

Elizabeth's Early Learning Center NEWSLETTER

A nurturing community where every child can discover, learn, and shine.

Introducing the EELC Pep Squad

Our PEP (Positively Engaged Parents) Squad has been busy, busy, busy this summer! They've planned activities to show our love for our EELC teachers, and coordinated fun activities for our school, including a Hillcats event, Read-A-Thon, Foam Party (pictured here), Family Movie Night, and much more! If you're interested in learning more about the EELC PEP Squad, please contact Diana Weeks, EELC board member, at dbweeks0602@gmail.com.



Meet Pam Thomas, M.Ed. EELC's New Executive Director

My first month as Executive Director of Elizabeth's Early Learning Center has been such a warm and welcoming experience. From day one, everyone—staff, families, and especially the kids—has made me feel right at home. It's clear that this is a place full of care, dedication, and heart, and I'm so grateful to be part of it.

One of the best parts so far has been getting to meet all the wonderful children and their families. The kids have already brought so many smiles and sweet moments to my days, and it's been such a joy getting to know the people who love and support them. I'm really looking forward to the year ahead and all the fun, learning, and growth we'll share together!



Founded in 1997, Elizabeth's Early Learning Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. To learn more, please visit our website at eelc.org.



Board of Directors

In Memoriam

Elizabeth Morton Forsyth

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Executive Director, Ex-Officio

Pam Thomas, M.Ed.

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Angie McFadden is EELC's New Operations Coordinator

EELC is happy to share that Angela (Angie) McFadden has accepted a new position at EELC - Operations Coordinator! Angie capably stepped into the Interim Director role for several months and will now continue her leadership journey at EELC in this new role. Congratulations Angie!



Introducing The Quiet Corner

Pam Thomas, EELC Executive Director, has introduced an open-door policy for teachers to visit her office and enjoy the Quiet Corner. Pam witnessed the success of Quiet Corner while utilizing this technique in her previous positions with Lynchburg City and Danville Public Schools. Teachers and staff are welcome to visit, chat, eat some chocolate, or take a quiet break.



Chocolate



Save the Date for EELC's 4th Annual Kentucky Derby Gala - May 2, 2026

EELC's popular annual special event - the EELC Kentucky Derby Gala - will return on Saturday, May 2, 2026! This year, we will be celebrating the Run for the Roses at a new venue - Tresca! Sponsorship opportunities are now available, and tickets will go on sale in March 2026. All proceeds will benefit the EELC Scholarship Fund. We hope to see you there!

EELG HERO Nikki Elswick



There are HEROES among us at EELC! One of our children suffered a medical emergency that was life threatening. Thanks to the quick actions of his teacher, Nikki Elswick, he received CPR and emergency care that saved his life! A HUGE thank you to Nikki and all those supporting HEROES that day.



EELG Updates as We Grow Forward

- Surveillance cameras with both audio and video capabilities have been installed in all classrooms, as well as common areas throughout the school. These are in addition to the external cameras that cover the parking lot and playground areas.
- What's that BUZZ? A new classroom is opening for our toddlers, and it's called the Honey Bees! This classroom is located where the Rainforest classroom used to be. Stop by to check out the fresh look and new décor of honeybees!



Fritz Frog Outdoor Music Classroom Update



Thank you again to everyone who has donated to the Fritz Frog Outdoor Music Classroom in memory of Fritz Vordermark. We're happy to share that the Easley Foundation recently made a generous grant of \$20,000 towards the project! With this gift, our community has raised over \$70,000 towards the \$110,000 budget for the Fritz Frog Outdoor Music Classroom. We are continuing to accept gifts and grants in memory of Fritz, and we plan to begin construction soon while we continue to raise the remaining funds needed to complete the project. The outdoor classroom will include a wide variety of outdoor musical instruments, including ladybug drums, lily pad cymbals, a thunder wall, and butterfly chimes. The Fritz Frog Outdoor Music Classroom will also include some low to the ground play equipment, including a frog hopper, gator walk, and Calvin the Caterpillar. Once complete, EELC students will celebrate Fritz's memory and love of music for years to come. Thank you again!



You Are Our Sunshine! Thank You to Our Donors!

November 1, 2024 - August 7, 2025

Anonymous (3)
Mr. & Mrs. Rick Anderson
Ms. Julie Bost
Jed & Cathie Brown
Barbara Campanella
Mr. Samuel P. Cardwell
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Mr. & Mrs. Steve Crank in honor of Jane Gerdy

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Mr. & Mrs. Donald M. Giles in honor of Mr. & Mrs. William Harris

Mrs. Elizabeth T. Johnston in honor of Matt & Gordon Vordermark

Mr. Gage McAngus in honor of Kum-Ba-Yah Nature Center

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Dr. & Mrs. Ed Polloway in honor of Jane Gerdy

Ms. Kim Price in honor of Cathie Brown

Dr. Geeta Rakeram & Mr. Godfrey Myaing in honor of Elsie Chambers

Dr. & Mrs. Michael Valentine in honor of Jane Gerdy

Mr. George D. Vermilya, Jr. in honor of Chloe & Blair Phillips

Mrs. Joy G. Zogby in honor of Jane Gerdy



THANK YOU





Thank You to Our Donors!

