



Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

Annual Report

July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006
(DRAFT)



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Introduction

Message from the Board Chair



To the residents of Miami-Dade and Monroe counties:

The mission of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe is to offer young children an opportunity for a quality learning experience. By being faithful to this mission we can significantly improve a child's chances of success in school and in life. The coalition brings together both public and private sponsorship. We provide school readiness funds via a parental-choice voucher system for the children in our communities who are at risk or migrants in transition; or whose parents are teenagers or earn less than 150% of the federal poverty level. The coalition is also responsible for implementing, and providing the funds necessary, for all four-year old children in South Florida to attend FREE Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK).

In the pages of this annual report are three stories:

- The unmet need in our community
- The forging of the coalition to accommodate all qualified child care centers and all children in need of our services
- The results of investing in quality programs

The unmet need in our community reflects our capacity in serving only half of our population: providers, parents, and children at risk. We ask you to continue encouraging our state legislators to provide funding for quality care and education on behalf of all our children in need.

The coalition has made great strides in accommodating an ever-growing population in need of high-quality environmental assessments, child assessments, and mentoring programs. Last year we launched VPK in an astounding six weeks and by doing so, provided our services to more than 16,000 four-year olds. On average, we served 29,300 children per month in the school readiness program. Moreover, we introduced new quality programs and strengthened the ones currently in progress. Through these programs, our providers continue to create numerous opportunities for our children's success. Parents are helping their children to succeed by enrolling them in school readiness and VPK programs.

The coalition invested \$11,000,000 to assess the needs of children and the needs of child care centers. We also provided many resources to advance the skills of teachers and staff in serving more than 14,000 children in 513 centers. Making a difference in children's lives is accomplished one child at a time and one center at a time. We have our hardworking professionals, dedicated center directors and staff to thank for our achievements.

While we are unable to serve all of South Florida's children at this time, we are hopeful that our community will appeal to our legislators to continue providing us with the resources necessary to expand our efforts and thus fully accommodate all those in need. The positive direction of our efforts is driven by the positive changes shown in our children. Early learning is the foundation on which our children's future success is built.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.
Board Chair



Introduction

Vision

To ensure a comprehensive and integrated system providing, for all families and their children beginning before birth to five years, the affordable opportunity to enter school ready to learn and succeed in life.

Mission

To promote school readiness and voluntary prekindergarten programs, thus increasing all children's chances of achieving future educational success and becoming productive members of society. The coalition seeks to further the physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs of Miami-Dade and Monroe county children beginning before birth through age 5.

About us

The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe, a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit, formed to establish and improve early education programs for the more than 160,000 children from birth to age 5 in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. The coalition was incorporated in 2000 following the enactment of the School Readiness Act, which consolidated the state's early childhood education services into one integrated program of school readiness. The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe is coordinated by Florida's Office of Early Learning, a department of the Agency for Workforce Innovation, and is among 31 coalitions in the state.

Introduction

Partners



Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties:

School readiness programs have been designed to prepare children for school, particularly those from income-eligible families. These programs are intended to serve as a preventive measure for children at risk of future school failure. Priority for school readiness program participation is given to: children whose parents are economically disadvantaged; children who have been determined to be at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation; and children possessing disabilities.

Resource and Referral Unit (R&R)

The Resource and Referral Unit (R&R) provides parents equal access to affordable and available early care and education programs for children in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. The unit serves the community—via telephone, at walk-in locations or via the internet—at five sites in the Miami-Dade county area and in three sites in Monroe county.

- In the 2006 fiscal year, the unit provided R&R services to a total of 4,810 families in both counties. This number reflects both initial and update referrals as well as the families who were assisted with other services. Most requests were responded to within 24 hours of initial contact, ensuring all parents requesting referrals received a listing of all available child care facilities that met their specifications. Parents seeking services were also provided instruction on the different types of child care and the components of a quality program

- The R&R Unit reviewed and updated over 1,686 early care and education programs in its database to include family child care homes, child care centers, Head Start centers, after-school programs, summer programs, faith-based programs and Montessori schools. The R&R Unit compiles information for the annual market rate survey mandated by the state

Single Point of Entry (SPE)

Child Development Services (CDS) in Miami-Dade county and Wesley House Family Services (WHFS) in Monroe county

administer the Single Point of Entry (SPE) and Unified Waiting List (UWL) data collection program. SPE allows families to apply on-line for child care financial assistance as well as to acquire information on accessing R&R services. Once an application is received by either central agency and eligibility information is verified, services are then offered. However, if funding is unavailable, the family's information is transferred to the UWL where CDS and WHFS can track the children waiting for financial aid. The data is updated and if needed, purged regularly to ensure families' continued eligibility and needs are accurate.

Miami-Dade County:

- Miami-Dade County Department of Human Services' Child Development Services bureau (CDS) serves as the coalition's central agency for Miami-Dade, providing school readiness services to families through the county

- In the beginning of the 2006 fiscal year, (July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006), the open-enrollment policy for Miami-Dade county was closed once the school readiness population exceeded 32,000 children. As a result of natural attrition, the number of paid children

Miami-Dade School Readiness Demographics

OCA Code	Funding Group	Hispanic		Black		White		Hawaii		Indian		Asian	
		Families	Children										
BG1	At Risk	606	979	1299	2259	741	1199	2	3	7	7	2	2
BG8	Working Families	5826	8965	3612	6062	6024	9307	29	34	9	9	29	34
BG8OP	Working Families-One Parent	313	482	192	344	324	508	1	1	1	1	3	4
BG5 & 5T	T.C.C	2121	3235	1649	3007	2222	3405	11	11	9	9	7	8
CCPP	Child Care Purchasing	560	1048	394	745	587	1106	2	3	0	0	4	7
BG3, 3R & 3W	Workforce	1907	2903	2077	3576	2005	3044	8	8	10	13	2	2
	TOTALS	11333	17612	9223	15993	11903	18569	53	60	36	39	47	57

The number of unduplicated children served in 2005 to 2006 was 42,794 from a total of 40,050 eligible families in Miami-Dade county.

to receive school readiness services declined until the year's end when the final number of paid children was 24,865. Throughout the year, 42,794 children from a total of 40,050 eligible families received school readiness services

The two tables shown on pages four and seven show the racial/ethnic breakdown, by Other Cost Accumulator (OCA) code and funding group, of unduplicated children and families who received school readiness services. Data includes both Miami-Dade and Monroe counties.

Eligibility Services Unit

CDS has separate units that coordinate the various services provided under the school readiness banner. The Eligibility Services Unit is responsible for conducting face-to-face interviews to determine eligibility for school readiness services, as well as responding to telephone inquiries. Due to the diverse population in Miami-Dade, these services are provided in English, Spanish or Creole.

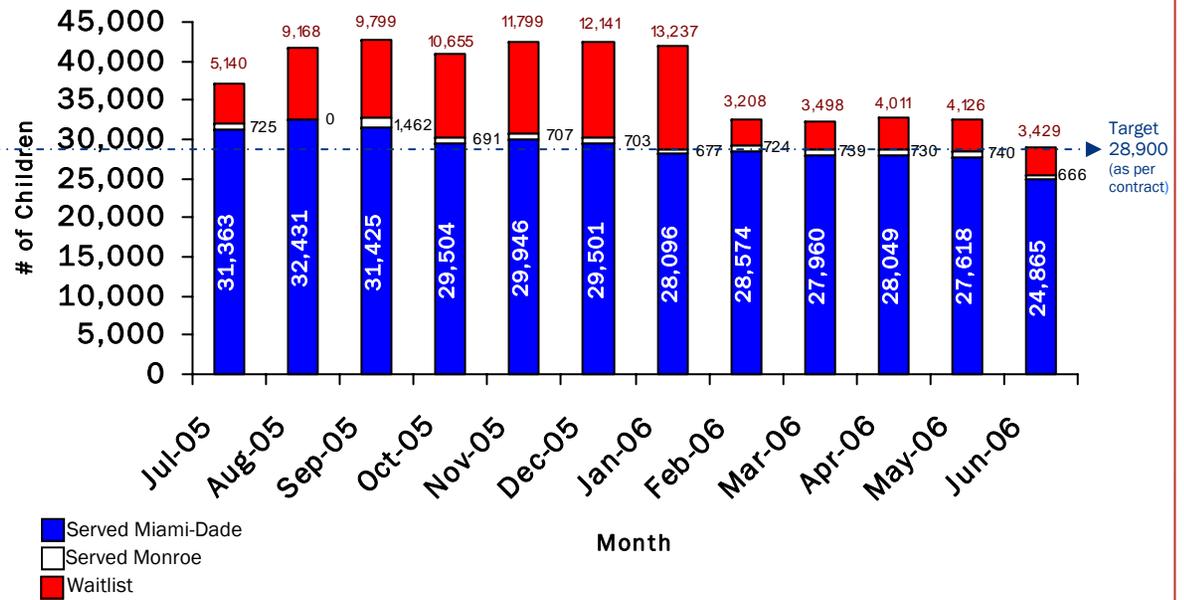
During the 2006 fiscal year, the CDS bureau provided eligibility determination at ten eligibility offices and 11 South Florida Workforce One-Stop Career Service Centers in Carol City, North Miami Beach, Hialeah Gardens, Northside, Hialeah-Downtown, Miami-Downtown, Miami Beach, West Dade, Little Havana, Perrine, and Homestead.

The CDS bureau completed 43,715 Preliminary Social Service Family Needs Assessment Checklist forms. An additional indicator of the bureau's on-going efforts to "Deliver Excellence Everyday" to the families of Miami-Dade county is reflected in an overall satisfaction rating of 95%. This rating is drawn from the review of 10,069 voluntary consumer satisfaction surveys which were distributed to clients.

Provider Services Unit

The Provider Services Unit works with child care centers and family day-care homes to ensure quality programming. The Provider Services Unit also works with providers to help them become accredited,

School Readiness Children Served in Miami-Dade/Monroe in FY 2006



Note: Paid in August for Monroe was zero due to hurricanes. August paid in September. Waitlist statistics apply to Miami-Dade county only. Monroe county currently does not have a waitlist for service.

SOURCE: EFS/CDS Spending Plan Report

providing parents/guardians with appropriate instruction on selecting quality child care and directing counseling sessions that distinguish between licensed and illegal child care, family and center based care.

School Readiness Uniform Screening System (SRUSS)

Miami-Dade
84%

Monroe
84%

SRUSS is administered to children within thirty days of entry into kindergarten. This screening system determines their readiness for school.

School Readiness

Enhanced Field System (EFS): Data and Management Information

At the beginning of the year, CDS completed a full migration to the Enhanced Field System (EFS). The migration was completed while CDS and the coalition prepared to implement the first year of VPK. In the midst of entering an overwhelming amount of data from the old county system into EFS, a number of data-integrity problems were identified. The coalition worked closely with CDS, expert EFS contractors, and Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) and Office of Early Learning (OEL) personnel to determine the extent of the data problems. The data clean-up project was completed within four months and resulted in a number of improved operational processes as well as the establishment of an EFS administrator position within CDS.

