



# Provider News Alert

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Issue 8

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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

## President's Message



Quality Counts has reached an exciting milestone in its delivery of quality rating improvement services to center-based programs and family childcare homes in Miami-Dade County. This voluntary five-star-rating system is entering into the Renewal phase which signifies that many early care and education providers have engaged in continuous program improvement for at least one year.

In order for early care and education providers to continue with a subsequent year of the improvement process or request a formal environmental assessment from a reliably trained assessor, they must complete an update report and submit it to the Coalition for verification. Once confirmed, programs that choose to undergo a formal assessment will receive a Star Rating. We anticipate the first Star Ratings will be awarded by mid-summer. To learn more about Quality Counts and to access a list of our participating early care and education providers, please visit <http://elcmdm.org/QualityCounts/index.htm>. Thank you.

As always, I remain at your service.

Sincerely,

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

## Important Announcements

### The Coalition Honors Miami-Dade County Officials for Their Support in Opposing HB 501

At the June 1st board meeting, Chairman Dennis C. Moss, Board of County Commissioners, District 9; Assistant County Attorney Jess Mc Carty; and Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Joe Rasco were honored for their support in opposing House Bill 501 which called for the abolishment of the state's early learning coalitions.

Chairman Moss is pictured (center) with Director of the Department of Human Services Phyllis Tynes-Saunders (left); and Special Assistant for Social Services Irene Taylor-Wooten, Office of the County Manager (right).



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.

## Upcoming Board & Committee Meetings

Program & Strategy  
June 24 at 1:00 p.m.  
ELC Board Room

Finance  
June 29 at 8:00 a.m.  
ELC Board Room

Provider Services  
June 30 at 10:00 a.m.  
ELC Board Room



Assistant County Attorney Jess McCarty (left) graciously accepts his award and shakes hands with Coalition Board Chairman Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr. (center), and Coalition President & CEO Evelio Torres (right).

## Our Provider News Alerts Have Gone Green!

Please visit [http://elcmdm.org/newsroom/news\\_alerts.htm](http://elcmdm.org/newsroom/news_alerts.htm) to download current and archived issues of the Provider News Alert. If you still wish to receive a hard-copy version, please call us at (305) 646-7220 and we will be happy to mail you one.



## The Coalition Participates in The Children's Trust Family Expo

On Saturday, May 30, 2009, the Coalition participated in The Children's Trust Family Expo, an annual day-long family festival at the Miami-Dade Fair and Expo Center. Volunteers Yvette Medina, Karen Molinario, Georgi Payne, Ana Rodriguez, Jackye Russell, Bethany Sands, Qin He, Terry Wilson, Yasmin Wong-Peraza, Sandy Ampudia, and Angelo Parrino were on-hand to answer questions about the Coalition and its programs and services; hand out coloring books and crayons; and simply offer a friendly face to thousands of families and children.



Georgi Payne (left) warmly greets a little girl and her mother who visit the Coalition's table.

President and CEO Evelio Torres (right) joins the volunteer team in representing the Coalition.



Pictured from left to right are Ana Rodriguez, Jackye Russell, Yasmin Wong-Peraza, Georgi Payne, and Bethany Sands.

Ana Rodriguez (right) and Jackye Russell (far right) assist parents and children by handing out Coalition information and collateral, and answering any questions.



### **Seminar for Afterschool Providers on *The Florida Standards for Quality Afterschool Programs***

The Florida Afterschool Network (FAN) is pleased to announce it has received sponsorship from AWI's Office of Early Learning to host 15 regional seminars throughout Florida featuring *The Florida Standards for Quality Afterschool Programs*.

**WHO:** Afterschool providers from all venues, serving children grades K-5

**WHAT:** Participants will receive a print copy of *The Florida Standards for Quality Afterschool Programs* and will be introduced to all seven categories and 45 elements

**WHEN:** Saturday, October 24, 2009; 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

WHERE: Trinity Church  
17801 NW 2nd Ave.  
Miami, FL 33169

Registration is FREE to all afterschool providers who register through FAN's website at [www.myfan.org](http://www.myfan.org) or by submitting the registration flyer available for download at <http://www.elcmdm.org/events/trainings/MiamiRegForm.pdf>.

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## 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 **Dabney G. Park, Jr., Ph.D.**



As the Founding Partner of Performance, Dr. Dabney Park is an executive recruiter with deep experience in strategic planning, executive team building, organization development, and leadership training. He has served as founder of Performance Executive Search, Senior Partner in Mark Stanley & Company / EMA Partners International, Executive Vice President of Thoughtware, Vice President of the Higher Education Management Institute, and Executive Officer of the Episcopal Diocese of Southeast Florida. He was a professor at the University of Cincinnati, Staten Island Community College, and Florida International University.

Dabney Park, who is fluent in Spanish, has worked extensively in business and industry in the U.S. and Latin America, including work with Fortune 500 companies, medium-sized companies, and small companies in a wide variety of industries. He also has considerable experience in higher education and the nonprofit world.

