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## Upcoming Board and Committee Meetings

### Nominating

Monday, September 10  
3:00 p.m.

### Finance

Thursday, September 20  
8:30 a.m.

### Audit

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# ELC News Alert

Issue 9  
September 2012

## President's Message



Dear Friends,

National Hispanic Heritage Month is observed each year between September 15 and October 15. It is a celebration of the history, achievements, contributions and culture of Hispanics. This year, I hope you will join the Early Learning Coalition in paying tribute to generations of men and women who have made significant contributions to our country and communities.

The early care and education community can play an important role in celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month by incorporating activities that include music, literature, food and art into their daily curriculum. Highlighting Hispanic culture as it relates to diversity of heritage, family, tradition and professional accomplishments is another good way to help teach children about Hispanic heritage.

Sincerely,

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

## Important Announcements

### United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education Hosts Premiere International Literacy Conference

On August 4, the United Way of Miami-Dade Center for Excellence in Early Education Early Reading First/Project LEER held its premiere professional development event, the South Florida Early Literacy Conference. More than 300 early childhood education directors, administrators, coaches, curriculum specialists and teachers from across the United States and Latin America attended.

Thursday, September  
20  
9:30 a.m.

**Program & Strategy  
and Provider Services**  
Tuesday, September 25  
3:30 p.m.

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

## Contact us

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*Pictured are David Lawrence, Jr., The Children's Movement of Florida; Maria Serra, United Way of Miami-Dade; Dr. Lea McGee, the Marie Clay Distinguished Chair of Reading Recovery and Early Literacy at The Ohio State University; Dr. Mel Jurado, Florida's Office of Early Learning; Gladys Montes, United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education; and Evelio Torres, Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe*

Presenters included Dr. Lea McGee, the Marie Clay Distinguished Chair of Reading Recovery and Early Literacy at The Ohio State University; David Lawrence, Jr., Children's Movement of Florida; and Evelio Torres, Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe. For the complete news release, please visit [www.unitedwaymiami.org](http://www.unitedwaymiami.org).

### ELC Supports Miami Children's Initiative in 'Over the Edge' Fundraiser

On August 17-18, the [Miami Children's Initiative](http://www.unitedwaymiami.org) hosted its inaugural signature fundraiser, "Over the Edge Miami" at the JW Marriott Marquis in downtown Miami. With the support of many community partners, including the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, the event collected more than \$260,000 in donations, sponsorships and in-kind contributions for the children of Liberty City.

Evelio Torres, president and CEO of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe joined other brave individuals in rappelling from the 19th floor of the JW Marriott Marquis.



*Community partners at the Over the Edge cocktail*

*reception on August 17: Jaret L. Davis, Miami Children's Initiative Board of Trustees; Blythe K. Robinson, Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe; Evelio Torres, Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe; Cecilia Gutierrez-Abety, Miami Children's Initiative; and Modesto Abety-Gutierrez, The Children's Trust.*

Miami Children's Initiative is a nonprofit organization focused on transforming Liberty City into a prosperous community. In partnership with Liberty City's residents, youth, religious centers, schools, businesses and non-profit organizations, the Initiative seeks to address the needs of the community by investing in children. To view photos from the cocktail reception and the rappelling event, please visit <http://www.jennyabreu.com/OvertheEdgeMiami>.

#### **Guarione M. Diaz Alpha Charter of Excellence School Hosts Inaugural Celebration for Parents and Community Partners**



Last month, the Early Learning Coalition joined parents, teachers, and members of the community at the inaugural celebration of the Guarione M. Diaz Alpha Charter of Excellence school in Little Havana. The school celebrated the opening of a newly-renovated facility and official launch of its charter school for grades K-5. On hand to celebrate the inaugural celebration were: City of Miami Mayor Tomas Regalado; Sonia Lopez, the school's executive director; Evelio C. Torres, Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe; and Guarione M. Diaz, president of the Cuban American National Council and the event's honoree.

#### **United Way Seeks 300 Volunteers for ReadingPals Program**

United Way of Miami-Dade is recruiting 300 volunteers to become readers at more than 30 early learning centers throughout Miami-Dade County as part of its ReadingPals program. A \$116,000 private grant for each of the next three years from Carol Jenkins Barnett, chairman and president of Publix Super Markets Charities, and Barney Barnett, Publix vice chairman, is helping United Way expand its current volunteer reader program, to engage more volunteers and help more young children improve their literacy skills.



