



**Early Learning Coalition**  
of Miami-Dade/Monroe

# Provider News Alert

MARCH 2009

Issue 3

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## ELC Mission & Vision

### Mission

To promote high-quality school readiness, voluntary pre-

## President's Message



Our steadfast commitment to work in partnership with our community to develop high-quality early childhood education programs is at the heart of everything we do. We believe that if we provide you, our providers, with every resource to enhance your services, programs, and teachers' skills, our children will in turn be prepared for a lifetime of learning and success. The Curriculum Learning Communities (CLC) project was designed with this in mind, and will assist with the implementation of developmentally appropriate curricula in early learning programs. Initially, it will support programs using Creative Curriculum or the High/Scope approach, with plans to include other approved curricula in the future. CLC is based on best practices and lessons learned from the Ready Schools Miami project and other local and national early childhood curriculum implementation initiatives.

Please note that this year's legislative session began on March 3rd. I will continue to work diligently on our community's behalf alongside our very dedicated and hard working board of directors. This year's focus is to ensure that members of the legislature have a good understanding of the need to continue to work in partnership to improve the quality of our early care and education programs, and to provide incentives and higher reimbursement rates to providers. At the local level we will once again request consideration for a much needed School Readiness Program provider rate increase at the beginning of the next fiscal year, so make sure that your market rate information is up to date.

Another excellent opportunity by which to instill a lifelong love of learning in our children is the Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) project. RIF, the nation's largest and oldest children's literacy organization, provided a matching grant to the Early Learning Coalition in the amount of \$123,750 to operate a book distribution program. The Coalition is also contributing \$41,250. New, free books will be purchased and distributed to approximately 25,000 children in both Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. Children will have the opportunity to select a book at three distribution events (for a total of three books), which will include fun, literacy-related activities. Our goals for this program are to encourage children's enthusiasm for reading and to motivate children, families and community members to read together.

Lastly, thanks to continued collaboration between the Provider Services Committee, chaired by Commissioner Natacha Seijas, our providers, and the Department of Health (DOH), a moratorium has been placed on the increase to DOH inspection fees. Commissioner Seijas has taken the issue to the health department's leadership for their review and reconsideration.

Our partnerships, and innovative programs and services, play critical roles in helping us achieve our mission. I encourage you to visit our website at [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org), to learn more about the various resources we offer so that together we strengthen our advocacy on behalf of children.

I remain at your service.

Sincerely,

Evelio C. Torres  
President & CEO

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.

### 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.

Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

## Important Announcements

### Celebrate Children's Week with the Children's Advocate Office at Miami Children's Museum!

The Children's Advocate Office at Miami-Dade County's Department of Human Services invites you to celebrate Children's Week at Miami Children's Museum. The event will be held at the museum, located off of I-395 between Downtown Miami and South Beach, on **Friday, March 20, 2009, at 4:00 p.m.**

To celebrate the inclusive spirit of Children's Week, participants will engage in activities to help raise awareness for children's issues and gain momentum for the statewide event taking place in Tallahassee from March 29th to March 31st.

Join us in strengthening Florida's families by participating in events and outreach efforts aimed at promoting the health, safety, and well-being of our children!

### "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).

### CCEP Program is a Success in Miami-Dade County

The Child Care Executive Partnership (CCEP) program has been helping families throughout Miami-Dade County since its launch in July 2008. Thanks to our partnership with you, our providers, we are pleased to report the program has been a

great success. Due to overwhelming demand, we have already reached maximum capacity in a relatively short time. As a result, we will not be able to accept new recipients at this time but will continue to pursue additional funding. We will keep you informed of any changes. For more information, please contact Alina Soto at (305) 646-7220, ext. 282 or via email at [asoto@elcmdm.org](mailto:asoto@elcmdm.org).

