



## **\$1.8 Million Awarded to the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe to Enhance Employee Benefits of Local Businesses and Stimulate Local Economy**

Miami, FL -July 6, 2009. The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that all children have an opportunity to participate in high-quality early care and education programs, has been awarded a \$1.8 million grant by the Child Care Executive Partnership (CCEP) program board. The CCEP board is a public/private partnership created to help local businesses improve employee benefits by offering parents access to reliable, discounted early care and education settings for their children while they work.

“At the Early Learning Coalition, we take pride and work hard to continuously find ways to provide a high-quality early education to children. This grant also gives us an opportunity to stimulate the local economy and support early care and education providers,” says **Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.**, **Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe**. “We received this grant because of the success of our program in the previous year.”

With these new resources, the coalition will now be able to serve **900 additional children**. This program enables business owners to offer the benefit of early child care and education for their qualifying employees while helping to improve employee productivity and reduce absenteeism. According to the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, the lack of available child care costs US businesses over \$3 billion annually in employee absences.

“Employers understand the challenges their employees face in caring for a family and managing a career. Employers also understand that when their staff are late or take time off from work because of child care issues, their company’s bottom line can be affected,” says **Evelio C. Torres, President and CEO of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe**. “The CCEP Program is a great solution for both,” added Torres.

Whether working parents in South Florida have lost their jobs or are cutting expenses in anticipation of a job layoff or salary cut, they are facing tough challenges when it comes to affording child care. The CCEP program allows working parents to focus their attention on other crucial expenses like



rent/mortgage, food or car payments, while ensuring their children have high-quality early education at a reduced cost.

Funding for the CCEP program is provided through federal and state sources and is available to businesses throughout Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. These dollars are matched with funding from local governments, businesses and charitable foundations on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Local businesses may receive potential tax benefits, attract and retain better employees, reduce absenteeism and tardiness, improve morale in the workplace, and cultivate a stronger work ethic as employees are comforted by the knowledge that their children are being cared for and educated in a stable and safe environment.

For more information on the CCEP program for your business, contact Alina Soto at 305-646-7220.

**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).

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