



Early Learning Coalition
of Miami-Dade/Monroe



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Issue 5
May/June 2011

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Dear Friends:

We are now getting very close to the end of the 2011 legislative session and the final agreements on agency budgets, program expenditures and government reorganization are being reached. As you already know we have been particularly concerned about the early learning budget. Following is an update:

School Readiness

We are facing a potential reduction of approximately \$60 million, \$30 million in Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) federal dollars that have not been restored by the legislature and just over \$30 million to make up for last year's reduction in our base allocation that was temporarily covered with ARRA dollars. The impact of these reductions is over 15,000 fewer children served statewide. This reduction may also involve the disenrollment of children, reductions to a number of ELC-funded direct service programs, and other measures that will no doubt impact the quality of our early care and education system - and outcomes for children. This is very, very bad news for Florida's children, working families and for our state's long-term economic development.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

The Senate and House have agreed to reduce administration and program support from 4.5% to 4%. Two years ago the amount was 5%. To be clear, very little of this percentage is used for actual administrative costs. Most of these dollars are used for program supports such as the legislatively mandated client eligibility determination, program monitoring, provider certification and payments. It will be extremely challenging to meet all of the VPK program requirements with just 4% because we must still determine the annual eligibility of over 30,000 children to participate in VPK, certify over 900 child care providers to serve VPK children and receive over \$50 million dollars in state funding, and monitor those providers as required by state law.

The most serious concern, however, is the reduction in the base student allocation. This means that early care and education providers will receive less reimbursement



Upcoming Board and Committee Meetings

Provider Services
Thursday, May 12
1:00 p.m.
Board Room

Finance
Wednesday, May 25
8:00 a.m.
Board Room

Program & Strategy
Tuesday, May 31
3:30 p.m.
Board Room

Board
Monday, June 6
8:00 a.m.
Board Room

Program & Strategy
Tuesday, June 28
3:30 p.m.
Board Room

Finance
Wednesday, June 29
8:00 a.m.
Board Room

For a complete list of upcoming Coalition meetings and events,

please visit our website at

per VPK child. As we have seen before, to make up for the loss of dollars to providers, the proposed legislation calls for an increase in class size. Just about every expert - and some non-experts, too - will tell you that packing more four-year-olds into the same classroom is just not a good idea.

The Bottom Line

The bottom line is that there are a number of issues that remain unresolved in the last days of the legislative session. At this point, the leadership in the legislature (Senate President Mike Haridopolos, Senate Budget Chief J.D. Alexander, House Speaker Dean Cannon or House Appropriations Committee Chair Denise Grimsley) will be negotiating many of the final details. There is still time to for these issues to be corrected, so please act on this information as you deem appropriate.

As always I'm at your service.

Sincerely,

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

Important Announcements

Congratulations to ELC Board Member David Williams Jr., Newly-Appointed Councilman to the City of Miami Gardens



ELC Board Member David Williams Jr. is the City of Miami Gardens' newest Council member representing At-Large Seat 5. Mr. Williams was nominated by Mayor Shirley Gibson to fill the unexpired term of former Council member Sharon Pritchett. This nomination was approved and voted on by the City Council at their meeting on March 9, 2011. To learn more about Mr. Williams and his appointment, please visit <http://www.miamigardens-fl.gov/mayorcouncil/d-williams.html>.

Children's Artwork Celebrates Children's Week

A big thank you to the providers who submitted their children's hand artwork to celebrate Children's Week. Our community's children were well represented in Tallahassee, Miami Children's Museum and the ELC's Coral Gables office!

