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Strategic Plan
CHILDREN FIRST: The Strategic Plan for the Early Learning Coalition of Miami Dade/Monroe 2015-2016

OUR MISSION
To promote high-quality inclusive 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 development of Miami-Dade and Monroe County children with a priority toward the ages before birth through age 5.

OUR VALUES
CHILDREN - Children are at the heart of all we do. We believe that all children, regardless of circumstance, are capable of educational excellence and personal growth, and we are committed to ensuring school readiness and lifelong success for each one.
COMMUNITY - We believe children are the future, and our community an essential part of their road to success. By working together, we can promote education and support children as they become contributing, productive members of society.
PARTNERSHIP - We value partnerships and are collaborative in all we do. We work closely with fellow service providers, families, corporations, elected officials, and individuals, and the community at large to promote the importance of early learning and to secure educational opportunities for all children.
ADVOCACY - We are a champion for children, promoting positive societal and community change. Our staff and community partners are committed to advancing early education throughout Miami-Dade and Monroe counties and are set apart by their passion, strength and dedication to children.
EXCELLENCE - When it comes to early learning quality, we are committed to excellence, providing quality programs and curricula that make a difference in our community. Designed to further the physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs of all children, our programs are innovative and offer each child an equal opportunity for a successful future.
CUSTOMER SERVICE - We strive to meet the needs of our parents, families, providers and partners by providing comprehensive customer service in a professional, timely and courteous manner.
EQUITY - In working with parents, families, providers, and partners, we are committed to the principle of equity and balance, so that all may benefit from the work we do, while keeping children first.

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

PRIORITY INITIATIVES

NEEDED CHILDREN
Improve outcomes for children in our neediest communities, and include children with developmental and other delays and disabilities

TARGET NEAREST AREAS
Identity centers in distressed zip codes and those serving children with, or at risk for developmental delays & provide extra support for them

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN
Receiving services who have physical, developmental, sensory, and social-emotional delays and disabilities

REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN
Receiving services who permit higher quality services to those enrolled

PARENT/FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY
Identify methods of encouraging self-sufficiency

YOUNGEST CHILDREN
Offer a continuum of care from before birth to age 5, focusing on the youngest

TARGET AGES
Set targets for after school care for children over 9 and 6-8 years of age

AGE-BASED RATES
Adjust reimbursement rates to offer incentives to serve the youngest children

PARENT ACCOUNTABILITY
Offer incentives for parents to become more accountable

EDUCATE ALL
Educate all families and children about the benefits of early learning

PARENTAL CHOICE
Educate parents to choose child care centers that are more likely to have better outcomes for their children

EDUCATE PROVIDERS
About responsibilities to include children with disabilities, and provide them with the training and resources to do so

QUALITY COUNTS
Assess all centers wanting to participate in the ELC program

PROVIDERS
Improve ELC relationship with providers and provider performance

CREDENTIAL PROGRAM STANDARDS
Establish standards for child care providers and enforce them

PROVIDER REIMBURSEMENT RATES
Determine optimum rates to attract higher quality providers

TRAINING EDUCATION
Increase the number of teachers with child care credentials

FEWER PROVIDERS
Drop low performing providers

TECHNICAL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE
Offer business assistance to providers in distressed areas

INTERNAL CAPACITY
Strengthen Board and Staff capacity to carry out strategic goals

ADVOCACY
Engage aggressively & systematically in advocacy to drive better outcomes for children and promote community awareness of the ELC

COUNCIL OF PARTNERS
Establish regular meetings with partners

FUNDING
Increase public and private funding and reallocate funds to strategic goals

PUBLIC
Secure adequate resources to ensure high quality delivery to each child we serve

MONROE COUNTY
Establish a Childcare Services Council with dedicated funding
Eligibility Criteria

Strategic Plan Priority Initiatives:

• Neediest Children
• Youngest Children
Child Care Development Block Grant Reauthorization and House Bill 7053

