



## **Two Nights, Dozens of Smiles: Kindergarten Parties Shine in Sarasota County**

The excitement of starting kindergarten came to life this spring as dozens of future kindergartners and their families joined the *Kickoff to K* celebrations, co-hosted by Sarasota County Schools and the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County. Held on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at Suncoast Technical College in Sarasota, and Thursday, May 1, 2025, at Suncoast Technical College in North Port, the two lively events marked the third annual Kindergarten Parties—and they were nothing short of a smashing success.

Laughter and energy filled the rooms as children and families enjoyed dinner, dancing, and a variety of interactive activities designed to make the transition to kindergarten both fun and memorable. Highlights included the popular “Future Kindergartner” photo booth, hands-on games led by Sarasota County kindergarten teachers, and exciting prize giveaways. Families also left with free books to build their home libraries, reinforcing the strong connection between reading and kindergarten readiness.

More than just fun, this event was a launchpad for learning, as parents and caregivers got the chance to connect directly with school leaders and kindergarten teachers, ask questions, and prepare for the milestone moment ahead. Eligibility specialists from the Early Learning Coalition were also on hand to provide one-on-one guidance with childcare financial assistance and VPK (Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten) registration for younger siblings.

“This is more than a party—it’s an uplifting community event where families can celebrate this big moment together,” says Ana McClendon, ELC’s Director of Outreach. “At the ELC, we’re proud to walk alongside families during this important transition as we help to ‘walk our little ones over the bridge to kindergarten’ with confidence, connection, and a whole lot of joy.”

The Kindergarten Parties are made possible through the generosity of The Patterson Foundation and are presented in coordination with the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading as part of Suncoast Remake Learning Days, a 15-day regional festival of free, hands-on, multi-generational learning experiences.

*Kickoff to K 2025* was a celebration to remember—and the perfect start to an exciting new chapter for Sarasota County’s youngest learners.

Check out pics from our Kindergarten Parties here:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/198249773@N03/albums/>