



ELC News Alert

Issue 1
January 2010

In This Issue

- :: [Important Announcements](#)
- :: [ELC Board of Directors](#)
- :: [Team Member Spotlight](#)
- :: [Miami-Dade County News Briefs](#)
- :: [Monroe County News Briefs](#)
- :: [Quality Counts](#)

President's Message



Dear Friends:

The board of directors and staff of the Early Learning Coalition wish to extend our thoughts and prayers to the people of Haiti as they work to rebuild their communities and ensure the safety of their residents in the aftermath of such a tragic earthquake. We are particularly concerned about the welfare of Haiti's children who are undoubtedly most vulnerable at this time. We are working closely with our state partners and will keep you posted as to our role in assisting children brought over from Haiti.

We ask all of our friends and colleagues to please do whatever you can to assist our neighbors. If you wish to assist with a secure monetary-gift to help the children affected by the earthquake in Haiti, you can visit our website, www.elcmdm.org, and click on the UNICEF button. The U.S. Fund for UNICEF is absorbing all associated administrative costs so that 100% of every dollar you give will support UNICEF's relief efforts for children in Haiti. If you prefer to send your donation by mail you can print a form or call 1.800.FOR.KIDS (1.800.367.5437) to donate by phone.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

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

Upcoming Board & Committee Meetings

Finance
Wednesday, January 27; 8:00 a.m.
ELC Board Room

Quick Links

[Early Learning Coalition](#)

[VPK](#)

Program & Strategy
Wednesday, January 27; 1:00 p.m.
ELC Board Room

Governance & Bylaws
Thursday, January 28; 8:00 a.m.
Conference call (Executive Conference Room)

Board of Directors
Monday, February 1; 8:00 a.m.
ELC Board Room

For a complete list of upcoming Coalition meetings and events, please visit our website at www.elcmdm.org.

[Agency for Workforce Innovation](#)

Get Connected with ELC!



Important Announcements

Do you need to hire extra staff but are struggling to find the funds to do so? Your South Florida Workforce is offering a solution of government-funded assistance!

The FLORIDA BACK TO WORK program will provide up to a 95% reimbursement to Florida's businesses to cover the costs of employee wages and benefits. All available jobs listed under *the Florida Back to Work* program will be posted on the Employ Florida Marketplace website, www.employflorida.com.

Some program highlights include:

- Private, public, for-profit and non-profit employers who are adding new positions are eligible.
- Employers paying the wage and benefit costs are reimbursed by the program for up to 95% of those payments according to an agreement negotiated in advance.
- The wage/salary level must be based on that paid by the employer for comparable positions doing comparable work. The employer cannot have laid-off employees in the same or similar position.
- Employers will provide a written commitment to provide a funding contribution equal to the project amount not reimbursed by the Florida Back to Work program.
- Participation is on a first-come, first-served basis. The life span of the funds is limited and for that purpose, the eligible period *for payroll* ends September 30, 2010. Any payroll costs after that date would not be eligible for reimbursement; therefore no subsidized position could extend beyond that date.

For additional information on the Florida Back to Work program, eligibility, and necessary paperwork, please call the South Florida Workforce at 305-594-7615 ext. 407, or visit www.southfloridaworkforce.com and click on the FLORIDA BACK-TO-WORK icon.

Time is of the essence, and we still need your help!

If you would like to participate in reducing child care costs, addressing the needs of early care and education, and supporting a strong workforce in our community, we encourage you to join the Child Care Executive Partnership (CCEP). This program is designed to ensure that children of employees through age 12 are provided

affordable, high-quality, and developmentally appropriate child care.

Through federal and state funding, employers who participate in the program contribute money for child care that is matched dollar-for-dollar with funds from the CCEP. Parents pay a portion based on a sliding fee scale. Similar to the School Readiness grant, employees may qualify for CCEP by earning low to moderate wages. The eligibility requirements are the same, except employees may earn up to 200% of the federal poverty level.

