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## ELC News Alert

Issue 4  
May 2010

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### President's Message



Dear Friends:

We are in the final stretch of the 2010 legislative session. The Senate's position on the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten base student allocation continues to be 10% less than the current rate. To make up for the reduced rate, the proposal includes raising the class size from 1:10/2:20 to 1:12/2:24. This provision is considered by most as unrealistic due to space limitations in most facilities, limitations in licensing and accreditation standards, and common sense about the environments that children need to learn and thrive. We need the Senate to adopt the House version of the VPK budget.

Most early care and education providers are small business owners who already struggle to keep their doors open so that they can serve children in communities in all 67 counties in Florida. If you are concerned about our state's economic development, then I know you are concerned about the survival of these small businesses. If you care about children, and I have no doubt that you do, then I know you care about manageable class sizes. You can make a difference. Please contact members of the Senate to help educate them on the need to restore the VPK base student allocation and the current class size. You can find contact information and talking points on our website at [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org).

Legislators depend on all of us to help them make educated decisions. I thank you for your support and partnership and, most importantly, for your lifelong dedication to the children of our state.

I remain at your service,

Sincerely,

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

### Upcoming Board & Committee Meetings

Program & Strategy  
Tuesday, April 27; 3:30 p.m.  
ELC Board Room

Finance  
Wednesday, April 28; 8:00 a.m.  
ELC Board Room

Board of Directors  
Monday, May 3; 8:00 a.m.  
ELC Board Room

Provider Services  
Friday, May 21; 1:00 p.m.  
ELC Monroe Office

For a complete list of upcoming Coalition meetings and events, please visit our website at [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org).

### Quick Links

[Early Learning Coalition](#)

[VPK](#)

[Agency for Workforce Innovation](#)

### Get Connected with ELC!



### Important Announcements

#### The Process by which Providers May Present Matters to the ELC Board of Directors

Providers, please be advised that there is a process in place at the ELC in which you may bring matters to the Board's attention through the committee structure. Please see below:

**Providers bring matters forth through the Provider Services Committee.** The Committee is responsible for:

Addressing and providing resolution, whenever possible, to concerns, requests or ideas brought forth by early child care and education providers (ECCEP).

3.2 Report matters to the Board of Directors requiring Board action and provide feedback to providers regarding Board responses at subsequent PSC meetings and, or/via Provider News Alerts as needed.

3.3 Review unresolved matters of grievance submitted to the coalition by early child care education providers.

#### ELC Curricula Conference

The success of the ELC's first curricula conference ensures that there will be more training to follow in the near future. In partnership with Ready Schools Miami and the South Florida Association for Young Children, the ELC held a professional development conference, "Paving a Path to Quality: Best Practices in Curricula Implementation," for early care and education providers on April 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Over 700 directors and teachers attended the two-day event which was hosted by over 90 volunteers and presenters from the ELC and partnering agencies. This conference presented a pathway to quality with curriculum as a primary focus; uniting the early childhood community around the importance of high-quality learning experiences for young children.

The first day included table talk sessions which provided directors the opportunity to network around topics

such as accreditation, special needs, advocacy, Quality Counts and others. Keynote speaker, Dr. Lilian Katz, provided a morning of insight in "What Children Should and Should Not Be Learning in Early Learning Programs." Dr. Katz provided a "bottom-to-top" view of quality from a child's eyes. Her message focused on what learning experiences should be happening most of the time for children. She also reminded the audience that learning is experience-dependent and that children's experiences need to be frequent, meaningful and interesting. The afternoon consisted of 16 break-out sessions on topics ranging from arts for learning, social-emotional development, and using recycled materials in the classroom.

The second day was much anticipated as teachers participated in 23 break-out sessions in English and Spanish on ELC-approved curricula for preschool and infant-toddler children. Sessions were aimed at providing targeted support in improving teaching practices at a beginner level and intermediate level through quality implementation of an identified curriculum. Teachers left the conference inspired to try new ideas in their classrooms and with valuable resources to support them as they work to continue to provide meaningful learning experiences for young children.

This conference sparked comments such as, "When are we going to do this again?".... "Will there be an opportunity for more teachers to have curriculum training?"...."How soon can I attend another training session?" While this was a tremendous effort to reach a large number of early learning providers and teachers, there is obviously a need for additional training. ELC staff will work closely with community partners to develop a county-wide, systematic and cost-effective training model that provides consistent training opportunities in the area of curriculum implementation.

Please see the photos below for a recap of the event and its great success.

