



CELEBRATING our children's teachers



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Upcoming Board and Committee Meetings

Board
Monday, May 7
8:00 a.m.

Provider Open



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ELC News Alert

Issue 5
May 2012

President's Message



Dear Friends:

Friday, May 11, is **Provider Appreciation Day**. The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe would like to thank each and every child care provider, teacher and other educators who play a part in shaping the lives of the children of our counties. The work we do would mean nothing without the help and support you give us. The selfless offering of your time and talents do not go unnoticed.

We know our children are in good hands with you.

THANK YOU!

Sincerely,

Evelio C. Torres

President & CEO
Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

NOTE: Please refer to the Legislative Updates sidebar for important information that may affect your business.

Important Announcements

Forum Conference Call

Thursday, May 10
10:00 a.m.

Program & Strategy and Provider Services

Joint Meeting
Wednesday, May 23
3:30 p.m.

Program & Strategy Accreditation Meeting

Wednesday, May 30
3:30 p.m.

Finance

Thursday, May 31
8:00 a.m.

Board

Monday, June 4

8:00 a.m.

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

Legislative Updates

Governor Scott vetoes the early learning bill, HB5103

Read his letter [here](#).

Kingdom Academy Wins April Photo Contest



Congratulations to Kingdom Academy for winning the Early Learning Coalition's first Facebook photo contest!

Families, child care centers, schools and other caregivers were asked to submit a picture of their children creating a garden to welcome the Spring season. We received more than 30 pictures and published them on our Facebook page. The winner was chosen by the amounts of "Likes" the photo received. At the end of the voting period, Kingdom

Academy won with 571 votes!

Thank You to all the participants who created a garden and sent us pictures. All of the photos were beautiful. Stay tuned for more news, updates and contests on our [Facebook page](#).

Legacy Magazine Honors Blythe Robinson



Blythe Robinson
Senior Vice President &
Chief Programs Officer
Early Learning Coalition
of Miami-Dade Monroe

Blythe Robinson, Senior Vice President and Chief Programs Officer for the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade Monroe, was selected by Legacy Magazine as one of South Florida's 50 most powerful and influential black business leaders of 2012.

Blythe and the other honorees were featured in The Business Monday section of the Miami Herald on April 30.

Congratulations, Blythe! We are honored to have you on our team. Thank you for all the hard work you do for the children of Florida.

Visit <http://legacy-mag.com> for the complete list of honorees.

Read to Learn Book Club Offers Free Books to 3-Year-Olds

All 3-year-olds in Miami-Dade County are eligible to receive a free book each month through The Children's Trust Read to Learn Book Club. By registering for the program, children can receive books in the mail each month for a year of fun and learning.



"No child should want for a book in Miami-Dade County, and this book club is just

Contact us

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www.elcmdm.org

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one tool in the comprehensive Read to Learn strategic plan," Modesto E. Abety-Gutierrez, president and CEO of The Children's Trust, said in a statement.

The Read to Learn Book Club is funded and administered by The Children's Trust, the Miami-Dade Family Learning Partnership and the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe.

To sign a child up for the program, complete the [registration form online](#).

To read more about the program, please visit the [Miami Herald's website](#).

Transition to Kindergarten Month



May is designated as Transition to Kindergarten month! A quality transition to the kindergarten process values the role of families, teachers, administrators and most importantly the child.

Here are some tips to help the families in your program have a successful transition to kindergarten:

- Identify the schools families will be attending in the fall.
- Reach out to those schools and find out if there are scheduled orientations, registration dates, open houses, etc. Share this information with families and encourage them to register early! Registration begins April 2.
- Provide families with a list of registration requirements.
- If families are unsure of the school their child is eligible to attend, follow this [link](#).

CDA Renewal Amnesty

The Renewal Amnesty Program began on March 1, 2012. This will allow anyone who has earned or renewed a CDA in the last ten (10) years to apply for renewal, even if your CDA has expired. This means that if your CDA has a credential date of January 2002 or later, you are eligible for Renewal Amnesty.

