



# Provider News Alert

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Issue 2

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## ELC Mission & Vision

### Mission

To promote high-quality school readiness, voluntary pre-kindergarten and after school programs, thus increasing all children's chances of achieving future educational success and becoming productive members of society. The Coalition seeks to further

## President's Message



On Saturday, February 14, 2009, I attended a legislative forum with Representatives James Bush, III (D-109) and Dwight Bullard (D-118). The forum was organized by the Alliance for Early Care & Education in collaboration with the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe. Providers were offered an opportunity to discuss proposed legislation and other challenges facing early childhood education. Participants asked questions, exchanged ideas and provided feedback in an open and honest dialogue with the panel. David Lawrence, Jr., ELC Board member and President of The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation, gave an inspiring speech about the importance of advocacy and active involvement in the future of our children's early education.

To continue making positive strides in our community in these challenging economic times, it is more important than ever that we work collaboratively towards the common goal of improving our early education system. We have accomplished a lot, but much more work remains to be done.

Please know that there is a strong and consistent advocacy effort taking place on your behalf at the state level. The effort includes members of the board of directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, the Association of Early Learning Coalitions, the Early Learning Advisory Council, the Florida Children Services Council, and others. Our main funder, the Agency for Workforce Innovation, has also been very actively involved in advocating in front of the legislature for resources to support early education. As you already know, I also spend a good part of my time locally and in Tallahassee addressing issues that impact you, your work, our community, our children and our families.

I remain at your service.

Sincerely,

Evelio C. Torres  
President & CEO  
Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

## Important Announcements

### Celebrating Black History Month



February is Black History Month. The commemoration of black history was originated in 1926 by African-American historian, author, and journalist Carter G. Woodson, Ph.D., who also founded the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. Dr. Woodson is known as the Father of Black History and chose February to celebrate the achievements and contributions of African-Americans because it was the birth month of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick

the physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs of Miami-Dade and Monroe County children with a priority toward the ages before birth through age 5.

## Vision

To ensure a comprehensive and integrated system providing for all families and their children, beginning before birth to 5 years, the affordable opportunity to enter school ready to learn and succeed in life.



Douglass.

Listed below are some links for educators as well as activities taking place around town to celebrate Black History Month:

Links for educators:

<http://www.asalh.org>

<http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/bhm/>

<http://www.floridablackhistory.com/>

[http://resources.kaboose.com/kidslinks/social-studies/black-history/Black\\_History.html](http://resources.kaboose.com/kidslinks/social-studies/black-history/Black_History.html)

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/africanamericanheritage/>

Links for activities around Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties:

<http://www.hmsf.org/exhibitions-bcross.htm>

[http://www.mdpls.org/news/press/pr/2009/01\\_16\\_09jazzRoots.asp](http://www.mdpls.org/news/press/pr/2009/01_16_09jazzRoots.asp)

<http://www.miamidade.gov/transit/blackhis.asp>

<http://www.fl-keys.com/news/news.cfm?sid=2060>

## "Hanging of the Hands" to Celebrate Children's Week

Help us celebrate Children's Week in Tallahassee by creating hand artwork with your children! Each year, child care centers, schools, and individuals throughout the State participate in this time-honored exhibition. The hands are hung in the Capitol Rotunda and remain there for a week, reminding our elected officials and advocates of our youngest and most cherished, our children.

Artwork Instructions:

- Children's hand artwork should be stapled onto string or ribbon **vertically** in lengths of 8 to 10 feet
- Please do not send individual hands without connecting them to string/ribbon
- Please do not send large signs
- You may decorate the hands with colorful artwork, stories and attach small pictures and posters (no larger than 11" x 14")

Please submit your children's artwork to the Coalition no later than **Monday, March 16, 2009**. If you have any questions, please contact Gabriel Carreras at (305) 646-7220, ext. 276 or via email at [gcarreras@elcmdm.org](mailto:gcarreras@elcmdm.org).

## Child Care Executive Partnership Program

Take advantage of a great program! Congratulations to those providers who have submitted their CCEP agreements to Alina Soto at the Coalition. The next step is to fax the Step One Pre-Screening Form with your employee's information to Sharon Gordon at (305) 514-6152 if you are in Miami-Dade County, and to Kathy Snyder at (305) 292-7156 if you are in Monroe County.