## ELC Board of Directors

As seen in previous news alerts, we have featured our board members to familiarize our community with the dedicated professionals who serve on the Coalition's board of directors. In this issue, it is our pleasure to highlight Board Director **Daniel Armstrong, Ph.D.**



Daniel Armstrong, Ph.D., is professor and associate chair of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, where he also serves as the director of the Mailman Center for Child Development and the University of Miami Sickle Cell Center. He is also the associate chief of staff for Holtz Children's Hospital at the UM/Jackson Memorial Medical Center.

Dr. Armstrong received his education at Brevard College, Duke University, and Southern Methodist University. Later he received his Ph.D. in pediatric and child clinical psychology at West Virginia University and the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. He joined the faculty of the University of Miami in 1985, and has worked in the South Florida community since that time. Dr. Armstrong oversees the service, training, and research programs of the Mailman Center for Child Development, a program that provides services to more than 20,000 children with special needs each year.

Additionally, Dr. Armstrong trains more than 70 advanced neurodevelopmental disabilities professionals as part of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), the Maternal and Child Health Bureau Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) programs, and the Florida Department of Health's Children's Medical Services-supported Family Intervention and Management program. He also conducts innovative clinical and community research on children with special health care needs.

For more than 25 years, Dr. Armstrong has been an active researcher in the area of neurodevelopmental disabilities, particularly those related to chronic or genetic illnesses like childhood cancer, sickle cell disease, HIV, and Fragile X. He has been a national and international leader of many multiple institution clinical trials sponsored by the National Cancer Institute; the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; and the National Institute of Mental Health.

Dr. Armstrong served on the Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health for the American Academy of Pediatrics. Presently he is a member of the National Cancer Institute's PDQ Supportive Care Editorial Board and the board of directors for the Florida Division of the American Cancer Society. Recently Dr. Armstrong completed a term as the chair of the Congressionally-mandated Sickle Cell Disease Advisory Committee for the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

A strong advocate for children at the local, state, and national levels, Dr. Armstrong was responsible for developing a national model program for child health community research as part of the Dyson Foundation/American Academy of Pediatrics Community Pediatric Training Initiative. He is very proud of the strong partnerships that have been developed between the Mailman Center and the Jackson Health System, United Way of Miami-Dade, The Children's Trust, the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, and Miami-Dade County Public Schools. These partnerships are ones he believes most effectively improve the lives of children in South Florida.

Dr. Armstrong and his wife, a 4th-grade-teacher at Gulliver, live in Miami. Their oldest son is a firefighter/paramedic with Miami-Dade Fire Rescue, and their youngest son is a sophomore at the University of Central Florida.

### Upcoming Board and Committee Meetings:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Program & Strategy	25-Mar	1:00 PM	ELC Board Room
Finance	30-Mar	8:00 AM	ELC Board Room
Board of Directors	06-Apr	8:00 AM	ELC Board Room

### Employee Spotlight

As a new regular feature, our news alerts will shine a spotlight on our valued employees and the important work they accomplish in bringing quality early childhood education to our community. In this issue, it is our pleasure to highlight **Pam Hollingsworth**, Director of Quality Counts.

With over 25 years of service on behalf of children, Pam Hollingsworth has proven that her commitment to improving the quality of early childhood education is one close to her heart. On February 19 and 20, 2009, Pam and approximately 15-20 quality-ratings professionals and early childhood advocates from states around the country convened in Washington, D.C., to participate in a day-and-a-half-long forum to discuss the critical issue of equity within the early education community and its programs. Hosted by the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI) and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), those invited to participate in the symposium are actively involved in extending the reach of NAEYC's voluntary accreditation to early education providers in underserved and culturally diverse communities. Keynote speakers at the event included NBCDI President Carol Brunson Day and NAEYC Executive Director Mark Ginsberg, Ph.D.



By gathering data of quality initiatives introduced in other states, with particular attention paid to the enhancement of cultural diversity and competency, Pam and her fellow collaborators will continue to meet on an ongoing basis. Moreover, a status report is expected to be released in the next few weeks documenting their findings and recommendations to NBCDI and NAEYC.

