



Early Learning Coalition
of Miami-Dade/Monroe

Provider News Alert

JUNE 2009

Issue 9

In This Issue

[President's Message](#)

[Important Announcements](#)

[ELC Board of Directors](#)

[Team Member Spotlight](#)

[Our Partners](#)

[Miami-Dade County News Briefs](#)

[Monroe County News Briefs](#)

[Quality Counts](#)

Quick Links

[Early Learning Coalition](#)

[VPK](#)

[Agency for Workforce Innovation](#)

ELC Mission & Vision

Mission

To promote high-quality school readiness, voluntary

President's Message



Several months ago we announced a grant award to the ELC from Reading Is Fundamental (RIF). RIF is an organization founded in 1966 to motivate children to read by working with them, their parents, and community members to make reading a fun and beneficial part of everyday life.

RIF's highest priority is reaching underserved children from birth to age 8. We are very excited to announce the partnership and kick off of our early literacy initiative that will provide wonderful opportunities for approximately 25,000 children in both Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties.

Activities include free Care to Read® Emergent Literacy trainings for early care and education professionals. RIF will also provide participants with training books and literacy materials. Summer and fall dates have been selected for the training and book distribution. Please stay tuned for additional information on dates, times and locations of all activities for this exciting and important initiative.

Also, please remember that you can now find the Early Learning Coalition on Facebook and Twitter. 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 Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe is now on Facebook and Twitter!



Click here to follow us on Twitter.



Click here to become a fan on Facebook.

For continuous updates on all of the ELC's latest news and events, join now!

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.

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 23 at 12:00 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

Florida's Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners is Ready for Review

The draft version of Florida's Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners is ready for review and public input. These competencies reflect and define the content areas and knowledge expectations for those working in the early care and education profession. This document is the result of hard work by the Professional Development Initiative Steering Committee which is composed of early learning experts from across the state including providers, coalition directors, and representatives from partner agencies, higher learning institutions, and Head Start.

Please visit <http://www.flready.com/> to view a PDF version of the draft Core Competencies and complete a feedback survey online. A link to a printable version of the survey is also provided which can be faxed to AWI's Office of Early Learning (OEL) once completed. The links to the Competencies and both versions of the survey are in the "What's New!" section of the OEL homepage.

Our Provider News Alerts Have Gone Green!

Please visit 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.



RIF's Care to Read® Emergent Literacy Trainings

Care to Read® is an early literacy program conducted by Reading Is Fundamental (RIF)* to support the development of children's emergent literacy skills through training and resources.

RIF, in its partnership with the Early Learning Coalition has offered to provide these trainings **free-of-charge** to you, our early care and education professionals. Trainings will be held in both Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, and the training books and literacy materials will be provided.

In order to participate, providers must complete an application form (please submit no more than two (2) names per center/family childcare home) and fax it to the attention of **Georgi Payne** at **305-447-1608**. You may download the form from our website at <http://elcmdm.org/downloads/RIFCaretoReadSum09.pdf>.

Please note that space for this opportunity is very limited, and submitting your form does not guarantee a reservation in the training! **To be considered for this opportunity, you must submit your fax no later than Monday, July 6, 2009.**



The applications will be forwarded to RIF who will make selections and organize the trainings based on the responses. Additional information with exact training dates, times and locations will follow within the next few weeks.

NOTE: IF YOU ARE A VPK PROVIDER, THIS TRAINING DOES NOT REPLACE THE VPK EMERGENT LITERACY TRAINING!

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 or by submitting the registration flyer available for download at <http://www.elcmdm.org/events/trainings/MiamiRegForm.pdf>.

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 **Valtena G. Brown**.



Ms. Valtena G. Brown is the assistant superintendent, curriculum, instruction for Miami-Dade County Public Schools. In this capacity, she is responsible for the development, coordination, and implementation of early childhood programs and the Ready Schools Miami initiative. Additionally, she oversees world languages and bilingual programs; instructional technology, instructional materials and library/media programs; career and technical education; summer services; and components diversity and compliance requirements.