For eligible employees, send only the Pre-Screening Form; there is no need to send supporting documentation to Ms. Gordon or Ms. Snyder. Once the Pre-Screening Form is received, someone will contact the employee to arrange an eligibility appointment.

Clarification: Owners of early care & education centers are not

eligible for reimbursement for the care of their own children in their center. For more information on the CCEP program visit our website at [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org), or call Alina Soto at (305) 646-7220, ext. 282.

## Board Committees

### Upcoming Board and Committee Meetings:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Finance	23-Feb	8:00 AM	ELC Board Room
Provider Services	25-Feb	10:00 AM	ELC Board Room
Program & Strategy	25-Feb	1:00 PM	ELC Board Room
Board of Directors	02-Mar	8:00 AM	ELC Board Room

## Miami-Dade County News Briefs

### *School Readiness*

#### Provider Services Committee Meeting

Your attendance is encouraged at the Wednesday, February 25th Provider Services Committee meeting, to be held in the ELC's board room at 10:00 a.m. This is a perfect opportunity to receive important updates and openly discuss issues concerning the early education community. We look forward to seeing you there.

#### Eligibility 101: Learn the ABCs

The Eligibility Office of Miami-Dade County's Child Development Services (CDS) is offering, "Eligibility 101: Learn the ABCs."

If you have any eligibility questions, be sure to participate in this informative seminar. It is offered in both English and Spanish.



#### English Programs

Date: February 25, 2009  
Time: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. (noon)  
South Dade Gov't. Center, 10710 SW 211 Street, Second Floor

Date: March 11, 2009  
Time: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. (noon)  
Miami Gardens Center, 16405 NW 25 Avenue

#### Programmas Español

Fecha: Febrero 25, 2009  
Horario: 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
South Dade Gov't Center, 10710 SW 211 Street, Segundo Piso

Fecha: Marzo 11, 2009  
Horario: 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Miami Gardens Center, 16405 NW 25 Avenue

### The Original Harlem Globetrotters: Don't Miss the Hoop-la!

Join us for fun-filled excitement on **Sunday, March 1, 2009 at 3:00 p.m.** when the Original Harlem Globetrotters visit the American Airlines Arena!

All tickets are \$9.50 (although seating is limited in certain sections) and \$2 from each ticket will go back to the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe.

Also, if you arrive early make sure to check out Globetrotter University, a pre-game session promoting healthy lifestyles through the S.P.I.N. (Some Playtime Is Necessary) program. Doors open at 1:00 p.m. and the event begins at 1:30 p.m.

To order **ONLINE** at the special \$9.50 per-ticket rate, please visit:  
<https://www.heatlife.com/WebSell/default1.aspx?promCode=HGElc>.

Order your tickets early for best seats. The deadline is **Monday, February 23, 2009**. Don't miss out!

### ELC's Mall Walk



On Friday, January 30, 2009, the ELC Communications team held a mall walk at the Mall of the Americas. In addition to our ongoing partnerships with providers and community leaders, the Early Learning Coalition is focusing its outreach efforts on parents. Our goal is to continue raising awareness about the important role we play in bringing early care and education programs and services to our community's children. With increased support and feedback from parents, the Coalition's positive impact will continue to gain momentum. The ELC Communications department will conduct mall walks every other week, at various locations throughout the County.

Pictured in photo above: Gabriel Carreras, Media Coordinator, speaks to parents about ELC programs and services at the Mall of the Americas.

### Autism Speaks: Walk Now for Autism

Join Autism Speaks to raise money for autism research and awareness! The nation's largest grassroots autism walk program, Walk Now for Autism, unites and empowers thousands on behalf of a single, important cause.

**WHEN:** Sunday, February 22, 2009; Check-in: 8:30 a.m.; Walk begins: 10:00 a.m.

**WHERE:** Crandon Park on Key Biscayne

For more information or to register as an individual, team captain, or join an existing team, please visit

<http://www.walknowforautism.org/faf/home/default.asp?ievent=285608>.