Children from the following schools and centers in Miami-Dade County showed off their creative and artistic talents:

Smart Start at City Church
Smart Starts at Tamiami
Smart Starts Day School
Smart Starts Day School (1101)
Smart Starts Day School (8445)
Smart Starts Day School III
Smart Starts Early Learning Center
Smart Starts Learning Center



Artwork submitted by Interamerican Learning Center

www.elcmdm.org

Contact us

Miami-Dade

2555 Ponce de Leon
Blvd., 5th Floor
Coral Gables,
FL 33134
305.646.7220
305.447.1608 (fax)

Monroe

1100 Simonton Street,
Suite 1-204
Key West,
FL 33040
305.296.5557
305.296.5588 (fax)

www.elcmdm.org

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Smart Starts Preschool
Interamerican Learning Centre
Elite Kids Enrichment Center
Get Smart Kids Academy
Maria Soto Large Family Child Care Home
Kids Land Day Care
Holy Comforter Day Care Center
Little Promises Day Care
Little Promises Day Care II
Coral Villa Christian Academy
Poinciana Park Elementary Head Start
St. Albans Child Enrichment Center 3465
St. Albans Child Enrichment Center 6060
Bethune Head Start & Child Care Center
Colonial Drive Elementary Head Start and Child Care Center
Lincoln Marti
Our Lady of Lourdes
Noah's Ark L.C.
New Generation Preschool
Happy Kids Childcare
Happy Children of Overtown
Paradise Christian
ARC Project Thrive Kendall
Little Star Day Care
Athalene Clay
The Thinking Child Academy
Gratigny Day Care
Young Presidents Club CCC
Sheyes #2
Head Start
Sheyes #4
Born 2 Learn
Villa Learning Center
Coral Villa Christian Academy
University Christian Children's Center
Precious Little Steps Learning Center



Artwork submitted by
Little Promises Day
Care

Miami Children's Initiative - Board of Directors Meetings

The Miami Children's Initiative has scheduled board of directors meetings at 6:00 p.m. on the following dates in May and June of 2011:

May 10th
May 24th
June 21st

All meetings will be held at the Joseph Caleb Center (5400 NW 22nd Avenue) in the 4th floor conference room.

The ELC and EPIC Hotel Host a Community Awareness Day in Honor of Earth Day

On Wednesday, April 20, 2011, the ELC and EPIC Hotel joined forces to welcome children for Community Awareness Day in honor of Earth Day on April 22nd. Students met with EPIC's Director of Engineering, Alessandro Passalacqua (see photo to the



right), to learn about environmental responsibility, energy conservation and recycling.

The United Way Center for Financial Stability

With the economy's recent challenges in mind, the United Way Center for Financial Stability was founded to assist working individuals and families in their journey toward achieving long-term economic independence and stability.

In response to the one-third of Americans who face difficulty in meeting their long-term plans due to financial hardships, the UW Center of Financial Stability utilizes a personalized approach and a three-step framework to assist clients in realizing longstanding financial stability. These three steps are: increasing income (step 1), building savings (step 2), and gaining and sustaining assets (step 3). Each client receives an initial financial assessment and a customized financial stability plan.

Additional services include:

- *Financial education workshops, seminars and trainings
- *Free tax preparation and benefits enrollment
- *Credit counseling and debt management
- *Employment services - job training, interviewing skills and resume building
- *Individual development accounts
- *Home ownership services
- *Small business services
- *Other asset building services

To seek financial assistance and/or to learn more detailed information, please visit <http://www.unitedwaymiami.org/financialstability.asp>. Assistance is available in English, Spanish and Creole.

United Way Center for Financial Stability
11500 NW 12th Avenue
Miami, FL 33168 305-688-3551
Monday - Friday
9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Worthy Wage Day

This year's Worthy Wage Day marks the 20th Anniversary of the Worthy Wage Campaign.

Launched in 1991 by the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW), Worthy Wage Day on May 1st resulted from the Worthy Wage Campaign--a grassroots national effort initially intended to last only five years. The Campaign was designed to improve the compensation, professional development opportunities and work conditions for the early care and education workforce.

Many committed and qualified early childhood professionals leave the field each year because of low pay and lack of benefits; as a result many early learning programs are not able to maintain the quality that all children deserve. The Campaign builds alliances among advocates and has created a successful network of stakeholders, families, and locally-based campaigns promoting accessible and affordable high-quality early care and education.

Since 2003, Worthy Wage Day has been coordinated at the national level by the America Federation of Teachers.

The Look Before You Lock Campaign is on a Roll!