Evelio C. Torres, ELC President and CEO, welcomes early care and education providers and teachers to the Coalition's first curricula conference



Lilian Katz, Ph.D., an expert on early childhood education, child development, and parenting, gave the conference's insightful keynote speech

Dave Lawrence, President of The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation, shares a few words with the audience of early learning administrators and



teachers



The Quality Counts booth at the ELC Curricula Conference

Teachers enjoy the break-out sessions at the ELC Curricula Conference



**Florida Family Child Care Home Association's (FFCCHA)  
18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in June**

We are pleased to announce that the Coalition will randomly select two (2) providers from Miami-Dade County and one (1) provider from Monroe County to attend FFCCHA's "Enhancing our minds...in 2010" conference free of charge. The only requirement is that each person either runs a family childcare home or works in one. To submit your entry for random selection, please send your name, the name of your center, address, and phone number to Tabatha Cullen at [tcullen@elcmdm.org](mailto:tcullen@elcmdm.org). Entries must be received by 12:00 p.m. (noon) on Wednesday, May 5, 2009. The drawing will be held the following day on Thursday at 3:00 p.m. in the ELC Board Room. You are welcome to attend the drawing however your presence is not required in order to be selected. The three persons chosen will be notified accordingly.

The FFCCHA conference will take place June 22-27, 2010 at the Sheraton Sand Key Resort in Clearwater Beach, FL. Visit us at [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org) for additional conference details, or access the FFCCHA website at [www.familychildcare.org](http://www.familychildcare.org).

**South Florida Workforce is Recruiting for their Summer Youth Employment Program**

South Florida Workforce Investment Board's (SFWIB) Summer Youth Employment Program will provide job opportunities to approximately 1,440 to 2,000 low-income young adults ages 14-24, residing in both Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. They will earn \$8-\$10 an hour for 140-160 hours to include 20 hours of work-readiness skills training.

By partnering with SFWIB, local businesses will provide young adults with job opportunities and guidance in

appropriate workplace behavior, at no cost to the employer.

For additional information, please visit:

<http://www.southfloridaworkforce.com/w/youthSummer.html>.

### **Target Foundation Offers \$2,000 Literacy Grants for Schools, Libraries & Nonprofits**

#### **NEW PRIVATE GRANT**

Target Foundation Funds Enhance Classroom Curriculum

**DEADLINE: April 30.** The 2010 Target Store Grant program, a giving effort of the retail chain's foundation, will focus funding on childhood literacy and arts and culture grants of \$2,000 each. Applicants will be notified by September 1.

The Early Childhood Reading category funds programs that foster a love of reading and encourage young children (pre-K-3) to read together with their families.

The Arts and Culture in Schools category funds in-school arts programs that enhance students' classroom curriculum by bringing in arts and cultural experiences. This includes in-school performances, artist-in-residency programs and workshops.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Schools, libraries, public agencies and nonprofits.

**INSIDER'S TIP:** The Store Grant has another category--Field Trip Grants. This category has awarded 7,400 grants, totaling more than \$6 million, to educators in all 50 states. More than 729,000 students have explored the world outside the classroom with a Target Field Trip Grant. Target staffers tell Federal & Foundation Assistance Monitor that applications will begin being accepted for this grant category on Aug. 1. This is just one of many federal and private grant notices posted every week in Federal & Foundation Assistance Monitor, one of our online, interactive, continually updated grant news services covering new private and federal funding opportunities for a wide range of education and social services needs. They include insider application guidance directly from funding officials, proven advice from grants consultants, and valuable insights on how new and proposed federal legislation and policies could affect your programs.

For free access and to receive more information on this grant opportunity please click on

<http://cdpublications.com/freeresources/freedom.php?ID=149>

or cut and paste the link into your web browser. For additional questions, please call 301-588-6380.

#### **Be Your Children's Advocate!**

Now is the perfect time to become more informed and actively involved on behalf of children and early care and education.

To learn how you can become a more active and vocal children's advocate, please regularly access the Early Learning Coalition's Legislative Updates webpage at: <http://elcmdm.org/Legislative/legislative.html>.

### **The ELC Encourages Reading at an Early Age by Participating in *Read Across America Day***

On March 2, The Early Learning Coalition proudly supported the National Education Association's *Read Across America Day*, with county-wide readings for children and book drop-offs. The Coalition gathered a group of staff, its board of directors and volunteers to visit 25 childcare centers throughout Miami Dade/Monroe to read to children and provide them with books to encourage reading at an early age.

Marking the birthday of Dr. Seuss, one of the world's most renowned children's book authors, the National Education Association launched *Read Across America Day* on March 2, 1998 to call on all children to celebrate reading, as research shows that children who are motivated to read, and read with greater frequency, do better in school. To-date it is considered one of the largest reading events in the United States.

