



January 2009

Issue No. 17

## Provider News Alert

### OUR MISSION AND VISION

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#### Our 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 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.

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#### Our 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.

#### President's Message



Happy New Year to all!

With the holiday season behind us, we now look forward to a fresh new year. Although we are faced with a more than difficult economy, our staff and our partners are forging onward. In 2009, the ELC plans to carry on its mission to help children achieve educational success. We are planning a major literacy initiative in the spring to provide books and reading programs for children and with the help of our community partners we continue the development and deployment of training initiatives for providers in the Quality Counts program. These are some of the additional programs and efforts underway in our community to pave the way for our children to receive a quality early childhood education.

To health, happiness, and prosperity in 2009!

Evelio C. Torres, President & CEO

### IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Legislative Priorities

## Background

On average, over 90% of early learning funding is utilized in collaboration with early learning providers, either to pay for services to young children and their families or to improve the quality of these services through training, technical assistance, and placement of materials and resources in the early learning settings. Local early learning coalitions generate millions in local funding to maximize the match of federal dollars.

## Challenges

The early learning system is currently facing a serious financial crisis with millions of dollars being eliminated from the budget. Any additional reductions in state funding for School Readiness will likely also reduce the amount of federal matching dollars available to Florida. The Coalition's budget has already been reduced by \$1.1 million for fiscal year 2008 - 2009. It is a priority for the children of our community that:

- \* All existing funding for VPK and School Readiness is preserved
- \* New revenue sources are explored
- \* All Federal funds available are utilized to support children and families

## School Readiness Impact

Proposed budget cuts for SCHOOL READINESS include a reduction of \$5.85 million of General Revenue funding. The impact of these cuts include:

- \* Quality Child Care will be reduced, affecting working families whose employment is critical to the state's economic health
- \* Infants and toddlers on the child care waiting list will not be provided with early learning opportunities
- \* The current waiting list for children in desperate need of affordable child care is over 9,000. Additionally, enrollment is currently closed due to lack of funding

## Voluntary Prekindergarten Impact

Proposed budget cuts for VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN include a reduction of \$860,748.

- \* The school year base allocation (price per child) will be reduced by \$53.00 (\$2,628 to \$2,575) for the remainder of the school year program. The summer base allocation (price per child) will be reduced by \$438.00 (\$2,628 to \$2,190)
- \* Reduced dollars for teacher salaries, quality care and materials and basic operational expenses will further impact the availability of quality education for our young children

To download and print the Coalition's legislative priorities, please visit:

<http://www.elcmdm.org/Legislative/legislative.html>.

## Going Green



The Coalition is making strides to create a more green office environment. One of the first processes we are changing is the distribution method of our News Alert and other mass communications. This will help reduce the need for paper and cut down on the amount of waste in our environment.

To encourage providers to sign up for our electronic delivery service, we have created a contest. The first 20 providers that set up an official organization email-account to which they can receive Coalition correspondence will receive a gift card to AMC Movie Theaters. This contest is only open to providers who do not currently have an email address in our contact database. This contest has been extended until February 15, 2009. Please send your emails to [gcarreras@elcmdm.org](mailto:gcarreras@elcmdm.org). Complete contact information should be submitted, including: center name, address, phone and fax numbers.

## 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**

**In an effort to encourage participation, please see the descriptions of each Board Committee's responsibilities. If you are interested in attending any of these meetings or becoming involved, we have noted upcoming meetings below. You may also visit our website at [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org), and click on "Events" to view our calendar.**

**Executive Committee:** The Executive Committee is responsible for providing leadership for the Board. This is accomplished by setting policies to encourage effective governance, administration, and legal representation; reviewing and recommending legislative proposals at all levels of government; and resolving conflicts among committees and between the Coalition and other partners.

**Nominating Committee:** The Nominating Committee is responsible for nominating Officers and Members, and nominating replacement Officers when there are vacancies on the Board.

**Program Policy and Strategy Committee:** The Program Policy and Strategy Committee is responsible for evaluating Coalition programs, formulating strategy, and making policy recommendations to improve the quality of early care and education in Miami-Dade and

Monroe Counties.

**Provider Services Committee:** The Provider Services Committee is responsible for addressing the issues and concerns of both School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK) early care and education providers in Miami-Dade County.

**Governance and Bylaws Committee:** The Governance and Bylaws Committee periodically reviews the Coalition's Bylaws, policies and procedures. They are responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding policies that provide specific guidance and direction to the Coalition and its leadership concerning all significant aspects of governance.