*Carol Barnett, president of Publix Super Markets Charities with Governor Rick Scott and First Lady Ann Scott, announcing a \$3 million gift from Carol and Barney Barnett to create ReadingPals, a new early literacy program.*

"We are so grateful for the extraordinary leadership and generosity of Carol and Barney Barnett," Harve A. Mogul, president and CEO, United Way of Miami-Dade, said. "They are passionate, caring leaders who are committed to helping the children of Florida achieve success in school and in life," "They understand the importance of quality early education and that by investing in our children, they are investing in the future of Florida and our nation."

United Way of Miami-Dade is one of 10 United Ways in Florida to receive a grant from the Barnett's who launched this three-year initiative to connect volunteers with young children to help them on the road to literacy. Research shows that children who are reading on grade level by 4th grade have a better chance of graduating from high school. In Florida, more than one-third of 3rd graders in public school cannot read at minimum levels of proficiency.

United Way of Miami-Dade ReadingPals' volunteers will commit to reading to students once a week for 24 weeks, starting the week of Oct. 15. They will be matched with pairs of children to help build vocabulary and other literacy skills by reading high quality books and engaging them in interactive learning. The program will offer trainings for participating teachers and volunteers and will utilize the VPK assessment to identify intentional interventions for children.

The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe is proud to join United Way in this ReadingPals initiative. Other local partners include: The Children's Movement of Florida, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, and The Children's Trust.

For more information visit [www.unitedwaymiami.org/volunteer/readingpals](http://www.unitedwaymiami.org/volunteer/readingpals).

To volunteer with the ReadingPals program, send an email to [readingpals@unitedwaymiami.org](mailto:readingpals@unitedwaymiami.org) or call 305-646-7021.

### **Important Information about the VPK Assessment**

The Florida Department of Education has notified all VPK Providers about the mandatory implementation of the VPK Assessment Tool to be administered during the 2012-13 school year to all VPK Children.

VPK providers must begin Assessment Period 1 the week of September 27, 2012.

The training is mandatory for providers on probation. If you are not on probation, you do not have to attend a training session in person. Instead, you may use the DVD included in your kit to train your teachers.

The training is ONLY for VPK teachers and the site director. Please do not register assistant teachers or other personnel.

Visit our website for more [information](#) about the VPK Assessment, [training dates](#) and the Online Reporting System.

### Save the Date

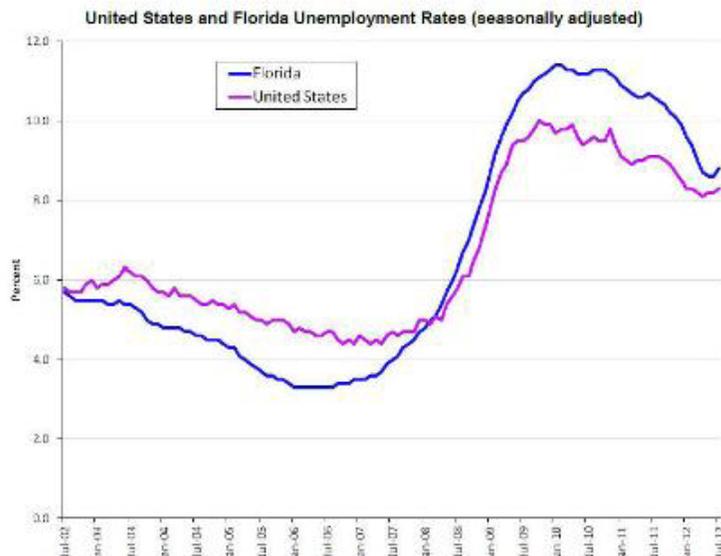
**Two-Day Expo for Early Childhood Professionals**  
**Friday, September 28 and Saturday, September 29**  
**9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**  
**Ft. Lauderdale/Broward Convention Center, 1950 Eisenhower Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316**

Spend two days visiting exhibitors to see what new products and services are available to enhance your work with children, families, teachers and others. Attendees will have the opportunity to attend mini-seminars, watch product demonstrations, test different products, receive free materials and network with colleagues. Admission to the event is FREE.

To register for your place at the convention, please visit [www.earlychildhoodexpo.com](http://www.earlychildhoodexpo.com). To learn about exhibitor and sponsorship opportunities, call 954-651-4556 or visit the website.

### Florida Releases Its Employment Figures for July

Florida's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 8.8 percent in July 2012, up 0.2 percentage points since June. There were 816,000 jobless Floridians out of a labor force of 9,269,000. Nationally, the unemployment rate was 8.3 percent in July.



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program in cooperation with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Labor Market Statistics Center.

