



Policy Council Meeting
February 19, 2025 (English and Spanish)
5:30 p.m.
Minutes

I. Call to Order

Mr. Randy Grice presided over the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m.

Mr. Grice congratulated the Early Head Start program for its 10th anniversary at the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade and its many years of service to the community.

II. Roll Call

The following participated in the meeting:

Members	Representing Centers
Anielka Coke	Miami Gardens
Ashley De Frank Nunez	My Little Angels
Jennifer Lynn Ortega	Jennifer Lynn Ortega
Joanna Mancisidor (Substitute)	Kids Small World Learning Center
Julie Ramirez (Substitute)	Tiny Tykes
Kerenza Scheepers	Lincoln Marti - 905
Kimberly Wardlow	GBilly Jr.
Polo Coronado	Community Representative
Randy Grice	Community Representative
Ra'Shawanna Avant	B&G Preschool
Sherelle Stephens	Lord's Learning Center
Virgina Ponce	Naranja Prep Academy Annex
EHS Staff	Position
Alexander Sanchez	Controller
Angelo Parrino	Chief Operating Officer
Belkis Torres	Vice President for EHS
Bob De La Fonte	Legal Counsel
Cecilia Nariznis	Mental Health Manager
Elicenia Del Rio	Interim Finance Manager
Jacqueline Dominguez	Human Resources Director
Jessica Dittmar	Administrative Coordinator
Maggie Casanova	Sr. Accountant
Otilia Gonzalez-Varese	Disabilities Manager
Sarahi Rivera	Director of Child Development and Education Support Services
Valeria Perez Sarabia	Nutrition Manager
Yissel Morales	Contract Manager

III. Action Item

A. November 20, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Grice asked for a motion to approve the November 20, 2024 meeting minutes.

- Motion made by Jennifer Lynn Ortega
- Motion seconded by Ashley DeFrank Nunez
- No discussion
- Motion passed in 12 favor and 0 opposed.

B. Resolutions

Resolution 02192025-01: Self-Assessment Report and Improvement Plan

Ms. Torres shared that the self-assessment is an annual process that is required by performance standards. The self-assessment is an opportunity for the program to look at data with Board members, policy council, partners, community representatives, parents, and staff. The purpose is to identify any challenges and/or potential initiatives that will enhance services. This year the self-assessment took place on November 22, 2024. Six goals were identified as a result of the self-assessment. The goals include:

- Improve the efficiency and accuracy of dual enrollment reporting for the Early Head Start program.
- Refine the process for responding to emergencies, including active shooters.
- Develop a uniform process for identifying teachers for intensive coaching using a valid and reliable research-based classroom observation tool.
- Increase the number of hemoglobin and lead screening results submitted.
- Train teachers on implementing Conscious Discipline in the classroom to mitigate children's challenging behaviors.
- Create uniform guidelines for supporting and fostering collaborative onsite therapy.

Details of the report and improvement plan could be found as part of the background of the resolution.

Mr. Grice asked for a motion to approve Resolution 02192025-01: Self-Assessment Report and Improvement Plan.

- Motion made by Kerenza Scheepers
- Motion seconded by Ashley DeFrank Nunez
- No discussion
- Motion passed in 12 favor and 0 opposed.

C. Resolution 02192025-02: 2025-2026 Recruitment and Selection Plan

Ms. Torres shared that the recruitment and selection plan is a framework intended to ensure that the program meets 100 percent of enrollment at all times. The plan includes recruitment and outreach strategies that the program will use to reach families that may be eligible for the program. The plan also outlines the point system that will be used to select families. For the 2025-2026 school year, the program did not make any changes to the plan that was approved in February 2024 and modified in September 2025 with the new Head Start requirements. Ms. Torres briefly shared the information in the plan.

Mr. Grice asked for a motion to approve Resolution 02192025-02: 2025-2026 Recruitment and Selection Plan.

- Motion made by Ashley DeFrank Nunez
- Motion seconded by Jennifer Lynn Ortega
- No discussion
- Motion passed in 12 favor and 0 opposed.

IV. Reports

A. Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee met on February 14. The following information was shared:

October 2024

The total year-to-date expenses in October 2024 were \$3,205,719.65. Of these, \$1,787,398.78 went to childcare partners for direct services. The program has a remaining balance of \$9,111,133.35.

October 2024 Credit Card Report

There was \$1,030.69 in credit card expenses for the month of October 2024. This charge was for travel and lodging expenses for one (1) staff to attend the AELC conference and two (2) staff to attend the Conscious Discipline Annual Conference.

November 2024

The total year-to-date expenses in November 2024 were \$4,009,300.40. Of these, \$2,174,385.44 went to childcare partners for direct services. The program has a remaining balance of \$8,307,552.60.

November 2024 Credit Card Report

There were no credit card expenses for the month of November 2024.

December 2024

The total year-to-date expenses in December 2024 were \$4,667,144.31. Of these, \$2,446,031.72 went to childcare partners for direct services. The program has a remaining balance of \$7,649,708.69.

December 2024 Credit Card Report

There was \$991.88 in credit card expenses for the month of December 2024. This charge was for travel and lodging credit for one (1) staff to attend the AELC Conference, one (1) staff to attend the National Head Start Association Winter Leadership Conference, and two (2) staff to attend the FSU Breastfeeding Training.

B. Nutrition Committee Reports

The Nutrition Committee met on February 14. The following information was shared:

Ms. Perez, Nutrition Manager, explained each month the program shares the amount of USDA meals claimed by each site. The report captures the number of meals given to each child, each day of the month. The percentage column indicates the percentage of meals served based on each day a child was present for the month. Sometimes children missed a meal because they arrived late or left early. Those who arrived late were not counted for USDA purposes but were still offered a meal.

