Because every child counts.

2006-2008 Report
Mission
To promote high-quality school readiness, voluntary pre-kindergarten and after school 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 with a priority toward the ages before birth through age 5.

Vision
To ensure a comprehensive and integrated system providing for all families and their children, beginning before birth to 5 years, the affordable opportunity to enter school ready to learn and succeed in life.

This is the number of children the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe served between June 2006 and June 2008. By participating in the Coalition’s early learning programs, each child has a better chance of entering school ready to learn. That is our mission: to offer young children an opportunity for a quality learning experience and improve their chances of success in school and in life. Our Coalition is a champion for children, with staff and community partners distinguished by their passion and dedication to providing each child an equal opportunity for a successful future. Because every child counts.
Every Future Counts

Dear Friends,

The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe is dedicated to ensuring quality early education and lifelong success for every child. While our Coalition is one of 31 similar organizations in Florida, we are not only the state’s largest—currently serving more than 50,000 children ages birth to 12 years old—but also the most demographically and geographically diverse. Despite the unique challenges we face, we are pleased to share our achievements and the significant progress we have made over the past two years.

2006-2008: New Collaborations and New Hope

During 2006 to 2008, the Coalition made a fundamental change in its operating model: rather than build up our in-house staff to expand our services, we partnered with a variety of local organizations to leverage their resources and expertise and rapidly extend the reach, quality, and efficiency of our programs.

The advantages of our “partnership model” have already become apparent. By opening the door to new collaborations with agencies and schools, we have gained access to infrastructure, knowledge and resources money cannot buy. Schools such as Florida International University, and agencies like the United Way and The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation help us bring value to the children, families, and providers of our counties. We are not only serving greater numbers, but also enhancing our services.

Low administrative costs are another advantage of our partnership model. We keep our staff lean, and are proud that our general administrative costs have been just 1.69% of our budget for the 2007-08 year. We believe that every dollar counts because every child counts and making the most of our budget means we can serve more children and those who support them, including families and providers.

Accomplishments: Quality Focus, Expanded Programs

Among our collective accomplishments, we are proud to state that we:

- Extended our Voluntary Prekindergarten program (VPK) by growing the number of approved providers — from 805 in 2006-07 to 848 in 2007-08 — and increasing the number of children served to just over 18,000.
- Introduced an important new quality initiative called Quality Counts that uses a five-star rating system to review early education programs.
- Continued successful quality initiatives such as materials and curricula fairs, providing 2,200 packages with quality materials and developmentally appropriate curricula to 679 providers.
- Worked closely with center directors to discuss and find solutions for matters pertinent to the provider community.

Supported children’s successful transition to kindergarten by providing 3,000 backpacks.

Provided 3,000 hearing, 2,905 vision and 700 speech screenings, plus 1,500 follow-up calls and letters to detect problems early.

Established a new level of transparency with the development of an innovative Performance Dashboard on our website, open to parents, providers and legislators.

Conducted developmental screenings and assessments that showed children enrolled in our programs made impressive gains in educational and social development.

**Going Forward: New Challenges, Unmet Needs**

Although these are significant accomplishments, we are entering a period of economic uncertainty that touches all levels of society in our counties, state, and nation. Here in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, we serve a population that is already under pressure: Miami is the third poorest major city in the nation, and Miami-Dade County has a troubling number of “distressed” census tracts with 40% or more of the population living below the federal poverty line.

In June of 2008, there were more than 3,000 children on our waitlist, and the number has continued to grow. This waitlist, demonstrates the unmet need in our community, underscoring the urgency of continued and expanded funding for quality care and education. We hope that our community will continue to appeal to our state legislators for that support. Quality care and education are investments that bring positive returns both short-term and long-term for children as individuals, and society as a whole.

