



Monroe Advisory Committee Meeting
October 12, 2021; 1:00 p.m.
Zoom Meeting ID: 921 1793 0396
Passcode: ELC1012

Committee Attendees: Sandi Bisceglia; Aleida Jacobo; Gilda Ferradaz; Sue Ellen Bennett; Lisa Taylor; Bob Eadie; Marla Russell; Gilda Ferradaz

Committee Absentees: Heather Carruthers; Stephanie Scuderi

Staff Attendees: Evelio Torres; Angelo Parrino; Sandra Gonzalez; Pam Hollingsworth; Mercy Castiglione; Laurie Dunn; Wilhelmina Lopez-Martin; Anabel Espinosa; Desiree Aguilera; Dialina Quintanal; Paloma Lopez-Barcena; Michele Morgan; Ana Sejeck

General Attendees: Jeffrey Hurst; Alix Harper; Natalia Capp, Laura Toman; Amanda Pinkley; Jerlyn Matthews; NildaBernaldez; Maida Court; Christine Patterson

I. Welcome and Introductions **Sandi Bisceglia, Vice Chair**

- A. S. Bisceglia called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.
- B. Quorum was established with eight (8) voting members.
- C. Special guests Dr. Natalia Capp, Director of Medical and Community Engagement, *Reach Out and Read Florida* and Alix Harper, *Reach Out and Read Florida*, Program Director were acknowledged.

II. Approval of Agenda **Sandi Bisceglia, Vice Chair**

S. Bisceglia shared meeting agenda and requested to add “Old Business” and “New Business”.

Approval of agenda items

- Motion to approve by M. Russell
- Motion seconded by G. Ferradaz
- Motion unanimously passed

III. Approval of Minutes **Sandi Bisceglia, Vice Chair**

Approval of minutes for August 10, 2021

- Motion to approve by G. Ferradaz
- Motion seconded by L. Taylor
- Motion unanimously passed

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.





IV. Old Business

Sandi Bisceglia, Vice Chair

L. Dunn shared that three (3) refresher trainings have taken place, one in July and two in August, to address the decline in at-risk referrals. It was stated that the goal is not to increase the number of referrals but to ensure that community partners are educated and informed of available services to share with families. The trainings will continue to be offered as needed.

P. Hollingsworth shared the following update on the Apprenticeship and Internship programs:

- The 16-week internship program will launch the first week in November.
- Pilot group will include ten (10) interns from one site at a center in Miami-Dade County.
- The internship program will continue past pilot phase and the goal is to extend to Monroe County.
- The apprenticeship program application is being finalized with the addition of community partners. The goal is to allocate six (6) of the twenty-five (25) slots for Monroe County constituents.
- The programs are fully funded by Career Source South Florida.

V. ELC Monroe Update

Laurie Dunn, Monroe County Supervisor

L. Dunn shared the following updates for Monroe County:

- School Readiness Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®) assessment scores were shared. The Coalition has assessed 9 classrooms and rated 3 early learning programs in Monroe County as of 10/5/2021. Approximately 8 programs are pending assessments. No programs have scored below a contract threshold of 3.50. P. Lopez-Barcena shared that COVID continues to delay assessments and programs are monitored monthly to see if they come out of exemption due to violations or not meeting threshold. She stated the assessments are still on track.
- At-risk referrals have increased to 30 children.
- 302 children receiving SR funding when report was pulled.
- 445 children enrolled in VPK.
- Slot Utilization snapshot from August showed 313 in SR with total payments of \$134,001. The decrease from August of last year is attributed to first responders who no longer qualify for the program.
- There are no applications in the queue. Waitlist applications continue to be pulled daily.
- The Professional Development Institute (PDI) begins Child Development Associate (CDA®) Courses on November 6th in both English and Spanish. Classes and materials are offered at no-cost to participants. Seven (7) applicants are from Monroe County.
- Participants of the CDA® training course for Family Child Care Homes and Infant Toddler offered by PDI who have obtained their CDA® Credential from the Council of Professional Recognition, included three (3) Monroe County teachers. The graduates were recognized at the October board meeting.

