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ELC News Alert

Issue 3
March 2013

President's Message



Dear Friends,

Just about everyone has heard about the impact of the federal sequestration. This federal budget issue impacts state and local governments and communities. For the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, the impact to our budget will be approximately \$1 million. Although this is a tough situation to deal with, it is not unlike the situation many other organizations are facing.

We manage our budget very tightly and are always looking for efficiencies that will allow us to serve more children. Our goal is always to minimize the impact of budget reductions on services to children, families and child care providers. Our plan for the sequestration reduction is no different. Although we will have to make some necessary adjustments to the enrollment process, children will not be disenrolled from any of our programs unless they no longer meet the federal, state or local eligibility guidelines for their current eligibility category. That is our commitment to the communities that we serve in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. That is our commitment to the children.

Thank you for your partnership and ongoing support. We will continue to keep you informed of any new developments.

As always, your opinion is important to us. If you have questions, concerns or comments, please write to us at info@elcmdm.org.

Regards,

Evelio C. Torres
President & CEO

Upcoming Board and Committee Meetings

Finance

Wednesday, Mar. 27
8 a.m.

ELC Board Room

Audit

Wednesday, Mar. 27
8 a.m.

ELC Board Room

Program & Strategy

Wednesday, Mar. 27
3:30 p.m.

ELC Board Room

Board

Monday, April 4
8 a.m.

ELC Board Room

For a complete list

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

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Join Our Mailing List!

Important Announcements

Children's Week Local Event a Great Success



On Friday, March 15, the Early Learning Coalition and the Miami Children's Museum collaborated on an event for Children's Week, a statewide celebration that aims to raise awareness for children's issues and call attention to the events taking place in Tallahassee from April 7 to April 12. Along with more than 15 community partners, the ELC distributed information to hundreds of people who attended the event.

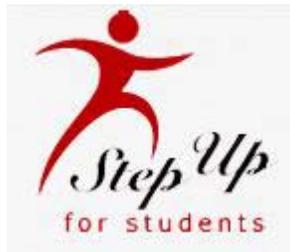
WSVN 7 Meteorologist, Vivian Gonzalez, and Miami Marlins mascot, Billy the Marlin, joined the ELC at the museum.

The museum was decorated with hand artwork collected from families and childcare providers across Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. We sincerely appreciate the enthusiasm and creativity showed in creating

each piece.

To view photos from the event, please visit our [Facebook page](#).

Step Up For Students



Your child may be eligible for a scholarship. Florida has help for schoolchildren who are low-income, in foster care or homeless. Today, more than 50,000 low-income students in Florida are receiving a Step Up For Students Scholarship. Could your child be next?

Many families still don't know this option exists, but Florida has the nation's largest K-12 scholarship program giving low-income families the ability to choose the school that best meets their children's needs. Families who qualify for the free or reduced-price school lunch program, children who are in foster care or who are homeless, could be eligible.

Applications for the 2013-14 school year have started. Renewal families were invited to start applying early February and new families in early March. Please visit www.StepUpForStudents.org to apply. To learn more, please visit the [website](#), call 877-735-7837 or email info@sufs.org.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Child Care Website

The EPA has launched a new web-based resource directory of environmental health information for child care.

This website was developed with three target audiences in mind: child care providers, parents, and state and local agencies. The information is arranged to be easily accessible for these three distinct audiences.

To view the new website, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/childcare>.

VPK Agreement Deadlines

The Coalition is accepting VPK Agreements for the Summer 2013 and School Year 2013-14 programs. To submit a VPK Agreement, please visit the Provider Portal at <http://providers.elcmdm.org>. Additional information regarding the VPK program can be found below:

VPK Summer 2013

The deadline for submitting a VPK Agreement to provide the Summer program is **April 1, 2013**. Please visit the [Provider Portal](#) to submit your Summer 2013 VPK Agreement.

A reminder about requirements for the Summer VPK program:

- Teachers must have a minimum of a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Early Childhood Education, Pre-K, Primary Education, or Family and Consumer Science (Home Economics)
- Teachers, directors, substitutes, and aides must have a Level II background screening within the past five years (FBI and FDLE)
- Teachers, directors, substitutes, and aides must have an Affidavit of Good Moral Character
- A valid DCF license to operate
- Classroom capacity is 12

*It is the Coalition's policy that a program lasting six (6) or more hours should include a minimum of 30 minutes of rest time for children. This time is not covered for reimbursement through VPK.

