



Quick Links

[Early Learning Coalition](#)

[VPK](#)

[Department of Economic Opportunity](#)



Upcoming Board and Committee Meetings

Board

Monday, Dec. 2
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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ELC News Alert

Issue 12
December 2013

President's Message



Dear Friends,

Our board of directors held its annual strategic planning retreat on December 2nd. The focus of the meeting was provider reimbursement rates and supporting children in high need areas to ensure they have an equal opportunity for school success.

The board discussed the challenges child care providers face in trying to improve the quality of their programs with very limited resources. This is a challenge that is particularly pronounced in high poverty zip codes where market rates are very depressed and where providers have a particularly difficult time investing in quality improvement.

Dr. Melissa Clements, Vice President of Research for the Children's Forum, presented a [workforce study](#) that clearly highlights the challenges. As a first step in overcoming those challenges, the board reviewed reimbursement rates for Miami-Dade and Monroe counties as they compare to rates in similar counties. They also reviewed a tiered reimbursement model that would focus resources and supports in high poverty zip codes. Providers contributed to the discussion and made many important recommendations. All of this remains a work in progress.

The end result of the meeting was a vote to continue to explore a tiered reimbursement model. Part of the process will include convening a workgroup of stakeholders to guide the process. It will also include having a university or other third party conduct a statistically valid survey of child care providers to learn more about their opinions of a tiered reimbursement system that rewards high quality programs. This is important to better understand providers' points of view before recommending changes to the current reimbursement model. Focus groups with parents will also be conducted.

The board of directors of the Early Learning Coalition remains 100 percent committed to making sure all children have an equal opportunity to participate in

Miami-Dade

2555 Ponce de Leon
Blvd., Suite 500
Coral Gables, FL 33134
305-646-7220

Monroe

1111 12th St., Suite 206
Key West, FL 33040
305-296-5557

info@elcmdm.org

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a high quality early education program so they enter school ready to learn. The board supports investments in quality improvement for early care and education providers. The board understands that quality costs money and that our reimbursement rates need to increase. The board wants taxpayers to get a good value for their money and believes that only high quality programs will yield that value.

We will continue to provide updates and will invite everyone who wants to participate to be part of the tiered reimbursement model workgroup. We are all in this together.

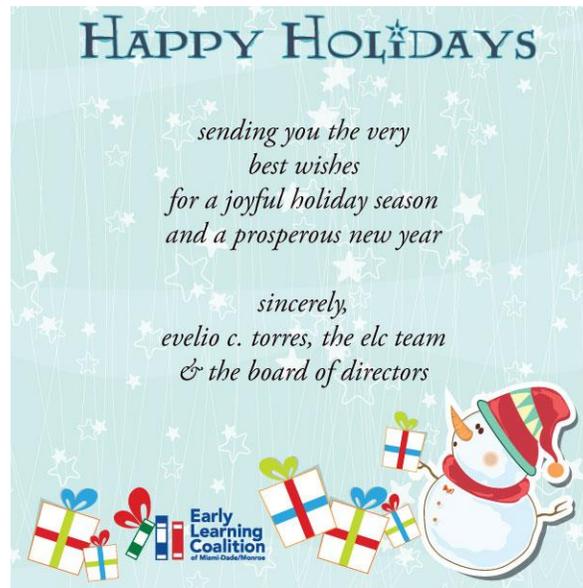
On behalf of our board of directors and staff, I wish you a joyous holiday season and a prosperous new year.

Sincerely,

Evelio C. Torres
President & CEO

Important Announcements

Happy Holidays from the ELC!



A reminder that all ELC offices will be closed on December 24 for Christmas Eve, December 25 for Christmas Day and on January 1 for New Year's Day.

Florida Statues Update: Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse, Abandonment or Neglect

Florida Statute 39.201 was updated during the 2013 Florida legislative session.

The updates include the following:

- Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused, abandoned or neglected by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver or other person responsible for the child's welfare or that is in need of supervision and care ... shall report knowledge or suspicion OR
- Any person who knows, or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by an adult other than a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or

other person responsible for the child's welfare... shall report such knowledge or suspicion OR

- Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is the victim of childhood sexual abuse or the victim of a known or suspected juvenile sexual offender... shall report such knowledge or suspicion.

The penalty for failure to report any of the above situations has been changed from a misdemeanor to a felony.

Mandatory reporters include:

- Physicians, any medical or hospital personnel engaged in the admission, nurse examination, care or treatment of persons
- Health or mental health professionals
- Practitioner who relies solely on spiritual healing
- School teacher or other school official or personnel
- Social worker, **day care center worker or other professional child care**, foster care, residential or institutional worker
- Law enforcement officer
- Judge

These reports may be made on the single statewide toll-free number, via fax, web-based chat or web-based report. Contact information is found below:

- Phone: 1-800-962-2873 (1-800-96 abuse)
- Fax: 1-800-914-0004
- Web-based: <https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us>

For more information, please visit

<http://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2013/Chapter39>.