VI. FL Keys Chamber and Other Updates

Sandi Bisceglia, Vice Chair

- S. Bisceglia shared that a Social Media coordinator was hired by the Coalition to



spread the word about the early education opportunities available to families.

- L. Dunn and S. Bisceglia visited two (2) childcare centers in the middle keys to get interviews, photos and video to publicize on social media. Additional visits to centers will take place soon to encourage and support partners.
- Presentations to a few Chambers in the Keys are pending.

VII. Partner Updates

A. Child Care Provider Update

**Sue Ellen Bennett,
Monroe Advisory
Committee Provider
Representative**

- S. Bennett shared that providers are experiencing some relief from COVID disruptions. Enrollment has improved but the challenge of retaining staff continues. She shared the possibility of collaborating with the College of the Florida Keys to engage constituents in the apprenticeship and internship program, once available. The NOLO survey update was requested.
- S. Bisceglia shared that S. Bennett was recognized at the October board meeting for her hard work and dedication. She was commended by all in attendance.

B. District Head Start/VPK Update

**Marla Russell,
Early Childhood Supervisor**

M. Russell shared the following updates:

- Challenges with the district finding qualified staff continue.
- Pre-K numbers are up but Head Start is slightly down. 165 out of 180 required Head Start slots have been filled. There is a waitlist in Marathon.
- The professional development focus is on CLASS® standards, literacy efforts and bridge from Pre-K to Kindergarten.
- The Office of Head Start will conduct a Focus Area 2 monitoring on the district in January.

C. DCF Updates

Jeff Hurst, DCF

J. Hurst shared the following updates in a presentation on child care licensing:

[Department of Children and Families Child Care - presentation - September 15th 2021.pdf \(elcmdm.org\)](#)

- Information on the Department of Children and Families (DCF) new Cares 2.0 system was given.
- The presentation included information on background screening, renewal process, inspections, training and credentials and corporation changes.
- DCF contact information was shared.
- The change of ownership process specific to Coalition partners will be shared at a later time.
- Some centers are finding creative ways to deal with staff retention challenge.



- KnoxBox was mentioned and an update on DCF protocol regarding it will be given next meeting.
- G. Ferradaz shared about the new DCF initiative HOPE Florida to help support families and prevent crises.
<https://www.myflfamilies.com/APathwaytoProsperity/>

D. COVID Update

**Bob Eadie, Director
Monroe County Health
Department**

B. Eadie shared the following updates:

- There has been a decline in COVID cases that end in hospitalizations. Most hospitalizations are of unvaccinated individuals. The cases that involve vaccinated are due to underlying health conditions.
- About 15 to 20% of new cases are minors but no reports of pediatric hospitalizations.
- The COVID numbers are decreasing.
- There was a previous spike in cases due to the Delta variant.
- Studies continue to show the vaccine is the best method of protection.
- The two-dose Pfizer vaccine is already authorized in teens aged 12 to 15 and fully approved for ages 16 and up. Vaccine for children under 12 has not been approved yet but underway.

VIII. Proposed 2022 Meeting Schedule

Sandi Bisceglia, Vice Chair

S. Bisceglia shared the following proposed 2022 meeting schedule and requested approval:

- Tuesday, January 18, 2022; 1:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 15, 2022; 1:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, May 17, 2022; 1:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, August 16, 2022; 1:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 11, 2022; 1:00 p.m.

Approval of 2022 meeting schedule:

- Motion to approve by M. Russell
- Motion seconded by S. Bennett
- Motion unanimously passed

IX. New Business

Sandi Bisceglia, Vice Chair

A. Parrino shared that Dr. Capp from *Reach Out and Read* will present at the next meeting.

S. Bisceglia mentioned the opportunity of engaging The College of the Keys to help attract students and offer new programs in early childhood, specifically at their new campus. P. Hollingsworth shared that a meeting took place with the College President and additional efforts are required to move forward with offering educational opportunities for early childhood professionals.

X. Public Comments

Sandi Bisceglia, Vice Chair



XI. Adjourn

Sandi Bisceglia, Vice Chair