opportunity to engage with their children. The tool is available in English at the 3Ts.org or in Spanish at la 3Cs.org.

We need YOUR help to introduce this amazing new resource by having parents you know sign up at the 3Ts.org or la 3Cs.org!







ANY TIME IS 3TS TIME











Engaging families can be complicated, especially in our current situation with COVID-19. We are experiencing a variety of emotions and varying options of what is safe. As early childhood professionals, we know the importance of routine for the children in our care, and you are a vital part of that daily routine.

So how do you engage with children and families from a distance? In order to remain in contact, we must continue to find creative ways to engage and build relationships with families and especially the children we miss. Let's use a popular acronym to create a method to be mindful in your engagement. These are quite simple and probably not new; however, a gentle reminder can be helpful in a time when we are balancing our needs and others.

best way to communicate with them: phone, text or email. Communication preferences can change since life has changed. Ask parents at drop-off/pick-up or add a note to check on their child's sign-in/out sheet. For families that are at home, use the last type of preferred communication to checkin. They are just as busy as you, so keep notes simple and brief to share what you know and hear about resources in our community. Go "Old School" and use the postal service to communicate with children that have not returned to your classroom, send pictures, notes and activities. Use a virtual chat (remember to get signed permission) to connect children. The Zoom platform has free 40-minute video chats for up to 100 participants and unlimited 1-to-1 video conferencing. Try story time, creative movement, show & tell and snacks/meals in this type of format to bring school and home together. Be consistent and make it a part of your weekly routine.

Talk with parents and not at them. Use active listening skills to sharpen your listening skills to reflect parents' words. This will allow everyone to be heard and validated. This a stressful time for you and them as well, so speak to them as you would want someone to speak to you. Keep written communication brief, so your time and families are valued. Set guidelines, if need, for communication and respectful boundaries for when those conversations occur.

E

Encourage parents to engage other parents in your program. Build your school community through private groups on social media or a bulletin board, so families can share tips and needs. Add words, quotes or sayings to these types of media that build encouragement and laughter for everyone. Create a Community Agreement with parents that will build conversations that are respectful, safe and mindful of those in the group.

M

Model compassion. Empathy is needed in this time of crisis. The unknown is full of questions and children will have lots of them. Remember, it is ok not to have all the answers. Ask them what they think, to develop their thinking skills. Build empathy by validating feelings with words like "I noticed you seem sad about Mom leaving." or "I know it is frustrating to wash our hands so much, but it will keep everyone safe and healthy." Use the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you when emotions are difficult with children, parents and colleagues.

HOW ARE YOU ENGAGING FAMILIES?

EMAIL YOUR IDEAS TO:

SOCARROLL@ELCHC.ORG

know how you are helping families to transition back to school by sending me an email at socarroll@elch.org. I will collect your responses and share them in a future Focus Magazine or Provider Notes. Remember to Keep Calm and Pass it On. Together we can do better for our children and families in our community.



The COVID-19 pandemic has dominated our lives this year and also changed many of the ways we have to do business.

At the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County (ELCHC), that's meant converting professional development trainings for child care providers from face-to-face learning events onto the web. It's taken some trial and error for everyone involved — both the trainers and the participants — but for some it's become a more accessible option for attendance.

Stacey Francois, IACET & Training Manager, said the Provider Relations team has been working hard to adapt to new technology and transition learning events to an online platform.

"We have strived to ensure that despite recent disruptions to our lives, quality learning events continue," Stacey said. "Our goal is to make online learning events dynamic, personalized and collaborative, and we here to help you through the process."

Since the ELCHC has had to convert to an online platform, more than 1,400 providers have attended Coalition Connection webinars and trainings.

"I've had a lot more participants attending, and we're reaching more people. If someone has family issues or transportation issues, this is a way for them to participate," said Jamie Harmon, the Region 5 Quality Specialist.