A Fulbright Fellow and medieval historian, Dr. Park is a principal author of *Strategic Decisions: Key Questions and Indicators for Trustees* and coauthor of *Strategic Analysis* (Washington, DC: Association of Governing Boards, 1987 and 1989). He also wrote *The Care of Learning: Resources for Theological Education in the Episcopal Church* (New York: Board for Theological Education, Episcopal Church Center, 1991), the AGB Pocket Publication on *The Board's Role in Planning*, and the National Center for Nonprofit Board's pamphlet on *Strategic Planning and the Nonprofit Board Member*. Dr. Park received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Texas and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Tulane University.

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## Team Member Spotlight

This month, the spotlight shines on another valued team member and the important work she accomplishes in bringing quality early childhood education to our community. In this issue, it is our pleasure to highlight **Melody Thelwell**, Director of Contracts and Procurement.

Melody Thelwell began her tenure at the Coalition in August 2007 as the director of contracts and procurement. Prior to that, she acquired 13 years of experience working in contracts management for both public and private companies. When she first arrived at the Coalition she discovered that the Contracts and Procurement department could benefit from a boost in internal organization; she was equal to the task. "It was baptism-by-fire for me," she says. "But since 2007, we have worked hard to streamline the department, whereby the files are uniform, the policies and procedures contain all the state and federal mandates, and our procurement process is improved and all of its aspects consistent."



Melody's leadership is a testament to her efforts to enhance the organization and practices in Contracts and Procurement; most recently the department was commended during a KPMG/AWI audit for the clear and concise manner of the Coalition's contracts, their respective files and procurements, issued during the 2008-2009 fiscal year. She enjoys working with the Coalition's providers and vendors by developing "win-win" relationships and "quick & dirty" solutions.

Addressing the daily requests of the ELC staff, the Coalition's providers, and partners like Miami-Dade County and The Children's Trust, and brainstorming with colleagues to find solutions to any internal/external challenges are the most meaningful aspects of her work. "I will carry these experiences with me in my present and future life," she says.

Melody possesses a Master of Public Administration and happily admits her hobbies and activities outside of work fully encompass her family.

## Our Partners

Much of our success is attributed to the contributions of our valued partners. After all, they play a key role in helping us bring high-quality early care and education programs and services to our children. In this issue, it is our pleasure to highlight Head Start/Early Head Start.



Head Start/Early Head Start provides comprehensive child development services for low-income children and families in Miami-Dade County. The program is open to children ages newborn through five-years-old, and provides instruction and care for children in a classroom setting.

The Early Learning Coalition has entered into an exciting and unique partnership with Miami-Dade Community Action Agency's (CAA) Head Start/Early Head Start through Quality Counts, the County's voluntary quality-rating-improvement system.

The Coalition funds and implements Quality Counts in partnership with The Children's Trust and The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation (ECIF)/Ready Schools Miami. During the 2008-2009 school year, 72 Head Start/Early Head Start grantees and delegates entered Quality Counts and received a baseline rating. Many of these programs have already successfully entered the phase of continuing quality improvement.

The partnership is coordinated by the Coalition which provides Head Start/Early Head Start with administrative support and training for its curriculum

specialists. In turn, these specialists assist the Head Start programs in achieving their goals in the area of professional development and overall quality improvement.

Head Start is widely recognized for its leading national reputation in providing high-quality early childhood care and education for our country's most vulnerable and underserved young learners. Thus Head Start/Early Head Start's participation in Quality Counts is significant in recognizing the merits and importance of high-quality in the entire early care and education system. Moreover, their partnership helps us build the integrated early learning system that all of Miami-Dade County's young children deserve to jumpstart their success in school and in life.

To learn more about Head Start/Early Head Start, visit <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ohs/> and <http://www.miamidade.gov/caa/hsrecruitment.asp>.

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## Miami-Dade County News Briefs

### *School Readiness*

#### Early Reading First (ERF): Child Language and Literacy, 2008-2009 Assessment Report

The Early Learning Coalition advocates that a high-quality early learning environment and developmentally appropriate curricula and activities (particularly those that cultivate language and literacy skills) play a critical role in helping a child achieve success in school and in life. The Early Reading First (ERF) program supports the development of early childhood centers of excellence that focus on all areas of development, especially early language, cognitive, and pre-reading skills that prepare children for continued school success. Children from low-income families are the primary recipients of the program's services.

Of the 173 children that participated in ERF (and one student who was not in attendance on testing day), 88 were enrolled in veteran classes in which their teachers had participated since the program's inception. The other 85 children were students in new classes beginning in 2007. The Early Reading First (ERF): Child Language and Literacy, 2008-2009 Assessment Report summarizes the environmental data collected in participating Cohort 3 pre-kindergarten classrooms. The five centers that participated in ERF were Centro Mater West, KidCo Childcare Center, South Dade Catholic Charities, REM Learning Center, and Bola Childcare and Learning Center.

