EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA
January 23rd, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Call

I. Welcome and Introductions
   Adrian Alfonso

II. Resolution
    Evelio C. Torres

III. Legislative Priorities
     Evelio C. Torres

IV. CEO Report
    Evelio C. Torres

V. Public Comment
   Adrian Alfonso

VI. Adjourn
    Adrian Alfonso

Mission: To promote school readiness and pre-kindergarten 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.
Action Requested: Authorize the President and CEO to respond to The Children’s Trust Request for Proposals (“RFP”) Procurement for Early Childhood Development (Quality Counts).

Fiscal Impact: The total contract resulting from the request is in the amount not to exceed $8,760,000.00.

Funding Source: The Children's Trust

Strategic Goal: ☑ Neediest Children ☑ Youngest Children ☑ Educate All ☑ Providers ☑ Internal Capacity ☑ Funding

Resolution: 01232015-01

Authorization for the President and CEO to respond to The Children’s Trust Request for Proposal Procurement for Early Childhood Development (Quality Counts). It is anticipated that the contract amount would be determined after selection.

WHEREAS, the Finance Committee has been apprised of the goals of the program through the attached narrative, hereby incorporated by reference, and the Finance Committee is in agreement with the goals described therein; and

WHEREAS, the President and CEO and staff recommend approving this action,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF THE EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF MIAMI-DADE/MONROE, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA that this Board authorizes the President and CEO to respond to The Children’s Trust Request for Proposal Procurement for Early Childhood Development (Quality Counts).
The foregoing resolution and attachment was offered by __________, who moved its approval. The motion was seconded by __________, and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows: __________.

The vote was recorded as in the attached roll call sheet.

The Chairperson thereupon declared the resolution duly passed and adopted this 2nd, day of February, 2015.

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF MIAMI-DADE/MONROE
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

BY_______________________________
BOARD SECRETARY
Background

Since 2007, the Coalition has received a QRIS grant from The Children’s Trust to administer Quality Counts, Miami Dade County’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) for early learning programs, in addition to providing significant matching funds to support the program. Quality Counts serves nearly 500 diverse early care and education programs, including center-based, family childcare homes, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Head Start/Early Head Start, and Redlands Christian Migrant Association. In an effort to increase the quality care and education services provided to children of Miami-Dade County, Quality Counts provides a rating of the current level of quality in an early learning program as well as many types of support for quality improvement activities.

In December 2014, The Children’s Trust posted a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Early Childhood Development, which includes three sections: a) Quality Counts Administration, b) Program and Professional Development Network and c) Short Term Intervention. The Coalition desires to respond to the Administration and Professional Development Network sections of the RFP with several key community partners (for annual contracts beginning in FY 2015-2016, not to exceed three years of renewed funding).
2014-2015 Legislative Agenda

Early education. Lifelong success.

PRIORITIES:
• Increase Program Funding
• Improve Professional Development Standards
• Incentives for Providers
• Improve Industry Standards
• Establish a High-Need Community Pay Differential/Tiered Reimbursement
• Support Help Me Grow Parent Skill-Building Initiative
• Raise Health and Safety Requirements to Improve Child Care Quality

SCHOOL READINESS & VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN
• Increase School Readiness funding to address the waiting list of children 0 – 5 and improve the quality of care.
• Increase training requirements for staff in School Readiness programs, ensuring, at a minimum, all have specialized training for the ages of children in their care.
• Establish statewide program performance and effectiveness standards and supports.
• Establish a High-Need Community Pay Differential/Tiered Reimbursement to achieve equity across School Readiness providers.
• Enhance resources for families to inform their decision-making regarding selecting good early learning settings and supports for their children.
• Improve industry standards that must be met by every contracted program offering School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK).
• Increase VPK Base Student Allocation to help programs meet State Board of Education performance standards.
• Revise the VPK assessment and readiness rate process to incorporate developmentally appropriate practices that address all domains of development and incorporates child progress.
• Improve Florida’s national best practices ranking by reducing VPK staff to child ratios back to 1:10 or better.
• Improve teacher capacity by increasing the number of required in-service training hours and specialized training in prekindergarten.
• Improve children’s access to health care to enhance educational and socio-emotional development.

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Questions regarding these legislative priorities should be directed to Evelio Torres, President and CEO, Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe etorres@elcmdm.org
State Legislative Priorities 2014-15

Provide adequate School Readiness funding to support working families and children at-risk

- Increase funding to serve eligible children and support working families by increasing recurring state funding and providing budget authority for the Office of Early Learning to utilize all federal dollars allocated to Florida.