Prior to her now year-long tenure as the director of Quality Counts at the Early Learning Coalition, Pam was the director of education for Family Central, Inc. Previously she also worked for an international child care corporation as the manager of professional development, and collaborated on a Fulbright project to assess the effects of a research driven master's degree program on teacher preparation of ethnically and linguistically diverse students. Pam affirms her interest in cultural competency and equity is not only professional but personal. She serves on the council for the African-American Research Library and Cultural Center in Ft. Lauderdale and possesses a master's degree in multi-cultural education and early childhood. Pam is a fan of museums, historic homes, and the theatre; she is also a collector of outsider art.

### Miami-Dade County News Briefs

#### *School Readiness*

#### Leap into Literacy at the Miami Metro Zoo!

WPBT2's KidVision invites parents and children to a **FREE** event, Leap Into Literacy, at the Miami

Metro Zoo (at the Gazelle Grove Picnic area), on Saturday, March 14, 2009, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. You and your family will enjoy arts and crafts, presentations from A Place of Our Own/Los Niños en Su Casa, and a chance to meet Curious George.

Registration is required. To do so, please visit:

[http://www.mychannel2.org/site/Survey?SURVEY\\_ID=1961&ACTION\\_REQUIRED=URI\\_ACTION\\_USE\\_R\\_REQUESTS](http://www.mychannel2.org/site/Survey?SURVEY_ID=1961&ACTION_REQUIRED=URI_ACTION_USE_R_REQUESTS).

This event is sponsored by: WPBT2 KidVision, A Place of Our Own, Los Niños en Su Casa, BP, First 5, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and The Parent Academy.

### 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 Program

Date: March 11, 2009

Time: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. (noon)

Miami Gardens Center, 16405 NW 25 Avenue

#### Programa Español

Fecha: Marzo 11, 2009

Horario: 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Miami Gardens Center, 16405 NW 25 Avenue

## *Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Updates*

### VPK Registration for the 2009-2010 School Year Began on Saturday, February 28

VPK registration for the 2009-2010 school-year began on Saturday, February 28, 2009. This year, in an effort to reduce the amount of wait-time for parents, registration is taking place in three tiers. Please assist us in communicating this schedule to your parents. By following this schedule, the process will be more efficient.

#### Tier 1

- Children enrolled in the School Readiness/subsidized childcare program turning 4-years-old by September 1, 2009
- Privates - children not enrolled in subsidized childcare, but who attend a facility that has VPK and/or School Readiness

#### Tier 2

- Children selected through the School Board Lottery

#### Tier 3

- General Public

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Saturdays</b>
<b>1 School Readiness</b>	<b>February 28–March 20</b>	<b>February 28 March 7 and 14</b>
<b>1 Privates</b>	<b>March 23–April 4</b>	<b>March 21 and 28 April 4</b>
<b>2 MDCPS</b>	<b>April 17–May 7</b>	<b>April 18 and 25 May 2</b>
<b>3 Public Kick Off</b>	<b>May 18–ongoing</b>	<b>June 6, 13, 20, 27 August 1, 8, 15</b>

**Sites:**

Miami Gardens Neighborhood Service Center  
16405 NW 25th Avenue  
Miami Gardens, Florida 33054

Frankie Shannon Rolle Neighborhood Service Center  
3750 South Dixie Highway  
Miami, Florida 33133

Naranja Neighborhood Service Center  
13955 SW 264th Street  
Miami, Florida 33032

**Release of the 2007-2008 VPK Readiness Rates**

Calculation of the final 2007-2008 VPK Readiness Rates were released by the Florida Department of Education (DOE) on Thursday, February 26, 2009. Accordingly, 54 percent of students who completed Florida's VPK program last year demonstrated overall classroom readiness compared to 42 percent of students who did not attend VPK.