Monroe County:

- The coalition and its school readiness provider, Wesley House Family Services (WHFS), participated in the Monroe County Interagency Transition Agreement Workgroup and planned the transition of children ages birth to five, including those with special needs, from early child care and/or educational settings into kindergarten. A facilitator from Florida's Transition Project assisted with the revision of the interagency agreement. Subsequently, the coalition's Monroe County Advisory Committee (comprised of coalition staff, board members based in Monroe county, providers, DCF licensing, the Monroe County School District and community partners) approved a motion to incorporate a transition committee that would provide quarterly updates to Monroe board members and advisory committee members on issues related to the children's transition

- The coalition assisted in the Hurricane Wilma recovery efforts in Monroe county as follows:

- ◆ A mini-grant was awarded to child care providers negatively affected by Hurricane Wilma. The grant was awarded to WHFS in the amount of \$25,000 by the Community Foundation of the Florida Keys' "My Key West Emergency Relief Fund"

- ◆ The coalition board approved a parent fee-waiver for December 2004 and January 2005 to assist parents and providers during the hurricane recovery process

- The coalition, in partnership with the Florida Keys Area Health Education Center, sponsored a child health screening and follow-up medical care project that targeted approximately 230 children ages birth to five, receiving subsidized child care in the Lower Keys. Financial assistance was made available to provide follow-up medical care as indicated by the child's health screening results. Parents who were uninsured or underinsured received financial assistance for follow-up medical, dental and/or specialty care as applicable. Funding for this project was made available through a \$38,000 grant from the Community Foundation of the Florida Keys' "My Key West Emergency Relief Fund"

- ◆ Health screenings were conducted on 198 school readiness children at eight child care centers, 13 family child-care homes and one regional screening site

- ◆ Follow-up consultation was provided by coalition staff to the parents/guardians of 27 children who required referral for primary care and/or developmental issues. Children who were flagged for developmental and/or emotional concerns were referred to Easter Seals Early Steps or Child Find, Monroe County School District at no charge. Third party billing authorizations were established with local medical providers for children who were uninsured, underinsured and/or lived in areas where Medicaid providers were not readily accessible

- As an Even Start community partner, the coalition's Monroe office received a \$2,000 "Bonding with Baby" grant to provide early literacy materials for use in trainings targeting centers, family child-care home providers and parents of infants and toddlers

- The coalition approved a 5% to 10% rate increase for Monroe providers to address the high cost of operation, high cost of living, staff turnover, and inability to offer competitive wages, etc

"Words cannot express how grateful we are to have been chosen for financial assistance when knowing that we couldn't afford to pay for the extensive work that Idi [a four-year old who braved six visits to the pediatric dentist] needed. We will never forget this big blessing that was granted to us by such a wonderful organization."

-Yvonne Bain, Idi's guardian; Jamica Ross, Idi's cousin

- The coalition’s school readiness provider, WHFS, completed the following contractual requirements through their work with Monroe providers:

- ◆ Implemented the Creative Curriculum Assessment Tool for children ages three to five with a total of 104 pre-assessments completed and 84 post-assessments completed
- ◆ Completed Ages and Stages child developmental screenings for children ages birth to five with a total of 765 developmental screenings completed. Ninety-four children were identified as “at-risk” and received intervention services
- ◆ Performed environmental assessments on providers’ centers. A total of 22 centers and 82 classrooms were assessed resulting in seven centers requiring technical-assistance work plans for 12 classrooms
- ◆ Providers in the child care community received 114 different trainings
- ◆ Four hundred eighty-five technical assistance units were provided to the child care provider community
- ◆ Approximately 87 referrals were given to parents as part of the child and family support program



- The coalition’s annual parent and provider satisfaction survey of WHFS, Monroe county’s school readiness contracted provider, determined the following:

- ◆ Parents reported (23% response rate) 97% overall satisfaction with services received from WHFS. Furthermore, 94% were satisfied with the accessibility of services, responsiveness of staff and information received from WHFS. Regarding child care referrals, WHFS also received a high score of 93%. An overwhelming 97% reported that their child care provider kept them involved in their child’s education and informed them of their child’s progress
- ◆ Providers reported (48% response rate) being 100% satisfied with the responsiveness of, and respect given by WHFS staff in answering questions about attendance invoices, parent fees and reimbursements. Another high-satisfaction rating of 95% was given regarding the curriculum and training materials received. Moreover, 93% of providers reported being satisfied with the program assessments and center improvements plans to improve the quality of care

Monroe School Readiness Demographics

OCA CODE	FUNDING GROUP	HISPANIC		ASIAN		BLACK		HAWAII		INDIAN		WHITE	
		FAMILY	CHILD	FAMILY	CHILD	FAMILY	CHILD	FAMILY	CHILD	FAMILY	CHILD	FAMILY	CHILD
BG1	At-Risk	23	37	1	3	33	71	0	0	1	2	0	0
BG8	Working Families	185	324	5	5	113	203	0	0	0	0	499	747
BG5	T.C.C.-First Year	5	6	0	0	10	20	0	0	0	0	24	34
BG5T	T.C.C.-Second Year	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BG3W	Workforce Funding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BG3	Workforce Non-Working	1	1	0	0	7	11	0	0	0	0	13	18
CCP	Child Care Purchasing Pool	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTALS	214	368	6	8	163	305	0	0	1	2	536	799

The number of unduplicated children served in 2005 to 2006 is 1,114 from a total of 706 eligible families in Monroe county.

Voluntary Prekindergarten

The benefit of effective early childhood education affects more than just the first few years of learning; it sets the foundation for success throughout children's lives. Studies show that children who attend high quality prekindergarten are more likely to graduate from high school and earn a slightly higher income. They are also less likely to go on welfare, spend time in jail, repeat a grade, or be placed in special education classes. With those apparent advantages in mind, Florida voters passed a constitutional amendment in 2002 to provide every four-year old child in the state with a FREE, high quality prekindergarten education. The Voluntary Prekindergarten Program known as VPK gives children a jump start on their pre-reading, pre-math, language, and social skills. VPK classrooms offer quality programs that include high literacy standards, developmentally appropriate curricula, manageable class sizes and qualified teachers. Two programs are offered annually: The School-Year VPK Program consists of 540 instructional hours and starts in August, and the Summer VPK Program consists of 300 instructional hours and can start as early as May 1.

education

Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties:

- Supported by local mayors and the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners, VPK Day was proclaimed on August 4, 2005. The event launched community-wide outreach efforts by community stakeholders, and parents and providers on behalf of VPK via word-of-mouth, various media outlets (newspaper and magazine articles, radio, and print advertisements) and the dissemination of brochures and flyers
- The newly remodeled Miami-Dade and Monroe counties' VPK website, www.vpkhelp.org, was launched in July of 2006, providing comprehensive information on registration, resources, and community outreach efforts in English, Spanish and Creole. The website's target audience consists of both families and providers. In the 2006 fiscal year, the website received 30,537 hits

- Now known simply as Client Services, the VPK Client Services team was established in April of 2005 to provide support, conflict resolution and technical assistance regarding VPK in English, Spanish and Creole to parents and providers. The team's role and responsibilities have since expanded beyond VPK to reflect clients' need for a broader range of support services



- The VPK Helpline was established in the coalition for parents and providers seeking assistance with issues related to the VPK program and its registration process. In the previous fiscal year, the help line received over 24,500 phone calls

Miami-Dade County:

- Effective July 1, 2005, the state implemented its very first year of the VPK program for a target of 22,904 children in Miami-Dade county which is approximately 66% of the four-year old population in the state of Florida
- At the inception of the program, an exceptional effort was made on behalf of federal and local partners, providers, and the coalition to increase student enrollment. In only nine days, the number of students enrolled in VPK jumped from zero to 9,000

Total number that participated in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties' VPK program

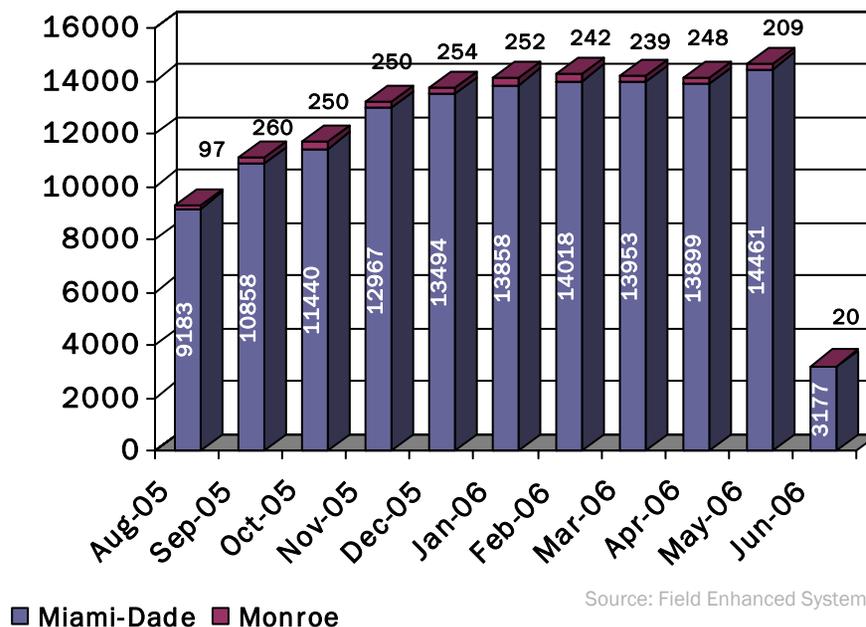
Centers	Teachers	Children
701	911	16,394

- VPK program staff as of the last fiscal year was comprised of one program director, one Florida Department of Education Southeast regional facilitator, and one administrative assistant
- A total of 680 providers were certified and 16,144 children were enrolled for the 2005 to 2006 School-Year VPK Program
- The VPK program director, spoke about Summer VPK at a town hall meeting sponsored by Florida House of Representative, Yolly Roberson on February 25, 2006. The town hall meeting gave parents the opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns about VPK and its implementation
- Community outreach efforts were significantly intensified to heighten awareness of the VPK program. Information was distributed to tens of thousands of parents at the following community outreach events: Miami's Martin Luther King, Jr. parade, 18th Annual Chinese New Year Festival, 16th Annual Black Family Symposium, Easter Eggstravaganza, and Great Metrozoo Egg Safari. Outreach is ongoing with a continued grass-roots campaign
- VPK Standards training was provided by the Southeast regional VPK facilitator to approximately 1,500 providers in English and Spanish
- Private providers received VPK Standards training with an inclusion component facilitated by the coalition's NEED program in April of 2006
- Active registration for the 2006 Summer VPK Program took place from March 1 to March 31, 2006 at eight Miami-Dade county locations
- A total of 129 providers were certified and 946 children were enrolled for the 2006 Summer VPK Program
- Active registration for the 2006 to 2007 School-Year VPK Program took place from April 24 to May 31, 2006 at 16 Miami-Dade county locations
- Monitoring of 188 providers was completed. Monitors reviewed enrollment, class ratios, classroom environment, developmentally appropriate activities, and proper staffing

