



For Immediate Release

The Early Learning Coalition Kicks-Off Series of Book Distributions for Children in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties

Guest reader María Celeste Arrarás highlights the importance of reading to children at a young age

September 10, 2009 – Miami – The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring children in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties receive high-quality early care and education, was awarded a \$125,000 grant by Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. (RIF), the nation’s largest literacy organization, to launch a series of book distributions for children.

The first in the series of book distributions was launched on August 31. The remaining two will take place during the weeks of October 5 and November 5. The Coalition will be distributing books to 28,000 children in 385 early care and education centers throughout Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. Children will choose from a selected list of books to build their own personal libraries.

On September 2, the Early Learning Coalition welcomed guest reader and Emmy award-winning journalist María Celeste Arrarás, who shared her book [The Magic Cane](#) with children attending Kidworks USA in Hialeah. Arrarás is the mother of three and a strong advocate of education and literacy. At the event she spoke about the importance of reading to children at a young age.

“Once you read to them, you get them excited. It doesn’t become like homework. It becomes something they want to. That’s the idea. They choose to read because they want to, not because they have to,” said Arrarás.

“We start at a very early age to work with parents and to work with children. We work with private centers and the public school systems. And you’ll be surprised at the number of children that enter kindergarten already knowing how to read,” said Evelio C. Torres, President and CEO of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe. “All the research tells us that when children enter kindergarten ready to learn, they are

going to score better on the FCAT and do better in school overall, all the way up to their high school years.”

ABOUT THE EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF MIAMI-DADE/MONROE: The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe is a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring children in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties receive high-quality early care and education. Through a variety of affordable and innovative early education and voluntary prekindergarten programs, the Coalition serves more than 50,000 children ages birth to 12-years old and their families. For additional information, visit www.elcmdm.org.

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