Online training is a more attractive option for those who may be more hesitant about participating in person and are more willing to join in the conversation in a virtual setting. Jamie said she had to shift her perspective on

participation once she started teaching online, as she's learned to rely on different tools to see if learners are engaged, rather than

"reading the room" of body language. Jamie has incorporated participation measures such as taking polls through the webinar platform during her trainings. Through the webinar platform, there's even an option for breakout

While the first few sessions of training were rough as everyone climbed the learning curve of virtual training, Jamie said she's "all about" the virtual option now.

"I've had very positive feedback, they've liked the option," she said. "It reaches a different style of learner and allows them to engage." Jaime Bogdan, Director for Kids Club Early Learning Center, is exactly the kind of learner who has been thriving on the virtual platform. She's been in the field for 16 years and has spent many hours in face-to-face learning events with the Early Learning Coalition, but said the curriculum training she took online was "the best I've ever done." The online platform is helpful for

"I'm shy, I will not speak in front of others. But online I feel comfortable asking questions or answering other questions in the chat box," she said. "It allows me to engage more. And I learn a lot too."

Jaime was skeptical at first that she would adapt to online learning, but found she was able to concentrate better when she was at home rather than at a face-to-face training, where there may be more distractions.

Martha Aguiar, Region 2 Quality Specialist, said there was a learning curve for everyone getting used to the technology of online trainings, such as the steps for registering online. Some of the activities are less user-friendly on smart phones than computers, but overall the experience for her and her trainees has been positive, and it's pushed her and other trainers to try something new. "There are a lot of steps but all in all I think it has been well received. Even the ones who say they still prefer face to face say they are pleasantly surprised by the ease of use and interaction," Martha said. "I think it is here to stay as an option at least."

For some, the online platform is an appreciated but not preferred option during the coronavirus pandemic.

Gretzin Sanchez, Director at the Achievement Center Dale Mabry, said while there have been some challenges, online training is a good option to have during the current situation.

"I think we do prefer the face-to-face trainings, but the situation is bad now and getting the online training is still good," Gretzin said.

Some instructors who are primarily Spanish speaking may find the virtual trainings in English more difficult to understand. During a face-to-face training there may be more opportunity for goals and materials or explanation of concepts to be translated into Spanish, she said.

"Most of the trainings are in English, sometimes it can get confusing," she said.

The technology side of the virtual platform was easy to adapt to, and accessible: even if someone doesn't have a computer or internet at home, they can still watch the training on their smart phones. She encourages her teachers to ask questions if they need more information.

"If I have a question I find the trainer and ask," Gretzin said.

Some online trainings have been held in Spanish. Similar to traditional learning events, if the ELCHC is alerted with enough advanced notice, materials can be translated ahead of time, or if there are enough people interested in taking a training in Spanish, accommodations can be made, Stacey said. The ELCHC team is working to provide even more online trainings in Spanish, too.

The ELCHC won't be abandoning the traditional face-to-face format completely — once a level of normalcy allows groups to meet safely, those traditional formats will resume. However, the convenience and strong participation in virtual trainings is a good sign that online learning also needs to continue into the future, even when a global pandemic doesn't mandate the platform switch. "Online trainings will be something we keep," Stacey said.

## ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS CAN BE A LEARNING CURVE FOR EVERYONE, TRAINERS AND TRAINEES ALIKE. HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

- Registration is a two-step process. Make sure to sign up for the training in the LMS, but also register through GoTo Webinar so you can actually participate.
- Sometimes your audio may not connect automatically. Log out and log back into the training.
- If you have a question or need help, you can type in the question box. The trainer will answer your question.
- Don't forget to return to the LMS for the evaluation after you finish the training.

Thank you to all of our online learners for your patience in trying this new learning experience with us! For those who have not tried, we hope to "see" you in an online learning event soon!



**DR. ASHLEY MCPHIE** 

Tampa Family Health Centers, Inc. (TFHC) is the largest federally qualified health center in the state of Florida. As a not-for-profit Patient-Centered Medical Home, TFHC is committed to providing the highest quality, caring and accessible healthcare to the culturally diverse community located throughout Hillsborough County. As the Director of Pediatrics at TFHC, **Dr. Ashley McPhie** is committed to the health and wellness of the Tampa Bay area's youngest patients - before, during and after COVID-19.