• Eligibility period extended from 6 to 12/15 months
• A child who is ineligible due to a parent’s job loss or cessation of education or job training shall continue to receive school readiness program services for at least 3 months to enable the parent to obtain employment.
• Income threshold set at 85% of state median income ($55,899 for a family of four), up from the 200% ($48,600 for a family of four) federal poverty threshold
• Parent copayments may be decreased, but not increased during the 12 month eligibility period
• Parents cannot be terminated based on failure to provide timely notice of changes in family’s circumstances
Challenge: How Can We Adhere to Strategic Plan Priority to Serve Youngest Children

• Strategic Plan Priority: Youngest Children

• Waiting list of children 0 – 5 is currently at 4,200

• Estimated annual cost to eliminate current (growing daily) waiting list is approximately $17,220,000

• According to the Department of Education, Florida Office of Early Learning, the waiting list is expected to double or triple as it has in other states due to the 12/15 month eligibility period.
Priority 1

• Serve children in accordance with statutory requirements:

  a) a child younger than 13 years of age from a family that includes a parent who is receiving temporary cash assistance
  b) at-risk child younger than 9
  c) a child from birth to the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten who is from a working family who is economically disadvantaged – based on budget availability
Priority 2: As Budget Permits

• Based on funding availability we will:

  a) expand access to siblings beginning with the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten
  b) exercise rollover option in the following priorities:
      1. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
      2. At-Risk
      3. Transitional Child Care
  c) temporarily adjust age limits from the statutory priority of 0 – 5 to ages greater than 5 depending on budget availability
Impact of First Priority

• Adhere to Strategic Plan and Statutory Priority of serving the youngest children
• Reduction of 0 – 5 waiting list. Goal is elimination of waiting list
• More children 0 – 5 served
  • Children 0 – 5: Children on waiting list may not have the opportunity to participate in an early education program until they are 4 years old and enter VPK (3 hours)
  • School Age: Children eligible for admission to kindergarten are able to participate in full-time school-based program, while children 0 – 5 on waiting list may not
• Reduction in the number of school age children served
• Children from economically disadvantaged families who are eligible for admission to kindergarten will lose care at the end of their eligibility period (6 y.o.)
• Helps to alleviate provider, board and community concerns about the growing number of children on the waiting list

Note: Children will remain in care until the end of their eligibility period. Families will receive at least 75-90 days notice.
Florida Statute 1002.87 - School Readiness Program; Eligibility and Enrollment

(1) Each early learning coalition shall give priority for participation in the school readiness program as follows:
(a) Priority shall be given first to a child younger than 13 years of age from a family that includes a parent who is receiving temporary cash assistance under chapter 414 and subject to the federal work requirements.
(b) Priority shall be given next to an at-risk child younger than 9 years of age.
(c) Priority shall be given next to a child from birth to the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2. who is from a working family that is economically disadvantaged, and may include such child’s eligible siblings, beginning with the school year in which the sibling is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2. until the beginning of the school year in which the sibling is eligible to begin 6th grade, provided that the first priority for funding an eligible sibling is local revenues available to the coalition for funding direct services.
Florida Statute 1002.87 - School Readiness Program; Eligibility and Enrollment

(d) Priority shall be given next to a child of a parent who transitions from the work program into employment as described in s. 445.032 from birth to the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2.

(e) Priority shall be given next to an at-risk child who is at least 9 years of age but younger than 13 years of age. An at-risk child whose sibling is enrolled in the school readiness program within an eligibility priority category listed in paragraphs (a)-(c) shall be given priority over other children who are eligible under this paragraph.

(f) Priority shall be given next to a child who is younger than 13 years of age from a working family that is economically disadvantaged. A child who is eligible under this paragraph whose sibling is enrolled in the school readiness program under paragraph (c) shall be given priority over other children who are eligible under this paragraph.

(g) Priority shall be given next to a child of a parent who transitions from the work program into employment as described in s. 445.032 who is younger than 13 years of age.

