



# Message from ELC

## Governor Crist Re-appoints Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., to Chair the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

Miami, FL - June 24, 2009, Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., of Coral Gables, and managing partner of Verdeja & De Armas, LLP, was reappointed by Governor Charlie Crist to serve a second term on the board of directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe. His new term begins June 19, 2009, and ends April 30, 2013. Mr. Verdeja will continue to serve as the coalition's chair.

Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., CPA, has 30 years of experience in public accounting and has specialized in the not-for-profit and school industries with clients that include local museums, art centers and children's organizations. A graduate of the University of Miami in 1979, Mr. Verdeja became one of the youngest licensed CPAs in the state of Florida. He is now a leader in performing audits of schools in Miami-Dade, Broward and Monroe Counties, as well as being actively involved in the real estate development industry.

Early on in his career, Mr. Verdeja committed himself to sharing his time and talents with his community. He is a member of the University of Miami Citizens Board and past-treasurer of the University of Miami's Cuban Collection. In 2005, Mr. Verdeja was appointed by Governor Jeb Bush to chair the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe. In this capacity, Mr. Verdeja leads a board of community leaders in the oversight of early education programs for Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. Together these programs serve over 50,000 children annually with the organization's budget of over \$180 million.

"The coalition, our community and our board are very fortunate to have Mr. Verdeja in the role of chairman for another term. His leadership, generous contribution of time, and his family's tradition of giving back to the community have made, and will continue to make, a long lasting difference," says Evelio C. Torres, President and CEO of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe.

As a tireless education advocate, Mr. Verdeja's professional expertise as a CPA and auditor, and his skills as a business executive and leader, have helped advance the largest, and most demographically diverse early learning coalition in the state to become one of the most successful. In turn, the young children of Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties are entering school better prepared to learn and succeed than ever before.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to navigate the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe through the unique challenges and rewards of the past four years. On behalf of the young children of our community, I am humbled to be given the opportunity to continue to lead the organization for the next four years," says Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe.

Mr. Verdeja remains optimistic as he prepares the Early Learning Coalition for the future. His primary goals are to strongly advocate for additional funding to support early education programs, to improve the quality of care and education that children receive, and to advocate for state policy changes that will positively affect and create better opportunities for all children. "Our coalition is well poised to continue showing the return on investment of an early education. Every child in our state deserves an opportunity to participate in a high-quality early education program," he says. "We know that by providing our youngest and most vulnerable citizens with high-quality early care and education, we are giving them the tools and resources they need to succeed in school and in life."

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 our website at [www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org).

**Contacts:**

Lina Baena

Media Relations

786.973.0904

[lina@ccomgroupinc.com](mailto:lina@ccomgroupinc.com)

Tabatha Cullen

Early Learning Coalition

305.646.7220

[tcullen@elcmdm.org](mailto:tcullen@elcmdm.org)

# # #

Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

2555 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, 5th Floor. Coral Gables, Florida 33134