Under Dr. McPhie's clinical and strategic guidance, TFHC Pediatrics has identified innovative ways to keep children on track regarding necessary immunizations and Well Child visits during COVID-19. By designating a Center and appointment times for healthy children and following the guidelines provided by the CDC and the Florida Department of Health, children are staying safe and on schedule. By coordinating Pediatric visits to incorporate key objectives, like Age One Dental appointments as part of a Medical Dental Integration (MDI) Program, children are receiving expanded access to care that will positively impact their long-term health. TFHC is proud to be more than healthcare!

# Teaching Children Healthy Habits Before, During and After COVID-19

By Dr. Ashley McPhie, Director of Pediatrics at Tampa Family Health Centers

As we learn to "coexist" with COVID-19, good hygiene is critically important for children of all ages. Children learn by observation, so please lead by example! Teach children to cover their coughs and sneezes. If a tissue is used, immediately throw it away. Practice handwashing frequently, but especially before eating and after going to the bathroom, coughing or sneezing. Remind children to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water. Show them how to create soap bubbles from their thumbs to their fingertips. Singing the "Happy Birthday" song twice is a reliable way to add an element of fun, while encouraging children to reach the recommended 20 second minimum timeframe. If you are unable to wash hands using soap and water, please use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to keep hands clean. In child care centers, Pre-K, and Kindergarten, it is difficult to prevent touching and sharing and the focus should be on minimizing risk. In addition to hand hygiene, be sure to frequently wipe down high touch surface areas and encourage children of appropriate age to limit face-touching. When possible, avoid activities that require sharing of toys





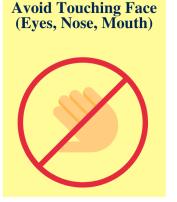
or equipment. If this is unavoidable, child care centers and schools should lean on disinfection techniques, educating staff, engaging in outdoor activities, adult physical distancing and possibly adult mask use. Official recommendations and decisions about the 2020-2021 school year have been changing day by day, making it hard to predict what this fall might look like. Masks are encouraged in child care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please remember, per the CDC, face masks should not be used by children under 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing, or on anyone who cannot remove a mask without assistance.

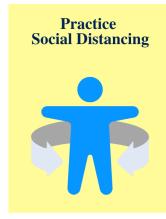
School and early learning environments are fundamental to child's development and overall well-being. Educational institutions provide children and adolescents with academic instruction, social and emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental

health therapy, as well as opportunities for physical activity. Decisions about how we will use to return to school this fall are still being discussed and finalized. Whatever the outcomes, we must speak with school-aged children and teens about avoiding large groups and gatherings to decrease the spread. Consider spacing desks in a classroom 6 feet apart. Block scheduling to help cohort students may be a safer way to receive instruction. Activities such as singing or physical activity should take place outdoors as these activities can increase viral spread. With your help and cooperation, we will not only keep our children safe; we can protect our community! Lastly, if you are unsure what to do or how to navigate COVID-19 safely, please reach out to one of our Pediatric providers at Tampa Family Health Centers. TFHC is a comprehensive Patient-Centered Medical Home and we are happy to help!

ELCHC PROVIDER'S FOCUS MAGAZINI









Images and graphics provided by Tampa Family Health Centers, Inc.

## C.org Summer 2020

## lessons learned

during COVID-19

The global pandemic has impacted all of us in some way, presenting challenges and obstacles we never knew we'd have to face. When a collective hardship such as COVID-19 hits our community, it can be a good moment to reflect upon the experience and see how we've learned and grown from it. Here are a few Lessons Learned from you, our child care providers.

Pandemic Teaching

Friday, March 13, I left my classroom with my laptop in hand. I was never expecting to teach PreK virtually. To my surprise, my laptop became my best friend for two and a half months. I discovered that Zoom is not something you do with a camera and that TEAMS is not something you play on with a group of people. The first week was trial and error. When working in a private PreK through eighth-grade school, you encounter different outlooks from coworkers and the families. The administration had high expectations



for quality lessons, along with understanding and compassion for each individual's situation.