**Audit Committee:** The Audit Committee meets to discuss audits carried out by outside independent entities to make sure the Coalition is in accordance with State Statutes and Laws as governed by the Agency for Workforce Innovation.

**Finance Committee:** The Finance Committee is responsible for providing oversight of the Coalition's financial obligations, for reviewing compliance with Coalition policies, procedures, and applicable laws and regulations.

**Legislative Advocacy Committee:** The Legislative Advocacy Committee is responsible for working with legislators in order to educate and promote funding and support for early care and education.

**Upcoming Board and Committee Meetings:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Program & Strategy Committee	21-Jan	1:00 PM	ELCMDM Board Room
Governance & Bylaws Committee	23-Jan	8:00 AM	ELCMDM Board Room
Finance Committee	26-Jan	8:00 AM	ELCMDM Board Room

**Miami-Dade County News Briefs**

**School Readiness Updates**

**Suspension of Managed Open Enrollment**

The Coalition has had continuous managed open enrollment since October 1, 2008. This has enabled us to serve additional families and provide school readiness services to more children. These additional services were made available based on funding availability. The enrollment target that was set has been exceeded and due to the lack of budget, the Coalition has made the decision to suspend managed open enrollment, beginning December 29, 2008.

Miami-Dade County Department of Human Services Child Development Services (CDS) is implementing the following process:

- \* Only clients with scheduled appointments will be seen at the eligibility offices. Walk-ins will not be accepted.
- \* The CDS eligibility offices has ceased extended evening hours and resume normal office operating hours.
- \* Families who are determined eligible for services must enroll their children into care within 10 days of receiving eligibility.

- \* Families who receive an appointment are not guaranteed to receive services. All services are based on funding availability;
- \* Families who have appointments scheduled and are determined eligible for services, will be placed into the Ready Pool.
- \* Based upon funding availability, families placed into the Ready Pool will be selected for services based upon the order in which they were placed into the Ready Pool.
- \* Families who do not have appointments scheduled, should apply to the Single Point of Entry/Unified Wait List at <https://spe.schoolreadiness.org/pe/>.

If you have questions or need assistance to apply to the Unified Wait List, please contact Child Care Resource and Referral at (305) 373-3521.

## Child Care Food Program

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) is teaming up with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to promote the Child Care Food Program, a federally funded USDA program that reimburses child care providers for serving nutritious meals and snacks to children.

"The Child Care Food Program encourages children to build healthy habits for life," said Philip E. Reeves, M.P.H., Bureau Chief of Child Nutrition Programs. "Parents seeking child care in Florida are encouraged to enroll their children in facilities that participate in this program."

DOH administers the Child Care Food Program in four types of child care-related settings:

In a **non-pricing child care center**, meals are available at no separate charge to eligible children.

In a **pricing child care center**, children from households whose income falls within the reduced-price income guidelines are eligible for reduced-price meals. These meals are priced at 40 cents for lunch/dinner, 30 cents for breakfast, and 15 cents for snacks.

Children from households whose income falls within the free guidelines are eligible for meals at no separate charge.

**Family day care homes:** Meals are available at no separate charge to eligible children.

**After-school programs:** The After-school Snack Program is a subcomponent of the Child Care Food Program. Snacks are available at no separate charge to eligible children.

**Homeless shelters and certain emergency shelters:** The Homeless Children Nutrition Program is a subcomponent of the Child Care Food Program. Meals are available at no separate charge to eligible children.

Households currently certified to receive food stamps or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families are automatically eligible to receive free meal benefits.

For more information on current Income Eligibility Guidelines used in determining a child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals, visit [www.doh.state.fl.us/CCFP/info/eligibility.html](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/CCFP/info/eligibility.html).

## VPK Updates

### **Miami-Dade Children Show Steady Improvements in Florida Mandated Readiness Test**

Congratulations to our providers and children! Results of the Florida Department of Education 2008 screenings further indicates that VPK enhances the school readiness of our children: public-school kindergarten children in Miami-Dade County who have completed VPK are making steady improvements, particularly with letter naming and letter sounding. From 2007 to 2008, there was an increase of 7.3% for letter naming and an increase of 5.2% in letter sounding.

Students are assessed within 30 days of entering kindergarten, and the results are based on a test that measures a child's performance in the classroom setting and two literacy measures that determine letter naming and initial sound fluencies.