## *Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Updates*

### New VPK Rates Now in Effect!

Please be advised that the new VPK rates for Miami-Dade County are now in effect! The Florida Legislature reduced the rate per child by \$53 dollars during the special legislative session in January.

As of February 1, 2009, the new VPK rates per hour, for both Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, will be \$4.83 instead of \$4.93.

The new rate for the summer program will be \$7.40 per hour. For additional information, please visit <http://vpkhelp.org/> or [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org).

Please call (305) 373-3521 should you have any questions regarding VPK rates in Miami-Dade County.

### VPK Readiness Rates

Calculation of the final 2007-2008 VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rates are scheduled for release by the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) at the beginning of the February 23, 2009 week. The DOE has confirmed it is still in the process of uploading data and verifying its accuracy, as well as testing the functionality of both <http://vpk.fldoe.org> (including the new LPP Status information for administrators) and the revised templates for the improvement plans.

### VPK Screening and Readiness Rate Presentation

On Monday, February 2, 2009, Shan Goff from the Office of Early Learning, Florida Department of Education (FLDOE), provided VPK information and updates respective to Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties on the following:

- 2008 Kindergarten Screening Results 2007-2008
- Preliminary VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rates
- Changes in 2009-2010 Kindergarten Screening
- Development of VPK Assessments

For details, please visit [http://www.vpkhelp.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&Itemid=74](http://www.vpkhelp.org/index.php?option=com_docman&Itemid=74) to view Ms. Goff's presentation on our website.

## *Monroe County News Briefs*

### *Voluntary Prekindergarten*

### New VPK Rates Now in Effect!

Please be advised that the new VPK rates for Monroe County are now in effect! The Florida Legislature reduced the rate per child by \$53 dollars during the special legislative session in January.

As of February 1, 2009, the new VPK rates per hour, for both Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, will be \$4.83 instead of \$4.93.

The new rate for the summer program will be \$7.40 per hour.  
For additional information, please visit <http://vpkhelp.org/> or [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org).

For questions regarding Monroe County's VPK rates, please contact Mary Williams at (305) 296-5557.

### **VPK Registration Round-Ups for the 2009-2010 School Year Program**

Spring VPK Registration Round-Ups for the 2009-2010 VPK School Year Program are just around the corner. The registration round-up dates are as follows:

- **Key West** - Saturday, April 4, 2009; 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Wesley House, 1304 Truman Avenue
- **Key Largo** - Saturday, April 18, 2009; 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Key Largo Library, Tradewinds Shopping Center
- **Marathon** - Saturday, April 18, 2009; 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., Marathon Library, 3251 Overseas Highway

\*Note: Ongoing registration for the 2009-2010 VPK School Year Program will be conducted at all Wesley House locations beginning Monday, May 4, 2009.

Additional details are forthcoming with flyers to be distributed to providers and throughout the community.

### **Save the Date:**

#### **Early Education and Care Directors Meeting**

Saturday, February 28, 2009; 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
First Baptist Church, 200 62nd Street, Ocean, Marathon

\*Lunch will be provided

Co-sponsored by Wesley House, the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, and the Child Care Provider Association of the Fabulous Florida Keys, this workshop will include a variety of topics of interest. ELC Board Member Alan Eckstein, from Monroe, will present an Advocacy for Early Childhood Issues training. Sue Ellen Spencer, aide to Representative Ron Saunders will also be present to answer questions and concerns. Additional topics include a DCF Licensing update from Lisa Barry-Toth, discussion with Child Find Specialist Linda Welsh regarding the special needs ESE preschool children survey, and other timely updates and announcements.

Please RSVP no later than February 23rd to 305-809-5000.

### **Quality Counts**

#### **One Step Closer to a Statewide QRIS!**

The Children's Trust agreed in late January 2009, that both Palm Beach and Broward Counties may use the name "Quality Counts" for their quality rating improvement system initiatives. This is an exciting and unifying step on our journey towards a statewide Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), and a success for the tri-county region. As other early learning coalitions begin to develop their own quality-rating collateral materials, ideas on how to incorporate a similar Quality Counts branding image and shared media campaign will be addressed in the near future.