As an employer you understand that caring for one's family while managing a career is challenging. You also understand that being late and taking time off from work because of child care issues can affect your bottom line. Thus the CCEP is a mutually beneficial solution for you *and* your employees.

If you are not already a member of the CCEP, please contact Alina Soto at (305) 646-7220, ext. 282. She will gladly provide additional information on participant eligibility and the program. To learn more, you may also visit the ELC's website at http://www.elcmdm.org/our_services/ccep.html.

Kindergarten Students are Better Prepared to Enter School

"~ Screener results show students demonstrating increased early literacy skills ~

TALLAHASSEE - Florida's Kindergartners are entering classrooms with better foundational skills according to the 2009 Florida Kindergarten Readiness screening results released today by the Florida Department of Education. Administered within the first 30 days of Kindergarten, the screening measures a student's knowledge and understanding in seven areas: language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, social and personal skills, physical health and fitness, and the creative arts. The screening results are used to determine student readiness, inform classroom instruction and provide useful information to parents and teachers.

"Early learning is essential for future success and I'm thrilled that more students are entering school better prepared and ready to learn," said Education Commissioner Dr. Eric J. Smith. "Florida's parents and prekindergarten teachers have dedicated countless hours to educating our students at an earlier age, ensuring that our success today is not short-lived, but rather an enduring trend that will pave the way for more students to be successful throughout their education career."

Traditionally, Florida has used two primary Kindergarten screening tools: the Early Childhood Observation System™ (ECHOS) and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills™ (DIBELS). This year, the DIBELS screening tool was replaced with the new and more comprehensive Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) to measure letter naming, phonemic awareness, listening comprehension, and vocabulary.

Data collected from ECHOS and FAIR will be used to calculate a readiness rate for private and public school providers of the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program later this year. However, screening results detailing the readiness of Florida's kindergartners are available now.

* ECHOS (Observation screening) - Of the 182,534 students screened by ECHOS in 2009, 88.51 percent were considered to be "ready for Kindergarten" up from 87.94 percent in 2008. The percentage of students identified as "not yet demonstrating" dropped slightly to 11.49 percent from 12.06 percent in 2008. To be considered "ready for Kindergarten," students should be scoring at the Demonstrating or Emerging/Progressing level on the ECHOS.

* FAIR Broad Screen (Letter Naming and Blending of Sounds screening) - Of the 179,827 students screened, 65 percent were considered to be "ready for Kindergarten" by scoring a Probability of Reading Success score at or above 67 percent. Such score indicates that the student has a 67 percent or greater chance of being on grade level at the end of the year.

Additional FAIR measures that were administered as part of the Kindergarten screening also provide teachers with student data on listening comprehension and vocabulary to help inform their instruction.

To learn more about the results, visit http://www.fl DOE.org/news/2010/2010_06_01/Memo1-6-10.pdf. To see results by district, visit http://www.fl DOE.org/news/2010/2010_06_01/kindergarten-screening-results.xls."

(Content taken directly from FL DOE Press release, Wednesday, January 6, 2010, "Kindergarten Students are Better Prepared to Enter School: Screener results show students demonstrating increased early literacy skills.")

Early Care and Education Conferences

For a listing of upcoming early care and education conferences in 2010, please visit our website at www.elcmdm.org. Plan your attendance today!

Tickets FORE Charity to Benefit the ELC

Purchase tickets for the 2010 World Golf Championships-CA Championship and 75% of the net proceeds will directly benefit the Early Learning Coalition! The remaining 25% will assist The First Tee, a World Golf Foundation initiative that provides learning facilities and education programs to promote character development and life-enhancing values through the game of golf.

The 2010 CA Championship will host the best golfers from around the globe on **March 9 through 14, 2010**, at the TPC Blue Monster at the Doral Golf Resort & Spa. **Any-day grounds passes** are available for \$40 each.

You may purchase tickets directly via the TICKETS Fore CHARITY webpage on Ticketmaster: <http://www.ticketmaster.com/event/0D00435E8BC13072?artistid=1292654&majorcatid=10004&minorcatid=30>.