Address Health and Safety Concerns

- Align Florida Statutes with anticipated federal CCDF reauthorization and rule-making:
  - Require all programs receiving School Readiness funds to meet licensure standards; all programs must be monitored for adherence to these standards
  - Ensure all programs serving children meet all background screening requirements
  - Establish group size limitations that correspond with adult-to-child ratio licensure requirements and revise the adult-to-child ratio requirement for two-year-old children
- Strengthen language prohibiting programs that have been terminated from contracting with the School Readiness program due to licensing violations, Child Care Food Program violations, public assistance fraud, and/or other violations, from reopening under a new corporate name or through transfer of ownership to family or friends

Improve School Readiness performance standards

- Enhance resources for families to inform their decision-making regarding selecting good early learning settings and supports for their children; resources should be available in formats (e.g., via telephone, web, or in-person) that meet their needs through Child Care Resource and Referral
- Align Florida Statutes with anticipated federal CCDF reauthorization and rule-making:
  - Adjust the 22% cap on all quality, nondirect, and administrative expenditures in Florida to ensure that the increasing federal expenditure requirements for activities related to the quality of early learning services can be met (anticipated gradual movement from 4% federal requirement to 9%)
  - Ensure that a minimum of 3% of performance/quality expenditures are directed toward infants and toddlers as the federal expenditure requirements are increased
  - Increase training requirements for staff in School Readiness programs, ensuring, at a minimum, all have specialized training regarding the ages of children in their care
  - Move to annual eligibility redetermination
  - Ensure Child Care Resource & Referral provides information to families on health and safety as well as quality enhancement efforts made by School Readiness programs (e.g., accreditation, CLASS, child assessment, local quality improvement systems)
  - Support establishment of statewide program performance and effectiveness standards and supports by establishing a Statewide Program Effectiveness System Task Force to address national QRIS standards, examine findings from the Performance Funding Pilot and local QRIS efforts, and develop a recommendation regarding a statewide continuous performance and quality improvement and support system
- Clearly establish DCF Office of Child Care Regulation and Background Screening as the responsible entity for licensure and the DOE Office of Early Learning as the responsible entity for child care performance standards and accountability by transferring responsibility for the Gold Seal program and professional development requirements to the Office of Early Learning
- Establish child assessment requirements to inform classroom practices and document child progress

Improve Florida’s Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)

- Increase per student funding levels to ensure programs can meet performance standard requirements
- Revise the VPK assessment and readiness rate process to incorporate a valid, reliable, and authentic assessment of child progress, addressing all domains of development and delivered during the VPK program year
- Improve Florida’s rankings regarding the quality of VPK by reducing staff to child ratios back to 1:10 or better and requiring: 15 hours annually of in-service training; lead teachers to have specialized training in prekindergarten; secondary instructors to have a CDA credential; and vision, hearing, health, and developmental screenings.

Florida’s economic growth strategy starts at birth by investments in early childhood; Lack of investment in the productivity of the next generation is a deficit strategy, not a growth strategy
Adequacy of Funding: There are direct and immediate benefits related to early learning investment. Parents are able to work and maintain employment, are less reliant on government resources and overall are more economically self-sufficient. If ample resources are not available, this becomes a critical challenge for our state in terms of higher unemployment and increased reliance on other government programs. The earliest interventions in a child’s life promote educational success, reduce crime, and foster workforce productivity as compared to more expensive interventions later shown to be less effective. Recognizing there are limited public resources, investments must be made where there is greatest global impact. Given the demonstrated need for services and the specific short- and long-term benefits to taxpayers and Florida’s economy by investing public resources in early learning, there is clear need for an increase to the School Readiness Program budget. Consideration should be given to a multi-year increase that coincides with the increased general revenue estimates. Increasing the funding for School Readiness will address some of the deficiencies in current School Readiness payment rates; implement the early learning educational standards associated with positive learning outcomes; and provide critical early learning services to additional children and families.

Increasing funding for School Readiness will support the implementation of educational standards associated with positive learning outcomes and provide critical early learning services to additional children and families.

- A $30 million increase in recurring funds will allow an additional 7,500 children to receive School Readiness funding, enabling immediate access for children at-risk of abuse of neglect as determined by the Department of Children and Families.
- A $10.5 million increase for Education Based Performance Funding would support additional providers that meet Gold Seal standards, implement a curriculum-based assessment tool that is aligned to state performance standards and informs instruction, and fund other initiatives that incentivize or assess quality early education.
- A $63 per student increase in Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) funding will help to continue to recover funding cut in years past during the recession and allow for program improvements in the program.
- A $4 million dollar appropriation to expand the Help Me Grow Network to reach additional Florida communities with enhanced referrals and resources.
School Readiness Program

Fifteen years ago the legislature unanimously passed and Governor Bush signed into legislation the School Readiness Act. The dual-missioned program is designed to support low-income working families and to provide children with the foundational early education experiences needed for school success. Today, the program allows:

- Nearly 250,000 children to make developmental gains that support their success in school and productivity in life.
- Parents to maintain employment, while children participate in early learning and school-age care programs.
- A typical family to participate using about 8% of income to pay for child care – without this assistance, the cost of child care increases to 50% of income.
- Families to become more financially self-sufficient, thereby reducing public assistance payments, state unemployment and underemployment – in sum, the program increases state tax collections and economic productivity.