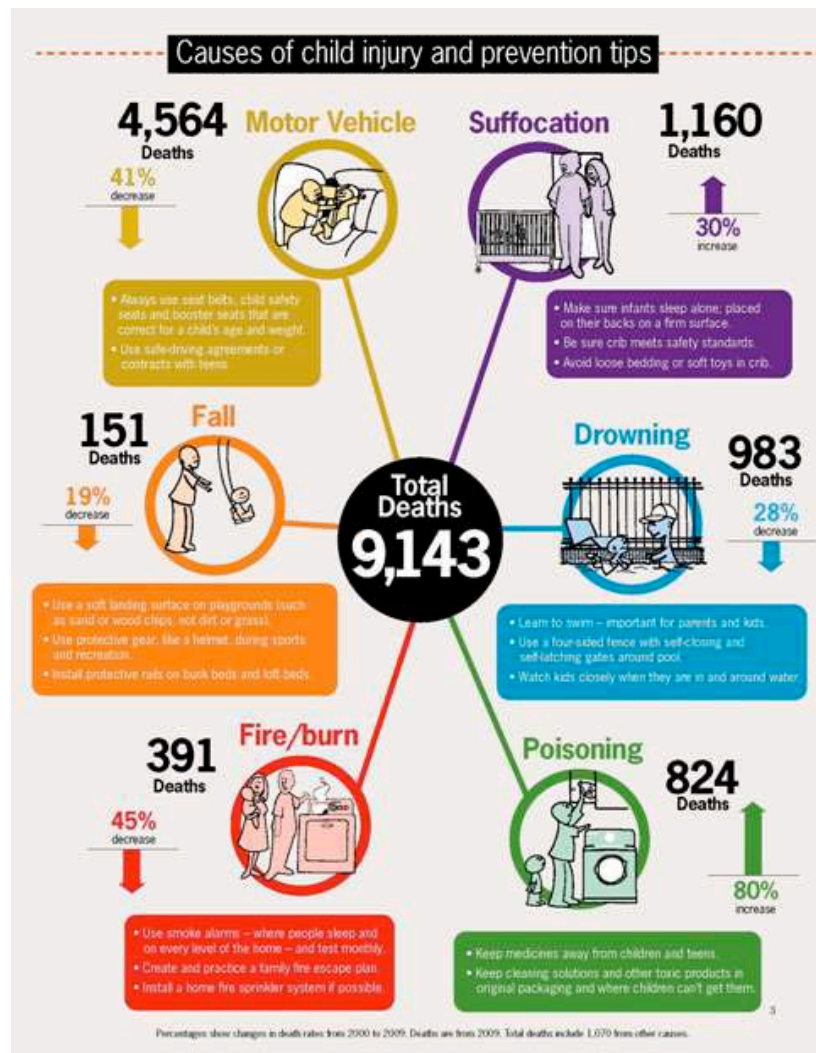
Make sure to take advantage of using the online application to renew. It's faster, and you can easily check your status as you go through the process!

This program will only last until December 31, 2012, so don't delay. Renew your CDA today.

For further information about the Child Development Associate (CDA), please visit www.cdacouncil.org for the National Credentialing Program and related professional improvement opportunities.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Release the National Action Plan for Child Injury Prevention

Injury is the number 1 cause of death in children in the United States. To learn more about what you can do to keep your children safe, read the April 2012 Vital Signs newsletter.



Vacancies on Board of Directors for Provider Representatives

We have two positions available on our Board of Directors for Provider Representatives.

The two opportunities are for:

- Representative of programs for children with disabilities under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Representative of faith-based child care providers.

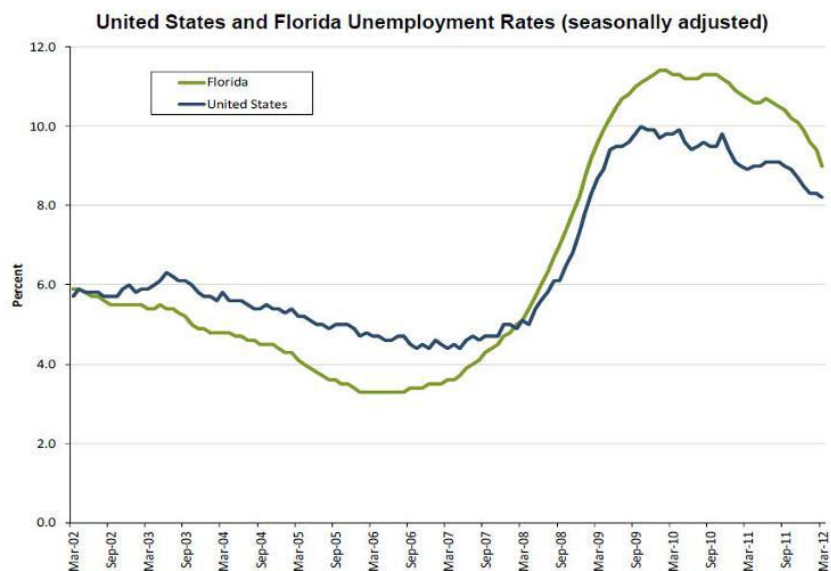
Interested applicants should visit our website and complete an [application](#). The deadline for submissions is May 21, 2012.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Leena Pena, Board Liaison, at 305-646-7220 or lpna@elcmdm.org.