With over 22,000 children assessed, Miami-Dade County ranked first among metropolitan counties in the state for percentage change in letter naming and second for letter sounding. Coalition Board Chairman Octavio A. Verdeja Jr. sends his warm congratulations to all those involved, "I am very pleased that our efforts and those of our partners have resulted in these improvements and successes."

Since 2005, when the first year assessments were mandated by the state, the percentage of students who have scored high on these assessments has increased by over 20%.

"We are thrilled to see the consistent improvements made by students throughout Florida, and especially by the children of Miami-Dade," says Evelio Torres, Coalition President and CEO. "The VPK program is needed to insure that all of our community's 4 year-olds are provided with the fundamentals for success in the elementary school setting...these results are proof of the program's effectiveness."

### **VPK Attendance**

Providers must maintain daily attendance on the CDS roster and the Parental Choice Form. These two forms should reflect the same information. If you do not have a pre-printed CDS roster with your VPK children's names by the start of your program, please contact CDS for a blank form for the month.

VPK allows three (3) un-excused absences each month and up to ten (10) days with a note from a parent. Furthermore, VPK allows providers to set their own attendance policy; this means you do not have to allow excessive absences for any child. At the time of enrollment, providers should inform parent(s) about their attendance policy.

### **What to Submit for Payment?**

Beginning with the 2008-2009 year, only the CDS roster should be submitted for your VPK payment. Also, any absentee notes must be submitted with your attendance at the end of the month in order to be paid for those days beyond the three (3) un-excused absences.

All Parental Choice Forms will be kept in the individual child's folder. The monitors will review them during their visits.

**IMPORTANT!** VPK providers are requested to submit the name(s) and supporting documents for one or two individuals who will function as chosen VPK staff substitute(s). It is important that the Coalition have correct credentials and background screenings for these substitutes on file. Providers were given the due date of October 31, 2008, to

submit this respective information-package. If a provider has not yet submitted this documentation, please do so immediately.

If a monitor finds an individual in a VPK classroom that is not the teacher, assistant, or substitute on-record with the Coalition, the provider will not be paid for that class on that day.

**ATTENTION PROVIDERS:**

Please visit [www.vpkhelp.org](http://www.vpkhelp.org) and search for your provider information. We are in the process of checking to ensure that all provider information is up-to-date. If your information needs to be corrected, please call Lizzette Quesada at (305) 646-7220, ext. 229, to provide us with accurate information.

## **NACCRRRA Raffle**

ENTER TO WIN A TRIP TO THE NACCRRRA 2009 National Policy Symposium in Washington, D.C.!

The Early Learning Coalition is inviting three lucky early care and education providers to attend the NACCRRRA conference in Washington, D.C. from March 10 - March 14, 2009. Join us on the Hill along with national childcare experts, leaders, and a network of your colleagues in learning how we can work together towards "Getting Child Care on the Right Track." Learn about real, workable policy solutions and initiatives that will help us change the current state of child care and create a brighter future for our nation's children.

As our guest, we will provide your airfare, transfers to the hotel, hotel stay for one, and a per diem for meals. Submit your name, center name, address, phone number, and email address to Alina Soto at [asoto@elcmdm.org](mailto:asoto@elcmdm.org), or fax to (786) 888-9282. Three providers will be selected from all entries at the Coalition office on Wednesday, January 28, 2009, at 3:00 p.m. You do not need to be in attendance for the drawing to be the lucky winner.

For more information on the conference, please visit [www.naccrra.org](http://www.naccrra.org).

## **Monroe County News Briefs**

### **Save the Dates:**

#### **Teaching Tools for Young Children Workshop**

**Trainers : Trina Rodriguez /Amber Eby , Monroe ELC Classroom Mentors**

**Thursday, January 15, 2009; 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.**

**St. James Children's Center, 87500 Overseas Highway, Islamorada**

Experiencing challenging behaviors in your classroom? This workshop will introduce participants to the "Child Behavior Toolbox," which gives teachers practical strategies in using positive behavior to create a plan in supporting young children. All materials will be supplied.

\*Note: This is the first workshop in a three part series. Part Two is scheduled for Thursday, February 12, 2009, and Part Three is scheduled for Saturday, March 14, 2009. Locations will be determined. Upon completion of all three workshops, participants will receive seven (7) of the required ten (10) in-service hours of child care training. Please RSVP to Laurie Dunn, Wesley House at 809-5000.