**Making a Difference: One Child at a Time**

For our Coalition, 2006 to 2008 has been a time of new collaborations and renewed hope that the children of Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties will benefit from a positive and promising future...a time when we have laid new groundwork and put quality initiatives in place that will bring even stronger results in the years ahead...a time when the passionate commitment of our staff, providers, supporters, and community partners has improved early care and education for thousands of South Florida’s children. For your hard work and dedication, we offer our heartfelt thanks! Together, we will continue to make a difference, one child at a time.

Octavio A. Verdeja, Jr.
Board Chair

Evelio C. Torres
President/CEO

* Source: Agency for Workforce Innovation
Access Counts

The Coalition offers access to all of our services and our contracted providers through the “front door” of Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R). This service is provided by our central agencies. In Miami-Dade, our agency is the County’s Department of Human Services, Child Development Services (CDS); in Monroe County, CCR&R is provided by Wesley House Family Services (WHFS).

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)
Designed to provide parents with equal access to available and affordable early education programs, CCR&R in Miami-Dade and Monroe serve our community by instructing parents and guardians how to select quality child care, and assisting providers with general questions and referrals. CDS in Miami-Dade and WHFS in Monroe facilitate the Coalition’s core programs: School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten. In 2006-07, there were 2,218 child care referrals for new families in Miami-Dade, and in 2007-08, there were 7,748 families. In Monroe, 442 referrals were received by new families in 2006-07, and 409 in 2007-08.

Eligibility Services
CDS provides eligibility services to Miami-Dade families seeking financial and/or enrollment assistance. Additionally, the agency serves as the Single Point of Entry (SPE) for customer access to early care and education programs. It also tracks the number and types of children served, thus ensuring attendance records are accurate and submitted in a timely manner, and provides monthly expenditure reports to the Coalition. In Monroe County, these same services are provided by WHFS.

47,100 phone calls were received by CCR&R via Miami-Dade’s 311 line, an invaluable resource to which families can turn for referrals and assistance.
School Readiness: Our Core Program

School Readiness programs provide early education opportunities for children ages birth to 5-years-old. These programs are intended to prepare children to enter school ready to learn, and 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 with special needs. Programs are extended to children ages 6-12 as needed.

Miami-Dade County School Readiness 2006-07

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<tr>
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<th>Indian Children*</th>
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<th>Black Children*</th>
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Miami-Dade County School Readiness 2007-08

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The number of unduplicated children served in 2006-07 was 45,655 and in 2007-08, 43,583 children.

Monroe County School Readiness 2006-07

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Monroe County School Readiness 2007-08

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Billing Category Descriptions

BG1
At-risk children (ages birth to 5) not enrolled in a public school and school-aged children (ages 5 to 12), as determined by the Department of Children and Families (DCF)/Our Kids, Inc. and as outlined in the Riley Wilson Act

BG3
Children ages birth to 12 from families eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

BG5
Children of families eligible for the Transitional Child Care (TCC) program whose household income does not exceed 200% of the federal poverty level (referrals from South Florida Workforce are required)

BG8
Children of working families whose household income falls below 150% of the federal poverty level upon entry into the program

* Total number of children will be greater than number-of-children-served since children are often listed in more than one ethnic group and/or funding category.
Quality Initiatives: An Ongoing Commitment
Research shows that high-quality early learning programs help children develop the social, cognitive, and problem-solving skills that will serve them the rest of their lives. The Coalition focuses many of its efforts on enhancing the opportunities for quality early care and education in our communities. From mini-grants for materials support; scholarships for teacher education, accreditation and training; as well as technical assistance; our quality initiatives offer a range of support services to help our providers achieve a higher quality-based and educationally enriched environment.

During the years 2006 to 2008, the strength of our Coalition’s commitment to quality education has been consistently demonstrated by the diverse and innovative programs described on the following pages, and this listing is far from complete. The launch of our new five-star-rating program in 2007-08, Quality Counts, was especially exciting.

Excellence Counts
When it comes to early education, quality matters. We are committed to excellence, providing quality programs and services that make a difference in our community. Through dedication and innovation, we strive to develop programs that offer each child an equal opportunity for a successful future.