Monroe County:

- VPK staff for Monroe county consists of one managing director and one junior executive assistant
- A VPK public awareness campaign was implemented via various media outlets (press releases, articles in Keys' local newspapers and advertisements) and the dissemination of collaterals in hardcopy and electronic form
- VPK registration round-ups to kick off the 2005 to 2006 School-Year VPK Program were held throughout the Keys during June and July of 2005

Number of Four-Years Olds Enrolled per Month in FREE VPK during FY 2006



"Discovering VPK was the best thing that could have happened for my family, especially my four-year old daughter, Daniela. Not only does she receive a quality education but it also saves me \$450 a month! With that extra money, I bought our family a new car." -Ana Castillo, parent

Voluntary Prekindergarten

- A total of 13 private providers and eight school district sites participated in VPK during the 2005 to 2006 School-Year VPK Program, serving approximately 250 children monthly
- Key West Preschool Co-op, Kind to Kids in Big Pine, and Grace Jones Community Center in Marathon were praised for their extraordinary efforts to resume operations after being severely damaged by Hurricane Wilma in October of 2005. Due to extensive structural damage, Grace Jones temporarily operates out of an alternate site, the First Baptist Church in Marathon. Each center suffered significant loss of educational toys, books, materials and furnishings
- A monthly Monroe county edition of a VPK e-newsletter was created to serve as an informational resource for providers
- VPK Standards training was conducted for school-district instructional personnel on January 3, 2006
- VPK Standards training was conducted for private providers with an inclusion component facilitated by the coalition's NEED program on February 6, 2006
- With the Monroe School District serving as the only 2006 Summer VPK provider, registration was conducted at three district site locations throughout the Keys from February 27 to March 1, 2006
- On-going registration for the 2006 Summer VPK Program took place from March 2 to June 3, 2006, at three Wesley House Family Services (WHFS) locations Keys-wide
- Despite a total of 50 Certificates of Eligibility (COE) being issued for the 2006 Summer VPK Program, only 29 children enrolled
- A VPK provider teleconference took place on March 23, 2006 to discuss the 2006 to 2007 VPK provider application process, new documentation requirements, Q & A, and child registration process and procedure

- VPK registration round-ups to kick off the 2006 to 2007 School-Year VPK Program were held throughout the Keys during April of 2006
- On-going registration for the 2006 to 2007 School-Year VPK Program took place from May 8, 2006 to June 30, 2006 (and into the new program year) at three WHFS locations in the Keys
- In order to expedite the processing of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) screenings for VPK instructors, the coalition's Monroe office, in coordination with WHFS, developed a plan in June of 2006 to utilize WHFS' Community Based Care (CBC) fingerprinting machine to screen on-site at provider locations throughout Monroe county
- WHFS staff monitored all 21 VPK providers on the following: enrollment, class ratios, classroom environment, developmentally appropriate activities, and proper staffing



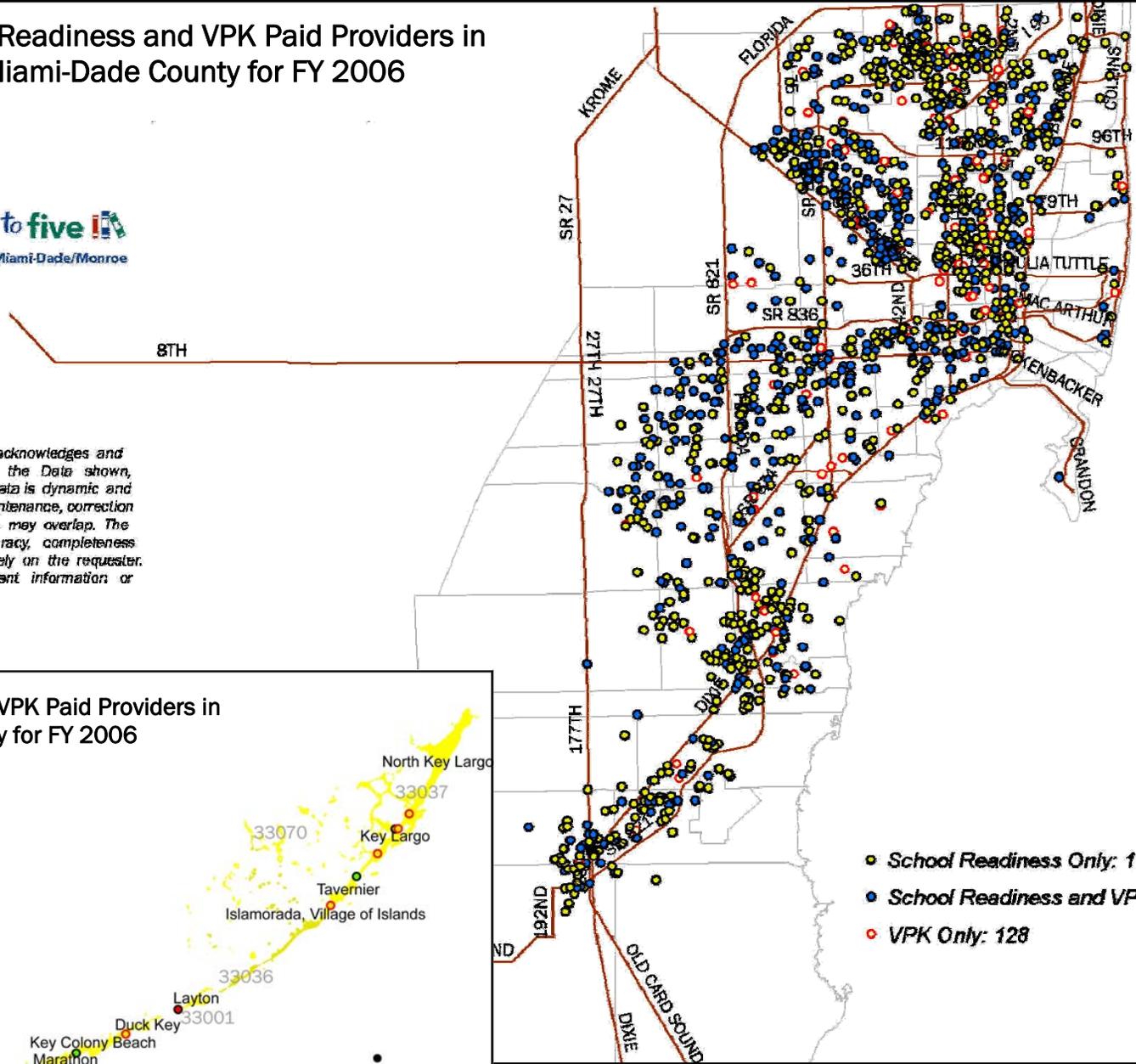
School Readiness and VPK Paid Providers in Miami-Dade County for FY 2006



Disclaimer:

The requester of this map acknowledges and accepts the limitations of the Data shown, including the fact that the Data is dynamic and is in a constant state of maintenance, correction and update. Some providers may overlap. The burden of determining accuracy, completeness and fitness for use rests solely on the requester. Contact ELMDM for current information or interpretation.

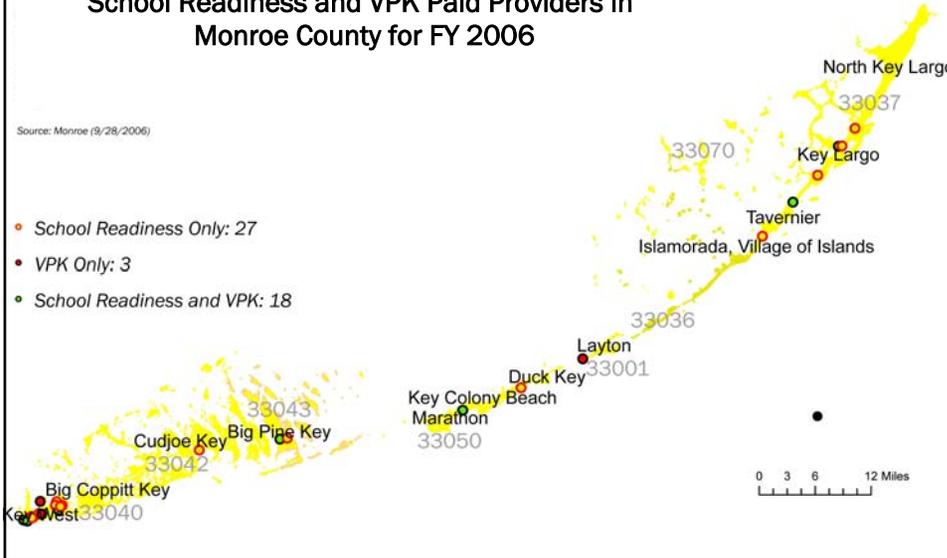
Source: EFS (9/25/2006)



School Readiness and VPK Paid Providers in Monroe County for FY 2006

Source: Monroe (9/28/2006)

- School Readiness Only: 27
- VPK Only: 3
- School Readiness and VPK: 18



- School Readiness Only: 1107
- School Readiness and VPK: 615
- VPK Only: 128

Assessment

The coalition's assessment department was ultimately created to improve the quality of education for children attending school readiness programs. Its focus is three-fold: 1) screening children to determine their rate of development 2) assessing their developmental progress and 3) measuring the quality of learning environments in child care centers. Children's language, cognitive, social-emotional, and fine and gross-motor development are assessed as part of the child developmental screening and assessment process. The coalition uses the Learning Accomplishment Profile-Diagnostic screen (LAP-D), and the Devereux Early Childhood Assessments (DECA) to give parents and teachers the critical information needed to determine the rate of their children's developmental growth. Developmental information supports a teacher's ability to plan meaningful classroom instruction.

children

The assessment department was created in July of 2005 and expanded greatly

to include a program director, two coordinators, and 12 assessment specialists

- Through the coalition's central agency, Child Development Services (CDS), LAP-D screenings were conducted on three-year olds receiving subsidized care and LAP-D assessments were performed on four-year olds
- By way of CDS, DECAs were completed by teachers and parents whose children received subsidized care
- DECAs and LAP-Ds were also completed by teachers and parents of children attending Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) pre-kindergarten
- In partnership with Florida International University (FIU), the coalition developed a time-efficient scanning system markedly decreasing data processing time of DECA forms