Early learning is a privatized model and an integral part of the education system. In Florida, nearly 10,000 small and large private businesses provide School Readiness services annually. Though budget priority is on maintaining services to children, there is also a clear need to establish service standards aligned with adequate payments to ensure children are ready for kindergarten and are reading on grade level by 3rd grade.

- Since 2001-02, the combined federal/state funding for School Readiness services has decreased by approximately $95 million; combined with Consumer Price Index increase in business costs of approximately 25% in the same time period, the result has been a major funding decline for services impacting Florida’s children most in need.
- Florida is the 6th lowest in the nation for infant care and the 7th lowest for toddler and preschool care. We pay significantly less per child than California, Texas and New York.

Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program

Florida was one of the first states in the country to offer free prekindergarten for all 4-year-olds regardless of family income. The Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program supports the preparation of early learners for success in kindergarten and beyond.

- In Florida, more than 5,000 small and large private businesses provide Voluntary Prekindergarten Education programs annually.
• More than 180,000 children—about 80 percent of Florida’s 4-year-olds—were enrolled in VPK in 2013-14. The program is free for children who are Florida residents and will be 4 years old by September 1 of the year they would enroll.

• For the fifth consecutive year Florida students who completed the VPK Education Program were better prepared for kindergarten than those who only attended part of the program or did not participate in VPK at all.

• Florida ranks first in access for prekindergarten in the nation, but is the 5th lowest in per pupil spending.

_Help Me Grow_

Help Me Grow is a system that builds collaboration across sectors, including child health care, early care and education, and family support. Through comprehensive physician and community outreach and centralized information and referral centers, families are linked with needed programs and services.

Help Me Grow (HMG) Florida is in the implementation stage, moving quickly towards statewide expansion. Successes and continued planning center on the following:

• **Collaboration with the 2-1-1 statewide network** and representatives from agencies in each county to establish the infrastructure for centralized telephone access and care coordination for follow-up, provide information and referral services, and administer developmental screenings;

• **Assess gaps and barriers in services and programs** for early childhood to improve data collection, facilitate access to services, and better document the needs of these respective communities;

• **Establish a plan for community outreach**, network within early childhood programs, child healthcare practices and children’s advocacy programs, and collaborate with service agencies to build communication and rapport;

• **Develop plans for child care provider and pediatrician outreach** to promote sharing information and surveillance resources with parents, encourage universal early developmental screenings, and provide support as a referral to those requiring additional assistance.
2015 Florida Partnership for Children Priority Legislative Issues

- **School Readiness and VPK Funding** – Increase VPK per student funding and increase school readiness funding **by at least $30 million** to ensure children’s access to educational enrichment programs that support working families.

- **Health and Safety Bill**
  - Amend early learning statute for School Readiness and VPK to include explicit standards for the health, safety and well-being of children.
  - Improve the consistency of child care licensing and background checks for the child care workforce.
  - Pass a health and safety bill that addresses licensing and Class I violations since (HB 7069 did not pass in the final hour of last year’s session).

- **CCDBG** - Address statutory changes that should/must be made to address changes resulting from the recent CCDBG reauthorization.

- **Early Learning Performance Pilot** - Strengthen early learning performance pilot standards

2015 Florida Partnership for Children Support Issues

- **T.E.A.C.H** - Increase in funding for T.E.A.C.H. scholarships for child care providers (funding has been level for 13 years). Amend early learning statute for School Readiness and VPK to include explicit standards for the health, safety and well-being of children.

- **Help Me Grow** - Raise awareness of and support a $4 million appropriation to Help Me Grow.

- Increase VPK/school readiness payments to child care providers (at least to 2007-2008 funding of $238 per child in school year and $595 per child in the summer program).

- Increase professional development efforts to child care providers to ensure positive outcomes for young children.

- Improve VPK assessments and child outcomes by amending school readiness statute to establish benchmarks and education-based performance standards.

- Increase Early Steps funding by $4 million.

- Support reinstatement of the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care.

- Allow for yearly recertification of school readiness families instead of every six months.

- Implement consistent quality standards and provider accreditation.

- Increase home visits to vulnerable and at-risk populations.

- Improve system developments and streamline forms that VPK and school readiness programs submit to ELCs use such as calendars and attendance logs.

- Increase funding for afterschool programs to promote the well-being and safety of children.

- Adopt statewide quality standards for afterschool programs.

- Identify the child care workforce as a unified, professional field of practice (profession instead of an occupation).

- Educate child care providers on the importance of play-based and developmentally appropriate curriculum in early learning classrooms.

- **Expand model “baby” court programs to reduce reoccurrence of maltreatment for infants and toddlers in child welfare.**