202 providers were selected to enter our new Quality Counts five-star-rating system in 2007-08, the program’s launch year.
The Coalition Launches Quality Counts:
An Innovative Program Rooted in Collaboration

Miami-Dade

A Five-Star-Rating System
Quality rating improvement systems are being implemented at both the national and local levels to raise the bar of quality for early learning programs. In 2007-08, the Coalition and our partners developed and launched a major initiative that brings a new quality rating system to early learning centers and family child care homes in Miami-Dade County. Appropriately named Quality Counts, this five-star-rating system uses clearly defined standards to evaluate early learning programs, and offers support and incentives to help providers achieve their quality goals.

A Model of Collaboration
Quality Counts is a superb example of how interagency collaboration can quickly make a profound impact. Funding for the program is provided by the Coalition, The Children’s Trust, and The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation/Ready Schools Miami. Program implementation is a joint effort by the Coalition and fellow partners: the United Way Center for Excellence in Education, Children’s Forum, University of Miami’s Mailman Center for Child Development, Florida International University, Family Central, Inc., Devereux Florida, and the National Institute for Innovative Leadership.

Up and Running
During the first year of the project, 202 early learning centers and family child care homes were selected into the system. Each provider completed a self-study profile, received a formal environmental assessment, and then engaged in a year of continuous quality program improvement. During the year, participants received help from technical assistance specialists who provided overview and self-study trainings, reviewed Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) results with directors and staff, created quality improvement plans, participated in staff meetings, ordered materials, and more. In addition, participants received material grants, awards, scholarships, and WAGES stipends. After one year in Quality Counts, providers will receive a second formal assessment and corresponding star rating.

Additional Quality Initiatives
2006-07: Accreditation and Quality Improvement
The Coalition’s efforts in the area of accreditation and quality improvement are designed to enrich the quality of care and education in early learning centers and family child care homes by providing staff development opportunities, on-site observation and feedback, and curriculum training through the use of mentoring.
- 10,538 hours of on-site mentoring had a positive impact on more than 480 teachers and 4,000 children.
- Higher ratings: 81% of the centers increased their Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) average score while 68% increased the average score of their Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS).
- Accreditation: 38 centers maintained or achieved accreditation.
- Professional development activities for the child care community included training in the following areas: Creative Curriculum, High/Scope, Reggio, Let’s Get Hands On, Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), transitioning, health procedures, documentation, lesson planning, active learning, literacy, and phonological awareness.

Success Story!
We received an enthusiastic report from Florida International University, a partner that provided technical assistance to 99 centers, and successfully helped 7 of them receive accreditation. Below is just one of many success stories:

Children’s Hour Day School
The old toddler classroom was an “L” shaped room with no running water, a large hole in the ceiling, and an uneven floor that created a tripping hazard. We came up with a plan to move the toddler classroom to an entirely new space—in what had been a staff room with a bathroom. We painted this room and it inspired the staff members to paint every classroom in the school. The director then purchased a new carpet ($400) even though she really could not afford it but she wanted to do her part. Through Quality Counts she acquired new furniture and materials for the classroom. The “new” toddler classroom is amazing. The children are engaged and the teachers are so happy that they get tears in their eyes every time I visit them. This classroom is proof that a little bit (money, materials, support, inspiration, assistance, and effort) really does go a long way.

Alison Gonzales, Program Coordinator
Materials, Curricula & Training: Delivering Quality

Each year the Coalition sponsors events designed to ensure that early learning centers and family child care homes have quality materials and training to support proper implementation of developmentally appropriate curricula. Some highlights include:

In 2006-07:
- We purchased 2,585 packages of materials for 711 providers — including manipulatives, furniture, literacy enhancements and office equipment.
- We purchased curricula materials and training for 329 providers serving 516 classrooms of 3- and 4-year-old children.