November 1, 2024 - August 7, 2025

In Memory

Mr. and Mrs. Frank H. Adams in
memory of Stella Tanner

Anonymous in memory of
Elizabeth M. Forsyth

Cathie & Jed Brown in memory
of Stella Tanner

Karen & Jeff Brown in memory
of Stella Tanner

David & Ashley Brown in
memory of Stella Tanner

Mr. & Mrs. Hunsdon Cary in
memory of Fritz Vordermark

Mr. & Mrs. Todd Elder in memory
of Stella Tanner

Mr. Christopher Haddock in
memory of Fritz Vordermark

Mr. & Mrs. Gary E. Harvey in
memory of Tyler Kelty-Lee
Harvey

Mrs. Elizabeth T. Johnston in
memory of Fritz Vordermark

Mr. & Mrs. Geoffrey Kershner in
memory of Fritz Vordermark and
in tribute to his family

L. G. Flint in memory of Fritz
Vordermark

Beatriz C. Lecusay-Diaz & Jose
Diaz in memory of Fritz
Vordermark

Mr. & Mrs. Dennis F. McMurran
in memory of Fritz Vordermark

Dr. & Mrs. Ed Polloway in
memory of Fritz Vordermark

Ms. Jennifer Sittason in memory
of Fritz Vordermark

Mr. Richard L. Stallings in
memory of Fritz Vordermark

Frank & Beth Tanner in memory
of Stella Tanner

Diana & Rodney Weeks in
memory of Gigi Stella Tanner

Corporations and Foundations

The Easley Foundation



Thank You

Summertime Fun!





Meet Maria Kraje, EELC's New Curriculum Coordinator

Maria Kraje is excited to join Elizabeth's Early Learning Center as the Curriculum Coordinator. She has over 10 years of experience working in early childhood education. Most recently, Maria has served our region as an Infant and Toddler Specialist with the Virginia Infant and Toddler Specialist Network, where she provided CLASS support and coaching to many different childcare centers. She is passionate about providing quality care that fosters individualized growth through strong relationships and positive interactions. Welcome to EELC, Maria!

Behind the Scenes - EELC Food Service

EELC recently replaced our commercial-grade dishwasher, which stopped working completely after 20+ years of loyal service and many repairs. Thank you to Foster Fuels for supporting EELC with a \$1,500 gift towards the \$6,888 cost of purchasing a new dishwasher!

On a daily basis, EELC serves 126 breakfasts, 137 lunches, and 130 snacks to our children who are old enough to eat solid food. The dishwasher at EELC operates continuously throughout the day. Elizabeth's Early Learning Center has 14 classrooms, and each classroom's dishes are run through the dishwasher together. Additional dishwasher loads include pots, pans, and utensils for meal preparation. A working and reliable industrial dishwasher is essential for daily operations at Elizabeth's Early Learning Center!



Continuing Education & Training for EELC Teachers

As part of the EELC Grow Forward Plan, we are providing our teachers and staff with ongoing professional development opportunities, including Child Protective Services (CPS) Mandated Reporter Training and Q&A, and MANDT training, consisting of prevention, de-escalating, and intervening in potentially aggressive behaviors. EELC continues to develop our comprehensive training plan for teachers. Pictured here are teachers in "What is ABA and How Does it Help with Challenging Behaviors" and "Learning Through Play" trainings held on August 11, 2025, before the new 2025-2026 school year starts.



Scholarship Fund Update For the New School Year

In keeping with the vision and mission of EELC and our founder Elizabeth Forsyth, EELC has awarded over \$225,000 in scholarship dollars for the 2025-2026 school year!

Thank you for supporting the EELC Scholarship Fund. Your gifts make a difference in the lives and education of children in our community!



Give Now to Support the EELC Scholarship Fund

Did you know that many of EELC's children are on need-based scholarships? EELC's Scholarship Fund provides partial to full tuition assistance to families that qualify so that all children may have access to quality early education, regardless of their ability to pay. When you become a monthly donor by making your gift recurring, you'll automatically join EELC's Sunshine Club! The Sunshine Club is dedicated to making quality early childhood development more affordable for our community. Your monthly gift will help sustain EELC's Scholarship Fund. Your generosity enables all children to enjoy age-appropriate instruction in a warm, safe, and caring environment full of sunshine!



A Letter of Appreciation From an EELC Family

It's always a good day when we receive a thank you note or praise from an EELC family. Below is an email we recently received from a family who has had three children at EELC over the years, and is now moving out of the preschool stage of life. We hope you enjoy this message as much as we did!

I can't believe this is our last day with our EELC family! You, and so many there, have been a part of our lives for a whole decade! Your patience and kindness with my children, and us as parents, is endless and genuine. From warm greetings and caring conversations to quality educational curriculum, structure, experiences, and learning through play opportunities, we have experienced everything you could hope for in early childhood education through Elizabeth's.

To all the teachers and staff who have cared for our Hunter, Reese, and Kylie over the last ten years, thank you so much for what you do and the impact you had on our littles' lives. I wish I could thank each and every one of you in the way you deserve. We love you and appreciate you more than we can express!

*It's been a tough year - but **what a testament** to the amazing people and organization that you have there that so many EELC families understand, love, and trust you all to continue to provide excellent care for the loves of our lives. We are a forever devoted and proud EELC family!*

Thank you again for being a wonderful part of our lives and we look forward to crossing paths again.

With love and gratitude,
The Read family
- Ricky, Laura, Hunter, Reese, and Kylie



Last Day of School Pictures!





Elizabeth's Early Learning Center, provides every child the affectionate and personalized care in a safe environment. We focus on providing for the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive developmental needs of children in an age-appropriate manner.

Our Mission



The EELC PEP Squad is working on sprucing up the EELC playground! Our next big project is retracing the bike paths and painting a Twister gameboard on the concrete. Pictured here are several examples of what we would like to accomplish. If you would like to volunteer or donate funds to purchase the special outdoor paint needed for this project, please contact Diana Weeks, EELC board member, at dbweeks0602@gmail.com. Thank you!

Help Needed to Spruce Up Playground



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