NEW Payment Reports Available on the Provider Portal

To assist providers with the payments reconciliation process, the Early Learning Coalition has modified the reimbursement reports. We have received lots of great feedback and input from providers, and we are confident most of the requests have been incorporated into the new reports.

If you need assistance in understanding the reports, please do not hesitate to request an appointment to meet with one of our staff by e-mailing Mercy Castiglione at mcastiglione@elcmdm.org. We request that all appointments be made via e-mail instead of telephone to ensure faster service and tracking of your request.

Trainings on the attendance portal and the reimbursement reports previously announced for December will be scheduled in January. Please look for the announcement in the near future.



Thank you for your support.

Save the Date for 2014 Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!

The Just Read, Florida! Office and the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), in partnership with other FDOE offices, the Office of Early Learning (OEL), school districts, Early Learning Coalitions and numerous other state agencies are pleased to announce the sixth annual statewide *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!* The event is scheduled for the week

of January 13-17, 2014.

The goal of *Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida!* is to promote literacy throughout the state by raising awareness of the many exciting things happening in school districts along with the programs and projects offered by the FDOE and its partner agencies and organizations. The most important objective of all is to encourage the enjoyment of reading for children and adults of all ages.

For more information about the events and activities taking place that week, please visit www.justreadflorida.com/literacyweek.asp.

Updates from the Office of Early Learning

December Highlights

The December newsletter from the Office of Early Learning includes:

- A review of 2013
- Monthly state reports for SR and VPK
- A message from the Governor
- News from Coalitions around the state

To view the full issue, please click [here](#).

Please visit the Office of Early Learning's new [website!](#)

Tune in to "Luchando por Nuestros Hijos" Every Tuesday at 11:30 AM

Luchando por Nuestros Hijos
A weekly radio show with Senator Rudy Garcia

Every Tuesday at
11:30AM

WQBA
1140 AM

Children's Health
Education
Safety
Family Life
And much more!

As parents, let us keep "Luchando por Nuestros Hijos"

Brought to you by:

The Children's Trust

Early Learning Coalition
of Miami-Dade/Monroe

When I served in the State Senate, fighting for our children and families in Tallahassee was a key part of my agenda, and it continues to be. Now that I am a father to three children, it's even more important to me." Senator Rudy Garcia

Providers Attend 20th Annual CDEA Conference

In October 2013, the Early Learning Coalition and Quality Counts sponsored four scholarships for faith-based providers to attend the 20th Annual CDEA Conference in Jacksonville, Fla. Attendees earned CEUs and participated in workshops. Pictured below is one of the scholarship winners, Sister Elsie Cruz from Cruz Large Family Child Care Home. She stands alongside the ELC's Jackye Russell and Martha Calderon-Apolo.



Programs Information

VPK Readiness Rate Website Now Available

The VPK Readiness Rate Website is now available. Providers must use this site to review their VPK attendance, review their preliminary scores and enter a dispute if they do not agree with their score.

All providers have the same temporary password: **ready2014**.

The timeline is as follows:

- **December 18 to January 31:** VPK Providers should access the Readiness Rate web site at <https://vpk.fldoe.org> to review their 2012-13 VPK attendance list, preliminary score and follow the dispute process if they so desire.
- **February 1 to February 27:** Disputes will be reviewed by the Office of Early Learning.
- **February 28:**

Final VPK Readiness Rates are released to the public.

VPK Assessment Schedule

VPK programs are required to administer the VPK Assessment and enter scores online three times per program year. Below is the VPK Assessment schedule.

- **Assessment Period 2 (AP2)** begins the week of January 13, 2014. All scores for AP 2 should be entered online by January 31, 2014.
- **Assessment Period 3 (AP3)** begins 3 weeks before the close of your VPK program. All scores for AP3 should be entered online by June 30, 2014.

The VPK Assessment Teacher's Manual 4th Edition contains instructions on how to use the VPK Assessment Online Scoring System. The website address can be found in the manual.

Provider Identification Numbers are assigned by the Office of Early Learning. You can call 1-866-247-1159 for more information.

ASQ-3 Online Update

Thank you to the many providers already using the ASQ-3 portal and successfully entering children's ASQ-3 screening results.

To access the online system, please follow the instructions below:

- Visit www.elcmdm.org
- Click on the blue Provider Portal found on left side of page
- Log in with your personal information
- Click the ASQ tab at the top
- Find the children with birthdays in the current month
- Click on "Do Screening"
- Click "Accept"
- Enter results of the ASQ-3
- Click "Complete"
- Review and save or print

Some providers have conducted the ASQ-3 on paper and still need assistance with the online entry or may have questions regarding the online entry. **Please contact Terri Camejo at 305-807-4271 for assistance with the online ASQ-3 data entry in English/Spanish.**

Monroe County News

2014 Competency Exam Dates

The following Competency Exam dates have been confirmed with Miami-Dade College:

- Saturday, February 22
- Saturday, May 10

Location: ELC Marathon Office training room, 5800 Overseas Highway, Suite 36, Gulfside Village Shopping Center

For additional information or to register, please contact Trina Rodriguez at trodriguez@elcmdm.org.