In 2007-08:
- The Coalition held “shopping days” to provide equipment and materials to providers. Vendors set up their samples and were on hand to answer questions about all of the products. Our staff helped providers place their orders and determine which items best fit their needs. 602 providers made selections and 2,204 packages of quality materials were ordered.
- We sponsored a curricula fair as part of a comprehensive curriculum plan that included ongoing training for teachers and providers. 170 directors and teachers representing 77 providers serving all age groups attended; they reviewed and selected 267 sets of curricula, 164 of which were for infants and toddlers.

Partners: The curricula fair was supported by the United Way Center for Excellence.

Kindergarten Transition Events: For Teachers, for Families

To help early learning centers and families build relationships with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, the Coalition and several partners in 2007-08 sponsored two kindergarten transition events. At one event, directors and teachers from over 340 centers and family child care homes met kindergarten and preschool teachers, as well as principals in their respective local elementary schools to discuss the issue of transitioning children from various early learning settings into public kindergarten. At the second event, families of children entering kindergarten in 2008-09 visited local elementary schools to talk to principals and teachers. Each family also received one of 3,000 backpacks filled with children’s books, pencils, crayons, card games, and school information to prepare for the new school year.

Partners: The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation, Miami-Dade County Public Schools/Ready Schools Miami, United Way Center for Excellence, and The Children’s Trust.

Early Reading First: Strong Results from a 3-year Research Grant

In 2005-06, The U.S. Department of Education awarded our Coalition one of five three-year grants to implement an innovative reading program, Early Reading First (ERF). The program provided low-income prekindergarten children with a literacy-rich class environment to help develop their early language, cognitive, and emergent literacy skills. By the second year, ERF was fully implemented in five provider sites, four of which were predominantly Hispanic. Each received educational materials, computers with educational software, professional development opportunities for teachers, and experienced mentors who coached and guided teachers. The grant also included a parent involvement program that was fully implemented in the third year, 2007-08. For children who participated in this program, the benefits were notable.

- In a classroom survey,* all ERF classrooms performed substantially better than the control classrooms.
- From pre-to post-participation tests, children’s spoken English showed overall improvement, and there was a significant change in language dominance at the Hispanic centers.
- Native English speakers showed increased vocabulary usage and understanding.
- ERF students performed 9.4 standard score points above those in control classrooms.

* Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO)
Monroe

Quality Initiatives in the Keys
With a small but geographically dispersed population, Monroe faces its own unique challenges. In 2006-07, the Coalition initiated and sponsored a child care roundtable that was attended by 49 representatives of early learning centers, family child care homes, local and state offices, and community partners. The group discussed critical child care issues and formed the Monroe County Child Care Task Force to explore potential legislative relief and sustainable funding options. The group is seeking local champions to help fund a Quality Counts-type of initiative in Monroe.

Child Health Screenings: Basic Care Counts
Dental, hearing, and vision care are fundamental to a child’s ability to succeed. For four years, the Florida Keys Area Health Education Center (FKAHEC) has partnered with the Coalition, providing a grant to fund comprehensive child health screenings and follow-up medical care as indicated by the child’s screening results. From 2006 to 2008, the program targeted approximately 450 School Readiness children, ages birth to five, at 24 early learning centers, and 20 family child care homes county-wide, and provided financial assistance to subsidized parents who were uninsured, underinsured, or unable to access Medicaid providers for dental and specialty care.
- A total of 1,051 unduplicated screenings occurred in the last two fiscal years.
- Based on the screenings, follow-up referrals were made to the children’s pediatricians, including: 61 dental, 115 vision, 189 hearing, and 10 immediate-care referrals. Additionally, 12 children received financial assistance for follow-up care.

Mini-Grants & Mentoring: Supporting Upgrades
In coordination with Wesley House Family Services (WHFS), mini-grants were made available to providers in order to target program improvements, upgrade facilities, and increase capacity. In 2006-07, grants totaled $337,529 and in 2007-08, the total was $188,165. The Coalition also funded classroom mentors who visited center classrooms, observed children, and provided intervention and inclusion services. In 2007-08, 17 School Readiness centers participated in the Coalition’s program.

