

READ, WHITE and BLUE

Celebrating 250 Chapters of America

★ CELEBRATE LITERACY WEEK 2026 ★

Infant/Toddler Activity Packet

The Florida Department of Education's (FDOE) Division of Early Learning (DEL) is collaborating with FDOE's *Just Read, Florida!* office for the eighteenth annual statewide *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!* 2026 events. *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!* 2026 is scheduled for **January 26-30, 2026**, so mark your calendars now for this important week of events. This year, our *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!* theme is **Read, White and Blue: Celebrating 250 Chapters of America!**

DEL supports the Celebrate Literacy Week theme from an early learning perspective with a focus on reading books to deepen children's knowledge.

Save the date for the simultaneous reading activity on **Wednesday, January 28, at 10 a.m. EST**. Help us spread the love of literacy to infant and toddler children by reading the book *Parade Colors* by Barbara Barbieri McGrath in provider homes, centers and schools.

Parade Colors by Barbara Barbieri McGrath



This fun and happy children's book highlights the many colorful and wonderful things children will experience during a parade. Take your children on an adventure as you read about all the colors on the firetruck, the parade floats and the American flag. Reading books such as *Parade Colors* builds children's experiences and expands their knowledge of the colors all around us.

Suggested Vocabulary Words or Terms from *Parade Colors* (with child-friendly definitions)

- **Big** is very large.
- **Little** is small.
- **Drum** is an instrument that makes sounds when you tap it.
- **Fire Truck** is a big red vehicle that helps firefighters go fast to places where there is a fire. It carries water, ladders and tools to help keep people safe. Fire trucks make loud noises and have flashing lights.
- **Play** (a drum) is using a drum to make music or sounds.
- **Color** is what makes things look different from each other. It's what we see when we look at a red apple, a blue sky or a green leaf.
- **Star** is a bright shape with points that look like it sparkles in the sky. You can see stars at night up in the sky, and sometimes we use star shapes to decorate or show something special.

- **Flag** is a piece of cloth with colors and shapes that stands for something special—like a country, a team or a celebration. People wave flags to show pride or to join in a parade or party.
- **Police Officer** is a helper in our community. They wear uniforms and help keep people safe.
- **Horse** is a big animal with four strong legs, a long tail and a mane (hair on its neck). Horses can run fast, make a sound called a neigh and sometimes help people by pulling wagons or giving rides.

**Teachers are encouraged to use vocabulary from the book that is most suitable for the children in their care.*

Parade Colors by Barbara Barbieri McGrath

Conducting a Read-Aloud and Intentional Teaching Tips

Plan ahead

- Prepare for a picture walk by reading *Parade Colors* by Barbara Barbieri McGrath to become familiar with the story and identify pictures you may want to point out and any new vocabulary words you can introduce to the children.
- Create a child-friendly definition for each new word to build the children’s vocabulary and background knowledge for the story.
- Determine open-ended questions ahead of reading.

Before reading the book

- Choose a place and time that supports a cozy setting. Gather children on the carpet or floor to join you.
- Review the cover of the book. Call attention to the labels and images that you see. Point and read the title, author and illustrator. Ask the children what they see.

While reading the book

- Be enthusiastic by showing excitement and curiosity as you read the story.
- Call attention to the images on each page of the book.
- Introduce new vocabulary words by using the best picture of each new word in the book. Note: It is not necessary for the text of the word to be on the same page as the picture of the word.
- Follow the prompts below to introduce new vocabulary words and ask open-ended comprehension questions. For example:
 - Ask the children what they see. Repeat what the child says and verify or correct with the actual word.
 - Teacher: “What do you see on the cover? What do you think this story is about?”
 - Child: “A truck.”
 - Teacher: “Yes, that is a truck. That’s a fire truck. It is a big word to say.”
 - Connect the story to real-life experiences. “Have you ever seen that type of truck before?”
 - Repeat the prompts as you encounter each new picture/vocabulary word in the story.

After reading the book

- **Connect the story to real-life experiences.** Show the last picture of the book. Ask questions and make statements such as:
 - “There was a horse in the parade! What was the horse doing?”
 - “Who was on the horse?”
 - “What do police officers do?”

Extension Activities for Infants and Toddlers

Following reading, teachers may choose to implement one or more of the following:

Activities for Infants and Toddlers

Activity 1: Flag Waving Dance

Activity 2: Color Parade

Activity 1: Flag Waving Dance



Activity Directions for Infants

Create Soft Flags. Use lightweight fabric (like felt or cotton) to make small flags. Sew or glue two pieces together if needed. Use soft handles like ribbon loops or just let the baby hold the fabric.

- Gentle Movement Time. Sit with the infant on your lap or a soft mat. Play the music and gently wave the flags in front of them. You can also help them hold and wave the flag with your assistance.
- Visual Engagement. Move the flags slowly side to side, up and down or in circles. This helps with visual tracking and attention.
- Tactile Exploration. Let the infant touch and feel the fabric. Talk about the colors: “This is red! Can you feel the soft blue?”
- Bonding & Language. Sing or hum along with the music and narrate what you’re doing: “We’re waving the flag! Look at it go!”

Supplies/Materials

- Lightweight fabric
- Glue
- Ribbon

Activity Directions for Toddlers

Play patriotic music and let toddlers wave their flags while you use some movement prompts. Use lightweight fabric (like felt or cotton) to make small flags. Sew or glue two pieces together if needed.