The South Florida region leads the state in the most jobs gained in over a year with 4,900 jobs added to the payrolls. The region's unemployment rate is down to 9.8 percent from last month's rate of 10.1 percent. The unemployment rate for Miami-Dade County was 9.9 percent, 1.6 percentage points lower than the rate a year ago. Monroe County was 5.3 percent, still the lowest percentage in the state, and 1.2 percentage points lower than the year-ago rate of 6.5 percent.

For more information, read the entire press release from [South Florida Workforce](#) or the press release from the [Department of Economic Opportunity](#).

### ASQ-3 Online System

Effective last October, Miami-Dade County established an online system in which all ASQ-3s must be entered into its website. Miami-Dade County staff offers trainings to assist providers in accessing the County website; offers assistance inputting the AQS-3 child data online; and has provided training to over 800 providers including individual trainings at their centers.

As of January 2012, the County has not been mailing ASQ-3 packages and all data must be entered online via its website.

If the ASQ-3s are not completed by the due date, providers will be delinquent. Delinquent providers are in jeopardy of losing funding as per the Provider Agreement (page 10) which clearly states "each child must receive an annual screening." These ASQ-3 screenings must be completed and submitted by the end of each child's birth month.

If you need assistance with the online system, please call 786-469-4517 to schedule an appointment for individualized training at your facility. If you still need an ASQ-3 kit, please call 786-469-4517.

For more information, call Bethany Sands at 305-803-1272.

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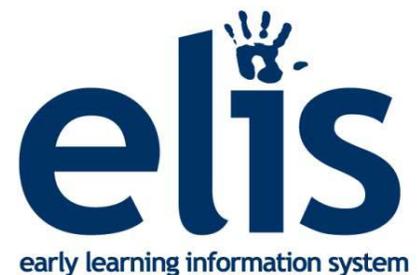
## ELIS: Early Learning Information System

### More Things You Can Do On the ELIS Provider Portal

Providers will be able to use the ELIS Provider Portal to complete their VPK Forms online. They will even be able to upload and attach documents to the forms. ELIS will verify that all required fields contain valid information. Then the Providers will be able to submit the forms to the ELC electronically. ELIS will route the VPK Forms to the right ELC staff members who will review them and complete the process - all without having to reenter the data.

The Provider's calendar will be automatically updated using information already collected from the electronic VPK forms.

The ELIS Provider Portal will establish and present each provider with a mailbox link to general announcements from their ELC and specific messages concerning their business, such as a



new child enrollment and slot management information.

Child care providers will be able to keep their Childcare Resource and Referral (CCR&R) profile current by updating it directly through the portal - as often as they wish. CCR&R Profile information contains all the things a parent needs to know before selecting a provider. These include such things as:

- Days and Hours of Operation
- Ages of children served
- Curriculum provided
- Instructor / child ratios
- Programs supported
- Special needs services
- Contact information

No longer will an opportunity to serve another child will be missed due to an out-of-date profile. One of the most exciting features of the ELIS Provider Portal is the easy access to a wealth of information about the children being served.

Providers can examine an individual child's attendance records. Schedule, progress, and results of child screening services will be available, along with any casework required for follow-up. Likewise child assessments - pre and post - will be scheduled and reviewed using the portal. Records of child inclusion services will be accessible online.

For more information about ELIS contact [Don.Northam@oel.myflorida.com](mailto:Don.Northam@oel.myflorida.com).

*\*Source: Florida's Office of Early Learning:  
[http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/\\_SysDev\\_ELIS.html](http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/_SysDev_ELIS.html)*

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## ELC Team Member Spotlight



**Miranda James** joined the Early Learning Coalition for a brief period from March to June 2011 as part of the School Readiness project for after-school programs. She returned to the ELC in November 2011 as a Navigator on the Quality Counts team. In this position, her main duty is assisting providers with the Quality Counts process. The most rewarding part of her job is knowing that she is here to assist providers with improving the quality of their facility for themselves, their teachers, and most of all their children.

Miranda states her proudest moment at the ELC was being hired permanently, giving her the opportunity to work with amazing people. Before joining the organization, she spent 3 years working with a consulting and management company. She holds her Bachelor's degree in Psychology and is currently working to obtain her Master's degree in Criminal Justice from Florida International University.

"Education is the key to opening doors," she said. "It plays an important role in both our personal and professional lives."

On her free time, Miranda enjoys traveling the world, reading, playing tennis, shopping, and spending quality time with friends and family.