Success Story!
Danielle, a 4-year-old attending Voluntary Prekindergarten seemed smart enough, but her father was concerned about behavior issues reported by the teacher. Danielle’s dad asked us for help. With guidance from the Coalition’s Inclusion and Assessment team, Danielle’s behavior was monitored. A Coalition specialist visited Danielle’s school, spoke with her teacher, observed Danielle in class, and spoke with her father about concerns at home. An assessment was conducted and it was determined that Danielle’s behavior at school was the result of a difficult transition at home and in school. Assessment results indicated that Danielle did not have learning difficulties requiring additional psychological assessment. What she did need however was additional loving support and intervention activities from both her family and teacher. This intervention resulted in an individualized plan for Danielle that helped her teacher and parents ensure she was on the right track.

Annual Parent and Provider Satisfaction Survey
Response to the Coalition’s 2007-08 annual parent and provider satisfaction survey regarding WHFS determined the following:
- 98% of customer respondents reported overall satisfaction with the services received.
- 98% reflected satisfaction with the accessibility of services, responsiveness of staff, and information received.
- 93% were satisfied with the child care referral service.
- 94% were reportedly satisfied with how their child care provider kept them updated on their child’s education and progress.
- 92% of provider respondents reported overall satisfaction with the services provided by Wesley House.
- 100% reflected satisfaction with the Annual WHFS Conference and its trainings on the Ages & Stages Questionnaire and Creative Curriculum child assessment tools.
Assessment & Inclusion: Enhancing Learning for All Children

The state of Florida mandates* early learning coalition assessment and inclusion programs to 1) conduct age-appropriate assessment of all School Readiness children ages birth to 5-years-old that provides feedback thus shaping instructional practices and 2) provide pre- and post-assessment to measure progress over time. The Coalition is in full compliance with the state of Florida mandate, and has provided programs for providers as well as children and their families.

The Coalition’s Assessment and Inclusion program includes professional development for early education providers and developmental screening and assessment of children. The goal is to enhance early learning by applying inclusion practices that address all children including those with special needs. In an effort to improve the quality of these programs, the Coalition developed special task forces in 2007-08, resulting in the adoption of new and effective screening protocols in both Miami-Dade and Monroe.

Early Intervention Counts

Screening young children enables professionals to identify problems and start treatment during the years when a child’s body and brain are quickly developing. Intervention prior to kindergarten has huge benefits to children, increasing the likelihood of their success in school and in life—and huge benefits to society, reducing the risk and cost of delinquency and crime.


1 out of 6 children is estimated to be affected by developmental delays, learning disorders, and behavioral and social-emotional problems.*
Programs: Assessment and Inclusion

Assessment Task Force and Results
Established in fiscal year 2006-07, the Assessment Task Force is comprised of community-wide experts in the fields of assessment, psychology, early childhood and special education. The task force selected a new screening protocol called the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). Following a successful professional development program for early education providers—which included 42 inclusion/assessment workshops and 212 ASQ trainings, the Coalition facilitated 18,511 screenings with the following results:
- 16,389 children received an ASQ.
- 789 children received pre-test assessment.
- 401 children received post-test assessment.
- 932 children received the Battelle Development Inventory II.
- 1,687 children with concerns received intervention services.

In Monroe County, 709 ASQ screenings for children ages 0-6 were completed. 56 children who were identified as “at-risk” received intervention services and action plans, of these, 17 received referral services. The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Assessment Tool was also completed for children ages 0-5, with a total of 185 pre-assessments and 278 post-assessments completed.

Inclusion Results: Support for Providers and Families
Early learning centers and family child care homes need support to learn how to work with developmentally challenged children. To meet this need, the Coalition provides in-school mentors who can observe and identify children with potential issues and recommend strategies to help teachers, and in some cases, families. Last year, 85 early education centers signed agreements to participate in the program and 42 inclusion/curriculum workshops were provided in English, Spanish, and other languages as requested. Services included:
- 547 individual child observations and 126 classroom observations for curriculum strategies;
- 577 teacher consultations, 103 parent conferences, 143 technical assistance strategies; and
- 206 child referrals for additional evaluation.