VPK 2013-14 School Year Program

The deadline for submitting a VPK agreement to provide the School Year program to those seeking pre-payment is **May 15, 2013**. The deadline for those not seeking pre-payment is **June 1, 2013**. Please visit the [Provider Portal](#) to submit your 2013-14 School Year VPK Agreement.

Please use the timeline below as a reference.

April 1	Deadline for Summer 2013 VPK Agreements
May 15	Deadline for Prepayment School Year 2013-14 Agreements
June 1	Deadline for School Year 2013-14 Agreements

VPK Readiness Rates Verification

The Florida Department of Education Bureau of Voluntary Prekindergarten released the Final 2011-12 VPK Readiness Rates on Friday, March 8.

Providers are able to go to the VPK readiness website and review their readiness rates. The minimum readiness rate for 2011-12 is 70. Providers who did not meet this rate are on probation and will be notified directly by the Florida Department of Education of their probationary status. Providers on probation should complete the acknowledgement and improvement plan at the readiness website. The timeline for

the 2011-12 VPK Readiness Rates is:

<i>March 8</i>	Department of Education posts final VPK Provider Readiness Rates to website
<i>March 29</i>	Deadline for Probationary VPK Providers to acknowledge Probationary status on VPK Readiness Rate website

Providers who have three consecutive readiness rates that are unsatisfactory will need to apply for a Good Cause Exemption. These providers must complete the online application and submit the required additional information. Please note that a provider who received an exemption last year will need to fill out the application again if the provider did not meet the minimum readiness rate or did not receive a rate for 2011-12, as the Good Cause Exemption is only good for one year.

ELC Board of Directors Seeking Candidates for Private-Sector Member Positions

The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe is seeking candidates to fill several private-sector member positions, including Governor appointed members, on its Board of Directors. Candidates must reside in Florida and be one of the following individuals associated with a private-sector business entity conducting business in Miami-Dade or Monroe County:

- An owner having at least a 10% ownership interest in the business entity;
- The CEO or COO of the business entity;
- A business executive or employee of the business entity who is at the management level or higher with optimum policy making or hiring authority; or
- An individual who previously met one of the criteria aforementioned, but is retired from the business entity. The candidate (or candidate's relative) must not be a childcare business owner or employee.

Candidates must have:

- Several years of executive leadership experience
- A deep passion for early childhood education
- Understanding and commitment to the organization's mission
- Ability to commit time to the organization
- Community involvement and engagement

In addition, applicants for Chair must have:

- Ability to develop and manage relationships and communicate with funders, partners and other stakeholders
- A commitment to and understanding of ELC's mission
- Savvy diplomatic skills and a natural affinity for cultivating relationships and persuading, convening, facilitating, and building consensus among diverse individuals
- Excellent written and oral communication skills coupled with affinity for public speaking
- Personal qualities of integrity, credibility, and a passion for improving the lives of the ELC's providers & families

Please contact Leana Sanchez at (305) 646-7220 ext. 246 for an application, or visit our [website](#) and click on the Board of Director's Application link on the homepage. Applications must be submitted by **April 5, 2013**.

Board Representatives Available to Answer Your Questions

The Early Learning Coalition would like to make it easier for you to reach your Provider Representatives on the board of directors. The following board members represent provider areas on the board:

- Shaleen Fagundo: Representative of private for-profit child care providers, including private for-profit family day care homes
- J. Abilio Rodriguez, Ph.D.: Representative of faith-based child care providers
- Helene J. Good: Representative of programs for children with disabilities under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

To contact your provider representative, please email board@elcmdm.org.

YWCA Seeking Candidates for Board of Directors

The YWCA of Greater Miami-Dade is looking for candidates for their Board of Directors for the upcoming board year beginning July 1. They have five vacancies to fill. The [attached letter](#) from the nominating committee chair explains the process, the expertise, and the board members responsibilities. As supporters of the YWCA, we need your help to identify candidates that will be a great addition to the Board of Directors. Nominations will be accepted through March 31.

From the Desk of Champagne Girtten, Project Director, Children's Legal Advocacy Project at Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc.



This section of the News Alert is designed to inform and remind providers and parents of their legal rights regarding the educational needs of their children. It is provided by the Children's Legal Advocacy Project at Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc., a private, not-for-profit law firm that provides free civil legal services to the low-income populations in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.