At the Shores School Center in Miami, guests and students celebrated one of Dr. Seuss' most popular stories, by enjoying a "Green Eggs & Ham"-style breakfast. The center is located at 545 NW 95th Street, Miami, and is owned and directed by Evelyn Ellenbogen. The center, which serves an 85 percent Haitian population, cares for many students whose families were impacted by the devastating earthquake in Haiti in January. "The Early Learning Coalition believes encouraging children to read at an early age helps set them up to succeed in school," said Evelio C. Torres, president/CEO, Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe. "That is why we support programs like the National Education Association's *Read Across America Day* because it helps further our mission by motivating children to enjoy reading."

In the past year, the Early Learning Coalition has donated more than 100,000 books to childcare centers in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties so that children may take them home and start their own libraries.

\*source: ELC press release, February 24, 2010, "EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF MIAMI-DADE/MONROE CELEBRATES NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION'S *READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY* ON MARCH 2."

### 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 **Connie Chapell**.



Connie Chapell is the principal of Coral Rock Academy, a school established in 2007, to provide customized educational services to individuals with autism spectrum disorders and related neurobiological disorders. The philosophy of the school is that children do well when they can.

Chapell has nearly 30 years of educational experience in South Florida and has developed and implemented numerous educational programs throughout her career. In August 1996, Chapell founded Keys Academy of Marine Science in Key Largo. In 2000, she became the principal at St. Justin Marine Academy, also in Key Largo. Her clinical and therapeutic experiences include director of Redlands Academy, a private, accredited therapeutic school, providing a comprehensive education to patients of Grant Center Hospital, a treatment center for children and adolescents. Her experience and knowledge continues to impact families in South Florida through her commitment of making a difference one student at a time.

"I believe every child should have the opportunity to succeed and as educators, we need to cultivate their desire for knowledge and success," Chapell said. "Coral Rock Academy is going to serve the children and teens which the system has not been able to accommodate for. We will focus on each student's special needs and work together with their teachers and parents to make sure each student reaches his or her full potential."

Chapell received her bachelor's degree in special education/mentally handicapped from Florida State University in 1978. She earned a master's degree in education of the emotionally handicapped and administrative supervisor from Nova University in 1983. She currently is an active board member of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe and the Florida Kindergarten Council of Independent Schools. She has been an active supporter and volunteer for many youth organizations and task forces; including child assault prevention, challenge day, youth mentoring programs, bullying prevention, suicide prevention in youth, youth group leader, grief counseling and many community service projects. Chapell currently resides in Key Largo, FL with her husband Gary and two children that are currently away at college.

### 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 **Socra Saintiche**, Senior Accountant.

Socra Saintiche has been working in the Finance department as a senior accountant for almost two years. She is primarily responsible for grant management, cash management, payroll, and fulfilling other general finance functions.



"The ability to experience and witness the direct impact of our work through the various activities held within the community is the most meaningful aspect of working at the Early Learning Coalition," says Socra. Moreover, stepping up-to-the-plate and providing assistance and taking over assignments during critical times without interrupting the flow/process of the department, are aspects of her professional performance in which she takes particular pride.

Previously Socra worked in both the public and private sectors as an agent with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), a senior accountant for the City of Miami, and an external auditor for Watson Rice LLP.

Socra enjoys many activities beyond her work-day including exercising, reading, attending live poetry readings and performances, babysitting, teaching church to children ages 0 - 6 years, and caring for her beloved nieces and godsons.

### **Miami-Dade County News Briefs**

School Readiness (SR)

#### **Information Regarding Childcare Services for Families Affected by the Earthquake in Haiti**

- ❖ Currently there is no special or additional funding to provide childcare services for families impacted by the earthquake in Haiti
- ❖ Families are directed to apply to the Unified Waitlist
- ❖ AWI has supplied a special code, HAITIQUAKE, to designate these children on the waitlist
- ❖ Families who meet At Risk, TANF, or Transitional Child Care eligibility may access services without waiting
- ❖ Children must meet all School Readiness requirements, including U.S. citizenship, U.S. non-citizen national or qualified alien with qualifying documentation. (Head Start participants are excluded from this requirement)
- ❖ Parents must meet all School Readiness requirements
- ❖ Children may be eligible for services through the Refugee Child Care Program, if their parents qualify. All slots in this program are currently being utilized and there are no vacancies or commitment for additional funding for additional slots

#### **Agreement for School Readiness-Funded Services**

All providers who receive School Readiness funding from the Early Learning Coalition are **required to submit an agreement no later than May 15, 2010**. Your School Readiness payments will stop on July 1<sup>st</sup> if the completed agreement and all required documents are not received by the deadline.