The Coalition leads the state in Warm-Line technical assistance services and serves as a mentor for other state specialists. In 2006-07, we received 300 requests for technical assistance and in 2007-08, more than 400 calls or requests were addressed.

Inclusion Task Force: Tackling Tough Issues
The Inclusion Task Force was formed in early 2008, and has already made a significant impact through two work groups. The Resources Work Group was charged with identifying resources for families and professionals, resulting in the addition of a family-friendly menu on the Coalition website to build community awareness of resources. The Definition and Matrix Work Group focused on determining a definition of a child with special needs who either has not been identified or does not meet criteria for outside assistance but nevertheless still needs support to learn. The group has developed an innovative model and will be pursuing support in 2009.

Recognition and Response: Funding Early Intervention
Funded by the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation and The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation, this program focuses on early identification of at-risk children and intervention strategies to help children with learning difficulties or other special needs. The Coalition’s Resource and Recognition staff consists of a literacy readiness coach, family engagement coach, and grant coordinator. Some highlights of the group’s effort were:
- Over 400 children received hearing, vision, and developmental screenings. Speech screenings were provided as needed.
- In collaboration with Early Discovery, 30 children were identified as at-risk but not eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for Part B or Part C services yet they were provided therapy.
- The Miami program was chosen to participate in the Phase II Intervention extension project with the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Only two sites were selected. The research results of this project will make a significant national contribution to early identification of learning difficulties in very young children. Additionally, they will provide valuable information to address learning disabilities in children who have not yet begun to fall behind in school.

Sensory Screening Program: A Successful Launch
A new sensory screening program was launched in 2007-08. Designed to meet the mandates of health screenings and referrals for School Readiness children, including licensed-exempt and faith-based providers—the program was implemented through Hearing and Speech of Florida, Inc. Parental consent was obtained and screenings conducted, followed by parental notification, professional referrals, and follow-up contact with families. By year-end, 3,000 hearing, 2,905 vision, and 700 speech screenings had been performed, with 1,500 follow-ups. Due to the success of the program, additional dollars will be allocated in 2008-09, and other community agencies have expressed a desire to join forces.
Overview
In 2002, Florida voters passed a constitutional amendment to provide every 4-year-old child in the state with a FREE, high quality prekindergarten education. The Voluntary Prekindergarten program (VPK) gives children a jumpstart 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, consisting of 540 instructional hours and beginning in August, and the Summer VPK program, consisting of 300 instructional hours and starting as early as May 1.

In 2005-06, the Coalition made a concerted effort to initiate the VPK program, certifying over 700 centers as qualified VPK providers, and enrolling some 15,000 children through community-wide outreach efforts. During 2006-2008, we expanded the program by increasing both the number of VPK-certified providers and the enrollment of eligible 4-year-olds.

First Impressions Count
The most important growth and development in the brain occurs by the age of five. Children who attend high-quality prekindergarten are more likely to graduate from high school and less likely to have behavioral problems, repeat a grade or go on welfare. The early years are the learning years.

Over 37,000 four-year-olds enrolled in VPK between 2006 and 2008.
Miami-Dade

2006-2008: Educating and Expanding

After the launch of the VPK program, we turned our focus to educating providers on the certification requirements and providing assistance with the application process. We held numerous training sessions throughout Miami-Dade County and delivered additional support via our VPK website and helpline. In 2007-08, our training initiative focused on helping providers maintain compliance; this was supported by monitoring visits.