The ELC is back on the rails! You may have noticed some Metrorail cars wrapped in very distinctive colors; these cars serve as moving billboards for the Look Before You Lock campaign. Our campaign is designed to remind

parents and caregivers that no amount of time is okay to leave a child alone in a car. This is of particular importance here in South Florida where temperatures are already soaring. The moving billboards are accompanied by sun screens and brightly colored Look Before You Lock reminders that parents can hang on their rearview mirror. In addition, an outreach campaign is planned for child care centers. Stay tuned for more details; we will update you once the campaign's hard launch date is finalized.

The Look Before You Lock campaign also has a Facebook fan page, <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Look-Before-You-Lock/109431725808935>. Please visit the page and click on the "like" button and encourage family and friends to do so as well!

Florida's Minimum Wage is \$7.31 Effective Summer 2011

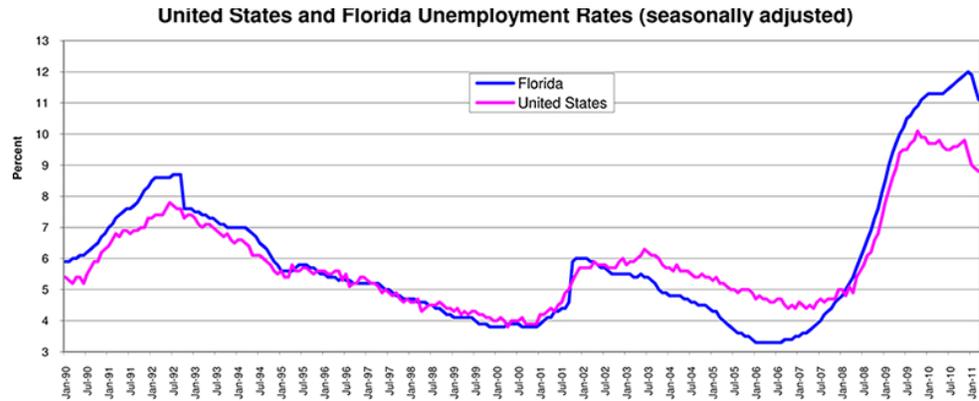
Effective June 1, 2011, the minimum wage for Florida is \$7.31 per hour. An adjusted minimum wage rate is calculated by AWI each year per Florida law. Employers must pay their employees the hourly state minimum wage for all hours worked in Florida. Additionally, State Statutes also require that employers who must pay their employees the Florida minimum wage must also post a notice with the minimum wage in a conspicuous and accessible location in each establishment where respective employees work. This poster requirement is in addition to the federal requirement to post a notice of the federal minimum wage.

To download posters with the Florida and/or Federal minimum wages in English or Spanish, please visit <http://www.floridajobs.org/minimumwage/index.htm>. Information regarding compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act is also available.

Florida Releases its Employment Figures for March

For March 2011, Florida's Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) reported that the State's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is 11.1 percent which is slightly below the February 2011 rate of 11.5 percent.

While Florida's unemployment figure is still unacceptably high, Governor Rick Scott is encouraged that the rate is the lowest it has been in more than a year, representing an almost one-percent drop since he was sworn in as the State's Governor. Moreover, he is optimistic that the latest decline is evidence of a now three-consecutive-month downward trend in Florida's unemployment.



Source: Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, Labor Market Statistics Center, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

To read more details about the current state of Florida's labor force, please visit http://www.floridajobs.org/publications/news_rel/LMS%20Release04-15-11.pdf.

*Source: Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) press release, "Florida's March Employment Figures Released - April 15, 2011; 10:00 AM."

Children's Movement of Florida

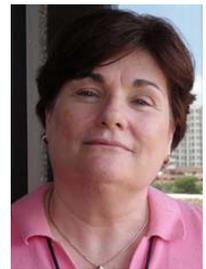


The Children's Movement of Florida is a statewide, citizen-led, non-partisan campaign with the objective of educating political, business and civic leaders - and all parents in Florida - about the urgent need to improve the way we care for our children, making the well-being and education of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens, Florida's

highest priority. To learn more about the movement, please visit www.childrensmovementflorida.org.

