

**MORNING SHOW**

# Embedded instruction: Tools for early learning for special education

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For parents, opportunities to teach kids are everywhere.

“All young children benefit from the opportunity to learn important skills in the context of their everyday routines and activities,” explained Patricia Snyder, distinguished professor at the University of Florida.

It is called embedded instruction and it can be especially beneficial for young children with or at risk for disabilities in classrooms or at home.

“Children who may be more marginalized because of differences in their learning abilities for them to have opportunities to be included, to be accessing the general preschool curriculum,” continued Snyder.

Separating children with learning disabilities from their typically developing peers can also have some negative consequences.

“We know that young children often remain in those more segregated and isolated settings for the remainder of their school career, which also could potentially impact their long-term success as being meaningful and participatory members of the community,” Snyder said.

In a study of 106 preschool children with disabilities, teachers were taught through workshops, training tools and on-site coaching to properly incorporate embedded instruction techniques. The children gained more communication and language skills and had fewer problem behaviors than children whose teachers did not receive the training. In the classroom, teachers can incorporate learning into everyday routines, such as art time.

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Teachers who received the onsite coaching in their classroom continued to implement embedded instruction practices. And they were able to generalize their implementation of embedded instruction to new children in their classroom who enrolled in the following year,” said Snyder

At home, parents can provide embedded learning opportunities in everyday tasks by comparing sizes of spoons while emptying the dishwasher, reading road signs during a drive, or even during breakfast.

“Looking at the cereal box and identifying what letters there might be on the cereal box. And although it seems very simple and straightforward, it actually turns out that it’s embedded instruction,” Snyder said.

Even though this study focused primarily on how teachers can use embedded instruction, Snyder and her colleagues at the University of Florida are developing an extension of the intervention to focus on connections among school, home, and community. It is called Tools for Families.

# The Gainesville Sun | Gainesville.com

## EDUCATION

# Arts will meet academics at Constellation, Alachua County's next charter school

**Gershon Harrell** The Gainesville Sun

Published 11:43 p.m. ET May 23, 2021

The county's first Waldorf education grade school — a curriculum that integrates the arts into academics — will be a charter school.

Alachua County School Board members last week approved the concept for the Constellation Charter School of Gainesville.

The school's mission, its founders say, is to inspire children to love learning through "academic pursuits, movement, art and nature."

Music is integrated into the core curriculum. Through grades 1 and 2 students will learn how to play a pentatonic flute. In grade 3 they transition to a diatonic flute while also being introduced to a string instrument such as a violin, viola or cello.

Teachers also will follow their children as they progress through the grades through a strategy called "looping." The strategy is used to foster a relationship between the teacher and the student.

**In case you missed it:** University of Florida will join others in state system return to pre-pandemic policies by fall

**By the way:** Prom returns, with a few new rules

The charter school plan was presented by Everett Caudle, director of project development, and the charter school board's president, Sylvia Paluzzi.

Despite the School Board's 4-1 vote to approve the plan, there were a few concerns among board members. Board member Robert Hyatt voted against the plan.

There are 13 charter schools in Alachua County. Some of them focus on building leadership skills, others focus on incorporating yoga and exercise into their curriculum and others concentrate on students with learning disabilities.

Vice Chair Tina Certain said she doesn't want students to leave the district, then eventually return to it, lagging academically.

"Whatever students enter your doors to learn, that you really serve those students because the motto of public school being for everyone, where we all contribute financially is being fractured because so many dollars are being pulled out for different reasons," Certain said.

Charter schools are funded through the Florida Finance Program (FEFP), the same as public schools. A charter school's operating funds are based on the number of students who enroll.

In the first two years of the school's opening, Constellation's backers project to have a total of 98 students enrolled for grades 1-5, with five teachers, one for each grade level. By year three, they expect to have 120 students, including sixth-graders, and by the fifth year, they expect to have 164 students up to eighth grade.

"Our trajectory into the future will be that it'll be grade school, first through eighth grade, but it just won't be that way for the first three years," Paluzzi said.