**2008 VPK Standards Training (for new VPK instructors)**  
**Trainers: Val Taylor, Wesley House/Trina Rodriguez, Monroe ELC**  
**Tuesday, January 20, 2009; 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.**  
**Wesley House, 1304 Truman Avenue, Key West**  
or  
**Saturday, January 31, 2009; 1:00 - 4:00 pm**  
**Wesley House, 1304 Truman Avenue, Key West**

Please RSVP to Val Taylor at 809-5000

**VPK Update Training (for instructors who have already completed a VPK Standards Training)**

**Upper Keys**

**Trainer: Jeanne Askins, MCSD**  
**Tuesday, January 20, 2009; 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.**  
**Key Largo School, Bldg. 6**  
or  
**Tuesday, January 20, 2009; 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.**  
**Coral Shores High School, Room 5109**

Please RSVP for either of these trainings to Jeanne Askins at [Jeanne.Askins@KeysSchools.com](mailto:Jeanne.Askins@KeysSchools.com).

**Lower Keys**

**Trainers: Val Taylor, Wesley House/Trina Rodriguez, Monroe ELC**  
**Saturday, January 31, 2009; 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

Please RSVP to Val Taylor at 809-5000

**Monroe County Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Wednesday, January 28, 2009, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Monroe County School District Board Room, 241 Trumbo Road, Key West**

Please join ELC staff, ELC Monroe board members and our community partners as we discuss important information of interest and concern to our early education and care provider community.

\*Participation via school district videoconferencing is available at Marathon High School, Room 2106, and Coral Shores High School, Library Media Center Conference Room, Tavernier. To participate via conference-call, please dial 1-888-813-8477. The passcode is 143130.

**Monroe County Happenings**

**38th Annual Florida Keys Health Fairs**  
**Saturday, January 24, 2009; 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**  
**Fisherman's Hospital in Marathon, Methodist and Baptist Churches on Big Pine, and Key West High School**

FREE adult health services (including skin cancer screening, blood pressure, diabetes screening, vision testing, colon cancer screening, Pap smears, etc.) are available at all three locations. The health fairs are sponsored by the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and the Florida Keys AHEC.



\*Note: Children's health evaluations are available at the Marathon and Key West locations. For more information, please call (305) 243-4898 or visit [www.umdocs.org](http://www.umdocs.org).

## ELC Knowledge Center

This section of our News Alert provides parents, educators, and caregivers more information about services and programs administered by the ELC, as well as articles of interest. You may learn about upcoming trainings, special reports, and other issues such as inclusion and special needs services related to early childhood education and care.

### Inclusion and Special Needs

#### **Infant and Toddler Awareness Part 2: Temperament**

Temperament is an inherited tendency influenced by genetics and experiences. Both adults and children vary in their tendencies: some tend to be active while others tend to be quiet, some are focused while others are easily distracted, some dislike change while others love new things. Temperament is influenced by experiences and it changes as children grow and learn.

Understanding the role of temperament in behavior and learning is an important skill of an effective teacher. The first step is to become aware of our own temperaments as adults. Then, we can understand the unique temperaments of the children with whom we interact. This understanding provides the key to being aware of how to create a good fit between ourselves and children. Research shows that families and teachers can help children by creating this goodness of fit. Dr. Jerome Kagan says, "Goodness of fit means: does the child's personality match what the parent's/teacher's ideal is for the child?" As a teacher, you must learn to match the child rather than expect the child to fit your temperament. Every child needs to feel special, known and understood; especially those children that are hard-to-like.

Tips for teachers and families:

1. Consider how your own temperament affects your interactions and responses to children.
2. Use your knowledge of the unique temperaments of children to understand how children will react to new experiences and routines. For example, remind a child who dislikes change of upcoming changes to routine.
3. Help children and families understand the positive aspects of their temperaments. For example, consider what may be positive about a child who tends to be shy. Is the child observant?

"The critical issue for a parent or any adult working with young children is to observe that child, get to know what that child's individual uniqueness is and then create an environment that matches his or her particular style." -Dr. Jack P. Shonkoff

Next Month: Temperament: Finding Goodness of Fit

## Quality Counts

**Not involved with Quality Counts yet?** It's never too late to make a difference! A simple two-step process can get you on your way to giving the quality care that makes a

difference in the lives of the children and families of Miami-Dade/Monroe County.

Quality Counts is a voluntary rating system that reviews early learning programs according to clearly defined, high quality standards using a five star method of evaluation and offers supports and incentives to help providers reach their goals.

For more information or to download an application please visit the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe website at:

<http://www.elcmdm.org/qualitycounts/index.htm>.

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