Team Member Spotlight

Kerry Allen joined the Early Learning Coalition on June 1, 2004. In her current role she serves as the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) regional facilitator for Broward, Dade, Monroe, Collier, Glades, Henry and Lee Counties delivering Florida DOE Training(s) to VPK providers. Kerry assists VPK providers with issues related to quality in classrooms, curriculum, assessment, and learning standards. She also supports teachers in their quest to develop and enhance early literacy skills in young children. "I am very proud that the Coalition operates a model early education program [VPK] that creates a positive impact on early childhood centers and the families they serve," she says.



The impact of Kerry's projects is felt statewide, not only in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. Her involvement in one project in particular has been a source of real satisfaction for her, "I was fortunate to participate in the revision of the Cognitive Development Domain in the Florida 4 Year Old Standards which will be released in August of 2011 for both VPK and School Readiness providers."

Prior to her tenure at the Coalition Kerry worked as a Head Start director in Springfield, MA, held two management positions in the Massachusetts Department

of Public Welfare, and was employed by Kaplan Early Learning for 13 years. Initially Kerry began her tenure at Kaplan as a sales representative in New York City and the surrounding area, and after a number of years she was promoted to the position of national director of training based in Miami.

Kerry is the vice president of public policy for the South Florida Association for the Education of Young Children (SFAEYC), the local affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). She is also an avid reader; loves old movies, music and swimming; and at one time was quite the skier. As a result of residing in South Florida however, unfortunately she has not had the opportunity to show her stuff on the slopes in the past few years.

Miami-Dade County News Briefs

School Readiness (SR)

ASQ Screening Reminder

Providers: Please be sure you mail your completed ASQ screenings to Miami-Dade County in a timely manner. ASQs are due back at the end of respective children's birthday months (for example, if a child's birthday is May 9th then his or her ASQ must be returned by May 31st). If you have any questions about the required screening of each School Readiness child, please contact one of the following:

North area - Ivy Martinez at 305-260-1240 ext. 244

South area - Iliana Acosta at 305-270-2913

Early Learning Coalition - Bethany Sands at 305-646-7248

Provider Contracts Must be Returned by May 15th

The 2011-12 Provider Contracts (Agreements) have been mailed to providers. The contracts are due back to the Coalition by May 15. A new policy approved by the Coalition Board of Directors requires all providers receiving school readiness funding to be licensed as of July 1. The exceptions to this requirement are Miami-Dade County Public School programs that are operated and supervised by school personnel; religious exempt programs and informal providers. Additional information on this policy and an additional new policy for SR providers may be found at http://www.elcmdm.org/our_services/SchoolReadiness.html. For specific questions regarding licensing, please contact the Department of Children and Families Child Care Licensing office at 305-377-5509.

Limited Number of Compliant Cribs to be Distributed to SR Providers and Family Child Care Homes Serving Infants

As per the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), effective June 28, 2011, all cribs manufactured, sold, or leased in the United States must comply with new and improved mandatory safety standards. The Coalition is pleased to announce it will be providing a limited number of cribs to school readiness centers and family child care homes serving infants. These cribs are being provided to assist providers' efforts to come into compliance with the new federal mandate. These cribs meet the new federal safety requirements mandated by the CPSC. Also of importance:

- Child care centers and family child care homes must have compliant cribs in their facilities before December 28, 2012
- Cribs that do not meet the new safety standards should not be resold,

- donated or given away
- Non-compliant cribs must be disposed of in a way that they cannot be reassembled and used
- The new safety requirements apply to cribs of all sizes, whether or not they are stackable, and include those made of wood or metal

You may expect delivery of your crib(s) in the next several weeks; instructions for receiving these materials are included. It is important to remember that all required paperwork must be submitted to the ELC within seven business days of receipt of the cribs.

Please note that if you have already purchased compliant cribs, we do ask that you notify us immediately so that we may allocate our cribs to those in greatest need.

Visit us at www.elcmdm.org to learn more details or if you have additional questions please contact Fiorella Altare at faltare@elcmdm.org or by calling 305-646-7220, ext. 272. Thank you for your partnership. We hope these cribs will give you a jumpstart in becoming compliant with the new federal safety standards and continue your longstanding commitment to the health, safety, and well being of our children.

