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## Linking Parents to Early Childhood Success September 2013

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Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe  
2555 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite 500, Coral Gables, FL 33134  
1111 12th St., Suite 206, Key West, FL 33040

### September Parent Link

#### ELC and You

Dear Friends,

There is no reason your child or any child in Florida should be without health insurance. Through Florida KidCare, the state of Florida offers health insurance for children from birth through age 18.

To qualify for premium assistance, a child must:

- Be under age 19
- Be uninsured
- Meet income eligibility requirements
- Be a U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen
- Not be eligible for Medicaid
- Not be in a public institution

Coverage could be free or cost families a nominal fee, depending on the household size and family income.

Please help spread the word about Florida KidCare. Healthy children are better able to thrive, learn and succeed in life.

To learn more about Florida KidCare, visit <http://www.floridakidcare.org/> today.

Sincerely,

Evelio C. Torres  
President & CEO

## On the Web: VPK Online



# VPK Online System now available!

If you live in Florida, and your child turns 4 years of age by September 1, your child is eligible to participate in Florida's FREE Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) education program.

Our new system lets you:

- Fill out the application online
- Print your Certificate of Eligibility at home
- Avoid lines and wait times

Visit [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org) to learn more about the program and register your child today.

## FAQs: Redetermination

### SCHOOL READINESS ELIGIBILITY AND REDETERMINATION

#### How can I register my child for the School Readiness program?

The School Readiness program is currently at capacity. Parents/caregivers who are interested in participating in the program must add their name to the waitlist. Visit [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org) and click on the button that says "Need help paying for childcare?"

#### My childcare expires soon. What do I do?

You will need to fill out a redetermination packet once it is mailed to you. If you have not received a redetermination packet, call 305-646-7220 to schedule an appointment. If your child care expires within 10 days, please print the packet off our website and drop it off at the Service Center that corresponds to your zip code.

#### Where do I drop it off once I have completed the packet?

Once you have completed all the necessary information, you may return your packet to the ELC in the envelope provided to you. They may be mailed to the Main Office at 2555 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Suite 500, Coral Gables, FL 33134.

### How can I confirm that my redetermination packet has been received by the ELC?

Call center staff has access to our system and can check to see if your packet has been received.

### How can I get a packet without waiting for it in the mail?

A copy of the redetermination packet can be found on the ELC website at [http://elcmdm.org/our\\_services/schoolreadiness/RedeterminationPackage.pdf](http://elcmdm.org/our_services/schoolreadiness/RedeterminationPackage.pdf).

### How can I obtain an Eligibility Form to prove to my childcare provider that my services have been redetermined?

The Change in Child Care Status Form is provided at the time of redetermination. You may call 305-646-7220 to request a duplicate form or pick one up at your nearest Service Center.

### Who notifies the provider?

Providers have access to the ELC Provider Portal. The Provider Portal contains information on the children's termination dates. This information is updated daily. The provider is also mailed a copy of the Change in Child Care Status Form.

## APPOINTMENTS

### Do I need to make an appointment for redetermination?

You do not need an appointment for redetermination. Your redetermination documents will be processed by ELC eligibility staff and you will receive notification of your approval through the mail.

### How can I change my appointment date/time if I can't make it?

You may call 305-646-7220 to request a new appointment date and time.

### What should I bring to my appointment?

A list of required documents can be found at <http://elcmdm.org/downloads/waitlistappointmentdocs.pdf>.

## SCHOOL READINESS WAITLIST

### How can I find out my status on the School Readiness program waitlist?

If you have a question about the waitlist, please send it to [waitlist@elcmdm.org](mailto:waitlist@elcmdm.org). Include your name, your child's name, your phone number, your address, and the question or concern you may have. A waitlist specialist will email you within a few days.



## From the Desk of Dr. Hughes

*Each month in Parent Link, Christine Hughes, Ph.D, Director of Research and Evaluation for the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe will offer insight about child development (from birth to 5 years old) on a variety of topics such as language, social skills, play, behavior, motor skills, learning habits, and more. Dr. Hughes earned her Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Miami. Her research has focused on the development of at-risk infants and children in early intervention.*

### Raising a Healthy Child by Limiting Screen Time

Television, computers, video games and smart phones are everywhere in our lives. That also means they are present in your child's life. Because the number of hours we use electronic media has increased greatly over the last three decades, research has looked at how this affects the health and development of infants and children.

The general recommendation based on this research is clearly stated by the American Academy of Pediatrics: there is **no evidence** that screen time is good for infants (under 2 years) and there **is evidence** that it may be harmful to their health and development. Therefore, infants under 2 years should not have any screen time or be exposed to any type of media (TV, computer/Internet, iPad, smart phone) in order to support their health and development.

Children over 2 years also may suffer negatively from screen time, mostly because it:

1. takes away from time that they are actively and creatively playing,
2. takes away from time that they are physically active, and
3. takes away from time that they are interacting with their family and friends.

This means children are spending much less time doing things critical to their health and development: playing, being physically active, and interacting with important people in their lives. Think about what types of media your child uses or is exposed to, and think about how much time he or she spends on it. If it is more than one hour per day, think about limiting the amount of time your child spends with screens and encourage them to do other things, like playing (either indoors or outdoors) and spending time with family and friends. This is what helps our children grow healthy and happy.