In the meal reports, there are several numbers in red for centers that did not reach 100% for a specific meal. This means one or more children missed the specific meal for one or more days of the month. If none of the meals reached 100%, there is a red box around all 3 meals.

In **November 2024**, the program had 7 centers that did not reach 100% for any of the meals. This was due to children arriving late and/or leaving early due to health issues.

In **December 2024 and January 2025**, the program had 8 centers that didn't reach 100% for any of the meals. This was a result of children arriving late and/or leaving early due to health issues.

C. Enrollment and Attendance Committee Reports

The Enrollment and Attendance Committee met on February 12. The following information was shared for enrollment and attendance:

The Enrollment Report

The Early Head Start program ended the month of **November 2024** with 748 children enrolled and 20 slots vacant for less than 30 days.

The Early Head Start program ended the month of **December 2024** with 746 children enrolled and 4 slots vacant for less than 30 days.

The Early Head Start program ended the month of **January 2024** with 747 children enrolled and 3 slots vacant for less than 30 days.

The Attendance Report

Attendance in **November 2024** was 84%. Children were mainly absent due to sickness. The reason for the sickness was mainly a fever followed by a cold, cough, and flu.

Attendance in **December 2024** was 84%. Children were mainly absent due to sickness. The reason for the sickness was mainly a fever followed by a cold. Also, there was an increase in absences due to families taking vacations for the holidays.

In **January 2024**, the average daily attendance was 86%. The main reason for children being absent was sick/illness. The reason for the sickness was mainly a fever followed by a cold.

V. General Updates

Ms. Torres shared a presentation that looked at the impact of Early Head Start (EHS) in Miami-Dade County during the past 10 years.

- As of January 31, 2025, the program had served 10,015 children, 13 pregnant moms, 777 children with a diagnosed disability, and 8,833 families in the past 10 years.
- In 2015, the program started serving 10 zip codes. During the past 10 years, it has increased to 18 zip codes.
- The program started with 25 partners and 9 have continued their partnership with the EHS program.
- The program experienced many challenges, most notably navigating COVID-19 and its ramifications.
- The program highlighted its impact on quality, in particular continuity of care which is the foundation of good early care. Ongoing assessment was another contribution that increased the intentionality behind educational activities for infants and toddlers.
- During the past 10 years, the program's return of investment has been anywhere from \$454,336,588 to \$1,363,009,746.

On January 28, the United States Payment Management System was shut down by the White House. This is the platform that the program uses to access funds for payments. When the platform was shut down, no program could access money to cover the cost of its program. The Executive Order was rescinded the next day and for now it appears that the program will continue to be funded.

Ms. Torres provided an update on the Lead Policy change as requested by the Policy Council in November. The policy now includes a statement of how the center will conduct remediation so that it is sensitive to parents' work schedule.

VI. Reminders

Next Policy Council meeting will be on Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

VII. Public Comments

Ms. Stephens shared three (3) community events that may interest parents.

1. **Kid Fest** at Theodore Gibson Park (350 NW 13 Street, 33136) on March 1, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. A fun-filled day for the entire family.

Kids Fest & Ready, Set, Go Miami! Community Event

MIAMI-DADE CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING

THE CHILDREN'S TRUST

Uplift Literacy

Saturday, March 1, 2025
11am - 2pm

Theodore Gibson Park
950 NW 42th St., Miami, FL 33136

Join us for a fun-filled day for the entire family!

- Bounce House
- Face Painting
- Interactive Games
- Storytime
- Food
- Music
- Free Giveaways!

Additional Information: cdecollado@upliftliteracy.org | [@upliftliteracymiami](https://www.instagram.com/upliftliteracymiami) | Contact Us: 305-981-6234

- No Wrong Door Event** at North Shore Medical Center (1100 NW 85th Street, 33150) March 15, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Connecting residents to government resources and community-based organizations.
- Know Your Rights: Eviction Diversion Project** at Arcola Lakes (8401 NW 14th Ave. 14th Avenue, 33147) on March 15 from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. Information for renters on their rights and how to get support if facing eviction.

Miami Workers Center
720 NW 55th Street, Miami, FL 33127

Eviction Hotline (786) 833-7078 | evictiondefense@miamimworkerscenter.org

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

MARLEINE BASTIEN
Miami-Dade County Commissioner For District 2

Miami-Dade County Eviction Diversion Project
Tenants Know Your Rights and Legal Clinic

Saturday, March 15 • 12pm-2pm

Arcola Lakes Senior Center
8401 NW 14th Ave Miami, FL 33147

The Eviction Diversion Project is empowering renters with information about their rights and how to get support if facing an eviction. Join our FREE event to learn more about how to defend your rights as a tenant in Miami-Dade County and to connect with an attorney on-site about your concerns.

Contact us or scan the QR code:

COMMUNITY JUSTICE PROJECT | LEGAL SERVICES | Haitian Lawyers Association | CABA PROBONO REGAL SERVICES

The Miami-Dade County Eviction Diversion Project is a collaboration between Legal Services of Greater Miami (LSGM), Miami Workers Center, Community Justice Project, Haitian Lawyers Association, Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. Bar Association, The Cuban American Bar Association (CABA) Pro Bono and Miami-Dade County's Office of Housing Advocacy.

To request materials in accessible format, sign language interpreters, CART and/or any accommodation to participate in any Miami-Dade, Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces sponsored program or meeting, contact Gisel Prado, 305-755-7048 or Gisel.Prado@miamidade.gov, at least 7 days in advance to initiate your request. TTY users may also call 711 (Florida Relay Service).

VIII. Adjournment

Mr. Grice asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

- Motion made by Jennifer Lynn Ortega

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.