(h) Priority shall be given next to a child who has special needs, has been determined eligible as a student with a disability, has a current individual education plan with a Florida school district, and is not younger than 3 years of age. A special needs child eligible under this paragraph remains eligible until the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2.
Florida Statute 1002.87 - School Readiness Program; Eligibility and Enrollment

(i) Notwithstanding paragraphs (a)-(d), priority shall be given last to a child who otherwise meets one of the eligibility criteria in paragraphs (a)-(d) but who is also enrolled concurrently in the federal Head Start Program and the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.

(2) A school readiness program provider may be paid only for authorized hours of care provided for a child in the school readiness program. A child enrolled in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program may receive care from the school readiness program if the child is eligible according to the eligibility priorities in this section.

(3) Contingent upon the availability of funds, a coalition shall enroll eligible children, including those from its waiting list, according to the eligibility priorities in this section.

(4) The parent of a child enrolled in the school readiness program must notify the coalition or its designee within 10 days after any change in employment status, income, or family size or failure to maintain attendance at a job training or educational program in accordance with program requirements.

(5) A child whose eligibility priority category requires the child to be from a working family ceases to be eligible for the school readiness program if a parent with whom the child resides does not reestablish employment or resume attendance at a job training or educational program within 90 days after becoming unemployed or ceasing to attend a job training or educational program.
Florida Statute 1002.87 - School Readiness Program; Eligibility and Enrollment

(6) Eligibility for each child must be reevaluated annually. Upon reevaluation, a child may not continue to receive school readiness program services if he or she has ceased to be eligible under this section. A child who is ineligible due to a parent’s job loss or cessation of education or job training shall continue to receive school readiness program services for at least 3 months to enable the parent to obtain employment.

(7) If a coalition disenrolls children from the school readiness program, the coalition must disenroll the children in reverse order of the eligibility priorities listed in subsection (1) beginning with children from families with the highest family incomes. A notice of disenrollment must be sent to the parent and school readiness program provider at least 2 weeks before disenrollment to provide adequate time for the parent to arrange alternative care for the child. However, an at-risk child may not be disenrolled from the program without the written approval of the Child Welfare Program Office of the Department of Children and Families or the community-based lead agency.

(8) If a child is absent from the program for 5 consecutive days without parental notification to the program of such absence, the school readiness program provider shall report the absence to the early learning coalition for a determination of the need for continued care.

(9) Notwithstanding s. 39.604, a school readiness program provider, regardless of whether the provider is licensed, shall comply with the reporting requirements of the Rilya Wilson Act for each at-risk child under the age of school entry who is enrolled in the school readiness program.

History.—s. 17, ch. 2013-252; s. 18, ch. 2016-238.
The Neighborhood Place for Early Head Start

Belkis Torres, Vice President

Strategic Plan Priority Initiative:

- Neediest Children
- Youngest Children
- Educate All
- Providers
- Internal Capacity
- Funding
EHS Governing Board Reporting Requirements

- Program summary/information reports
- Enrollment reports
- Attendance reports
- Reports of meals and snacks provided through programs of the Department of Agriculture
- Financial statements
- Credit card expenditures
- Financial audit
- Annual self-assessment
- Communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment
- Federal communication and guidance
ELC Around Town

Strategic Plan Priority Initiative:

• Educate All
The Early Learning Coalition Participated in the World Refugee Day Program at Miami Dade College (6/10/2016)

• The Early Learning Coalition staff participated in the celebration of World Refugee Day. They shared information about programs and services.
ELC Lunch Café Series: Fatherhood in the New Millennium (6/16/2016)

• The Early Learning Coalition hosted its monthly lunch café series with honored guests
• Participants learned about the changing face of fatherhood
• Check out our video from June’s Café
Summer Treatment Program for Pre-Kindergartners (6/22/2016)

• Early Learning Coalition hosted the "Summer Treatment Program for Pre-Kindergartners" (STP) for children who have been identified with behavioral concerns in pre-k
• This program is an 8 week camp from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., research based, focusing on behavioral treatments, helps improve their behavior to get them ready for kindergarten and speech pathology therapy was also provided
Early Learning Coalition Participates in North Miami Little Library Unveiling (6/22/2016)