The first and most important lesson is, you and your co-teacher needs to be on the same page as far as what you want your lesson plans to look like as far as the academics, what message you are trying to convey to families. Once we figured out each other's strengths in this new world of teaching, we trusted each other to handle that part of the lesson planning. From there, I began to make daily PowerPoint presentations that covered all eight domains of developmentally age-appropriate material. My co-teacher found educational videos, along with music and movement videos that supported theme-related PowerPoint presentations. Each day we would post the lesson under the Assignment tab on our TEAMS page. The parents could access all files, videos, links from the Assignment page by clicking on the purple link. By having everything available in one location it saved a lot of time for the parents, they did not have to click in and out of different websites or files to find the days assignments. Then comes learning to work with the families and meeting them where they are during the pandemic. Each family had its own story. Some families in our community were financially impacted. Some were adjusting to working at home while trying to help multiple young children with school work, and others had to adapt to temporarily being a single parent, due to the other parent needing to relocate for the safety and health of the family. I felt blessed to be a support for these families and be the constant familiar face for their child. The parents much appreciated the daily class Zoom meetings along with the individual Zoom meetings for the children who were struggling social-emotionally with the sudden changes. To help with the anxiety, Tucker Turtle would join me in our Zoom meetings, in the PowerPoint presentations and along with the recorded read-aloud Submitted by: Candice Tripi Scott stories posted daily.



## "learning how to be safe."

At Michelle Nowell's FCCH, we learned and practice what social distancing means. In addition, we also learned how to be safe by wearing our masks in our school (on and off throughout the day) and in public places.

Submitted by: Michelle Nowell

## "This is a huge transition for us all."

COVID-19 has created so many experiences and learned lessons. I have always been an early riser. During the first few weeks of the pandemic, I took my morning times to reevaluate my life goals. I started realizing that life would never be the way it was prior to COVID-19. I needed to make some adjustments and really think about how I needed to move forward for me. I started appreciating being outdoors and being in nature, things that we take for granted daily. The children and I started a garden. I began to spend more time with my family, talking more, expressing myself. I am embracing the new woman I am becoming. I needed to first, take care of me. My family, the children and the families I service truly depend on me. They look to me for support, guidance, and resources. I learned to transmute the immediate fear that COVID-19 and the media has caused by accepting the fact that we all have our own coping mechanisms. When a change comes about that is unexpected it forces you to make changes, some UN-wanted changes to everyday life. I look at the positive changes that have taken place around me and allow that to continue to be my motivational drive to move forward doing what I am passionate about which is early education for young children.

As a provider, I learned to be more empathetic. Parents I service have had several questions regarding precautions and how my program was going to move forward. Parents are concerned about their children getting sick. Prior to COVID-19 a child could have had

a runny nose in a program and it went unnoticed by another parent during drop off, now there is a guestion of is that child sick? I have put several safety measures in place. Increased hand washing, infrared forehead thermometer to take temperatures daily limiting entry into the child care program during drop off and pickups as well as consistently sanitizing and cleaning. I do my best to ensure that the environment is clean and safe for the children. I also inform parents that it is a collective effort. As families, we have to work together to be sure that we are consistent with proper care and hygiene when children are away from my care/program. It is difficult for children to social distance when all they care about is playing with their friends. As child care providers and teachers we have taught children the importance of social-emotional development and now we want them to be distant. It saddens me to see the look of confusion on their faces when they are asked to provide space during play. This is a huge transition for us all. I will continue to put forth an effort to maintain a healthy happy productive environment where children can continue to be expressive and safe.

I have also been tuning in to webinars and Zoom informational and leadership meetings. This has helped me to stay focused in my profession and connected to my peers, mentors and The Early Learning Coalition. I do miss the face to face relationships.

Submitted by: Annette Eberhart



## "We all worked together"

The COVID-19 exposure at our child care program showed us we were not prepared and taught us how to quickly adapt to changes in our procedures we had in place. For us, as caregivers, we continued to show a positive attitude in front of the children and kept our daily routines as normal as possible providing a sense of normality. This approach of easing them into the new procedures, helps the children in our care understand what is going on and allows for us to explain things at a slower page

We were also very surprised with both the children's and parent's positive reaction and how we all worked together (children, parents, teachers, community) to make these changes part of our new daily routines and will continue to keep our child care doors open. In this new journey, we have lost part of our staff and clients, but will keep the same level of service before COVID-19.

