



Children's voices and laughter fill the community room of Oakview Apartments as they file in for an experience like no other.

Enter DJ E-Lo.

Eric Lopez, a professional DJ known as DJ E-Lo, spends his time teaching the children of Alachua County how to DJ.

The session starts with a slew of DJ facts, specifically about how DJing can be both a hobby and a career. DJ E-Lo rattles off names of several famous DJ's along with their salaries as gasps are heard around the room.

"Who thinks it's important to make money?" He asks.

All hands shoot up into the air.

"How do people make money?"

A chorus of voices follows as they reach a consensus. Their answer? Get a job.

Now comes the real heart of DJ E-Lo's mission as he launches into a conversation with the kids about how they can do anything, and they can do it as a job.

One child says she likes to do hair and nails. Another says he likes cars. Each one is affirmed that they can turn their interests into a job, they just have to work toward it.

“I’m hoping that they get the message that they can become bigger than they are. They can do whatever they want to do,” DJ E-Lo says “It takes a little effort, but there’s really nothing that they can’t do.”

As the session continues, the children choose DJ names and are given tablets with DJing software to practice on. DJ E-Lo teaches them how to find the beat of a song, and how to use a mixer on the app. He goes around the room one-by-one and allows each child to showcase what they have learned and praises them for their attentiveness and abilities.

They all leave with smiles and the promise of a DJ party when they return for the second session the next day.

“It’s about more than just DJing.”

DJ E-Lo hopes to not only equip the children in these enrichment sessions with the skills to DJ but also to empower them to work toward their dreams. He says that most people do not realize how useful DJing can be, citing that older kids can use DJing to bring in extra money even if they don’t choose to do it full-time.

The bigger message is loud and clear: “Don’t be afraid to go for it, you won’t be able to do it if you never try.”

DJ E-Lo’s “Let’s DJ” enrichment sessions and many others are free to book for youth-serving organizations through a partnership with the Children’s Trust of Alachua County. Request a session from a CTAC-funded enrichment provider [here](#).

## ABOUT THE CHILDREN’S TRUST OF ALACHUA COUNTY

The Children’s Trust of Alachua County funds and supports a coordinated system of community services that allows all children, youth and their families to

thrive. Its funded programs and partnerships address three main goals: that all children and youth are healthy and have nurturing caregivers, can learn what they need to be successful, and live in a safe community.

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*Written by Amalie Bethune, Program Specialist*