Provider agreements may be accessed on the Coalition's website at:

[www.elcmdm.org/downloads/schoolreadiness/SRprovideragreement1011.pdf](http://www.elcmdm.org/downloads/schoolreadiness/SRprovideragreement1011.pdf). Providers may also obtain an agreement by calling the Coalition at 305-646-7220.

#### **Daily Attendance Codes and Approved Standard Reimbursable Holidays Listing**

For a listing of the 2010-2011 standard holidays approved by the ELC in concurrence with Miami-Dade County's CDS, as well as codes to be used in tracking daily attendance, please visit:

[http://elcmdm.org/our\\_services/schoolreadiness/holiday%20schedule.pdf](http://elcmdm.org/our_services/schoolreadiness/holiday%20schedule.pdf).

**Providers: Please Submit Your ASQ Forms ASAP!**

Please return your Ages and Stages Questionnaires to Miami-Dade County (CDS) promptly. They must be completed and returned as soon as possible following the instructions included in your ASQ packet, or if you need immediate assistance, call your centers' ASQ staff personnel. Your cooperation is essential to the success of the Miami-Dade County and the Early Learning Coalition's support in educating your children. For more information on completing the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, or if you need forms, please call 305-270-2905 (South) or 305-953-6007 (North).

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)

**Florida's VPK Students are Better Prepared for Success in Kindergarten**

Most recent results indicate that VPK students are scoring higher than those not enrolled in VPK in key learning areas.

"According to the 2008-09 Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Readiness Rate results announced today by Florida Department of Education Commissioner Dr. Eric J. Smith and Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation Director Cynthia R. Lorenzo, more than 120,000 students entered kindergarten better prepared this year as a result of their participation in a VPK program. Based on the results, children who completed VPK last year performed better on key Kindergarten readiness measures than children who did not participate. Additionally, children who only attended a portion of a VPK program outperformed students who had no exposure to the program at all."

To read the AWI press release in its entirety, please visit

[http://www.floridajobs.org/publications/news\\_rel/VPK\\_better\\_prepared\\_032510.htm](http://www.floridajobs.org/publications/news_rel/VPK_better_prepared_032510.htm). The VPK Readiness Rate Fact Sheet may be accessed at [http://www.fldoe.org/news/2010/2010\\_03\\_25/VPKResultsFS.pdf](http://www.fldoe.org/news/2010/2010_03_25/VPKResultsFS.pdf).

\*source: AWI press release, Thursday, March 25, 2010, "Florida's VPK Students are Better Prepared for Success in Kindergarten."

**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.

**Monroe County News Briefs****2010-2011 VPK School Year Registration is Now Underway**

The latest round-up to register for the upcoming 2010-2011 VPK School Year program will be held on **Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup>; 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Wesley House Family Services, 1304 Truman Avenue, Key West.**

Ongoing registration for the School Year program begins on **Monday, April 26<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at all Wesley House locations (Monday - Friday in Key West and Tavernier; Tuesday and Thursday in Marathon).** Children must be four (4) years of age on or before September 1, 2010 to participate in the 2010-2011 School Year program.

**2010 VPK Summer Program Registration Has Begun**

Registration for the Summer program is now underway **from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 pm. at all Wesley House locations (Monday - Friday in Key West and Tavernier; Tuesday and Thursday in Marathon).** Children who have not previously participated in the VPK program and will be entering kindergarten in the upcoming 2010-2011 school year are eligible to participate in the Summer VPK program.

For additional information, please contact Mary Williams at 296-5557 or Val Taylor at 809-5000.

## Quality Counts

Quality Counts celebrated its second birthday in January 2010 and is proud to be an inclusive quality rating improvement system with 460 programs including those that are center-based, family childcare homes, Head Start/Early Head Start, Miami-Dade County Public Schools classrooms, and the Redlands Christian Migrant Association. Center-based programs and family childcare homes are eligible to access a full array of support including technical assistance, stipends and scholarships, materials and achievement awards, as well as training. Other Quality Counts participants provide much of their own resources in return for training and administrative guidance and support.

Participants that join Quality Counts conduct an extensive self-study that provides a snapshot of their program, and receive a formal assessment by a reliably-trained assessor using the appropriate Environmental Rating Scale. This results in a baseline for the program and triggers a year-long quality improvement plan. After the first year of baseline ratings, programs can opt for a Star Rating (which includes a formal assessment) or continue to work on quality improvement for up to three years. Currently more than 90 programs have received a full Star Rating with additional programs being rated every month.

All Quality Counts participants are provided with a sign that states: "We proudly participate in Quality Counts!"



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