Florida Releases Its Employment Figures for March

Florida's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 9.0 percent in March 2012, the lowest since January 2009. The March rate fell 0.4 percentage points from the February 2012 rate of 9.4 percent. This was the largest decline in a month long period in the state's jobless rate since October 1992. The US unemployment rate was at 8.2 percent in March.

The number of jobs in Florida increased by 10,800 over the month, a 0.1 percent increase. March was the 20th consecutive month with positive annual job growth after the state lost jobs for three years. Monroe County has the state's lowest unemployment rate at 5.1 percent. The Miami-Miami Beach-Kendall metro area had the largest gain in over-the-year job gains.



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.

For more information, please view the entire press release [here](#).

**Source: Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) press release, "Florida's March Employment Figures Released" - April 20, 2012; 10:00 A.M.*

The POWER Project: Power of Words Equal Readers

Florida's First Lady Ann Scott and the Office of Early Learning want to encourage reading through a new initiative, the POWER Project. This program will promote reading to children and early literacy through Florida's 31 Early Learning Coalitions. It has been proven that dollars spent on a child before age 5, when brain development is at its critical point, produces a higher economic benefit than if the same amount were spent when the child is older.

Using Early Learning Coalition volunteers and community partners, the POWER Project aims to create reading excitement in the classroom by having volunteers introduce a book to children with a reading event; providing books for each child to take home; and providing parents the opportunity to jointly read with their children at home with the books and tools to help with parent/child engagement.

Check our website for more information in the coming months.

Be a Part of the Movement: Celebrate Summer Learning Day on June 21!



June 21 is Summer Learning Day, a national advocacy day offering an opportunity to showcase your community's summer learning program, as well as spread the word about the importance of summer learning. Host an event during the week of June 21 or anytime during the summer!

During this national showcase, your summer program will want to highlight how to:

- Maintain and advance participants' academic and developmental growth
- Support working families
- Keep children safe and healthy
- Send young people back to school ready to learn

Are you having a Summer Learning Day event? Visit www.summerlearningdaymap.org and put it on the National Summer Learning Association's event map to spread the word! Make sure your event is listed by June 21.

Programs can also plan to join in on Thursday, May 10, 2012 1-2:30 PM EDT for the FREE Celebrate Summer Learning with National Summer Learning Day Tools and Resources Webinar to get new event ideas, talking points, and resources.

ASQ-3 Online System

Effective October 1, 2011, the County established the online system in which all ASQ-3s must be inputted into the County Website. Miami-Dade County staff:

- offers trainings to assist providers in accessing the County website
- offers assistance inputting the AQS-3 child data online
- has provided training to over 800 providers including individual trainings at actual centers

As of January 2012, the County has not been mailing packages; all data must be inputted on the 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 that "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, call Evelyn Jordan at 305-514-6098.

If you still need an ASQ-3 kit, come by the Early Learning Coalition between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. daily to pick up your kit. We are located at 2555 Ponce de Leon Blvd. Coral Gables, FL 33134.

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

CEO Attends Gifts of Service Awards



Evelio Torres, President and CEO of the ELC, was invited to attend the Gifts of Service Awards on Friday, April 27, in Jacksonville. The event was a celebration and fellowship honoring church ministries in North Florida who serve young children and their families.

Senator Stephen Wise hosted the event organized by the Child Development Education Alliance, Inc.

In attendance were childcare providers and ambassadors from across the state, including Daisie Overman and Liz Scott from Miami-Dade; Ellen McKinley, President of the Child Development Education Alliance; and Dr. Mel Jurado, Director of the Office of Early Learning.

ELIS: Early Learning Information System

The ELIS Customer Portal is Coming Soon

The Early Learning Information System (ELIS) will soon replace the 20-year-old application Enhanced Field System (EFS). Florida's Office of Early Learning and Coalitions will use this new system to operate and manage the delivery of School Readiness (SR) and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) services in Florida. The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe has been selected to serve as a pilot site for the new data system. We expect to go live beginning July 2013.



Childcare providers will have access to ELIS online to see their data and complete many tasks that currently must be done over the phone, by mail or in person.

Parents and guardians will also have access to ELIS online to view their own data, search for childcare resources, apply for VPK services and assistance in paying for childcare and to complete the redetermination process.

For an overview of the changes the new system will bring, please view the presentation on our [website](#).

Children's Movement of Florida

Voices of Florida

We all have a story. A story that defines us. And it is our collective story - our challenges, our triumphs - that inspire a movement. Floridians from all walks of life have joined together with an understanding that the future of our state rests on the well-being of our children.



Visit [The Children's Movement website](#) to read their stories and share your own.