Submitted by: Shirley Grimaldo

## **COVID-19 RELIEF**







TOP: ELCHC Board Member Luke Buzard of TECO Peoples Gas presents a check from Tampa Electric and TECO Peoples Gas to Board Member Sandy Murman, CEO Gillette Gordon and Board Chair Aakash Patel. MIDDLE: Tampa Hillsborough Homeless Initiative COO Antonio Byrd presents 20,000 reusable masks to the ELCHC Board. Bottom: Board Chair Aakash Patel thanks

TECO and the Tampa Hillsborough Homeless Initiative for their donations to the supply drive.

SUPPLY DRIVE

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we surveyed our child care community to see what was most impacting your ability to operate yoru business.

Some of you said a lack of clientele or staff was an issue, as families or staff were staying home. But others said simply obtaining the supplies needed to adhere to COVID-19 safety guidelines was a big problem.

Thanks to the direction of our Board of Directors, we at the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County (ELCHC) launched the COVID-19 Relief Supply Drive to provide needed supplies to local child care providers at the beginning of the summer.

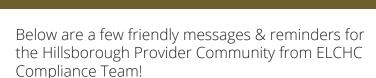
We launched our supply drive with two wonderful gifts: \$25,000 from Tampa Electric and TECO Peoples Gas and 20,000 reusable masks from the Tampa Hillsborough Homeless Initiative!

TECO's donation has gone directly to purchase infrared medical-grade thermometers. ELCHC Chairman, Aakash Patel, also donated surgical masks to area child care centers, and Sunshine Health gave a \$2,500 gift. We have also received numerous other individual donations.

"TECO Peoples Gas has been a longtime supporter of education and more specifically early learning. There is no better time for our organization to extend our commitment to the community than during this pandemic," said Luke Buzard, Vice President of Pipeline Safety & Regulatory Affairs at TECO Peoples Gas. "The Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County is making incredible contributions to support the kids of our community by keeping them safe while prioritizing quality early learning. It is our honor to contribute to the impactful efforts that they are making in the community."

Thank you to all who supported this effort! Distribution is scheduled for the end of July and beginning of August!

GOAL: (V)\$50,000



## Equity in Compliance:

Here at the Coalition, we stand for equity, and that is especially true in our compliance team. Our team is built out of a diverse group and backgrounds, and our mission is and always has been to support ALL our providers. Please be assured that compliance understands and supports their community and we strive to be fair and just in our assessments in every center or home we enter.



## **New for VPK Summer 2020**

- VPK Summer calendars can be between 200-300 hours and programs will still get paid the full amount for students (the 80/20 calculation for absences will still occur)
- VPK Assessments are suspended during the summer (though, we encourage to complete the assessments, if possible)
- Programs can begin with less than 4 children
- A private school administrator who holds a valid certificate in educational leadership issued by the Department of Education satisfies the requirement for a prekindergarten director credential
- If you have questions about the Summer 2020 Program, please contact Tiffany Skals 813-515-2340 ext. 217.

## **Provider Profiles**

Reminder: Providers are responsible for updating all their profile documents. Please contact your contract specialist before making any changes to your profiles. This will allow a smoother and faster process for you and the Coalition.

Here at the Coalition, we are so grateful for what all of our providers do. You are all frontline heroes during these trying times. Please remember the Coalition as well as the Compliance Team is here to support you.

THE COMPLIANCE TEAM

QUESTIONS?

813-515-2340 Extensions: REGION 1 Ingrid Sanchez ext. 223 REGION 2

Yelena Sanchez ext. 410

REGION 3
Jessica Sladky Jones

ext. 225 REGION 4

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REGION 5
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Do you need to publish an article to renew your Director Credential?
You can submit articles for consideration to be published in the Provider's Focus Magazine.
See inside for details!