- During the pre-assessment period a total of 8,757 pre-assessment DECA forms were completed by teachers and 7,515 by parents. During the post-assessment period a total of 5,862 post-assessment DECA forms were completed by teachers and 5,014 by parents
- A total of 3,139 LAP-D screenings were conducted on three-year old children
- During the pre-assessment period a total of 3,310 LAP-Ds were conducted on four-year olds. During the post-assessment period a total of 4,670 LAP-Ds were conducted. M-DCPS only conducted LAP-Ds during the post-assessment period
- In cooperation with the Mailman Center for Child Development, University of Miami, 363 child assessments were conducted in private child care centers
- An assessment task force was convened to review child assessment practices in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. The task force is comprised of experts in the field of early childhood assessments and representatives of stakeholders in both communities. The team's common purpose is to improve the early childhood assessment system on behalf of the communities' children, ensure the coalition's current assessment program is consistent with best practices and state legislation, and extend the population of children to be assessed to those ages birth to five. As part of the recommendations of the task force, the assessment plan has been modified to include: a pilot project using Ages and Stages Questionnaires to screen approximately 2,000 children ages four to 36-months in centers that are participating in coalition interventions; screening all three- and four-year old children using the L A P - D ; and conducting LAP-D assessments on a sample of three- and four-year olds

Total number of child assessments conducted		
DECA	LAP-D Screens	LAP-D
8,757	3,139	3,310

environment



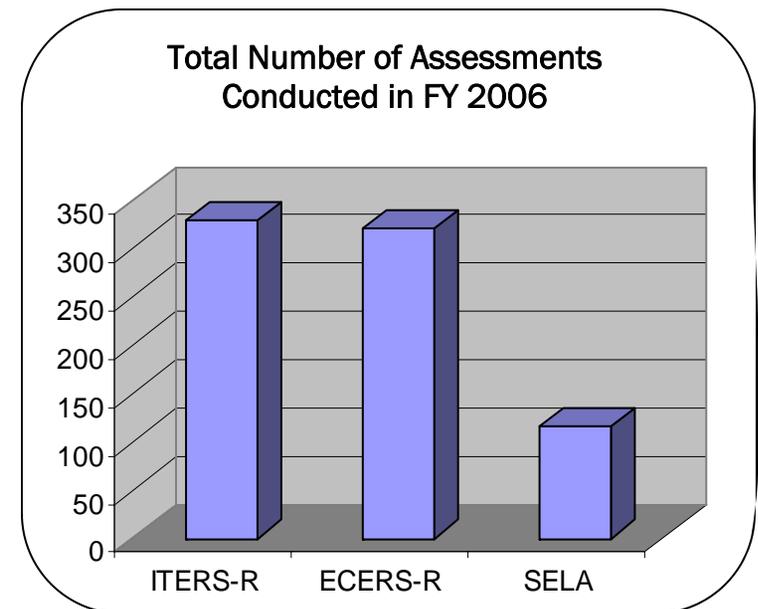
To measure and improve the quality of learning environments, individual classrooms are also assessed. Nationally recognized instruments such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS), the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS), Program Administration Scale (PAS), and the Support for Early Literacy Assessment (SELA) provide objective data which is then utilized by mentors, directors

and teachers to systematically improve classroom instruction.

- In August of 2005, assessment staff received intensive training on the use of new technology and nationally-recognized instruments, establishing proper environmental assessment technique, and comprehensive familiarity with the coalition's goals for the program
- Data collected and analyzed from assessments serve as baseline information for quality enhancement plans in each assessed center
- One-hundred eighty centers, including 145 Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) field sites were assessed using the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R), the

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R), and SELA. A total of 328 ITERS-R, 320 ECERS-R, and 116 SELA were conducted at these centers

- Assessment reports play an integral role in the measurement and quality enhancement of Natural Environment Educational Development (NEED) and Impact centers, and the monitoring of Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) classrooms
- Assessment specialists monitored a total of 188 VPK centers



"The assessments we've received helped us get a more accurate overview of the state of the school. We realized how important the daily routine is and have made the changes accordingly. Not only did the assessments show us where we needed to improve but what our strengths are. We want to have a superior quality center so that our kids are better prepared for their later school years."
-Maria Barros, ARC Florida City Project Thrive

Quality Programs

CIRCLE/Teachscape

The Center for Improving the Readiness of Children for Learning and Education (CIRCLE)/Teachscape was a two-year study under the direction of the University of Texas and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The objective of the program was to stimulate children's social and behavioral competence, and pre-literacy skills through a teacher's use of web-based, customized training. This professional development program instructed teachers regarding child assessments, classroom organization, and best literacy practices. Technology also played a role in individual child assessments. Teachers participating in the study used Palm Pilots™ to assess the progress of their students and inform classroom instruction accordingly.

teacher education

Preliminary data analysis from the University of Texas on CIRCLE/Teachscape implementation in Miami indicates that, on the whole children's knowledge and use of vocabulary, expressive language, phonological awareness, and print awareness (including letter knowledge) increased from the fall of 2005 to the spring of 2006. Positive effects of the target programs (mentored and non-mentored teachers) were discovered with respect to expressive language, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and print awareness.

- The CIRCLE program was comprised of one program director, two facilitators/mentors, and one administrative assistant
- As of September 2005, the University of Texas chose to fund only one facilitator/mentor for the 2006 fiscal year. The coalition funded the second facilitator/mentor

- A more comprehensive "Glow and Grow" form was introduced for facilitators/mentors and teachers to use in establishing best practices in their classroom ("Glow") and determining areas of improvement ("Grow")

Total number that participated in the CIRCLE/Teachscape program		
Centers	Teachers	Children
31	47	298

- Over the two-year period of CIRCLE, teachers received stipends in the form of gift cards from vendors: Kaplan™, Discount School Supplies™ and Wal-mart™. Upon conclusion of the program, all teachers were allowed to keep their Palm Pilots™
- In March of 2006, the University of Texas informed the coalition that grant funding had lapsed and the study's prospective third year would not be executed. As a result, control sites did not receive the promised accelerated version of the on-line lab course
- For the 2006 fiscal year, 35 CIRCLE teachers received three credits from Florida International University (FIU) for participating in the program and the web-based lab course, Emergent Literacy
- Teachers received a total of six credits for the full two-years of the program
- The CIRCLE grant concluded on May 31, 2006



"We have been inspired by your [Lea Stone] passion and commitment to teaching. Your lessons taught us numerous methods on how to better involve students in their educational process. The children's love of books, enjoyment of school and participation has greatly increased."

-Elena Mendendez, Ivet Montero, Emma Morales, and Ludmila Pena, Project Excel-Even Start, Zora Neal Hurston Elementary

Quality Programs

ELLM Plus

While many children do not learn to read until the age of five or six, research shows that the earliest years are the most critical for literacy development. In partnership with the University of North Florida (UNF), Florida Institute for Education (FIE), and early reading experts, the coalition has implemented the Early Literacy and Learning Model (ELLM), a nationally recognized literacy program. ELLM is designed to improve language and pre-reading skills in young children. No longer limited solely to reading, ELLM recently expanded to include the subjects of math, science, social studies, the arts, and movement, and is now referred to as ELLM Plus.

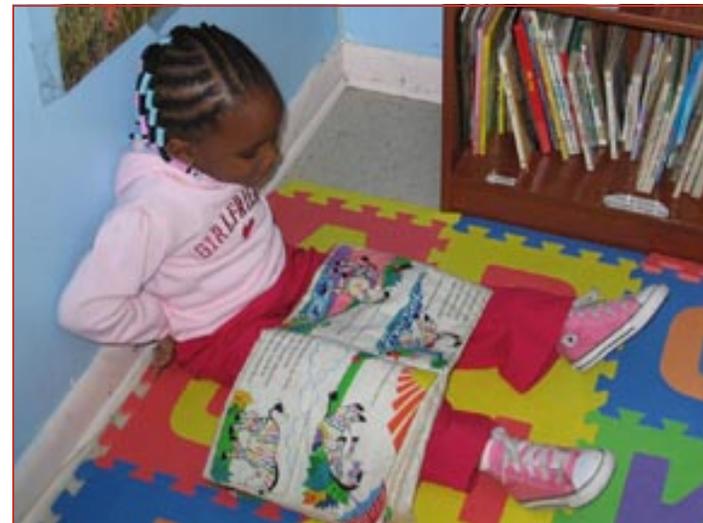
- Four Impact staff members implemented ELLM Plus in 11 child care centers serving three- and four-year olds in 20 classrooms
- The coalition is still waiting for results of the 2002 to 2006 national Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research (PCER) study in which 35 centers in Miami-Dade county participated. The implementation phase of the study ended in June of 2005 and only teacher interviews were conducted in 2006

Total number that participated in the ELLM Plus program

Centers	Teachers	Children
11	38	340

- UNF provided materials for the classrooms to pilot ELLM PLUS curricula
- Teachers embraced the program, engaging in a two-day training and continuing implementation throughout the year
- Over 300 children and 38 teachers participated in the program. The coalition plans to continue the implementation of ELLM Plus as it has had very positive effects on children and the strengthening of teachers' skills

literacy



"I have been teaching for over 18 years and thought I saw my students progress, but these last three years (this year without a coach) I have seen a huge difference in my children's progress. It must be ELLM."
-Elementary school teacher

Quality Programs

ERF

The U.S. Department of Education awarded our coalition one of five three-year Early Reading First (ERF) grants to implement the Learning Educational Approaches to Reading Now (LEARN) program in five preschool centers throughout Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. The ERF program prepares pre-kindergarten children from low-income families for success in kindergarten by developing their

emerging

early language, cognitive, and emergent literacy skills.

- ERF staff is comprised of five personnel: one program director, three mentor specialists, and one administrative assistant

- In October of 2005, ERF finalized a Memorandum of Understanding with REM Learning Center, Catholic Charities South Dade Childcare Center, Kidco 1 Child Care Center, Grouper Lane Preschool, and BOLA Child Care and Learning Center. Each participating child care center was provided with: educational materials, computers with educational software, teacher-professional development conferences, and experienced mentors

- The ERF program consolidated partnerships with Florida International University (FIU), Florida State University's Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR), and Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS)



- In partnership with FIU, all LEARN classroom environments were measured using

the following assessments: Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO)

Total number that participated in the ERF program		
Centers	Teachers	Children
5	5	100

- In cooperation with Florida International University (FIU), all students were screened using the following child assessments: Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, 3rd ed. (PPVT-III), Receptive One Word: Picture Vocabulary Test (ROWPVT), Expressive One Word: Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT), and the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS-PreK)

- FCRR trained the ERF project director, mentors, teachers, teacher assistants, and evaluation consultants on Literacy Express curriculum

- The ERF program successfully completed a site visit evaluation on May 18, 2006, conducted by the U. S. Department of Education. A few of the positive statements cited in the report are:

"The site review was well coordinated by the ERF project director, Dr. Silvia Palenzuela..."

Materials were prepared to assist the site visit evaluator in the review: charts, records, status reports, baseline assessments, revised management plan, and meeting minutes...

The project director and mentors have clearly worked hard since receiving their ERF grant. There was clear evidence of implementation in the centers visited, as well as continuity and coherence across the sites."