Board member Diyonne McGraw asked that if a student has a disability and the charter school can't meet the student's needs, the school works with the public school district and the parent to keep that student in the system.

"I've seen that is one of the biggest downfalls. We don't want them to come back especially when they have a learning disability, because they're not able to have that support in the

charter school," McGraw said.

Board member Hyatt questioned why the charter school board members were looking for a facility on the east side of Gainesville when there are already a "plethora" of charter schools there already.

Paluzzi assured the board that they have expanded their search to other facilities, as well.

"We're not completely wedded to it only being in east Gainesville," Paluzzi said. "Our first priority is to serve as many children and give them the opportunity if their parents are interested."

The school's organizers expect a facility to cost about \$100,000 for the first year, including rent, utilities and insurance.

The facility needs at least 5,000 square feet and to be able to accommodate students from grades 1-5. The layout would need natural light and a central gathering space.

"One of the things we're looking at is would it have enough space to accommodate the growth of a school that after three years it's going to be a middle school," Paluzzi said. "Does it have enough green space, because it's important for children to have recess outside."

Constellation officials have given themselves a deadline for securing a facility by March 2022 so they can allow time for repairs and inspections.

If they can't find a building by the start of the 2022 school year, they can defer opening the school up to three years.

## **Constellation Charter School and Waldorf education**

The Constellation Charter School of Gainesville will be organized under the nonprofit Heart Pine Waldorf Association Inc.

Paluzzi currently runs a Waldorf education school called Morning Meadow Preschool and Kindergarten.

According to Waldorf Education in North America, there are more than 160 member schools and 14 education institutes. Globally, there are 1,090 Waldorf schools in 64 countries and 1,857 kindergartens in more than 70 countries.

The idea came from a group of parents familiar with the Waldorf teaching style who wanted to see it tried in grade school.

They created a private school that ran for nine years, however, the school eventually closed when its location was lost and couldn't be secured before the next school year.

"But parents really wanted a grade school and we started talking about it two years ago," Paluzzi said. "We thought that the focus this time would be better serving our community if it was a charter school because we could invite more families that could participate in this type of education without the influx of financial issues."



## Positive Parenting: Tools for Early Learning

 May 11, 2021

 4:00 am      News 4 Tucson

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (Ivanhoe Newswire) --- In 2019, more than 716,000 preschool-age children were receiving special education services. Yet only 38 percent received these services at the early childhood program they attended. Ivanhoe has details on an intervention that supports all children's learning in their everyday activities and routines at school, at home, and in the community.

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It is called embedded instruction and it can be especially beneficial for young children with or at risk for disabilities in classrooms or at home.

"Children who may be more marginalized because of differences in their learning abilities for them to have opportunities to be included, to be accessing the general preschool curriculum," continued Snyder.

Separating children with learning disabilities from their typically developing peers can also have some negative consequences.

“We know that young children often remain in those more segregated and isolated settings for the remainder of their school career, which also could potentially impact their long-term success as being meaningful and participatory members of the community,” shared Snyder.

In a study of 106 preschool children with disabilities, teachers were taught through workshops, training tools and on-site coaching to properly incorporate embedded instruction techniques. The children gained more communication and language skills and had fewer problem behaviors than children whose teachers did not receive the training. In the classroom, teachers can incorporate learning into everyday routines, such as art time.

“What color is this paint? What color is that paint? Another time this might happen is during snack or mealtimes where there might be different colored bowls or different colored cups. And again, that provides a natural or logical opportunity for the child to talk about and name colors. Teachers who received the onsite coaching in their classroom continued to implement embedded instruction practices. And they were able to generalize their implementation of embedded instruction to new children in their classroom who enrolled in the following year,” said Snyder.

At home, parents can provide embedded learning opportunities in everyday tasks by comparing sizes of spoons while emptying the dishwasher, reading road signs during a drive, or even during breakfast.

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Even though this study focused primarily on how teachers can use embedded instruction, Snyder and her colleagues at the University of Florida are developing an extension of the intervention to focus on connections among school, home, and community. It is called Tools for Families.

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