- Use some of the prompts below during the Flag Waving Dance activity with toddlers to encourage movement, language development and fun:
 - **Movement Prompts**
 - “Can you wave your flag high in the sky?”
 - “Let’s march like we’re in a parade!”
 - “Wave your flag fast—now slow!”
 - “Can you spin in a circle with your flag?”
 - “Let’s stomp our feet while we wave!”
 - **Color & Object Prompts**
 - “What color is your flag?”
 - “Can you find someone with a red flag?”
 - “Let’s wave our blue flags together!”
 - “Is your flag big or small?”

- **Imaginative Prompts**

- “Pretend you’re leading the parade—who’s behind you?”
- “Can you wave your flag like a firefighter in the parade?”
- “Let’s be drummers—tap your feet while you wave!”

- **Language & Social Prompts**

- “Can you say ‘red’ while you wave your red flag?”
- “Let’s wave together—1, 2, 3 go!”
- “Who has the same color flag as you?”

Supplies/Materials

- Lightweight fabric
- Glue
- Ribbon

Related Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards (FELDS)

Physical Development

I.B.b.1. Uses perceptual information to guide motions and interactions with objects and other people

I.B.b.1.a. Exhibits body awareness and starts to move intentionally

Approaches to Learning

II.A.1. Shows awareness of and interest in the environment

Creative Expression Through the Arts

VIII.C.2. Responds and moves in creative ways while listening to music, stories and or/verbal cues

Language and Literacy

IV.A.1.b. Responds to gestures of adults

IV.A.1.c. Responds to gestures that indicate understanding of what is being communicated

IV.C.2.b. Vocalizes pleasure and displeasure sounds differently

IV.E.1.a. Engages in verbal and nonverbal conversations using facial expressions, gestures or sounds to initiate or respond to communication

Activity 2: Color Parade



Activity Directions for Infants

Help infants begin recognizing colors while enjoying tactile and visual play.

- **Introduce One Color at a Time:** Hold up a scarf and say the color name clearly: “This is yellow!” Let infants look at it and touch it.
- **Peek-a-Boo Play:** Gently cover your face with a scarf and play peek-a-boo. Say: “Peek-a-boo! It’s the red scarf!”
- **Tactile Exploration:** Let infants hold and crinkle the scarf. Talk about how it feels: “The blue scarf is soft!”
- **Mirror Fun (Optional):** Place a baby-safe mirror nearby and let infants watch themselves with the colorful scarves.
- **Color Switching:** Rotate through different colors, repeating the name and letting infants explore each one.

Supplies/Materials

- Lightweight scarves or fabric squares in bright colors (red, blue, yellow, green or orange)
- A soft mat or blanket for playtime
- Optional: a mirror for added visual fun

Activity Directions for Toddlers

Color Parade Collage. Provide toddlers with red, white, blue, green and yellow paper scraps. Let them glue pieces onto a large sheet to create their own “parade” scene.

- Set Up the Workspace. Lay out the large sheet of paper on a table or floor. Arrange the colored paper scraps in small bowls or piles within easy reach.
- Introduce the Colors. Show each color to the toddlers and name it clearly: “This is red!” Encourage them to repeat the color names.
- Explain the Activity. Tell the toddlers they’re going to make their own parade scene using colorful paper pieces. You can say: “Let’s make a parade with lots of colors! You can glue the pieces wherever you like.”
- Demonstrate Gluing. Show them how to use the glue stick or squeeze a small amount of liquid glue. Help them glue a few pieces to get started.
- Let Them Create. Allow toddlers to freely choose colors and place scraps on the paper. Encourage creativity. There’s no right or wrong way!
- Talk About Their Art. As they work, ask questions like:
 - “What color are you using now?”
 - “Is that a float or a flag?”
 - “Can you find a blue piece?”
- Add Extra Elements (Optional). Provide stickers, crayons or markers for toddlers who want to add more details to their parade.
- Display Their Work. Once finished, hang the collage on a wall or bulletin board. Celebrate their creativity by calling it the “Toddler Parade of Colors!”

Supplies/Materials

- Paper scraps in red, white, blue, green and yellow (cut into small squares or shapes)
- Large sheet of paper or poster board
- Child-safe glue sticks or liquid glue
- Optional: stickers, crayons or markers for extra decoration

Related FELDS

Approaches to Learning

II.A.1 - Begins to show eagerness and curiosity as a learner

II.B.1 - Pays attention for longer periods of time and persists at preferred activities

Creative Expression Through the Arts

VIII.C.2 - Responds and moves in creative ways while listening to music, stories and or/verbal cues

Language and Literacy

IV.A.1.b - Responds appropriately to simple requests

IV.A.1.c - Responds to language during conversations, songs, stories or other experiences

IV.A.1.a - Engages in multiple back-and-forth communicative interactions with adults as part of sensory, social and emotional experiences

IV.C.1.a - Looks intently at or points at a person or object that has been named with the goal of establishing joint attention

IV.E.1.a - Engages in conversations, asking and responding to simple questions through gestures and single words

Physical Development

I.A.1.a - Uses movement and sense to explore and learn

I.B.2.a - Uses body position, balance and especially movement to explore and examine materials, activities and spaces

Social and Emotional Development

III.C.1 - Enjoys games and other social exchanges with familiar adults