Team Member Spotlight



Tamara Ryland joined the ELC team on February 28, 2011, as a Quality Assurance Programs Monitor. In this position, her duties include conducting contract quality audits and investigations, documenting processes, and providing technical assistance and guidance to make best practice recommendations.

A graduate of Florida State University, Tamara earned her Bachelor's degree in Rehabilitation Services. She received a Master's degree from NOVA Southeastern University in Reading Education. Her education, professional skills and abilities have afforded her the opportunity to build a career of more than 15 years in social services. Before joining the ELC, Tamara worked in several community organizations, including Switchboard of Miami where she served as an Outreach Educator, educating middle school students.

"I believe education is essential because it can foster personal growth and lead to a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment," Tamara said. "Working here at the ELC is worthwhile because I love being part of an organization that is dedicated to

helping young children become ready to enter school, ready to learn and succeed."

The best part of her job is assisting contractors in meeting their contractual requirements, meaning that they are interested in improving the overall quality of their work and better serving the children of our community. In her free time, Tamara enjoys playing tennis, going to the beach, volunteering at youth organizations, visiting different types of restaurants and shopping. Most of all, she enjoys spending time with her family.

Monroe County News Briefs

VPK Registration Continues for Summer 2012 and School Year 2012-2013

Summer 2012

Children who have not previously participated in the VPK program and will be entering kindergarten in the upcoming 2012-2013 school year are eligible to participate in the Summer VPK program. Available public school sites include Poinciana School, Key West; Marathon High School; and Key Largo School. This is a full day program running from June 13 - July 25. Parents must provide their own transportation. **Parents are encouraged to register early to enable the school district to adequately plan for summer staffing.**

School Year 2012-2013

Children must be 4 years of age on or before September 1, 2012 to participate in the School Year VPK program. Parents are encouraged to register early to receive the Certificate of Eligibility. Enrollment at a specific public or private school is first come, first-served (as space is available) or by lottery.

Parents may register their children at all Wesley House locations from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Monday - Friday in Key West and Tavernier; Tuesday and Thursday in Marathon). Evening hours are by appointment only. For additional information, please contact Val Taylor at 305-809-5000.

Save the Dates:

Monroe Quarterly Provider Meeting
Saturday, May 19, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
San Pablo Church Hall, Marathon

Please join Wesley House and ELC Monroe staff for the Quarterly Provider Meeting to include important programmatic updates. A presentation by Florida Keys AHEC on the new childhood anti-obesity grant project will include a display of the free educational materials, lesson plans, CDs, videos, and hard cover books that participating providers will receive. Additionally, an inclusion training will be provided for all attendees and a FLKRS (Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener) training will be provided for VPK directors and instructors. Lunch will be provided by the Florida Keys Early Childhood Educators. [Click here to preview the agenda.](#) Registration deadline is May 15. Please RSVP to Laurie Dunn at 305-809-5000.

Monroe County Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, May 24, 1:00 p.m.
Monroe County School District Board Room, 241 Trumbo Rd., Key West

Please join ELC board members, CEO Evelio Torres, ELC staff and our community

partners as we discuss important state and local information of interest and concern to our early education and care provider community. ELC CIO Fred Hicks will provide a special presentation on the new Early Learning Information System (ELIS). Provider participation is strongly encouraged in person, via conference call or via videoconferencing. The agenda with conference call and videoconferencing information will be distributed shortly.

Quality Counts

Family Child Care Home Accreditation Assistance

The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe assists early care and education programs achieve accreditation through the Quality Counts department. Centers have a variety of choices of accrediting organizations. Just one organization specializes in accreditation for Family Child Care Homes, The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC). With assistance and support from ELC Specialists, family child care homes in Miami-Dade are achieving NAFCC accreditation in record numbers! The Quality Counts Accreditation Facilitation Project (QC AFP) is a registered program that supports quality improvement efforts of family child care programs.

NAFCC accredits family child care homes who meet a level of quality as detailed in the Quality Standards for NAFCC Accreditation, which consists of 289 Standards organized into five (5) content areas. The process includes a Self-Study, an Accreditation Application, an Observation by a trained NAFCC Observer, and the decision by the NAFCC Accreditation Commission. The ELC's Quality Counts AFP can assist family child care homes through successful achievement of the Standards and the Self-Study and Application process!

For further information on National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) Accreditation, go to <http://nafcc.org/index.php>.

For assistance with NAFCC Self-Study and Accreditation, please contact Carol Brogan, Quality Counts Implementation Manager, at cbrogan@elcmdm.org.

Watch future News Alert publications for more accreditation assistance from the ELC.

Early education. Lifelong success.



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