Prior to her current appointment, Ms. Brown served as administrative director to the deputy superintendent, curriculum, instruction, and school improvement. In this capacity, she was responsible for the district coordination of Pre-K - 12 curriculum. This division coordinated multimillion dollar budgets and curricula for school reform, literacy, and parent involvement.

Ms. Brown also served as principal of Florida City Elementary School, an original SPARK school partner. Under her leadership and support, she forged multiple partnerships to

support transitions for children and families, from early childcare and pre-kindergarten programs to elementary schools. In addition, school readiness and high quality early learning became a focal point in aligning curriculum, instructional practices and professional development.

Ms. Brown holds a master's degree in community psychology as well as advanced certificates in education and educational leadership. She is a board member of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe and has served as guest lecturer and presenter throughout Florida and the United States.

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 **Mary Williams**, Managing Director of Monroe County.

In April of 2004, Mary Williams began her tenure as the program director for the formerly independent Monroe coalition. A short year later, the Monroe and Miami-Dade County coalitions merged into the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe and she was promoted to the position of managing director of Monroe County in July of 2006. In her role, Mary manages and oversees the day-to-day operations of Monroe's Coalition office. Her staff consists of a four-member team (Mary, an administrative assistant, and two classroom mentors).



Mary has taken an active role in facilitating a number of successful early care and education projects in the Monroe community. One of which, the Coalition's Monroe Classroom Mentoring program, first implemented in the spring of 2007, has increased the quality of providers' early education programs. Two mentors—one serving the Upper Keys and the other, the Lower Keys, work with teachers in classrooms spanning a 105-mile area, from Key West to Key Largo. Another is the five-year partnership with the Florida Keys Area Health Education Center to provide comprehensive health screenings and follow-up medical care annually to approximately 450 school readiness children in early education centers and family child care homes throughout Monroe County. The health-screening grant project has been instrumental in providing early detection and intervention necessary to ensure children's good health and development.

A longtime Keys resident, Mary has worked with diverse populations in the Monroe County community in social services, and workforce and education programs since 1986. She possesses a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of West Florida and a master's degree in educational leadership from the University of South Florida.

In her free time Mary enjoys walking along the beach or riding her bicycle around her residency of Old Town in Key West. She also enjoys reading, movies, and yoga. Mary has one daughter, a second-year medical resident at the University of Miami/Jackson Memorial Hospital.

As the primary liaison to the Coalition's providers in the Keys, Mary is often considered a lifeline to those she serves. The feeling and admiration is mutual, "I admire the dedication of our early education and care providers, who persevere in spite of the challenges of doing business in the Keys (extreme high cost of living, staff turnover, etc.) especially in these difficult economic times," Mary says.

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 the Agency for Workforce Innovation's Office of Early Learning (OEL).



The Office of Early Learning (OEL), within Florida's Agency for Workforce Innovation, is dedicated to ensuring the accessibility, affordability and quality of early learning services for the state's children and families.

Moreover, OEL is responsible for implementation of the state's Child Care Resource and Referral, Child Care Executive Partnership Program (CCEP), School Readiness (SR), and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK), among many other programs. Florida's VPK includes high reading and writing standards, strict accountability, appropriate curricula, substantial instruction periods, manageable class sizes, and qualified instructors.

To learn more about the Office of Early Learning (OEL), visit <http://www.floridajobs.org/earlylearning/index.html>.

Miami-Dade County News Briefs

School Readiness

REMINDER to All Providers Receiving School Readiness Funding

The 2009-2010 School Readiness Provider Agreement has been sent by certified mail to providers. **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 check our website, www.elcmdm.org, often for updates and other information related to the provider agreement.

If you did not receive the agreement in the mail, you may download it by visiting http://www.elcmdm.org/our_services/SchoolReadiness.html.

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

New Proposed VPK Advance Payment Rule

The Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) designed a new proposed VPK attendance rule. Below are highlights of the proposed Advance Payment rule.