To receive the \$40 ticket-price, please log in using the special Ticketmaster code, **CACIDZ**.

If you know of friends or family who may be interested in attending this event, please forward them the link and the special code above. Daily tickets will go on sale to the general public on Tuesday, December 1, 2009, so purchase yours soon. Remember that these tickets are flexible any-day event passes. For more information on the Tickets Fore Charity golf event, please visit www.elcmdm.org or www.wgcca.com/tfc.

Gap Between Florida and U.S. Unemployment Rates Widens

Florida's Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) has just released the State's most recent unemployment figures. The report is a cause for concern as the gap between Florida and the national average continues to widen. Following are a few highlights:

- Florida's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December 2009 is 11.8 percent. This represents 1,087,000 jobless out of a labor force of 9,180,000.
- The unemployment rate is up 0.3 percentage point from the November rate of 11.5 percent, and up 4.2 percentage points from the December 2008 rate.
- The state's current unemployment rate is 1.8 percentage points higher than the national unemployment rate of 10.0 percent.
- December's unemployment rate is the highest since May 1975 when it was 11.9 percent.

- Industries losing the most jobs are construction; trade, transportation, and utilities; and professional and business services. These three industries account for approximately two-thirds of the job losses in the state. Health care has been Florida's only growth sector for most of 2009.
- In December 2009, Liberty County had the state's lowest unemployment rate (6.0 percent), followed by Monroe County (7.2 percent). Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are those with relatively high proportions of government employment.
- Flagler County (16.9 percent) has the highest unemployment rate in Florida in December 2009. Counties with high unemployment rates have either a high proportion of agricultural employees or continued weakness in construction and manufacturing.
- All metro areas in the state lost jobs over the year in December 2009.

Aforementioned statistics were taken from AWI's January 22, 2010, press release, "Florida's December Employment Figures Released." To learn more detailed facts, and to view a chart comparing U.S. and Florida unemployment rates, please visit our website at www.elcmdm.org. The next Florida Employment and Unemployment report is scheduled to be released on March 5, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.

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 **Modesto Abety**.



Modesto E. Abety is best known for his advocacy on behalf of children and families in South Florida. He served as Director of the Miami-Dade County Children's Services Council (CSC) for 12 years before joining The Children's Trust as CEO in 2003. The Trust is a special taxing district formed to improve the lives of all children and families in Miami-Dade. It was created by voters as a result of a successful ballot initiative, which Mr. Abety worked hard to pass as the campaign's Field Operations Manager in 2002. In August of 2008 The Trust was again before the voters and by a margin of 84-16 citizens voted again to tax their property to provide a dedicated source of funding for prevention and early intervention services for children and their families.

Today, Mr. Abety and The Trust staff manage the agency's comprehensive needs assessment and funding process, which results in a \$140 million annual investment in child and family services. Since 2003, The Trust has become a recognized leader in planning, advocating and funding high quality services for children and families statewide.

Throughout his more than 30 years of public service, Mr. Abety has also served as Executive Assistant to the Director of the County's Community Action Agency and Head Start Program, Director of Social Services for the County's Public Housing Authority; Special Project's Officer on Community Development, Housing and Homelessness at the United States Conference of Mayors, and as a community organizer and social worker with a variety of organizations and agencies serving the poor, aged and distressed families.

Mr. Abety earned his Master's Degree in Public Administration at Bernard M. Baruch College/City University of New York and his Bachelor's Degree in Sociology at Florida State University.

He currently serves on the following boards: The Juvenile Justice Board, The Policy Group for Florida's Children and Families and serves as chair of The Florida Children's Services Councils.