-Carol Vukelich, U.S. Department of Education

"Working with the ERF mentors has been a big help and I have benefited from their guidance. The mentors observe me in action and then tell me where I am strong and where I can improve. Their help has made me a better teacher."
-Amparo Santelices, REM Learning Center

Quality Programs

Impact

The Impact program is designed to enrich the quality of care and education in child care centers. In collaboration with Florida International University (FIU), Impact program mentors serve as advisors, role models, and motivators for teachers, center directors, and other child care staff. On-site professional development, mentoring, and accreditation assistance are essential means used to raise the level of quality in early learning environments. An estimated 9,265 children in participating programs demonstrated significant gains (an average of 2.5 percentile point increases) in cognitive, social and gross-motor skills when compared with national data.

- Impact staff, at the conclusion of the 2006 fiscal year included: two program directors, two program coordinators, two accreditation mentors, three director/administrative mentors, and 11 classroom mentors.
- Mentors interacted with center staff, children and parents in English, Spanish and Creole

mentoring

- Over 1,000 caregivers and 9,265 children have been positively affected by the 13,417 hours of on-site

mentoring; 113 training sessions were received by 1,000+ teachers

- In August of 2005, 22 classroom mentors began providing quality enhancement services in a total of 136 child care centers. Four of the mentors were Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) staff
- Center director focus groups were facilitated by the Impact program directors to solicit feedback on Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) field test participation, the recruiting and assessment process, quality enhancement services, and the Annual Quality Enhancement Action plan process

- Professional development activities for the child care community included attendance at workshops and conferences on such topics as: healthy environments, room arrangement, anecdotal note taking, lesson planning, behavior management, daily routine and transitions, assessment scoring and tools, High/Scope™ planning and review process, Creative Curriculum™, music and movement, conflict resolution, accreditation, ELLM Plus, circle time, Program Administration Scale (PAS), conscious discipline, infant and toddler developmental stages and needs, positive guidance, and VPK standards

- An ongoing series of quality-assurance surveys took place in community child care centers throughout the year. Interviews with center directors provided valuable feedback to improve the program
- At the end of the fiscal year, a total of 33 child care centers have received accreditation and an additional 47 are in the process of receiving accreditation

Total number that participated in the Impact program

Centers	Teachers	Children
136	1,000+	9,265



▶ "Without the Impact program, I don't know what we would have done...probably closed and that's the truth."
Marisela, InterAmerican Christian Center

Quality Programs

ITTCH

nurturing

The Infant-Toddler Training and Children's Health Initiative (ITTCH) is a partnership with Barry University's School of Nursing to ensure that children in their early-formative years have the opportunity to realize their optimal growth and development. While young children's brains are more open to learning and enriching influences, they are also more vulnerable to developmental problems. Under the initiative, care is given by adults who fully realize the importance of their role in helping infants and toddlers thrive. Health screenings are conducted on children ages birth to five. Training as well as on-site mentoring are provided to infant and toddler caregivers in child care centers near the university.



- The initiative began as a pilot project with 10 centers in February 2005 to June 2005. The program continued in July 2005 with a total of 20 child care centers, 110 teachers and more than 700 children

- In addition, caregivers successfully completed an 11-week training program which included

best practices focusing exclusively on infant and toddler development

- The initiative includes a project director and an early childhood specialist who facilitates the training and conducts on-site mentoring to assist teachers in transferring knowledge gained in the training program to actual practice in their center

- Each center was evaluated using the Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) and an improvement plan was implemented based on the results.

Materials and equipment were purchased to enhance the children's learning environment

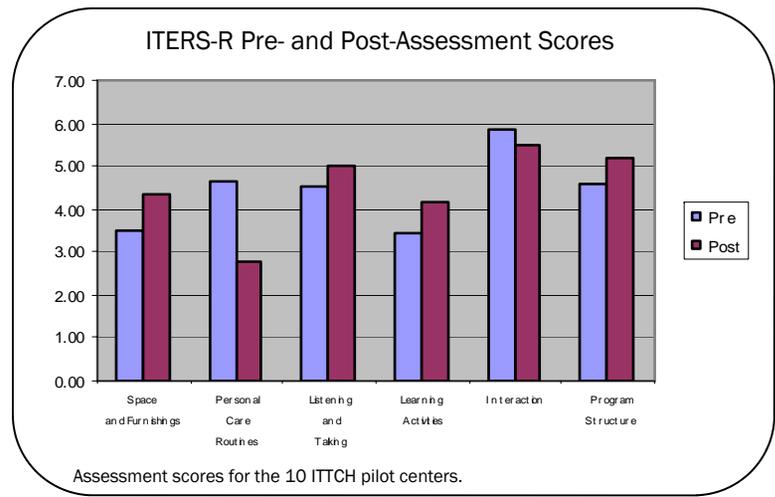
- A full-time registered pediatric nurse and a podiatrist conducted at least one health screening on every child in the participating centers.

Total number that participated
in the ITTCH program

Centers	Teachers	Children
20	110	>700

One hundred percent of all a b n o r m a l screening results were referred for f o l l o w - u p consultations. Parents were also assisted in securing health care for children if needed

- Comments from parents, teachers, and directors were very positive in their support of the program. As it meets the requirement for conducting health screenings and improving the quality of infant-toddler programs, ITTCH will be continued and expanded as funds permit



"Perhaps this program will lead to greater educational opportunities in its effort to secure knowledge for early childhood professionals of infants and toddlers."

-Terry Rutherford, Lakeview Baptist Day Care Center

Quality Programs

NEED

The award-winning Natural Environment Educational Development (NEED) program ensures that children with special needs are appropriately educated with their peers in a natural educational setting. Specialists provide classroom mentoring/strategies, staff trainings, assistance with referrals, parent engagement activities, and one-to-one child observations and interventions. NEED provides services in English, Spanish and Creole to support the development of *all* children.

inclusion

• Since 2003, the NEED program has increased from seven to 23 staff: one program director, one administrative assistant, two program coordinators and 19 inclusion specialists mentoring 210 centers, 835 teachers and serving 1,006 children in Miami-Dade county

- Provided 191 community trainings to 1,650 staff for a total of 4,354 in-service contact hours affecting 13,058 children
- Specialists conducted 2,859 site visits for the year
- Staff participated in 3,044 hours of professional development trainings
- Presented professional development to local, state and national audiences including the 2005 Division of Early Childhood - Council of Exceptional Children national conference and the NEED-developed "VPK 2006 Education Standards—Adaptation Module" at the 2006 Florida Early Learning Quality Initiative Symposium
- With support from the Agency for Workforce Innovation's (AWI) Office of Early Learning (OEL), a "warm-line" telephone number was created for providers and/or parents to call and request technical assistance resulting in 187 requests. Follow-up activities were provided to 484 callers

• Implemented a partnership with the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation to receive funding for work focusing on learning disabilities in three- and four-year olds

• Initiated 143 referrals to Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) and 52 referrals to Early Steps

• Provided services through collaboration with the infant/toddler initiative to 110 children at the Continuing Opportunities for Purposeful Education (COPE) center for teen parents

Total number that participated in the NEED mentoring program

Centers	Teachers	Children
210	835	1006



Thank you so much for taking the time to train my staff. As you can see, the teachers really needed the help and I felt that by having you reinforce them with your wonderful techniques it gave them something positive to work with."

-Anita Johnson - Director, Knowledge Beginnings

Quality Programs

Quality Initiatives on behalf of Teen Parents

Teenagers currently parent an estimated 7,000+ children in Miami-Dade county. In 2005, approximately 1,855 children were born to teen parents. These families' challenges and risk factors are unique. To begin to meet the needs of teen parents and their children, the coalition implemented several projects to improve the quality of care for this vulnerable population.

Teen Parent Task Force and Service Partnership

In cooperation with Florida State University's Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy (CPEIP), the coalition assembled the Teen Parent Task Force to build an integrated system of care for teen parents and their children. On February 13, 2006, The Children's Trust awarded a Service Partnership grant to the coalition to achieve the same goal. As a result, the task force dissolved on March 22, 2006, and its members joined the new partnership along with other community stakeholders and leaders. The goal of the \$385,000, seven-month planning grant is to



create a governance structure to implement a comprehensive system of care for teen parents and their children. Funding from the grant will provide infant mental health consultations, dyadic therapy, parenting classes to juvenile delinquent teen mothers, and quality enhancement in public child care programs serving pregnant and/or parenting teenagers.

Total number that participated in Quality Initiatives on behalf of Teen Parents

Centers	Teachers	Children
COPE—North	80	340
COPE—South		

Young Parents Project

The Young Parents Project is a two-year pilot project implemented by Judge Lester Langer of the 11th Judicial District for Juvenile Justice, CPEIP, the Agency for Health Care Administration, and the Health Council of South Florida. Thirty delinquent teen-mothers and their children volunteered to participate in the program which provides infant mental health services and parent education. Judge Langer identified that one in five teenagers arriving in the juvenile justice department are either pregnant or a parenting teen. The Young Parents Project is the only one of its kind in the country.

Education for Pregnant and Parenting Teens

Quality services and intervention are provided at the two Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Continuing Opportunities for Purposeful Education (COPE) centers for pregnant and parenting teens. These two schools have on-site child development facilities for the 100 to 125 children whose teen parents are enrolled in the program. The coalition, in partnership with CPEIP, is working to enhance program quality by meeting national accreditation standards, increasing caregivers' knowledge, and planning developmentally appropriate programs for participants' children.

"Now I know I can do things on my own, get where I need to be. My daughter, when she is older, is going to look up to me and I know I need to be her role model."

-Kimberly Brown, Young Parents Project

Special Initiatives

NIEER and QRIS

National Institute of Early Education and Research (NIEER)

In partnership with the National Institute of Early Education and Research (NIEER), 75 classrooms for four-year olds in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties' private child care centers were assessed using Preschool Classroom Mathematics Inventory (PCMI), Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS), and the Support for Early Literacy Assessment (SELA).

Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS)

To resolve the question of how to improve and maintain quality across the range of early childhood services in a community the coalition created a plan, the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS). Quality Rating Systems (QRS) provide a roadmap for quality improvement in early childhood programs, offering clearly defined steps (goals and objectives) and incentives as each quality level is attained. By engaging all programs and funding streams in the system, a QRS becomes a powerful tool for system alignment. It was with the aim of improving quality of children's services across the county that the QRIS was developed with a planning grant from The Children's Trust.

The QRIS was designed as a voluntary quality rating improvement system that had three main goals:

- To improve the quality of early education and child care throughout Miami-Dade county
- To enhance children's cognitive, social-emotional, literacy, language, problem solving, fine and gross-motor skills at kindergarten entry
- To ensure adequate community support for high-quality early education

The QRIS was conceptualized as a cycle of continuous improvement that entails moving through the following steps:

Step 1.

Developing quality benchmarks and assessing progress towards the standards

To meet its three goals, the QRIS is framed by a four-level system of quality. Each quality level in the QRIS is linked with a) current research on children's learning and development b) what is known about components of high quality programs for differing age levels of children, and c) externally validated and reliable measures of program quality.