• Early Learning Coalition’s Belinda Jeanty-Gautier spoke on the importance of reading and early learning
• The Coalition also donated books to contribute to the Little Library Initiative
Day care providers graduate from training program
Students spent a year learning about the business of childcare
Cleveland Bryant Jr. Special to The Miami Times | 6/22/2016

Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz presided over the fourth graduating class of the Small Business Workshop for Broward and Miami-Dade Early Learning Child Care Providers held last Saturday at the Broward County Convention Center.

Now graduates of the program, 75 day care center owners spent the last 12 months attending workshops, classes, and lectures, and doing loads of homework, all the while learning how to establish, build and operate a successful day care business. Read more.

“Child care centers provide services that are a crucial cornerstone to our economy,” said Wasserman Schultz. “As our economy improves and more South Floridians are able to find jobs, it's important that they are able to access quality, affordable, child care.”
Mayor Oliver Gilbert of Miami Gardens Reads at Excel Kids Academy to Promote Talk, Read, Sing (6/29/2016)

• The Early Learning Coalition in conjunction with Mayor Oliver Gilbert enjoyed a lively reading with the kids of Excel Kids Academy
• The mayor captivated his young audience and really drove home the importance of talking, reading and singing
OUR VPK CLASSROOM HAS A BRAND NEW LOOK!  
Under the watchful eye of Director Ms. B, our teachers Ms. Blue, Ms. Gloria, Ms. Yuri and Mr. Angel were assisted by volunteers Mr. Raheem and Jeanie Askins (ELC Classroom Monitor) in completely painting, refurbishing and installing new woodwork in the 4 year old classroom. A lot of work for a weekend, but the results were well worth it. This dedication and effort are certainly not part of their job descriptions, but where there is a will there is a way. Thank you, thank you, thank you to our staff and the volunteers. We love you all.
Ocean Reef Community Foundation Partners With ELC to Give STEM Kits to Key’s Providers

- Preschool teachers have received their STEM kits with materials for science, technology, engineering and/or mathematics activities in their classrooms
- The kits valued at $60 or greater were provided through a grant from the Ocean Reef Community Foundation to 108 participants, who attended the May 2016 Monroe Early Childhood Conference
Monroe Child Health Screening Project- Fall Screenings in September

- Community partner Key’s AHEC will begin the fall round of screenings in September onsite at contracted centers and family child care homes Keys-wide
- This project targets 630 School Readiness children, ages one to five, providing a comprehensive, no cost health screening to include vision, hearing and oral exams
- Follow-up case management is provided with parents for consultation and referrals to specialty care or primary care providers, as needed
- The ELC is contributing $25,000 to support this project
Upper Keys Rotary Club Grant- Sponsoring *Learning Language and Loving It™* Course

- The Upper Keys Rotary Club has provided a $1,981 grant to support this multi-session course offering to contracted School Readiness providers in the Upper Keys.
- This course is designed to promote language development for all children with emphasis on prevention of language delays for children at-risk and second language learners.
- The grant funds teacher guidebooks and center resource materials to support implementation.
Provider Visits to Miami Dade College’s Exploration Station, Hanan’s Childcare and Academic Development Center, and Room 2 Bloom (7/7/2016)

• Board Chair Adrian Alfonso, President & CEO Evelio Torres and other Early Learning Coalition staff conducted early education provider visits, touring centers, meeting staff and engaging students.
Overtown Music & Arts Festival (7/23/2016)

• The Early Learning Coalition participated in the vibrant Overtown Music & Arts Festival
• Staff shared information about programs and services and distributed over 500 books to children
Google “Let’s Put Miami on the Map” (7/26/2016)

• Early Learning Coalition staff participated in the Google “Let’s Put Miami on the Map” Networker and Technology Session
• Staff learned new technology skills to better help families locate services and promote the Early Learning Coalition brand to local businesses and organizations
Advocacy