He is the recipient of numerous honors: 2008 Toussaint L'ouverture Leadership Award presented by Fanm Ayisyen Nan Miyami. 2007 Champion for Children's award presented by Kids Hope United. 2007 recognized by Miami Today's Best of Miami for "going above and beyond for innovative health programs" and for his work on children's issues, and The Pinnacle of Hope Award from Neat Stuff. 2006 he was honored with the Special Citizen of the Year Award, presented by ARC (Association for Retarded Citizens South Florida), and was recognized as "The Achiever" in the Miami Today, 2005 Dave Thomas Child Advocate Award presented by Children's Home Society, was inducted to the Miami Dade College 2005 "Alumni Hall of Fame", received the 2005 Community Service Award from the Melissa Institute, Miami Today 2004 Gold Medal Award, the Heritage Award for "chartering a child's destiny in a safe world" presented by the Non-Violence Project USA, the

Alliance for Human Services Lifetime Achievement Award, Miami-Dade County Association of School Social Workers Award in Recognition of Advocacy for Children's Rights in the Field of Social Work, the Dade County Council PTA/PTSA Community Service Scholarship Award for Service on Behalf of the Welfare and Education of our Children and Youth, the Champions for Children Award presented by the Miami-Dade Community College's Center for Early Care and Education, and the Outstanding Adjunct Professor Award presented by the Florida International University's College of Urban and Public Affairs, among others.

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 Maritza Fuentes, Quality Assurance Monitor.

Maritza began her tenure at the Coalition in September of 2006. Initially she served as the organization's office manager for two years, and thereafter began working in the Quality Assurance (QA) department. As a QA monitor her primary duties include monitoring the programmatic performance of ELC-generated contracts, preparing monitoring reports, visiting early care and education providers, and providing technical assistance. Maritza is bilingual, speaking English and Spanish, a definite asset in her interactions with providers in Miami-Dade County.



Seeing firsthand how the Coalition's resources and services positively impact the young children of our community is a constant motivation for Maritza, "The support the Coalition offers our providers in the forms of trainings, materials, and technical assistance is invaluable; the children enrolled in our early care and education programs are taught by the very best."

Moreover, Maritza finds her duties with respect to quality assurance especially gratifying, "In the Quality Assurance department, we ensure that contract requirements are being adhered to. This responsibility is very important and I enjoy being a part of it. As a taxpayer I get a sense of satisfaction knowing our dollars are being utilized to offer and support these services," Maritza says.

Prior to working at the ELC, Maritza was a director of administration at a medical facility in Miami where she was responsible for office administration, billing, and liaising with patients. In her spare time, Maritza enjoys water sports/boating, gardening, and spending time with her family.

Miami-Dade County News Briefs

School Readiness (SR)

DRAFT of 2009 Proposed Rule Changes for Child Care Licensing

To review the *draft* of the 2009 proposed rule changes for child care licensing, please visit our website at www.elcmdm.org. You may also access a listing of respective enforcement facts at <http://ccrain.fl-dcf.org/documents/7/33.pdf#page=1>.

Providers: Please Complete and Submit Your ASQ Forms Promptly!

We are requesting your assistance in the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) screening-process implemented by Miami-Dade County. Please complete, review and return your ASQ forms promptly, following the instructions included in your ASQ packet.

To learn more about Miami-Dade County's workshops on how to complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaires, please contact 305-270-2905 (South) or 305-953-6007 (North) for more information.

REMINDER

The implementation of a developmentally appropriate curriculum and character development program is a requirement for providers to receive school readiness funding.

If you receive reimbursement through Miami-Dade County for children ages 0 to 5 years, you are likely being paid with school readiness funds and this requirement applies to your program.

Most providers who did not indicate an approved curriculum when they submitted their provider agreement have been contacted and informed of the need to select an approved curriculum.

If you are a provider who was contacted and have not yet responded, or if you are a provider who is not using an approved curriculum, it is necessary for you to come into compliance with this requirement.

Failure to implement an approved curriculum will affect your ability to continue to receive school readiness funding and may result in a repayment for funds you have already received.

A list of the approved curricula may be found at: <http://www.elcmdm.org/Providers/curriculum/Curriculum.html>. If you have questions, please call the Coalition at 305-646-7220.

