

NEWS ALERT

A monthly newsletter for the early care and education community

Quick Links

- [Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe](#)
- [VPK Online](#)
- [Provider Portal](#)
- [School Readiness Application](#)
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Upcoming Board and Committee Meetings

- **Program Policy & Provider Services:** Tuesday, January 28; 3:30 p.m.; ELC Board Room
- **Finance:** Wednesday, January 29; 9:15 a.m.; ELC Board Room
- **Audit:** Wednesday, January 29; 10:14 a.m.; ELC Board Room
- **Board:** Monday, February 3; 8 a.m.; ELC Board Room

For a full list of upcoming meetings, please visit our [website](#).

President's Message



Dear Friends,

Happy New Year to you all! I hope 2014 brings many good things your way.

In 2014 we will continue working on streamlining processes and adding new technology modules to make our programs and services more user friendly to families and providers. We will also continue working on the design of an innovative tiered reimbursement model that rewards providers for making investments in quality and for achieving high performance. This model also incentivizes parents to place their children in the highest quality programs available.

We will continue highlighting the good work of our early care and education community and the impact it has on children, families and communities, with the goal of increasing funding for the school readiness program. We will also continue to emphasize that if we are to give all children an equal opportunity to succeed in school and in life, only the highest quality program will do.

I look forward to our continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Evelio C. Torres
President & CEO



Important Announcements

Dr. Christine Hughes Appointed to Board of Florida Association for Infant Mental Health

Dr. Christine Hughes, Director of Research & Evaluation for the Early Learning Coalition, has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the Florida Association for Infant Mental Health. With the vision that one day all children will be emotionally healthy, equipped to learn, and nurtured to develop their full potential, the Florida Association for Infant Mental Health identifies community needs, translates research into public policy, integrates infant mental health services into current programs throughout the state, builds a cadre of infant mental health specialists, establishes training opportunities, secures funding, and evaluates the long-term impacts in the community.

Dr. Hughes is very excited to use her expertise and passion for supporting our community's infants and toddlers in her work on the Board.

Congratulations, Dr. Hughes!

Enroll America Helping Uninsured Learn About Health Coverage Options

[Enroll America](#) is the nation's leading health care enrollment coalition, bringing together community and health organizations, businesses and others to inform consumers about the new health coverage options and how to enroll in them. It is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501c(3) organization working to give Americans the information they need to choose an affordable health insurance plan that's right for them and their families.



Through its **Get Covered America** campaign, Enroll America is looking to assist people in the school community who are uninsured about health coverage options and help them enroll. This includes children, parents, school and child-care employees. To explore ways they might be helpful please contact **Jimmy Tan** at jtan@enrollamerica.org or 305-340-9798.

Provider Update Form

School Readiness and VPK providers contracted with the ELC are required to complete a Provider Update form. All providers must fill this out in order to be included in referrals by the ELC's Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) team.

To access the form, please click [here](#). Once completed, it may be emailed to your program's assigned Provider Specialist or sent via fax to 305-443-9107.

Tune in to "Luchando por Nuestros Hijos"
Every Tuesday at 11:30 a.m.

Tune in to Senator Rudy Garcia's weekly radio show as he discusses important information about children's health, education, safety, family life and much more.

Each week Senator Garcia is joined by special guests, experts who share their knowledge on different topics related to the families in our community.

You can listen online by following this link to Univision American on [WQBA 1140 AM](http://WQBA.1140.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

Help the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe Raise Funds through TICKETS fore CHARITY!



TICKETS fore CHARITY is a unique fundraising initiative designed to raise funds for local nonprofit organizations where PGA TOUR events are held. By [buying tickets](#) to this golf event, you will be directly impacting the quality of education for children in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. All funds raised (that's 100%!) through our unique promotional code **CHIP14** come directly back to our organization.

The Cadillac Championship continues to bring together the worlds of **fashion, music and entertainment** at one of the most elite and exciting tournaments on golf's calendar during this year's event at the Trump National Doral on **March 5-9, 2014**. There's something for everyone in the family, and children 18 and under get in **FREE** with a ticketed adult!

Ordering tickets is easy. Prices can be found on the [event flyer](#). Click here to access the [order form](#). Be sure to use our unique promotional code **CHIP14** to ensure 100% of the funds raised will come back to the children we serve.

To purchase tickets or for more information, please visit www.buytfc.com and click on **WGC-Cadillac Championship**. You may also email Christina Vila at cvila@elcmdm.org.

Join Us This Month for a Provider Meeting

Please join us for a provider meeting this January as we discuss several topics including School Readiness, VPK, payments, assessment/inclusion and more.

North Dade Regional Library

Location: 2455 N.W. 183 St., Miami Gardens, FL 33056

Date: Friday, Jan. 17

Time: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

South Dade Regional Library

Location: 10750 S.W. 211 St., Cutler Bay, FL 33189

Date: Tuesday, Jan. 21

Time: 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Join the Early Learning Coalition in Celebrating Literacy Week, Florida!

Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! 2014 is taking place the week of January 13-17, 2013. Join the Just Read, Florida! Office, the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), Florida's Office of Early Learning, school districts and Early Learning Coalitions in promoting the enjoyment of reading for children and adults.



There are a variety of ways you can participate.

The **Million Minute Marathon** took place on **Monday, January 13**.

Teachers were asked to read an additional 20 minutes with their students during the day (beyond regular school work) in celebration of literacy. Participating centers and child care homes are asked to report to the Early Learning Coalition the total number of minutes and students participating in the Million Minute Marathon in order to calculate the grand total. Please fill out the [tally sheet](#) and email it to [Christina Vila](#) by **Thursday, January 16**, who will then turn in all the minutes to the Just Read, Florida! Office. Help us surpass last year's goal of **30 MILLION MINUTES!**

VPK classes were also asked to participate in a **Simultaneous Reading** of "**Is Your Mama a Llama?**," by Deborah Guarino, on **Wednesday, January 15**. All the VPK classes across the state read the same book at 9:00 a.m. The objective of the activity was to promote the enjoyment of reading.

If you have any pictures from your Celebrate Literacy Week events, please send those to Christina Vila at cvila@elcmdm.org to share!

For additional information and resources, visit the [Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! page](#) on the Just Read, Florida! website.

If you have any other questions, please contact Christina Vila at cvila@elcmdm.org.

Team Pays Visits to Miami-Dade Providers

On Wednesday, January 8, several ELC leadership team members and partners from The Children's Trust and The Children's Movement of Florida paid visits to child care providers. Centers visited included Sheyes Young Achievers #3, Room 2 Bloom, and Excel Kids Academy.

Pictured from left to right are Juanita Walker, Director of Sheyes Young Achievers #3; Pamela Hollingsworth, ELC; Charles Auslander, The Children's Trust; Rachel Spector, The Children's Trust; Melissa Fernandez, ELC; Peter Gorski, The Children's Trust; Dave Lawrence, The Children's Movement;



and Evelio Torres, ELC.

Programs Information

Provider Specialist Contact Information

The provider specialist [zip code list](#) has been updated. Please review the new zoning list and contact information for your assigned Document Specialist.

VPK Program Deadlines for 2014-2015

The Coalition is accepting VPK Agreements for the VPK Summer 2014 and VPK Fall 2014-2015 programs. The deadlines to submit agreements are as follows:

- **VPK Summer 2014: Friday, February 7**
- **VPK Fall 2014-2015: Friday, April 4**

To submit a VPK Agreement, please visit the Provider Portal at <http://providers.elcmdm.org>.

Information about VPK Summer 2014

The requirements for the Summer VPK program are as follows:

- 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 must have a Level II background screening within the past five years (FBI and FDLE)
- Teachers, directors, substitutes must have an Affidavit of Good Moral Character
- A valid DCF license
- Classroom capacity is 12

If you do not submit your Summer 2014 VPK Agreement by **Friday, February 7**, the earliest start date for your program will be **Monday, June 16**.

Note: It is the Coalition's policy that a program lasting six (6) or more hours should include a minimum of 60 minutes of lunch time for children. This time is not covered for reimbursement through VPK.

Information about VPK Fall 2014-2015

The deadline for submitting a VPK agreement to provide the 2014-2015 VPK Fall is Friday, April 4.

Once you have submitted your VPK Fall 2014-2015 for review, you will not be able to submit changes to your agreement until you have been certified and/or after July 1.

If you do not submit your Fall 2014-2015 VPK Agreement by **Friday, April 4**, the earliest start date for your program will be **Monday, October 6**.

VPK Informational PowerPoints Now Available

Two VPK PowerPoint presentations are now available, "[Provider Portal: Document Library](#)"

[Helpful Tips](#)" and "[Provider Portal: VPK Form Guide Helpful Tips.](#)"

The "Provider Portal: Document Library Helpful Tips" provides step-by-step instructions and tips on how to upload documents in the provider portal. It also informs you in which folder each document should be uploaded to.

The "Provider Portal: VPK Form Guide Helpful Tips" provides general instructions and tips on how to complete VPK Contact forms 10, 11A, 11B, 20 and Attachment A.

Please use these PowerPoints as guides while uploading and completing your VPK forms for 2014-2015.

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 Period 2

VPK programs are required to administer the VPK Assessment and enter scores online three times per program year. Below is the schedule for Assessment Period 2.

- January 13: Assessments begin
- January 31: All scores must be entered online

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.

ASQ-3 Online Update

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

HOWEVER, there are still providers that have not entered their School Readiness (SR) children's annual ASQ-3 screening. These providers will be notified. Please reference your Provider Agreement for payment, which clearly states the responsibility to administer the ASQ-3 for each SR child. If you have conducted the ASQ-3 on paper and still need assistance with the online entry or have any questions regarding the online entry, **please contact Terri Camejo at 305-807-4271 for assistance in English/Spanish.**

Providers that have not administered and entered the ASQ-3 for SR children with birthdays occurring between July 2013 through December 2013 are out of compliance. Payments may stop in 30 days until compliance is achieved. If you need assistance to get caught up, please call or email Bethany Sands at 305-646-7220 ext. 281 or bsands@elcmdm.org.