Providers were rated on a scale of zero to 300 based on how well their students performed in the three key early learning areas of alphabet recognition, sound recognition and classroom readiness. Reports of specific VPK providers' performance can be found online at: <https://vpk.fldoe.org/InfoPages/ReportCriteria.aspx>.

**Some facts:**

- The 2007-2008 minimum readiness rate has been set at 214 out of 300. Eighty-five percent of Florida's VPK providers earned a readiness rate of 214 or higher.
- The minimum readiness rate has continued to increase since it was first established. In 2005 2006 the rate was set at 201. In 2006-2007 the minimum rate was 211.
- Not all providers received rates. Readiness rates were only calculated for providers with a minimum of four children who were enrolled in the VPK program for 70 percent or more of the total instructional hours and participated in each of the three kindergarten screening measures.
- Florida's 2007-2008 readiness rates reflect the performance of 91 percent of all VPK providers.

\*Information is taken from the Florida Department of Education (DOE) and Agency for Workforce Innovation's (AWI) joint press release on Thursday, February 26, 2009, "VPK Readiness Rate Press Release" and "VPK Readiness Rate Fact Sheet."

## Professional Development and Teacher Resources

The Florida Department of Education (DOE), Office of Early Learning's (OEL) VPK regional facilitators, and other DOE-approved trainers are offering face-to-face and online professional development opportunities, in addition to frequently updated online resources for directors, teachers, assistants, and parents.

For detailed descriptions of the trainings below, please visit <http://www.vpkhelp.org/resources/resources.html>.

Face-to-face trainings include:

- Florida VPK Education Standards
- What's New: Florida VPK Education Standards 2008
- Emergent Literacy in the VPK Classroom
- Integrating the VPK Standards: Phonological Awareness
- Florida VPK Education Standards: What Parents Should Know - It's Okay to Play in VPK! Parent Train-the-Trainer Workshop
- Florida VPK Education Standards: What Parents Should Know - It's Okay to Play in VPK! Parent Workshop
- Mathematical Thinking in the VPK Classroom

Online trainings can be accessed at the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) website, [www.myflorida.com/childcare/training](http://www.myflorida.com/childcare/training), and include:

- Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors
- English Language Learners in the VPK Classroom
- VPK Director Credential
- Mathematical Thinking in the VPK Classroom

Online resources include:

- Bright Beginnings
- Sample Lesson Plans Based on the Florida VPK Education Standards
- VPK Teacher Toolkit
- VPK Teacher Toolkit: Language and Vocabulary Folder
- VPK Teacher Toolkit: Mathematical Thinking Folder
- VPK Teacher Toolkit: Social Problem-Solving in the VPK Classroom Folder

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## Monroe County News Briefs

### Wesley House Launches New Child Care Professional Academy

Wesley House has recently been licensed by the Commission for Independent Learning. The new Child Care Professional Academy will be offering Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC) coursework. Upcoming classes will be held in Key West and the Upper Keys beginning in March.

For additional information, please contact Michele Morgan at 809-5000.

### Preparations for Children's Week, March 30 - April 6

Monroe County providers are asked to participate in preparations for Children's Week. 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")

In Monroe, Wesley House can pick up your artwork and deliver it to Tallahassee for you. **Artwork must be ready for pick-up by March 16, 2009.** Contact Anne Hoyt at 809-5000 to schedule a pick-up date.

### *Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Updates*

#### 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

**Teaching Tools for Young Children Workshop** -- Second chance for those who missed the first offering!

Trainer: Trina Rodriguez, Monroe ELC Classroom Mentor

Wednesday, March 25, 2009; 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Banana Cabanna Academy, 22673 Pieces of Eight Road, Cudjoe Key

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

\*Note: This is the first workshop in a three-part series. A total of six (6) of the required ten (10) in-service hours of child care training will be awarded upon completion.

Please RSVP to Trina Rodriguez at (786) 325-3836