Response to Intervention Should Not Delay Evaluations

Many children have problems achieving grade-level results in learning or have behavioral problems that interfere with learning. The federal laws on education, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB), offer some guidance on when children should be evaluated for special education, but we are frequently encountering children that are not being properly identified for educational services and the protections that come with it. Response to Intervention (RTI) is a program used to provide targeted learning and behavior strategies to children who are struggling. If used properly, RTI can help many students. However, it should not be used to delay an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education. This can be especially damaging for children with severe learning or behavioral disabilities.

RTI is approved as an additional procedure to identify and help children with specific learning disabilities, but it is not a substitute procedure. The federal office in charge of special education has issued a statement clarifying that schools are not to delay evaluating students for special education merely because the child is still in RTI. Evaluations for special education can be done at any stage while a child is still in RTI. It is important to know your rights. If you feel that your child has a learning disability or behavioral problem that is not being helped by the interventions at the

school, you have the right to request an evaluation. If the school tries to delay the evaluation, you should file a due process request and seek the help of an attorney right away. Every child is entitled to a free and appropriate public education, regardless of RTI or other intervention programs at the school.

Save the Date: "Children First: Envisioning Our Future" Conference

save the date

1 Children **First** **Envisioning our Future**

Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

A professional development conference for Miami-Dade's early childhood education community

Join the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe and our community partners in Miami-Dade's annual conference for early education professionals!

May 10 and 11, 2013
Miami Dade College / Wolfson Campus
300 N.E. Second Ave., Miami, FL 33132

Attend seminars in:

- school readiness
- quality learning environments
- support for administration
- curriculum
- child development
- inclusion
- family partnerships

CEUs
Free Parking
Vendor Fair

ELIS: Early Learning Information System

ELIS Launch Delayed



The Office of Early Learning announced ELIS is delayed for 90 days from its scheduled release date of July 1, 2013. Hewlett Packard, the developers of the ELIS system, have been asked to present a status report before the Florida Legislature.

Please check our [website](#) for more news and updates in the coming months.

ELC Team Member Spotlight



Genia "Gigi" Major joined the Early Learning Coalition team in April 2008. After spending time in the Finance, Quality Counts, and School Readiness departments, she found a permanent place in December 2012 as the Eligibility and Provider Relations Specialist for the Teenage Parent Program (TAP). In this role, Gigi is responsible for meeting with teen parents and helping them decide on quality care for their children. She also works with providers explaining the TAP Program and encouraging their participation.

Education is extremely important to Gigi, who comes from a family of educators and professionals including her mother who taught severely handicapped high school students. Prior to the ELC, Gigi worked in the fashion industry in New York. Along with her journey and her move to Miami, Gigi shortly started believing that everything happens for a reason. Having had to raise a special needs child on her own, working part-time at the ELC was a blessing.

"In some way the ELC has helped and allowed me to be able to raise a special needs child into a productive adult," she said. "I was so proud the day he graduated from high school. Therefore, I believe early education is extremely important to society as a whole, and every child should be able to have that opportunity."

In her free time, she likes to spend time with her son, work out and hang out with friends. Eventually, she wants to be able to do more volunteer work. She also enjoys dining out, the movies, cultural events, the arts, traveling and dancing.

"I believe in staying forever young with your mind, body and spirit. If that doesn't work, it doesn't hurt to have a great anti-age moisturizer."

Monroe County News

Registration for 2013-2014 VPK School Year Program Begins in April

Pre-registration dates are scheduled as follows:

Key West

Saturday, April 6, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.: Gato Building, 1st Floor Conference Room, 1100 Simonton St.

Key Largo

Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.: Key Largo Library, Tradewinds Shopping Center, 101485 Overseas Hwy.

On-going registration will begin on Monday, April 22, at all Wesley House locations:

- Key West: Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Marathon: Tuesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- Tavernier: Monday and Wednesday, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- *Evening hours by appointment
-

For additional information, please see the [attached flyer](#) or call 305-296-5557 or 305-809-5000.

Free Online Training Available for In-Service Hours

The **Online Introduction to the Pre-K CLASS Tool** (available in English or Spanish) for 3 and 4 year old teachers is a self-paced online program that provides an overview of effective teacher-child interactions as defined by the CLASS tool and the ways that these interactions help children learn. This course takes approximately 2 hours to complete and participants will receive 2 in-service hours.

*Note: Only 25 slots are available for this training.

Registration is 1st come, 1st served. The deadline to register for these courses is **Friday April 26, 2013**.

To register or for questions, please contact Amber Keller at 786-897-1933 or by email at akeller@elcmdm.org.

Save the Dates:

CPR Training

Spanish Session, Tavernier: 4/6/13

English Session, Tavernier: 5/18/13

For additional information or to register, please contact Laurie Dunn at 305-809-5000.