To determine the correct screening, please refer to the [chart attached](#).

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

As providers helping providers, please share the ASQ-3 information provided above.

Monroe County News

ELC Monroe Staff Visit the North Pole

ELC staff participated in the annual visit to the North Pole (located at Key West International Airport) sponsored by the Silverliners service organization. Hundreds of Pre-K and elementary students from public and private schools participated. Activities included puppet shows and music and movement. The highlight was a visit from Santa and Mrs. Klaus with each child receiving a present.



2014 Competency Exam Dates

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

- Saturday, February 22 (Deadline to register- February 14th)
- Saturday, May 10

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

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

Upcoming United Way Trainings

Join us in Monroe for upcoming United Way trainings. CEUs will be provided. Flyers and registration information will be sent out in the near future.

Lesson Planning with Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers

English session

Marathon

Saturday, February 8

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Lesson Planning with Creative Curriculum for Pre-K

English session

Marathon

Saturday, March 8

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Save the Date

Family Fun Fest

Saturday, January 25

Marathon Community Park

The Monroe ELC Team will participate in this community outreach event from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Our booth will have informational materials for parents and a hands-on activity for the children. Stop by and check out the new ELC tent with our logo.

Florida Keys Health Fair

Saturday, February 1

Marathon, Big Pine and Key West

Sponsored by Florida Keys Area Health Education Center Inc. (Keys AHEC) and the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, the FREE adult health screenings and services, including vision, skin cancer, blood pressure and mental health, will be offered in Marathon, Big Pine and Key West on Saturday, February 1, from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Child health screenings will be conducted at the Key West location only. Please see the attached [flyer](#) for a full listing of screenings offered and optional pre-registration information. Please distribute to your families and encourage their participation in this vital community service.

Quality Counts

Update on Free Voluntary CLASS Assessments for QC Providers

To help programs prepare for the transition from Quality Counts 1.0 to 2.0, Quality Counts provided the opportunity for programs to be observed using the assessment tools which will be used to determine Quality Counts 2.0 Star Ratings. This opportunity came with no risk and at no cost to the program and allowed programs to become familiar with specific areas to target in their quality improvement efforts.

The Quality Counts team completed more than 50 classroom observations including both family child care homes and centers. The assessments conducted in centers included 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 included the **CLASS Pre-K** or **CLASS Toddler**. These observations have provided great insight for programs participating in Quality Counts as they continue provide high level early education to the children in the community.

Family Child Care Home Standards

The Quality Counts 2.0 standards for Family Child Care Homes are now available on line in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Presentation at The Zero to Three National Training Institute

Quality Counts' own Dr. Christine Hughes presented at the Zero to Three National Training Institute in San Antonio, Texas, last month. Dr. Hughes joined Dr. Ginny Vitiello, Research & Evaluation Director at Teachstone, in presenting a workshop focusing on interactions between infants and toddlers and their caregivers.

The presentation, which drew 200 attendees, discussed features of high-quality interactions in infant and toddler care settings, as well as how Quality Counts incorporates infants and toddlers, along with challenges and lessons learned.

Dr. Hughes also had the privilege of hearing Judy Lichtman, former President of the National Partnership for Women & Families, discuss the history of the Family & Medical Leave Act and announce the exciting new legislation (the FAMILY Act) just introduced to Congress to enhance the experience and protection of working families with infants. For more information on the Act, please click [here](#).

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.



POOLS AND OTHER WATER HAZARDS

Operator should ensure that in-ground swimming pools and above-ground swimming pools that are more than one foot deep have either a fence or barrier that is a minimum of 4 feet in height on all four sides, or an operable pool alarm. Ensure all doors or gates surrounding the pool fence or barrier, as well as, exterior doors leading to the pool, are locked during times children are in care.

Water safety courses are recommended for persons responsible for the supervision of children during pool activities. Providers should ensure that at least one person who is a certified lifeguard or equivalent be present during water activities away from the home, such as field trips to the beach or lake.

Below are Class levels and descriptions of licensing standard violations related to pools and other water hazards:

Swimming Pools rule 65C-20.010(1)(i)(j), Florida Administrative Code

Class 3 - The large family child care home's swimming pool was not maintained by use of chlorine or other suitable chemicals.

Class 2 - The pool alarm was found to be inoperable.

Class 2 - The fence or barrier was unlocked or had gaps or openings that could pose a threat to the health, safety or well-being of a child.

Class 2 - The fence or barrier did not meet the minimum requirement of four (4) feet in height.

Class 1 - Children in care had access to a water hazard or swimming pool.

Class 1 - The large family child care home's swimming pool exceeded 3 feet in depth and no one who had completed a basic water safety course was present when children had access to the swimming area.

Class 1 - Children were taken from the home for a swimming activity and a person with lifeguard certification/equivalent was not present.

Stay Connected

Join Our Mailing List!



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Monroe: 1111 12 St, Suite 206, Key West, FL 33040 305-296-5557

www.elcmdm.org