Strategic Plan Priority Initiative:

• Youngest Children
• Educate All
Booster Seat AG Opinion

This is in response to your letter of February 11, 2016, requesting an opinion as to whether child care facilities are encompassed by section 316.613, Florida Statutes, which requires the use of certain child-restraint devices, including booster seats, when transporting children aged 4 and 5. You state that the Department of Children and Families has issued warnings and citations to child care facilities that have not used booster seats for such children. An amendment was recently proposed in both the House and the Senate and then withdrawn from consideration that would have specifically excluded child care facilities from the scope of the law (see HB 7063, 2016 Legislative Session). You inform us, however, that there is confusion as to whether the current law applies to child care facilities. As discussed below, it appears that public and private child care centers are subject to section 316.613, unless and until the Legislature decides to amend the provisions therein.
Booster Seat Statutory References

Section 316.613(1)(a), Florida Statutes, provides:
(1)(a) Every operator of a motor vehicle as defined in this section, while transporting a child in a motor vehicle operated on the roadways, streets, or highways of this state, shall, if the child is 5 years of age or younger, provide for protection of the child by properly using a crash-tested, federally approved child restraint device.
1. For children aged through 3 years, such restraint device must be a separate carrier or a vehicle manufacturer's integrated child seat.
2. For children aged 4 through 5 years, a separate carrier, an integrated child seat, or a child booster seat may be used.

The final sentence of paragraph (6) of the statute provides:
It is the obligation and responsibility of the parent, guardian, or other person responsible for a child's welfare as defined in s. 39.01 to comply with the requirements of this section. (e.s.)

Section 39.01 (47), Florida Statutes, contains the definition referred to in paragraph (6):
"Other persons responsible for a child's welfare" includes ... an employee of any school, public or private child day care center, residential home, institution, facility, or agency[.](e.s.)

Section 316.613 contains express exemptions and exceptions, but none of these encompasses child care facilities. In the following provision, paragraph (1)(a)2 permits transport of children aged 4 and 5 using a safety belt alone without a child restraint device in three limited situations:
[The requirement to use a child restraint device under this subparagraph does not apply when a safety belt is used as required ins. 316.614(4)(a) and the child:
 a. Is being transported gratuitously by an operator who is not a member of the child's immediate family;
b. Is being transported in a medical emergency situation involving the child; or
c. Has a medical condition that necessitates an exception as evidenced by appropriate documentation from a health care professional.]
Booster Seat Statutory References

The term, "gratuitous," used in paragraph (1)(a)2.a. above, is defined as: "Done or performed without obligation to do so; given without consideration in circumstances that do not otherwise impose a duty." Black's Law Dictionary (101h ed. 2014). Accordingly, "transported gratuitously" does not apply to children being provided transportation by public or private child care facilities.

Paragraph (2) of the statute excludes certain vehicles from the term "motor vehicles":

(2) As used in this section, the term "motor vehicle" means a motor vehicle as defined ins. 316.003 that is operated on the roadways, streets, and highways of the state. The term does not include:
   (a) A school bus as defined ins. 316.003(68).
   (b) A bus used for the transportation of persons for compensation, other than a bus regularly used to transport children to or from school, as defined ins. 316.615(1)(b), or in conjunction with school activities.
   (c) A farm tractor or implement of husbandry.
   (d) A truck having a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 26,000 pounds.
   (e) A motorcycle, moped, or bicycle.

Paragraph (6) excludes motor vehicles when the driver and vehicle are hired for compensation to provide transport:

(6) The child restraint requirements imposed by this section do not apply to a chauffeur-driven taxi, limousine, sedan, van, bus, motor coach, or other passenger vehicle if the operator and the motor vehicle are hired and used for the transportation of persons for compensation.

None of these provisions constitutes a specific exemption or exception that encompasses child care facilities as a category.

It therefore appears that under the current version of section 316.613, Florida Statutes, public and private child care centers are subject to the statutory obligations included therein.