The QRIS rating levels are calculated based on the scores received during the center assessment. Each center assessment includes classroom observations; a review of center records and interviews with relevant staff. The ITERS and ECERS are used for environmental assessments and procedures in the QRIS have been carefully selected to ensure confidence in the fairness and significance of the ratings. These tools are familiar to many providers and are closely aligned with the Florida School Readiness Performance Standards (FSRPS).

Step 2.

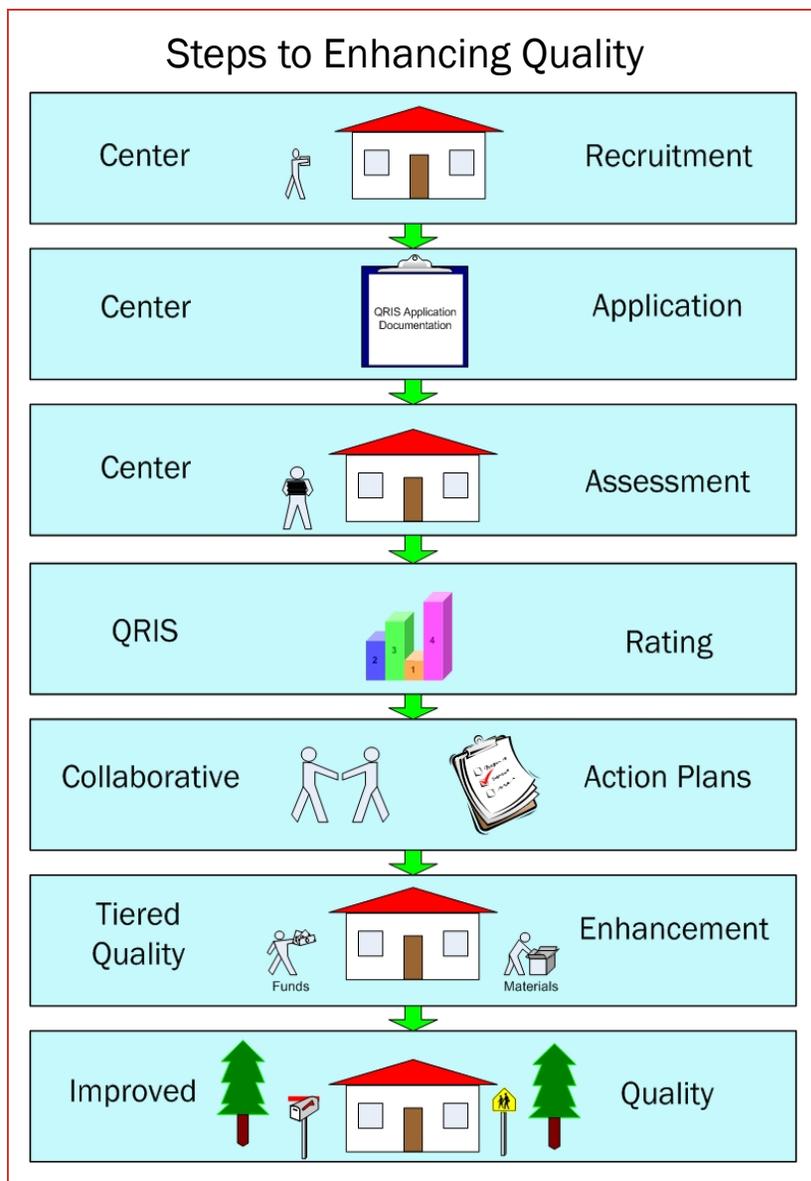
Engaging in a quality enhancement cycle

Assessment has little positive effect unless the findings are used to inform practice. This is where the center enhancement components of the QRIS come into play. The program enhancement system has two major components: 1) technical assistance through mentoring and professional development opportunities, and 2) financial incentives and professional networking supports that are carefully chosen with the provider to improve quality.

Technical assistance through mentoring is focused on both improving program responsiveness to the individual needs of students as well as helping staff with improving specific aspects of their practices that affect the overall program of instruction. Recognizing the important role of leadership on program quality,

Special Initiatives

QRIS



the quality enhancement team also targeted some of its technical assistance efforts on center directors, in addition to classroom based mentoring. Finally, as a means of elevating quality across the system some technical assistance was also aimed at increasing the numbers of centers who achieve accreditation status. Thus, the team for technical assistance provided the following:

- Direct *classroom mentoring* with teachers and center directors
- Direct classroom intervention to *support inclusion* in classrooms serving children with special needs
- Technical assistance on administration, supervision, fiscal integrity, parent involvement, child assessment, and professional development to center directors and other administrators through *director mentors*
- Assistance in the self-study process for accreditation through *accreditation mentors*

In addition to on-site mentoring, components for enhancing both the efficiency and effectiveness of center staff would also include financial incentives and professional development opportunities. A cornerstone of the professional networking and development support provided at a county-wide level would be the establishment of the Collaborative of Early Learning Leaders (CELL). Furthermore, small grants for augmenting equipment and materials would be provided to centers. Larger supplementary Program Improvement Funds (PIF) would be made available after some progress has been demonstrated in the first year. These supplements were to be used for more costly enhancements such as sending teachers to college, improving salary scales and hiring additional staff. To ensure equity and efficient use of resources, the amount and intensity of enhancements provided to each program were to be specifically tailored to their assessed quality rating.

Step 3. Ensuring ongoing sustainability

To make certain that the work of the QRIS would continue to ensure quality improvement over time across all children's services a sustainability plan had been developed that includes a communications initiative as well as a financial plan for investment from other organizations.

A social marketing campaign was to be executed by The Children's Trust to help increase consumer awareness of the importance of quality in children's services, to demonstrate how the QRIS facilitates such improvements within Miami-Dade county, and how local businesses, parents, and legislators could support the QRIS.

The development of partnerships with other agencies to share resources, and the linking of public funding sources to the QRIS would be a critical component of sustainability. The following is a preliminary list of early care and education partners considered:

- The Children's Trust
- Child Development Services (CDS)
- Head Start
- VPK
- Accreditation organizations (Accredited Professional Preschool Learning Environment (APPLE), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), etc.)
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools
- United Way of Miami-Dade
- Faith-based organizations that sponsor or fund early childhood programs
- Early intervention programs
- Private funders

The long term goal, and a cornerstone of the sustainability plan for this project was to make quality improvement align with QRIS standards, the community norm, so that all organizations would seek to achieve the same goals. This would align and maximize all resources.

QRIS Implementation

In summary, the QRIS is a well-organized, clearly conceptualized, and research driven system of quality improvement that promised to improve the educational lives of all children within Miami-Dade county. Developers of the QRIS carefully considered all the components that contribute to an effective quality rating system providing a model that can be used to inform other states and counties with their own reform efforts. Quality is a community-wide effort that requires a system to ensure that every family, no matter where they live, is able to access and participate in a program that meets their needs and ensures that their children learn and succeed. The QRIS planning grant was completed in November of 2005. The coalition thanks The Children's Trust for their generous support in this collaborative endeavor.



Analysis

Miami-Dade County:

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)

In June of 2005, the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe was presented with the significant challenge of implementing the first year of Florida's FREE VPK program. Working closely with the coalition's central agencies, and thanks to a significant effort on the part of child care providers, the VPK program was successfully launched in six weeks. Within the first month, more than 10,000 children, over 40% of the initial target of 23,363, were enrolled in VPK. By the end of the year, the coalition had achieved an eligibility rate of 85%, one of the highest in the state.

School Readiness

In the beginning of the 2006 fiscal year, the coalition enrolled approximately 32,000 children in school readiness services in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. This number was in excess of the budgeted amount and as a result, enrollment in school readiness was frozen. It was determined that as a result of natural attrition the number of enrolled children would sufficiently decrease. Therefore, once enrollment was frozen, the coalition's expenditures for school readiness would not exceed its budget.

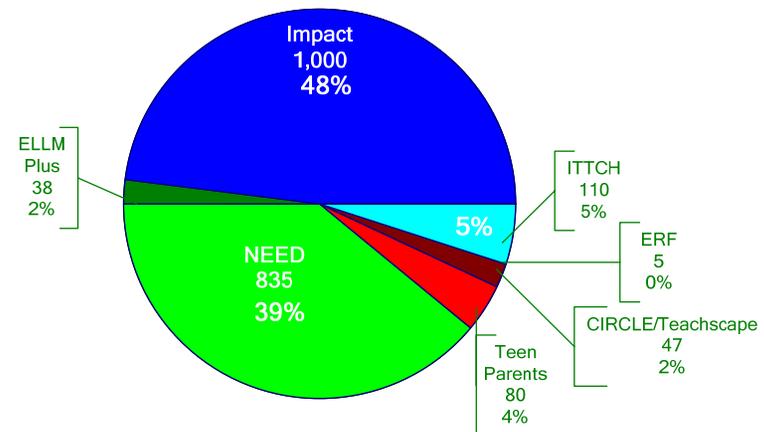
As of December 2005, however, the attrition rate had not significantly reduced the enrollment count and additional steps were needed to avoid a projected shortfall at year's end. After consultation with Child Development Services (CDS) and the Office of Early Learning (OEL), it was determined that the best course of action would be to temporarily freeze the practice of rolling-over children from the Transitional Child Care (TCC) category into Working Families. The hold was implemented for children over the age of seven.

Despite all efforts, the freeze did not eliminate the projected shortfall. At the same time, legislation was pending that would have required coalitions to ensure only 25% of the children served in school readiness were over the age of six. The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe chose to adopt this potential state guideline and reduce its school-age population from 36% to 25%. Thus the coalition would serve its community in compliance with future legislation, and also make a concerted effort to reduce the projected shortfall.

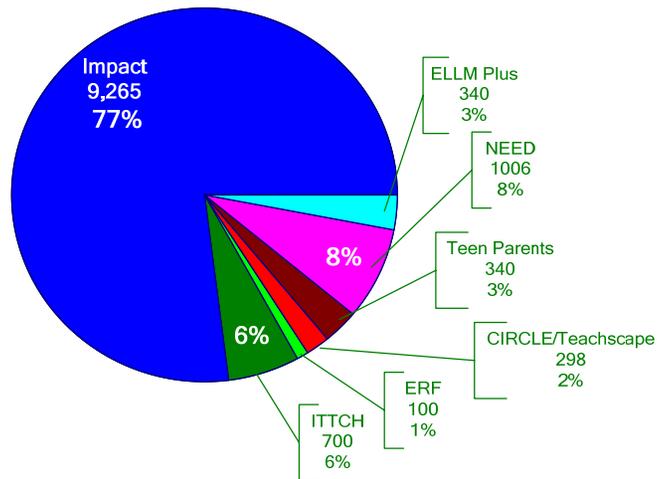
The board approved the motion to reduce the coalition's school-age population to 25%, thereby determining children from the Working Families, Working Families-One Parent, and Child Care Purchasing Pool as no longer eligible for care upon their six-month re-determination date.