Providers: Check Your Attendance and Enrollment Online

Providers now have the ability to check their attendance and enrollment information online through Miami-Dade County's secure web portal. Providers need only a username and password to enter this site and receive up-to-date information, including the enrollment and termination dates of children enrolled at your facility. Once providers receive a username, password, and training, they will also be able to submit all attendance rosters electronically. In order to obtain a username, password, or additional information, please contact Ed Nelson at 305-514-6023 or enelson@miamidade.gov.

Post-Attendance Audits

Miami-Dade County has begun conducting post-attendance audits at provider sites. Providers are reminded of their responsibility to provide copies of attendance rosters and daily sign-in/sign-out sheets upon request from the post-attendance auditors.

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)

How to Register for VPK Trainings

Please visit our VPK website at <http://www.vpkhelp.org/resources/trainings.html> to learn the 13 steps to successfully register for VPK trainings. Courses include VPK Educational Standards, Integrating the Standards, and Emergent Literacy for the VPK Classroom. Instructions on how to cancel your registration or obtain your certificate, transcript, and/or CEUs are also available.

The Parent Leadership Training Institute

Who Should Participate? Adults raising children--mothers, fathers, grandparents, stepparents, and anyone who cares about improving care-systems for children.

Parents learn group communication, project-design skills, leadership, public speaking, and local and state government policies.

The 3-hour weekly sessions (22-week commitment) is limited to 25 adults. Training is FREE, and dinner and

child care are provided. Application and interviews are **mandatory**. For more information or to request an application, please contact Gina Ha, PLTI Coordinator at GinaH@hscdade.org or 305-576-5001, ext. 41. You may also visit www.hscdade.org.

Monroe County News Briefs

Transitioning to Kindergarten Workshops Offered in the Keys

The ELC is sponsoring two (2) free one-day sessions of Transitioning to Kindergarten training provided by the Alliance for Early Care & Education. This training targets VPK instructors and other early education providers serving 4-year-olds. Participants will complete one 6-hour instructional component and one 4-hour independent assignment. All materials will be provided. Upon completion, participants will be awarded 10 in-service hours from Miami-Dade College.

The workshops will demonstrate the use of the Transitioning to Kindergarten toolkit, which was developed by the National Center for Learning Disabilities in cooperation with the American Federation of Teachers. The toolkit includes easy-to-use materials and strategies to help children achieve developmental milestones with support from their teachers and parents. Among the materials are Skill-Building Activity Cards for use in the classroom and at home. The toolkit also features a section on creating an "Early Learning Passport" (aka "student portfolio") which includes the results of the Kindergarten Readiness Indicators Checklist, anecdotal observations from both the prekindergarten teacher and parent(s), and a drawing/writing sample. The Transitioning to Kindergarten toolkit also includes Get Ready to Read!--a reliable, research-based series of questions used to determine if a student has the early literacy skills needed to become a reader. The instrument focuses on print knowledge, emergent writing, and linguistic awareness.

One session has since passed, but the next one scheduled is as follows (lunch will be provided):

Saturday, February 20th; 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., San Pablo Church, 550 122nd Street Ocean, Marathon
(This session is scheduled for private providers and is capped at 20 participants on a first-come - first-served basis. Please RSVP to Mary Williams at 296-5557 by February 12th).

Save the Date

Florida Keys Health Fair

Saturday, January 23rd; 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

The University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and the Florida Keys Area Health and Education Center are sponsoring the 39th annual health fair. The following free screenings and services include: skin cancer, vision, colorectal cancer, pap smears, breast exams, HIV, Hepatitis B vaccines (Key West), bone density, blood sugar (diabetes), blood pressure, mental health, and smoking cessation. **Children's health screenings will be available in Key West and Marathon.** There is a \$5 fee for blood cholesterol testing. *For accurate blood sugar and cholesterol results, do not eat or drink anything other than water 8-10 hours prior to attending the fair. Optional: Pre-Registration on Saturday, January 9, 2010; 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at site locations.