If your child goes to child care, have a conversation with the care provider about their policy on screen time for infants and children. If they don't have a policy, ask how often your child has screen time at school in a typical day or week. It is important to have these conversations, especially if you'd like to limit your child's screen time. Best practice in a child care setting is *no* screen time for infants under two years, and no more than 30 minutes per week (any media). There are many resources available to understand the impact of media on infants and children; the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has just published a comprehensive book called "Beyond Remote-Controlled Childhood: Teaching Young Children in the Media Age." By working together, both parents and teachers can make sure that children's use of media is developmentally appropriate and educational.

*The column is not intended to be a solicitation of business or the furnishing of self-help advice. Readers are strongly urged to consult independent and qualified professionals before making any decisions. The views expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe.*



## MOVE IT! with Maggie

*Each month in Parent Link, Maggie Thomas, Nemours Program & Policy Analyst for the Early Learning Coalition, will offer simple ways for creating healthy environments for families. Maggie holds a Master of Business of Administration in Management from Nova Southeastern University and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of Miami. She has played a critical role in increasing awareness in injury prevention and obesity prevention in diverse and hard to reach communities. Maggie has experience in providing training, consultation, and technical assistance to early learning centers throughout Miami-Dade County.*

### Join Us in Battling Childhood Obesity

Did you know children who are overweight between ages 2-5 are 5 times more likely to be overweight at 12 years? Overweight children are more likely to be overweight adults with increasing risk of chronic health conditions. For the first time, conditions like high cholesterol and diabetes seen mostly in adults are affecting our youngest children. Being overweight also puts children at risk to be teased or bullied, have low self-esteem, suffer from negative body image, and face depression.

To battle this epidemic, several initiatives have been launched across the United States. President Barack Obama officially declared September 2013 as **National Childhood Obesity Month**. First Lady Michelle Obama's **Let's Move! Initiative** has partnered with several organizations nationwide dedicated to changing the way a generation of children thinks about food and nutrition. Locally, the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, in a recent collaboration with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Nemours, has committed to **improving the quality of environments of early care and education programs** in South Florida to become healthier, more active, support breastfeeding, and limit screen time.

In the words of First Lady Michelle Obama, you can help **"tackle the childhood obesity epidemic**

one child, one family, and one community at a time."

As a parent, there are several ways to get involved. Talk to your doctor about obesity screening and counseling. Talk to your early care and education program about how you can encourage other parents to commit to being healthy role models. Talk to and engage your children about the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

You can start TODAY with small and simple steps like:

- eating a nutritious meal together,
- riding a bicycle,
- teaching your child your favorite childhood activity, or
- gardening.

We would love to see how you choose to 'Move It!' especially during National Childhood Obesity Month! Send us a picture of you and your child being active. Several pictures will be selected and posted in our upcoming Parent Link.

Additionally, here are 5 simple steps to creating a healthy home environment:

1. Keep fresh fruit in a bowl within reach for a quick snack.
2. Take a walk with your family after dinner.
3. Plan a menu for the week and get your children involved in planning and cooking.
4. Turn off the TV during meals and share some family time.
5. Talk to your director about joining the Nemours project!

For more ideas about health and wellness, be sure to check out:

- [www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org](http://www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org)
- [www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov)

**References:**

- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org](http://www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org)

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## Local Events for the Family!

### Free Flu Vaccinations for Children

Brought to you by the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County with support from Miami Children's Hospital and local politicians. Nurses will provide injections for children from 6 months through 18 years who are accompanied by a parent or guardian while supplies last.

**When:** Saturday, Oct. 5

**Time:** 1 p.m.

**Where:** Miami Dade County Fairgrounds  
Arnold Hall

10901 S.W. 24 St.

Miami, FL 33165

**More:** To learn more about this event, please click [here](#).

### Coconut Grove Pumpkin Patch

Kick off Autumn at the Coconut Grove Pumpkin Patch Festival! Families can navigate the giant maze, dress their own scarecrow, ride carnival rides, enjoy shows and activities and more!

**When:** Saturday, October 5, to Sunday, October 6

**Time:** 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**Where:** Peacock Park

2820 McFarlane Road

Miami, FL 33133

**Cost:** \$10-\$15, children under 24 months FREE

**More:** For details, please visit <http://coconutgrovepumpkinpatch.com/>.

### Target Free Friday

MCM and Target invite you to celebrate every month with fun interactive activities and crafts, storytelling and much more! You can also explore hundreds of bilingual, interactive exhibits which are related to arts, culture, community and communication for FREE!

**When:** Friday, October 18

**Time:** 3 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Where:** Miami Children's Museum

980 MacArthur Causeway

Miami, FL 33132

**Cost:** FREE

**More:** For details, please visit <http://www.miamichildrensmuseum.org/>.



The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring high-quality early care and education for children in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. Through a variety of affordable and innovative early education and voluntary prekindergarten programs, the Coalition serves more than 50,000 children ages birth to 5-years-old and their families. Founded in 2000, the Early Learning Coalition is among 31 similar organizations in the State of Florida established following the enactment of the School Readiness Act, which consolidated Florida's early learning services into one integrated program. For more information, visit [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org).

*As laws, details and personal situations vary from person to person and state to state, articles and content contained in the newsletter are not and cannot be used as a substitute for legal, parental, health, mental health, or any other advice.*

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