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)

VPK Trainings for May and June 2011

Training Location

St. John the Apostle School
479 East 4th Street
Hialeah, FL

The Florida VPK Assessment Training (This course is free)

*Tuesday, May 24, 2011; 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.; Reference # 1261

*Tuesday June 21, 2011; 2:00 to 4:30 p.m.; Reference #1262

2008 VPK Standards Training

(This course is \$10.00 which must be paid on-line at time of registration)

*Tuesday, May 17, 2011; 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Reference #1260

Training Location

Miami-Dade College - Homestead Campus
500 College Terrace, Building G, Room 105
Homestead, FL

The Florida VPK Assessment Training (This course is free)

*Thursday, May 5, 2011; 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.; Reference #1274

*Thursday, June 23, 2011; 2:00 to 4:30 p.m.; Reference #1276

2008 VPK Standards Training

(This course is \$10.00 which must be paid on-line at time of registration)

*Wednesday, May 11, 2011; 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Reference #1275

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Classes begin on time! Anyone arriving at 5:45 p.m. or later for a 5:30 p.m. class will not be admitted. Anyone arriving at 2:15 p.m. or later for a 2:00 p.m. class will not be admitted--no exceptions! You are not permitted to be more than 15 minutes late for class because you will be receiving CEUs for your attendance. Thank you for our cooperation.

Please note: You must bring your Florida VPK Assessment Kit to participate in the assessment training.

Monroe County News Briefs

SAVE THE DATE

MINI-CONFERENCE FOR INFANT/TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

Saturday, May 21, 2011; 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Florida Keys Community College, Stock Island

Please join us as we wrap-up our year-long focus on promoting social and emotional development of young children with all new sessions by expert trainers. Two morning Infant/Toddler Pyramid Model sessions will be offered (English and Spanish). A morning Preschool Pyramid Model session will be offered in English. Two afternoon Infant/Toddler sessions will continue the theme of "The Language of Love: Bonding with Children through Music" (English and Spanish). DOE Regional VPK Facilitator Kerry Allen will offer an afternoon session to preview the new Four Year Old Standards (final draft) that will consolidate the Standards for both VPK and non-VPK four year old classrooms.

The mini-conference is sponsored by the ELC, Wesley House and NAS Key West Child Development Center. Additional details and registration form to follow. Please contact 305-296-5557 for more information.

2011-2012 FCCPC Training Program

Applications are being accepted until June 1st for the upcoming 10-month training program offered by Wesley House. Classes will begin in August 2011. Contact Laurie Dunn at 809-5000 x 231 for details. Local scholarships may be available with a deadline for application of June 1st. In the Upper Keys, the Ocean Reef Foundation scholarship applications are available from Laurie Dunn. In the Key West-Stock Island area, the Klaus-Murphy scholarship applications are available from Mary Williams at 296-5557. TEACH scholarships may also be available through the Florida Children's Forum.

Quality Counts

Attend a Healthy Living Training

Healthy Living Trainings address ways to prevent obesity and live a healthier lifestyle. Sessions are FREE, presented in both English and Spanish and are a perfect opportunity to earn in-service credit hours. Breakfast will also be provided.

Saturday, May 14th; 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. (registration begins at 9 a.m.)
Miami Dade College, North Campus
11380 NW 27th Avenue, Miami 33167

Building 2 Auditorium (Room 2158)
Free Parking

Saturday, May 21st; 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. (registration begins at 9 a.m.)
United Way, Ansin Building
3250 SW 3rd Avenue, Miami 33129
Free Parking

Quality Counts Providers Receive 'Thank You' Packages to Enhance their Learning Environments

Since summer is fast approaching, the Early Learning Coalition has assembled a 'thank you' package to enhance Quality Counts providers' learning environments. This package includes one consumable kit that contains an array of art supplies, as well as one infant/toddler kit that contains an array of manipulatives and books. If you do not have infant/toddlers then it will be substituted with a preschool package. You can expect delivery of these items in the next several weeks.

Please note that instructions for receiving these materials are included. Please return all required paperwork to the Coalition within seven business days of receipt. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Quality Counts office at the Early Learning Coalition at 305-646-7242.

Early education. Lifelong success.