- Training: During the 2006-2008 seasons, 1,395 VPK teachers and directors received VPK Standards training. (Note: this number is composed of 845 educators reported in 2006-07 and 550 in 2007-08).
- More providers: In 2006-07, we succeeded in increasing the number of certified providers to 816 for the school-year program in Miami-Dade, and in 2007-08, we added 50 new providers for a total of 866.
- More children: 16,986 children completed the school-year program in the 2006-07 fiscal year and that number rose to 18,006 in 2007-2008. Summer participation was consistent over the two years, at approximately 675 enrollees.
- Monitoring visits: 434 monitoring visits were made to VPK providers in 2007-08.

Readiness Assessments: Rising

2006-07 was the first year that VPK graduates were assessed for their “readiness” upon entering kindergarten. The Florida School Readiness Rates were based on the scores received by students who took the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS), and who entered kindergarten after participating in the 2005-2006 VPK year. Student scores were tied back to the VPK program provider, and accordingly the providers were given a “readiness rate.” The readiness rate process gives providers an opportunity to improve their programs and enhance their quality based on the score received. Those scoring 200 or below are considered low-performing, and assistance is available to help them increase their scores the following year. The results over a two-year period were as follows:

- A total of 661 providers received readiness rates for the first time in 2006-07. That number increased to 740 the next year.
- In 2007, 32% of providers were considered high-performing with scores between 250 and 300. In 2008, 40% achieved this high level of performance, and 84% of providers met the minimum level of 200 and above.

Monroe

2006-2008: Expanding Despite Challenges

In Monroe County, the Coalition’s office and Wesley House Family Services (WHFS) share responsibility in administering the VPK program and provider certification. Despite the devastating impact of Hurricane Wilma in 2005 when the VPK program launched, and the ongoing economic challenges throughout the Florida Keys, we have increased capacity and thus enrollment during this two-year period. The Coalition continued to provide training programs and support, and monitor all providers to ensure compliance.

- Training: VPK Standards orientation and trainings for providers were held 5 times during each of the two fiscal years from 2006-08, and 37 technical assistance visits were made.
- Providers certified: 19 providers were certified in Monroe County including 9 school district sites and 10 private providers, for a total capacity of 455 students.
- Monitoring: 100% of providers were monitored to ensure compliance.

Readiness Assessments: High-Performing

According to the VPK readiness rates (described on the preceding page) Monroe County providers performed well.

- 19 VPK providers were included in the readiness rate calculations for Monroe County for each of the two years.
- The number of providers who scored above the cut-off of 200 rose from 84% to 89% from 2007 to 2008. In 2008, 74% of providers were considered high-performing with scores over 250.

Success Story!

“Henry learned so much in VPK. Not only does he know his ABCs, but the curriculum has prepared him to be in a classroom setting when he gets to kindergarten. VPK made all the difference! We were delighted to learn that he's been accepted into a magnet school after he graduates.”
We count on our core partners in our central agencies—Child Development Services in Miami-Dade and Wesley House Family Services in Monroe—to connect us with our diverse constituencies and help us reach the largest number of eligible children and families in the most effective way.

We count on our partners and fellow service providers who offer the many kinds of special expertise we need, whether in providing technical assistance, provider training, health screenings, and/or developmental assessments.

We count on our partners in education to share insights gained through research and experience, and to work with us to bring innovative programs to our community.

We count on our partners in foundations and corporations for the financial support we need to introduce new quality initiatives and touch more families and children who need our services.

We count on our parents and providers to give our children the security and love that are the bedrock in their lives.

We count on our partners in elected office and in the community to promote and advocate the importance of early learning and to secure educational opportunities for all children.

$15,027,028 was allocated to the Coalition’s quality initiatives and programs, thanks to the help of our partners.
Parents are our children's first teachers. They reinforce the lessons our children learn through our programs. Our community's early learning centers and family child care homes implement and execute our programs according to our mandates. Working in conjunction with these partners, we are able to provide all children with an equal opportunity for a quality education.