Quality Counts

New Addition to the Quality Counts Team

The Early Learning Coalition is proud to announce the addition of Melissa Elena Fernandez to the Quality Counts team. A graduate of Nova Southeastern University with a degree in Mental Health Counseling and Applied Behavior Analysis, Ms. Fernandez was selected as the new Director of Quality Counts. She joins the ELC after working with The Children's Trust as a Research and Evaluation Analyst. During her time with The Trust, Ms. Fernandez worked with the Parenting, Service Partnerships, Youth Development and Youth Violence Prevention teams. Across initiatives and topics, Ms. Fernandez served as a facilitator bringing about positive change and forward movement while promoting mutual understanding and collaboration with partner agencies. She has devoted her career to improving the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade County and is thrilled to be expanding that reach to the Quality Counts initiative.

Quality Counts Now on Facebook

You can find the Quality Counts program on Facebook. Be sure to Like the page for news, updates and information on high quality early education.

Find their page by searching for [Quality Counts Miami](#) on Facebook.

Assistance Available for QC Renewal Process

Is your early learning program going through the Quality Counts renewal process? If you need assistance with your Self-Study or the Quality Counts Portal, contact the Quality Counts Department. Please call 305-646-7220 and ask for a Quality Counts Navigator.

Free Resources Available to Programs in Miami-Dade Through Shared Resources Florida

Shared Resources is a free, membership-based website that offers an array of resources and tools for program directors, owners, and teachers to enhance the business and educational environment of centers and family child care homes. Program Benefits:

- Cost savings on child products, books, office supplies and more
- Quick links to DCF Regulations
- Helpful templates
- Free printable posters
- Community message boards

Classroom / Teacher Benefits:

- Free online training for teachers
- Literacy activity ideas
- Physical activity ideas and videos
- Parent handouts
- Teacher resources

To access the site, visit www.sharedresourcesfl.org.

- Click on "Interested in becoming a member?" and enter requested information.
- A login and temporary password will be emailed within 2 business days.

Shared Resources Florida is brought to you through the collaboration of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, Early Childhood Initiative Foundation, and Quality Counts in partnership with The Children's Trust.

Free CLASS™ Online Trainings Available

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS™) is playing a significant role in Quality Counts and across the early childhood community in Florida.

The Florida Office of Early Learning has purchased subscriptions to online programs to provide information on the CLASS™ tool. The ELC has free online subscriptions available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Limited quantities are available.

All you need to access these trainings are:

- Activation key - provided by ELC
- Computer access
- Email account
- High-speed Internet connection
- Flash player (latest update)

Introduction to the Pre-K CLASS™ Tool

This 2-hour program includes an overview of effective teacher-child interactions as defined by the CLASS™ tool and the ways these interactions help children learn.

Duration: Two hours, self-paced; available for one month from initial activation

Available in English or Spanish

Looking at Pre-K CLASSrooms

Learn to identify and analyze effective teacher-child interactions with this 15-20 hour online program. Teachers benefit from this in-depth look at the interactions that help children achieve. This self-paced program uses authentic classroom video and multimedia tools. A CLASS Dimensions Guide is included with the Activation Key.

Duration: Up to 20 hours, self-paced; available for six months from initial activation
Available in English or Spanish

For more information about these programs, please visit
<http://www.teachstone.org/training-programs/>.

To receive subscriptions, contact Carol Brogan, ELC Quality Counts Implementation Manager, at cbrogan@elcmdm.org.

Licensing News and Updates

From the Desk of Suzette Frazier, Regional Safety Program Manager Department of Children & 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 child care licensing and will serve as a guide to new regulations, information about recalls, licensing updates and much more.

FEMA Disaster Course

Tallahassee Community College (TCC) has collaborated with another community college to provide a free Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Emergency Disaster online course to train employees and our general community in emergency preparedness. The course, provided through a FEMA grant, takes approximately 2 hours to complete.

The online version of the Community College Citizen Preparedness Program (3CP2) has been approved by FEMA. This course is designed to teach threat awareness, evacuation and shelter, and assistance and resources in the case of a disaster. The course is offered at no charge and takes approximately 1-2 hours to complete. In order to receive credit for this course, you must enter Tallahassee Community College in the "School/Organization" registration field.

For help with registration or certificates, please contact Sheila Manns at 585-753-3921 or smanns@monroecc.edu.

For help with course content, please contact Guy Rossi at 585-753-3789 or grossi@monroecc.edu.



www.elcmdm.org



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