To assess the quality of the classroom environment, the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) measurement tool was utilized. Overall results indicate that the children who participated in ERF classrooms with high-quality literacy environments showed progress at the end of the year, and thus are likely to enter school ready to learn. To read the report in its entirety, please visit our website at <http://elcmdm.org/newsroom/EarlyChildhoodReports.html>.

## Volunteering for Fun at a 'Day in the Park'

On Friday, May 29, 2009, the Coalition pitched in to assist with the children's 'Day in the Park' field trip at Amelia Earhart Park in Hialeah. Volunteers Michelle Meilan, Lauren Melley, Belinda Jeanty, Sandy Ampudia, Miriam Altman, Maritza Fuentes, and Bethany Sands all posed for a photo. They are pictured from left to right.



The Coalition's Jackye Russell and Child Development Services' Nanette Bartel and Iliana Acosta also contributed their time and energy to the facilitation of the event.

## REMINDER to All Providers Receiving School Readiness Funding

The new provider agreement for 2009-2010 will be mailed to you in the coming weeks. **All providers who serve School Readiness children are required to complete and submit the agreement to the Coalition no later than July 1, 2009.**

Failure to submit an agreement by the July 1st deadline will affect your ability to provide, and receive payment for, School Readiness-funded services.

Please visit [http://www.elcmdm.org/our\\_services/SchoolReadiness.html](http://www.elcmdm.org/our_services/SchoolReadiness.html) to download the 2009-2010 School Readiness Provider Agreement or to acquire other information and updates related to the provider agreement. Thank you.

## \$2 From the Purchase of Every "When Elmo Grows Up" Event Ticket Goes Right Back to the Coalition!



When Elmo and his Sesame Street Live friends think about growing up, it's a musical show-and-tell! Elmo thinks about becoming a "weather monster," but has a hard time predicting his own forecast; he wants to be anything and everything all at once!

"When Elmo Grows Up" includes lessons on perseverance, teamwork and the power of imagination. Children learn that if they believe in themselves and are willing to try, the possibilities are endless.

Purchase tickets online at:

<https://www.heatlife.com/WebSell/Default1.aspx?promcode=elmomdm116>.

### SHOW SCHEDULE:

Saturday, June 13: 10:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m. & 5:30 p.m.

Sunday, June 14: 1:00 p.m. & 4:30 p.m.

Seats are only \$10.75 with a \$4.00 service charge per order. Remember that \$2 from the purchase of every ticket benefits the Coalition! For questions regarding ticket sales, please contact Basit Hasan, American Airlines Arena Group Sales Manager, at (786) 777-4386 or via e-mail at [bhasan@heat.com](mailto:bhasan@heat.com).

## Tips to Help Complete Your ASQs

Providers, we need your help! Please return your pending Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQs) as soon as possible. If you need additional or updated age protocols please call (305) 270-2905 (south of Flagler Street) or (305) 953-6007 (north of Flagler Street).

Child Development Services (CDS) is responsible for implementation of the annual screening mandate. Please support them in this important undertaking.

Tips on completing your ASQ screenings:

- Please complete each ASQ within two weeks from the day received.
- Please have parents sign the yellow consent form.
- Complete the white and pink answer sheet entirely.
- Return the package to us in a self-addressed envelope.

## Early Care and Education Providers' Business Meeting

DATE & TIME: **Wednesday, June 24, 2009**  
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. (English)  
2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. (Spanish)

Location: Martin Luther King Building (MLK)  
2525 NW 62 Street, 2nd Floor, Miami  
(305) 514-6000

NOTE: A \$4.00 PARKING FEE IS CHARGED TO ALL THOSE ATTENDING MEETINGS AT THE MARTIN L. KING BLDG.

It is the policy of Miami-Dade County to comply with all of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The facility is accessible. For sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices or materials in accessible format, please call (305) 514-6031 at least five (5) days in advance.

## *Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Updates*

### *Give Your Kids a Head Start with State's Free VPK*

CBS - Channel 4 published the article "Give Your Kids a Head Start with State's Free VPK" on their website (section '4 Your Money'). To read the article about VPK registration in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, please click the link below:

<http://cbs4.com/CBS4yourmoney/vpk.voluntary.pre.2.1012329.html>.

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## Monroe County News Briefs

### Adoption of Monroe's BG8 9- to 12-Year-Olds School Age Resolution

On June 1, 2009, the Coalition's board of directors unanimously approved the recommendation from the Monroe Advisory Committee to adopt the following:

- 1) Continue to serve the 65 currently enrolled BG8 9- to 12-year-olds and allow them to age out of the system or leave through attrition;

- 2) No new enrollment of BG8 9- to 12-year-olds;
- 3) Continue to provide school-age care through the summer;
- 4) Provide 60-day notification to parents that the new policy will be effective September 1st; and
- 5) BG8 children under age 9 become ineligible at the time of redetermination after their 9th birthday.

If you have additional questions or concerns regarding this resolution, please contact Mary Williams at (305) 296-5557.