Locations Keys-wide are as follows:

Fisherman's Hospital, 3301 Overseas Hwy., Marathon
Big Pine Methodist and Baptist Churches, 280 Key Deer Blvd.
Key West High School, 2100 Flagler Ave.

Infant/Child/Adult CPR and First Aid

Saturday, January 23rd; 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Wesley House, 1304 Truman Ave., Key West

Registration Deadline: January 20, 2010

Registration Fee: \$50

For additional information, contact Laurie Dunn at 809-5000 ext. 231

State Competency Exam

Saturday, February 6th; 8:45 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Grace Lutheran School, 2713 Flagler Ave., Key West

Registration must be completed ten (10) business days prior to the scheduled exam date. Register online at www.dcf.state.fl.us/childcare. If you experience problems with the registration process, please contact the Child Care Services Exam Scheduling Center at 1-888-375-3926.

Parents as Child's First Teacher

Children and Family Education (CAFÉ) is a one-hour free class for parents. Encourage your parents to attend this fun, interactive and informal class to learn helpful tips to support children's healthy growth and development.

Classes scheduled Keys-wide are as follows:

Tuesday, February 9th; 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. - Grace Jones Day Care, 230 41st St. Gulf, Marathon

Thursday, February 11th; 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. - Wesley House, 1304 Truman Ave., Key West

Thursday, February 11th; 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. - Wesley House, 175 Wrenn St., Tavernier

Please RSVP to Laurie Dunn at 809-5000 ext. 231

Quality Counts

South Florida's Migrant Families Need Our Help!

While it was not a story that made evening-news headlines, the recent cold-weather spell in South Florida has had a devastating effect on migrant families residing in the area. Charlene Edwards, Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) Director of Operations, and Leslie Moguil, RCMA Associate Executive Director, shared the following:

1. No work translates into families not making an income and thus being unable to buy food.
2. There is no place to travel to/for work because the cold weather has affected all of Florida and many of the other 'growing' states in the South. As a result, families are staying put.
3. Replanting is also on hold, affecting migrant families' long-term outlook for job recovery.
4. Houses have no heat so three and four families are sleeping in one small room sharing one space heater.

Let us join together and assist our migrant families during this challenging time. The most critical need is gift cards to purchase food. For more details and to learn other ways in which you can help, please contact Marbelia Zamarripa at 239-658-3560.

Quality Counts Career Center

The Quality Counts Career Center, operated by The Children's Forum and funded by The Children's Trust, plays an integral role in the quality rating improvement system of Miami-Dade County by helping remove the barriers that prevent practitioners from continuing their education and training in the field of early childhood. As a partner in the Quality Counts Initiative, the Career Center provides the following services to help those who work with young children achieve their career goals and realize their dreams:

Information

The Career Center maintains the website www.QCcareers.org with information on training, educational opportunities, resources and links to important information in the community.

Career Advising

Six career advisors assist practitioners in early care and education to develop a plan to meet their goals. Whether help is needed to obtain a GED, apply and register for college classes, translate and evaluate non-U.S. diplomas and transcripts or consider an advanced degree in early childhood, career advisors are available to help explore the various options.

Scholarships and Financial Assistance

Scholarships to help pay for educational expenses are accessed by the Career Center. Funding is provided through The Children's Trust depending on availability and established priorities. Since its inception through September 30th, 2009 there have been awarded 3,179 scholarships plus 485 Director's Institute classes, and 3,089 Great Beginning classes.

Training Registry

A central registry serves as a repository of educational and employment information of practitioners. A transcript of professional credentials and development is available to individual practitioners. Presently there are 4,961 practitioners in the Registry of which 4,298 are active.

Contact Information

2600 S. Douglas Road, Suite 314

Coral Gables, FL 33134

Tel: 786-360-2000

www.QCcareers.org

*source: Copy taken from Quality Counts Career Center flyer



Join Our
Mailing List 

2555 Ponce de Leon Blvd. Suite 500; Coral Gables, FL 33134