Soon after this policy was implemented, the proposal was withdrawn in the legislature. At the request of the coalition, OEL provided an additional \$4,000,000 grant towards the school readiness budget.

Total Number of Teachers that Participated in Coalition Programs during FY 2006



Total Number of Children that Participated in Coalition Programs during FY 2006



Miami-Dade county provided \$2,000,000 of the 6% matching grant for Working Families. The Children’s Trust provided \$1,600,000 of the matching grant.

In closely working with local partners, the coalition reduced the negative impact of the dis-enrollment policy by the start of the 2007 fiscal year (July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007). All school-age children that were eligible for care were re-enrolled in after-school programs.

Waitlist

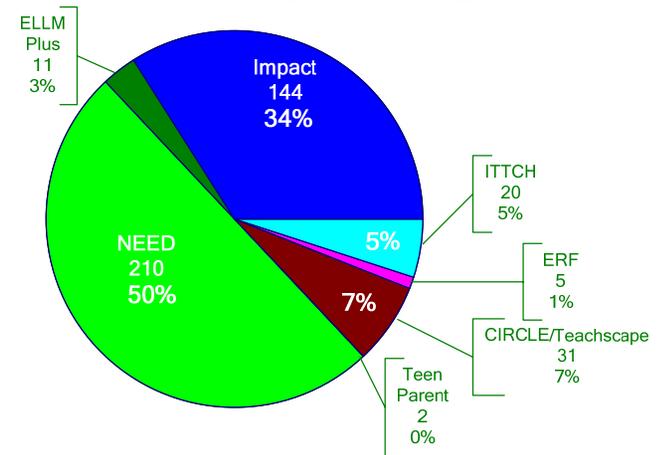
The coalition also implemented an improved wait list management policy. This improved policy places families and children on the waitlist after a pre-screening to determine eligibility for services. On the six-month anniversary of being placed on the waitlist, families are contacted to ensure the need for care still remains. A benefit of this policy is to ensure that the waitlist data is accurate and does not contain outdated or

duplicated applications. As a result, the waitlist was reduced from 13,237 in January of 2006 to 3,429 by the end of the fiscal year. (See page 5: graph of School Readiness Children Served in Miami-Dade/Monroe in FY 2006).

Quality Programs

In addition to school readiness and VPK programs, the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe made a positive impact on the lives of children in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties through a number of quality programs implemented by the coalition and its partners. These programs include: Impact, NEED, ELLM Plus, CIRCLE/Teachscope, ITTCH, Quality Initiatives on behalf of Teen Parents, etc. Through these programs, the coalition directly touched the lives of more than 14,000 children in 513 centers, via 2,710 teachers.

Total Number of Centers that Participated in Coalition Programs during FY 2006



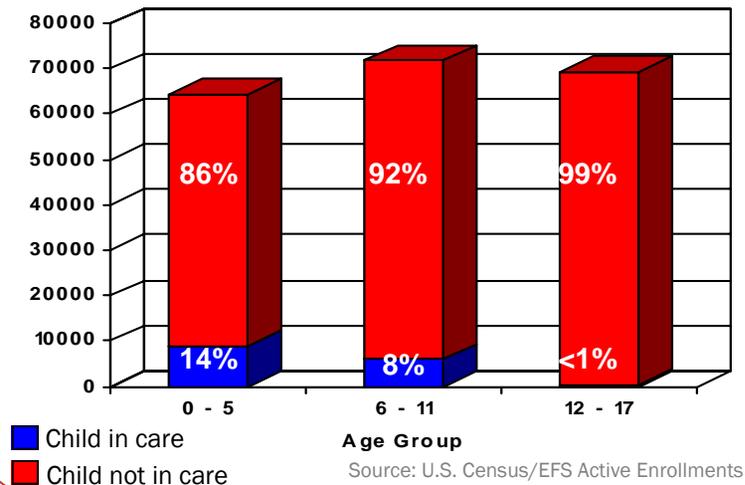
Analysis

Unmet Need

In addition to VPK, the coalition was able to provide school readiness services to 42,794 children in Miami-Dade county and 1,114 children in Monroe county. Over the course of the year average enrollment was 29,300 children per month. While the coalition's efforts fared well, an unmet need exists in our community.

According to U.S. Census data, there are just over 166,000 children living in our community ages zero to 11 years old whose families earn below 184% of the federal poverty level. There are 135,686 children ages zero to 11 whose families earn less than 150% of the federal poverty level. The coalition provided services to 14% of these children ages zero to five and 8% of the children ages six to 11. This means there are over 120,000 children ages zero to 11 from families that earn less than 150% of the federal poverty level who did not receive care. In addition, there are over 42,000 children from families who earn between 151% and 199% of the federal poverty level who were ineligible for care. Clearly there remains a significant need for the state to continue granting funds to ensure that all children, regardless of the family's socio-economic status, receive early learning education and services.

Unmet Need in Miami-Dade County
Working Families are <150% of the Federal Poverty Level



Monroe County:

The high cost of living and business operation, transient workforce, lack of affordable housing, and hurricane recovery efforts are challenging issues for the provider community. As a result, three centers and 14 family child-care homes closed from March 31, 2005 to March 31, 2006 with a loss of approximately 180 slots.

Many working families earn salaries that exceed the income-eligible guidelines to receive school readiness services; this creates a serious dilemma in securing affordable child care. School readiness enrollment declined from 820 children in March of 2005 to 739 children in March of 2006. The county as a whole continues to experience an exodus of working families. Due to the decline in enrollment, a wait list was not established. The decrease in the availability of child-care slots however continues to be problematic, particularly regarding infant care.

Specific steps were implemented to address the child-care challenges in Monroe county:

- The coalition's board approved a parent fee-waiver to alleviate the financial burden for parents and providers during the hurricane recovery process
- WHFS awarded a mini-grant to child-care providers negatively affected by Hurricane Wilma via the "My Key West Emergency Relief Fund"
- A child care task force was created by WHFS to assist the provider community with: professional support, strategies to increase capacity/slots, and exploration of public/private partnerships. Task force members include coalition staff from the Monroe county office, child care providers, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) licensing, the private sector and other community partners
- The coalition's Monroe County Advisory Committee met quarterly and addressed issues/concerns related to the provider community
- In June of 2006 the coalition's board approved an increase in the provider rate ranging from 5% to 10% with the highest increase given for infant care. The purpose of the increase was to bring Monroe county's rates closer in line with the prevailing market rates

Infrastructure

Administrative Update

Management Information Systems

In August of 2005, the coalition established the Management Information Systems (MIS) department which has grown to include a department director, data/Geographic Information Systems (GIS) specialist, and data entry clerk. The MIS department assisted in the establishment of the Early Learning Coalition Educational Database (ELCED) which stores comprehensive information on child care centers. ELCED is used to consolidate data from the Enhanced Field System (EFS) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF), as well as data on accreditation and centers' environmental assessments.

An EFS data clean-up project took place at Child Development Services (CDS) from January of 2006 to June of 2006. Regular updates were given to the Office of Early Learning (OEL). Information obtained from EFS was subsequently analyzed by the MIS department and then used to manage the coalition's projected financial deficit.

One significant achievement of the 2005 to 2006 fiscal year was the coalition's ability to acquire remote access to the EFS via a virtual private network. Such an accomplishment could not have taken place without the cooperation and assistance of OEL, and Miami-Dade county and CDS information-technology personnel. The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe greatly appreciates the collaborative effort of these organizations. Their assistance has helped the coalition work more efficiently.

Client Services

Initially conceived in April of 2005 to provide comprehensive information about VPK, the Client Services department has since grown to provide a broader range of support services to the coalition's most valued clients: families and providers. Formally established in November of 2005, the client services department serves as the coalition's single point of entry and resource and referral network for its clients. Client services representatives respond to programmatic inquiries, provide conflict resolution and technical assistance, and address parents and providers' needs via the VPK Helpline. Since the launch of the VPK program in 2005, representatives have responded to more than 24,500 phone calls in English, Spanish and Creole. Educated in the many services provided by the coalition, representatives guide parents and providers in using the community's early-childhood education resources to their fullest.

In May of 2006, the coalition hosted the first provider services committee meeting. Realizing the significance of facilitating an open dialogue with the provider community, the coalition's board appointed a number of its members to the provider services committee and proposed scheduling bi-monthly meetings, giving providers a forum at which their questions and/or concerns could be directly addressed by the coalition and its board.

Fiscal Analysis

Statement of Activities (In \$000)

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Preliminary 06/30/06
Support and revenues			
Grants	\$ —	\$ 169,025	\$ 169,025
Contributions and Other	54	117	171
Investment Income	—	62	62
Net Assets released from restrictions	169,028	(169,028)	—
Total support and revenues	169,082	175	169,257
Expenses			
Early Education Services	166,639	—	166,639
Administration	2,446	—	2,446
Total expenses	169,085	—	169,085
Change in net assets	(3)	175	172
Beginning net assets	10	2,419	2,429
Ending net assets	\$ 7	\$ 2,594	\$ 2,601

Statement of Financial Position (In \$000)

	Preliminary 06/30/06
Assets	
Cash & cash equivalent	\$ 1,491
Grants receivable	18,024
Property and equipment, net	551
Other assets	65
Total assets	<u>20,130</u>
Liabilities	
Accounts payable	17,455
Other liabilities	75
Total liabilities	<u>17,530</u>
Net Assets	
Unrestricted	7
Temporarily restricted	2,594
Total net assets	<u>2,601</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ <u>20,130</u>

Statement of Cash Flows

(In \$000)

	Preliminary 06/30/06
Cash flows from operating activities	
Change in net assets	\$ 172
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:	
Depreciation	143
Change in operating assets, liabilities and net assets:	
Grants receivables	7,198
Other assets	(57)
Accounts payable	(7,227)
Other liabilities	22
Net cash provided by operating activities	251
Cash flows from investing activities	
Purchase of property and equipment	(385)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(134)
Beginning cash and cash equivalents	1,625
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of period	\$ 1,491

Statement of Functional Expenses

(In \$000)