United Way Trainings Continue

Twenty-four (24) family child care home providers and center staff recently attended the United Way training "Supporting the Development of Infant & Toddlers" offered in Spanish in Key West.



Payments Team Attends Provider Meeting in Marathon

The ELC Payments team, including Director of Payments Jose Hernandez, Monroe Payments Specialist Sulema Cervantes along with ELC CIO Fred Hicks attended a

recent provider meeting in Marathon to provide an update on the attendance portal and payments process. A follow-up meeting will tentatively be held for school district personnel on January 17.



Save the Date: Family Fun Fest

The Monroe ELC team will participate in the Family Fun Fest held in the Marathon Community Park on January 25 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Our booth will have informational materials for parents and a hands-on fun activity for the children. Stop by and check out the new ELC tent with our logo.

Quality Counts

Free Voluntary Assessments for QC Providers

As Quality Counts transitions from 1.0 to 2.0, we are offering the opportunity for programs to be observed using the new assessments with no risk and no cost to you. The assessments used in centers will be the **CLASS Pre-K** and **ECERS-R Provisions for Learning** factor for preschool classes, and **ITERS-R** for infant and toddler classes. The assessments used in family child care homes will be the **CLASS Pre-K** or **CLASS Toddler**.

This is available to all Quality Counts centers and family child care homes for free.

If you would like to know more about the quality of your early learning program using these assessments, take advantage of this free opportunity. Devereux will work with you to schedule it, will visit your early learning program one morning to observe, and then will provide a short report explaining your results. Space is limited, and assessments will be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.

To reserve your spot or get more information, contact Ana Maria Farkas from Devereux at 786-287-2844 or afarkas@devereux.org.

Free Resources Through Shared Resources Florida Support QC 2.0 Standards

As Quality Counts transitions to our new system, resources for many items in the new standards can be found in 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.

This platform consists of cost savings programs; free templates/forms; posters; links to State (DCF) and Federal regulations; free online trainings for teachers; parents handouts; and much more.

Some of the new content users can access include:

- Teacher resources: Daily reports and schedules for school-age
- Event templates: Family Member Sign-Up Sheet
- Cost savings program: Constructive Playthings
- Health/Common Health Concerns: Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease
- Parent handouts: General Parenting Guidance, Preventing Bullying, Traumatic Stress
- Family communication topics: Dental health, physical activity, puberty
- Transitions: Self-Care Readiness Assessment
- Enrollment Agreements: Before/after school care programs

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

- Click on "Interested in becoming a member?"
- Enter requested information.
- A login and temporary password will be emailed within two 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.

Find Quality Counts on Facebook!

Get the latest news and updates on Quality Counts 2.0 by liking the Quality Counts page on Facebook. Search for [Quality Counts Miami](#) and you'll have access to resources and info regarding Quality Counts, the ELC and our partners in early care and education.

Licensing News & 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.

FOOD STORAGE AND PREPARATION

The food storage area must be designated for food only. It must be within the designated food preparation area or in a room designated for food storage. It may not be adjacent to a classroom pet, in a bathroom, or diapering area. It is not calculated as part of the indoor floor space footage regarding offsite storage. Food may only be stored at another licensed facility that is under the same ownership and that meets food service standards for storage.

Food may not be stored directly on the floor; this is to prevent contamination from mopping, floods, vermin, etc. Poisonous/toxic or cleaning products must be stored separately from food. Where space is limited such products may be stored below

any food products or food equipment. If stored in cabinets above countertops in the food preparation area, use rubber/plastic bins to store products to protect against leaks.

Staff who prepare food to serve the children must ensure the food in preparation is not contaminated and in good condition. Head coverings prevent physical contamination to the food in preparation. If hats are used, long hair needs to be pulled back into a ponytail or bun. Food can not be touched with bare-hands. If gloves are used, ensure proper usage of gloves. Hands must be washed before and after using gloves. Gloves must be changed between different activities. Other items that can be used include tongs, long handled spoons/forks for service, individual disposable wax paper sheets, etc.

Refrigeration units must be maintained at a temperature of 41 degrees or below. Freezer units must be maintained at a temperature of 0 degrees. Food may be frozen prior to the expiration date but when thawed it must be labeled with the date it was removed from the freezer and discarded within 7 calendar days of date removed from the freezer or by the food label expiration date, whichever is sooner.

For example, a leftover casserole that was refrigerated for 2 days after being prepared and then transferred to the freezer on day 3. When the casserole is thawed it must be consumed or discarded within the remaining 4 days.

Use table in rule for guidance on how long a food may stay in the freezer before being discarded.

A sample food log can be found [here](#).

Early education. Lifelong success.