Miami-Dade County Department of Human Services, Child Development Services Bureau

CDS provides training, technical assistance, and mentoring to child care providers, as well as inclusion services. They serve as the Coalition's central agency in Miami-Dade County, managing Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), which is the gateway for family services and must be offered to all families assisted by the Coalition and/or its contractor.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

M-DCPS provides high quality education to its students, empowering them to lead productive and fulfilling lives as lifelong learners and responsible citizens. M-DCPS offers the VPK program in over 200 sites throughout Miami-Dade County and participates in Quality Counts.

The Children's Trust

The Children's Trust is a dedicated source of revenue established by voter referendum to improve the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade County via strategic investments in their future. The Trust has supported the Coalition in numerous ways, including the design and deployment of Miami-Dade County's first quality rating system, Quality Counts.

The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation

The Foundation is actively involved on many fronts. In addition to helping fund the Quality Counts program, it also supports the Coalition's work with the Tremaine grant, an initiative focused on using prekindergarten education as a platform to ensure early learning success for children, including those who may be at-risk due to learning disabilities.

Wesley House Family Services

WHFS was founded in 1927 by the Methodist Church as a settlement program for Key West's Cuban community. This program included a kindergarten to teach English to Cuban children and ease their transition to public school. Now, in addition to adoption, case management, and inclusion services, WHFS serves as the Coalition's central agency in Monroe County.

Redlands Christian Migrant Association

RCMA is grounded in serving the needs of migrant families and rural poor families in Florida. The RCMA helps serve School Readiness children, and now participates in Quality Counts.

Head Start/Early Head Start

Head Start/Early Head Start provides comprehensive child development services for low-income children and families in Miami-Dade County. The program is open to children ages new born through age 5, and provides instruction and care for children in a classroom setting. They are also a participant in Quality Counts.

University of Miami

The University of Miami is a private four-year university and center of excellence in the promotion and integration of educational, psychological, and physical well-being in multicultural communities. UM participates and provides technical assistance in Quality Counts. Additionally, we have partnered with them on such joint projects as SPEC.

Speech & Hearing

As part of our mandated screenings, Speech & Hearing provides vision, speech, and hearing screenings for the children of Miami-Dade County.
Between July 2006 and June 2007, our Coalition served 44,495 children in School Readiness throughout Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties and more than 17,000 children in our VPK program. In 2007-08, we increased the number of children served in our VPK program to close to 18,386, and managed enrollment for School Readiness, serving 42,381 children.

The Coalition has one mission: To promote school readiness and prekindergarten programs, thus increasing all children’s chances of achieving future educational success and becoming productive members of society. Moving forward, the Coalition plans to maintain quality programs for our community’s children, and provide ongoing leadership for educators, providers, and schools that focus on early childhood education and care.

Every Dollar Counts

The Coalition is committed to allocating our dollars where they count most: directly into the programs that benefit the children of our community. That is why we have worked hard to keep our administrative costs low — at just 1.69% of our expenditures in 2007-08; this percentage is well under the mandated 5% cap. That is why any dollars saved on administrative or non-direct services are poured back into our programs.

1.69% was spent on our Coalition’s administrative costs in 2007-08, well under the mandated 5% cap.
A Breakdown of Total Actual Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007-2008 Expenditures</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality</strong></td>
<td>4.94%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Care Improvement Rating System, Mentoring, Materials and Curricula Enhancement for Providers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Program Support</strong></td>
<td>7.76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Eligibility Determination, Resource and Referral, and Payment Center Support</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Services</strong></td>
<td>85.61%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children's Placement into School Readiness and VPK Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General &amp; Admin.</strong></td>
<td>1.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day-to-Day Support, Operational Expenses, and Salaries</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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$174,114,022
was budgeted for programs and services in 2007 and 2008.
The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring high-quality early care and education are provided to children in Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. Through a variety of affordable and innovative school readiness and voluntary prekindergarten programs, the Coalition serves more than 50,000 children ages birth to 12-years-old and their families. Founded in 2000, the Coalition is among 31 similar organizations in the state of Florida established following the enactment of the School Readiness Act, which consolidated Florida's early learning services into one integrated program.