- A provider must request the advance payment method.
- A provider who elects not to receive the advance will be paid for services rendered in accordance with the proposed VPK Uniform Attendance Rule.
- A provider who elects to receive the advance will receive 95% of the anticipated monthly payment as a monthly advance.
 - Why 95%? The proposal eliminates monthly reconciliation in order to fulfill coalitions' requests for VPK administrative efficiencies. Therefore AWI needs to ensure there are funds available at the end of the program with which to reconcile. Any money owed to providers will be reconciled in the final payment after the conclusion of the class instruction. At the same time, this proposal provides a consistent funding stream to providers so there is *no interruption in cash flow*.

The original draft proposal was shared with coalitions on April 29th and a workshop was held on May 8th. AWI received minimal coalition participation at the workshop which typically indicates that there are few or no concerns with the rule as presented. No providers attended the workshop. After the second release of the proposed rule draft in June, however, the Agency began to receive substantial input from providers regarding the impact of the proposed changes.

AWI has worked diligently and quickly to create a new proposal which addresses all concerns raised over the last several days. **To view the proposed rule, please visit the homepage of the Coalition's website at www.elcmdm.org.**

In order for all comments and concerns to be considered resulting in a significant revision

to the rule, all written comments must be sent to Kristin Harden at Kristin.harden@flaawi.com before the close of the rule hearing on Tuesday, July 7th.

VPK Standards Training - Summer 2009

What's New in VPK*

DCF Reference # 245
Wednesday, June 24, 2009; 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
St. John the Apostle School
479 E. 4th Street, Hialeah

What's New in VPK*

DCF Reference # 246
Thursday, July 2, 2009; 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
United Way, Ryder Room
3250 S.W. 3rd Avenue, Miami

2008 VPK Education Standards**

DCF Reference # 247
Thursday, July 9, 2009; 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
United Way, Ryder Room
3250 SW 3rd Avenue, Miami

2008 VPK Education Standards**

DCF Reference # 248
Thursday, July 23, 2009; 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
St. John the Apostle School
479 E. 4th Street, Hialeah

What's New in VPK*

DCF Reference # 314
Thursday, July 30, 2009; 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
St. John the Apostle School
479 E. 4th Street, Hialeah

2008 VPK Education Standards**

DCF Reference # 270
Thursday, August 6, 2009; 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
Miami-Dade College, Homestead Campus
500 College Terrace, Homestead

What's New in VPK*

DCF Reference # 271
Thursday, August 13, 2009, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Miami-Dade College, Homestead Campus
500 College Terrace, Homestead

To REGISTER for training, please visit <http://www.myflorida.com/childcare/> and select 'Training Requirements' from the menu.

*What's New in VPK is for VPK teachers and directors who have a *2005 VPK Standards* book and a 2005 VPK Education Standards Certificate of Completion.

**2008 VPK Education Standards is for VPK teachers and directors who have never taken the 2005 VPK Standards training.

Monroe Coalition Office Move

Effective July 1, 2009, the Coalition's Monroe office is moving to the County's Gato Building. The new mailing address is:



Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe
1100 Simonton St., Suite 1-204
Key West, FL 33040

Please Note: The main office phone number and fax number will *not* change.

Quality Counts

The goal of **Quality Counts (QC)**, Miami-Dade County's voluntary quality-rating-improvement system, is to provide all children with the tools they need to become successful in school and in life. QC provides support to providers as they work to meet their goal of improving quality in the areas that affect young learners most: the learning environment, ratio of staff to child, professional development of teachers, parent involvement, and program administration.

QC reinforces the concept of parent choice, giving parents the necessary information to choose which early education program is the best fit for their child. Moreover, the program actively engages the entire child care community consisting of subsidized and non-subsidized early care and education programs, private and faith-based child care providers, family child care homes, Head Start/Early Head Start, Miami- Dade County Public Schools, and Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA).

Those involved in the facilitation of QC have held many focus groups to find out what participants are thinking and how to improve processes and practices. Quality Counts strongly values the input of the provider community; their assistance and feedback continue to enhance the program and make it thrive. As a result, many programs have already engaged in a year of continuous quality improvement and are ready to receive a Star rating.

As QC moves into its third year, Pam Hollingsworth, Director of Quality Counts, welcomes your feedback at phollingsworth@elcmdm.org, and looks forward to continued collaboration with partners, The Children's Trust, The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation/Ready Schools Miami; parents; and early care and education providers and professionals.