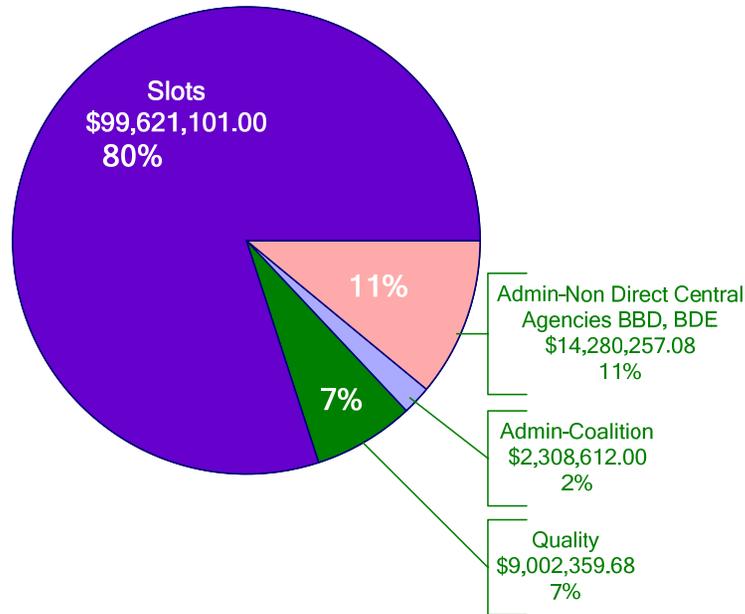
	Early Education Services	Administration	Preliminary Total 06/30/06
Expenses			
Depreciation expense	—	87	87
Dues and subscriptions	—	2	2
Enhancement projects	7,580	—	7,580
Equipment repairs and maint.	—	2	2
Insurance	—	21	21
Meetings and conferences	—	15	15
Occupancy costs	—	144	144
Office supplies	—	66	66
Other	—	47	47
Postage and freight	—	13	13
Printing	—	17	17
Professional fees	—	510	510
Salaries and benefits	—	1,433	1,433
Sub-recipient contracts	159,059	—	159,059
Telephone	—	54	54
Travel	—	36	36
Total expenses	166,639	2,446	169,085

Statement of Revenue over Expenditures at 6/30/2006 (preliminary)

(In \$000)

	School Readiness				Voluntary Pre-K				Other				TOTAL			
	Annual Budget	%	Actual	%	Annual Budget	%	Actual	%	Annual Budget	%	Actual	%	Annual Budget	%	Actual	%
Revenues & Support																
AWI/Office of Early Learning	126,755		125,460										126,755		125,460	
VPK					41,941		40,344						41,941		40,344	
Community Foundation of the Florida Keys											31				31	
Department of Education									100		99		100		99	
Early Childhood Initiative Foundation									60		59		60		59	
Early Reading First									550		242		550		242	
Florida Department of Children & Families									960		878		960		878	
General Operating Fund-Unrestricted											54				54	
Monroe General											1				1	
NIEER									75		70		75		70	
Parent Fees											61				61	
The Children's Trust									1,940		1,764		1,940		1,764	
University of North Florida											10				10	
University of Texas									50		49		50		49	
VPK Outreach									55		134		55		134	
Total Revenues	\$126,755		\$125,460		\$41,941		\$40,344		\$3,790		\$3,453		\$172,486		\$169,256	
Expenses																
Slot Distribution:																
Other											2,381				2,381	
VPPRP							38,422								38,422	
Safety Net			73												73	
Two/One Parent not working			3,122												3,122	
Transitional Child Care			16,362												16,362	
Workforce Development			10,543												10,543	
Gold Seal			7,637												7,637	
Income Eligible/Migrants			53,058												53,058	
Child Care Exec Partnership			1,720												1,720	
At Risk			7,107												7,107	
Total Slot Payment Expense	\$100,956		\$99,621		\$39,944		\$38,422		\$2,492		\$2,381		\$143,392		\$140,425	
Slot Administration Expense	\$15,475		\$17,570		\$1,280		\$1,064		\$		\$		\$16,735		\$18,634	
Programs:																
Assessment Program	1,771		1,049				1		59		91				1,141	
Intervention Program	2,381		2,230						72		68				2,299	
Project Upgrade																
Natural Environment Educ. Dev.-N.E.E.D.	1,316		1,061						95		96				1,157	
Infant Toddler	760		583				4				3				591	
NIEER			3						75		48				51	
Quality Assurance	258		219				11		8		6				237	
Circle/Teachscape	252		152		17		26		50		51				229	
Program Oversight	1,037		769		306		394		308		226				1,389	
Outreach	427		207		140		109		58		137				453	
Early Reading First			9						529		240				249	
Early Literacy and Learning Model			4								6				10	
CFFK											31				31	
Other Quality Programs	80		9												9	
Administration & General	1,676		1,736		275		270		44		110				2,116	
Information Technology	364		258				47				3				308	
Total Program Expenses	\$10,324		\$8,290		\$737		\$861		\$1,299		\$1,118		\$12,359		\$10,270	
Total Expenses	\$126,755		\$125,481		\$41,941		\$40,348		\$3,790		\$3,500		\$172,486		\$169,328	
Revenues over Expenditures before Depreciation adj	0		(\$21)				(\$4)				(\$46)		0		(\$72)	
Adjustment for depreciation			\$221				\$3				\$20				\$244	
Net Revenues over Expenditures	0		\$200				(\$1)				(\$27)		0		\$172	

School Readiness Funding Distribution



Through federal and state funding, the Office of Early Learning (OEL) supplies monies to each of the coalitions throughout the state to provide child care services to children. The state mandates that the money should be spent according to the following allocations:

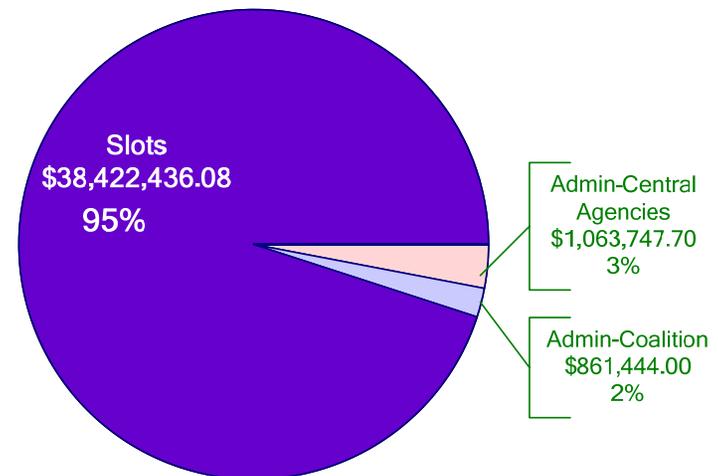
- A minimum of 70% of total funds must be spent on direct school readiness services (slots)
- A maximum of 19% spent on programs aimed at improving quality
- 5% can be spent on administration expenses
- The remaining 6% is designated for infant-toddler, match funding and other initiatives

The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe spent a total of \$125,212,329.76 on school readiness services. 80% of this was spent on providing direct services to children in school readiness programs with 7% spent on quality and only 2% spent on coalition administration expenses. A breakdown of expenses can be seen in the accompanying chart.

The state of Florida also funds the FREE Voluntary Prekindergarten program that is administered by each of the coalitions. The money is reimbursed based on the number of children enrolled in the program. Of the total amount provided by the state, only 5% can be used towards supporting administration expenses incurred by each of the coalitions.

The coalition spent 95% of the \$40,347,627.78 in VPK funds on direct services. Of the remaining 5% administration expenses, the coalition incurred 2% administration expenses and 3% was incurred by the central agency.

VPK Funding Distribution



Success Stories



Impact

St. Patrick's Preschool was one of the first faith-based schools to join the Impact quality enhancement program. As a large preschool, they are comprised of eight classrooms. Upon entering the program in September of 2004, St. Patrick's began, and in five months completed, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation process. An Impact mentor worked with the center on a weekly basis; together they successfully completed the necessary paperwork and environmental changes.



NEED

In the first week of pre-school, Jimmy, age four, was identified by his teacher as demonstrating several developmental "red flags." The teacher recommended that perhaps Jimmy should be observed by a NEED inclusion specialist. The father, Jimmy's primary caregiver, agreed to the observation and signed the necessary consent form. Upon conclusion of the observation, the NEED specialist recommended that Jimmy undergo a medical exam due to his frail size, lethargic state, and possible motor impairment. The consultant also suggested a speech, physical, and occupational evaluation be conducted.

While Jimmy was waiting to be evaluated, he fell ill. He was taken to his pediatrician and it was determined that he had leukemia. Now that Jimmy has received chemotherapy, he is thankfully in remission. His parents were subsequently referred to a support group for parents whose children suffer from leukemia and Jimmy's developmental delays are now being addressed by a visiting teacher through Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS).

ITTCH

On July 1, 2005, a registered nurse assessed a 1 ½ year old African-American boy at one of the child care centers under the direction of the Infant-Toddler Training and Children's Health initiative (ITTCH). The nurse discovered the toddler was quite congested, with decreased sounds in his left lung. A nursing referral was given to the boy's parents and they took him to Miami Children's Hospital for a follow-up appointment. Upon examination, he was found to have an enlarged heart and a serious upper-respiratory infection. He was subsequently treated and his health has vastly improved. The nurse continues to track his condition during her routine visits to the daycare center.

CIRCLE/Teachscape

As a result of successfully implementing teaching strategies learned as a participant in the CIRCLE/Teachscape program, one teacher, Ms. Antonia Corrales, was so impressive she was promoted to the position of curriculum specialist at Centro Mater West. This teacher's classroom management and instruction evolved from average to excellent.



ERF

ERF mentors met with Amparo Santelices, a teacher at REM Learning Center to plan an upcoming week's lessons using the new VPK Standards lesson-plan format. To assist Amparo, the mentors modeled the strategies and guided her by eliciting several comparisons between her lesson and the mentor's lesson. Amparo then tailored her lesson plans using all the strategies that she identified during the comparison session with her mentors. As a result of the mentoring, Amparo's confidence grew and her professional development became overtly evident. In fact, she was so eager to spread her newly acquired knowledge that she told a fellow teacher, "Do not worry. I will help you with your lesson plans. It's not difficult." Amparo was so empowered by the mentoring process that she in turn became a mentor to her peers.



VPK

According to Isabel Perez, director of the Just Kids child care center, one four-year old benefited so greatly from her enrollment in VPK that she was accepted into a magnet school upon graduation from the program.

ELLM Plus

When teachers who participated in the Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research (PCER) study were asked why they continued to implement the ELLM in their classrooms despite the conclusion of the study in June of 2005 and the lack of coaching support, the overwhelming response was, "Because it works for children; everything is here. ELLM has given us everything in an organized fashion; it makes my job easier, my children are learning and they love it."



Assessment

One of the benefits of environmental assessments is to provide center directors and staff with a "picture" of their children's learning environment. An assessor reported that one classroom in particular was lacking natural light. Children were spending all of their classroom activity time working in artificial light. Months later, on the assessor's second visit, she discovered that the center director had the back door removed and the space made into a window. Children are now enjoying the natural light streaming through the new window and the lovely yard outside.

School Readiness

Dental assistance recipient, Idi Wiggins, age four, was all smiles after braving six visits to a pediatric dentist. Idi's front teeth were broken off at the gum line; he needed four teeth extractions, four crowns and six fillings. Idi's guardian and cousin received a referral from the Monroe county office of the coalition, as well as financial assistance for Idi's extensive dental work. Funding for Idi's family was made available via a grant from the Community Foundation of the Florida Keys' "My Key West Emergency Relief Fund."



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youngest
citizens wish to
thank their
providers for
preparing them
for success in
school
and in life.

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