# Monroe County News Briefs

## 2012-2013 Klaus Murphy Foundation Teacher Scholarship Recipients

Sponsored by the ELC through a grant from the Klaus Murphy Foundation, six Key West and Stock Island child care teachers received a \$750 scholarship to enroll in the 10-month Florida Child Care Professional Credential training program provided by Wesley House.



*Pictured are (back row) Amanda Alcantara, Lighthouse Christian Academy; Ana Roca, Inez Martin Child Development Center; Chrissy Gardner, Lighthouse Christian Academy; Carmenita Carey, The Learning Center; (front row) Ana Achon Barneto, The Learning Center; and Alexiys Nichols, The Learning Center.*

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## Quality Counts

From the Desk of Suzette Frazier, Regional Safety Program Manager  
Department of Children and Families Child Care Licensing



*This section of the News Alert is designed to inform and remind providers of the licensing requirements of the Department of Children & Families. This licensing corner is a new and innovative way for providers to stay connected to childcare licensing and will serve as a guide to new regulations, information about recalls, licensing updates and much more.*

### **Operating a Child Care Program following a Declared Emergency**

The guidelines for Department of Children and Families (DCF) Staff and Child Care Providers within 24 hours after a declared emergency (hurricane, forest fire, or other natural disaster): The Florida Administrative Code requires the owner, operator, or director of a child care facility or family day care home (licensed, large, or registered) to notify your licensing authority about the status of operation in order to ensure that health and safety standards are met.

If children are to be moved to alternate sites, childcare providers are responsible for notifying your licensing authority for confirmation that the site is

appropriate, as well as informing the parents. Both licensing staff and the provider should work with their local Resource and Referral agency to help get the message out, to confirm location changes, and to ensure all children are provided care in a healthy and safe environment.

Each situation must be assessed on an individual basis and determinations made based on protecting the health, safety and well-being of the children in care. Once the Emergency Management Team has cleared the surrounding area for access, a childcare facility or family day care home will be able to re-open/remain open if:

- It has NO structural damage, AND
- It has FULL electrical service, AND
- The water and sewage/septic tank are working properly.

A childcare facility or family day care home may be able to re-open/remain open (based on a case-by-case assessment by the Department) if:

- It has NO structural damage, AND
- The water and sewage/septic tank are working properly, AND
- It is without electricity, but lighting needs are being met through the use of either batteries or a generator. Under NO circumstances are candles, open flames, gas or fuel lanterns to be used.

**Caution:** Generators, if used, must be located outdoors away from windows and doors. Exhaust can easily cause carbon monoxide poisoning if it enters the building or home. The generator must also be inaccessible to children. If the child care facility/home **SUSTAINS STRUCTURAL DAMAGE**, regardless of the extent, an on-site inspection is required **PRIOR** to caring for children. Licensing staff must ensure that the structure is sound, and no live wires or open access to sewage exists, etc. DCF staff may accomplish these inspections in collaboration with other departments or agencies

#### ISSUES TO CONSIDER DURING A RECOVERY PERIOD

Consultation with or alerts from the local health department are critical with regard to water safety. Contamination may occur and may require the following: water used for drinking/cooking must be purchased (i.e. bottled water); water used for hand-washing and cleaning must be vigorously boiled for five minutes and cooled or have 8 drops of bleach added to each gallon of water and sit for 30 minutes before use.

Provisions must be made for the facility/home to be kept cool and comfortable when children are in care. Fans may be appropriate; however, they must have safety features and kept out of the reach of children.

If flooding has occurred within the facility/home, clean up must occur before allowing children in care, including the disposal or sanitization of any toys and equipment impacted by the water.

Consultation with the local health department is critical with regard to sewage contamination and septic tank capacity, damage, and stress created by excessive rains, flooding, and standing water.

Outdoor areas must be safe for play and free from debris. Do not allow children to play near downed power lines or flooded areas. Programs may be allowed to reopen even if outdoor areas are not useable; however, approval by your licensing authority is required and children must be kept out of that play area completely or by setting up temporary fencing/barriers to prohibit access.

For food preparation in the absence of electrical power, pre-packaged foods that do not require refrigeration should be used and made available. Consult with your local health department on alternate meal planning and safe storage of foods.

Regardless of circumstances, staff-to-child ratios must be maintained to provide appropriate supervision particularly with these additional distractions.

Children may be accepted on a temporary basis; however, the licensed capacity may **NEVER** be exceeded. Enrollment information is required and contact numbers are extremely critical. Complete medical record requirements may be waived by your local licensing authority temporarily until the emergency situation has passed.

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