



**Legislative/Advocacy Committee  
Committee Meeting  
October 18, 2022; 1 P.M.  
Meeting ID: 862 4486 4629  
Passcode: 912881**

- |                                   |                  |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| I. Welcome & Introductions        | Alex Soto        |
| II. Approval of Minutes           | Alex Soto        |
| III. Proposed Advocacy Priorities | Victor Caballero |
| IV. Public Comment                | Alex Soto        |
| V. Adjourn                        | Alex Soto        |

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.



Legislative Committee Meeting  
January 22, 2021, 2:00 p.m.  
Zoom Meeting ID: 980 2860 5810  
Passcode: 548343

**Committee Attendees:** Alex Soto (Chair), Matthew Bruno

**Committee Absentees:**

**Staff Attendees:** Evelio Torres, Angelo Parrino, Lisa Sanabria, Jackye Russell, Pam Hollingsworth; Sandra Gonzalez

**I. Welcome and Introductions** **Alex Soto**

- A. Soto called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.
- A quorum was established with (2) voting members.

**II. Approval of Minutes** **Alex Soto**

- Motion to approve minutes by M. Bruno.
- Motion seconded by A. Soto.
- Motion unanimously passed.

**III. Overview of 2021 Session and Committee Assignments** **Evelio Torres**

- E. Torres reviewed the new committee assignments. E. Torres stated that there were many new members. The Legislative Committee must focus on establishing a relationship with these new members.

**IV. Florida Senate and Florida House COVID-19 Protocols** **Evelio Torres**

- E. Torres stated that due to the pandemic and the protocols put in place it will be difficult to meet face to face with new members

**V. Legislative Priorities** **Evelio Torres**

- E. Torres stated that the three goals on this year's legislative agenda will be:
  - Support the Early Learning Bill
  - VPK Base Student Allocation Increase
  - Provider Reimbursement Rates Equity



- Motion to approve new priorities by M. Bruno
- Motion seconded by A. Soto.
- Motion unanimously passed.

**VI. Meeting with Legislators**

**Evelio Torres**

- E. Torres stated that he was trying to schedule Zoom meetings in order to establish relationships with new members

**VII. Public Comments**

**Alex Soto**

**VIII. Adjourn**

**Alex Soto**



# Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe 2023 Advocacy Priorities

High-quality early care and education that focuses on children's social, emotional, cognitive and physical development provides the foundation that children need to enter school ready to learn. Access to high-quality, affordable early learning and school-age care allows parents to work while children learn. The academic success of Florida's students depends on a strong foundation in the early years.

**Childcare access and affordability is the #1 barrier for parents returning to the workforce.**

## Priorities

- **Amend the School Readiness program eligibility criteria for low income working families to align with Florida's growing economy by adopting income requirements based on the State Median Income instead of the Federal Poverty Level.** In response to inflation and the workforce shortage, employers have increased wages which has resulted in many low-income working families no longer qualifying for the School Readiness program. The current eligibility policies create affordability challenges and benefit cliffs that act as barriers to family economic self-sufficiency. The School Readiness program provides a subsidy to help low-income working families pay for the high cost of childcare. Florida will be well served by providing access to affordable childcare so low-income working families can continue to enter and remain in the workforce.  
**A solid investment for Floridians: families work while children learn.**
- **Restore non-recurring School Readiness funds reduced with the implementation of the funding formula.** Statewide, approximately \$40.7M of the base School Readiness funding was reallocated across early learning coalitions. Some coalitions had their funding increased, while others had it reduced. Unless the funding formula is reassessed, children of working families in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties will be disenrolled from the program and placed on a waiting list. Additionally, quality supports and professional development opportunities for early learning teaching personnel will be significantly impacted.



## SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM

Provides financial assistance to low-income working families. Families remain self-sufficient while their children learn and become successful in school and in life.

## VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN (VPK)

Florida was one of the first states in the country to offer free prekindergarten for all 4-year-olds regardless of family income. VPK prepares early learners for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Questions regarding these advocacy priorities should be directed to

**Evelio Torres, President and CEO**

Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe

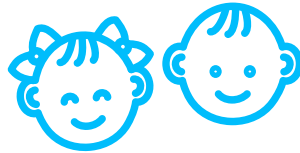
[etorres@elcmdm.org](mailto:etorres@elcmdm.org)

**Early Education. Lifelong Success.**  
[www.elcmdm.org](http://www.elcmdm.org)



# Supporting Today's Workforce

The early learning and school-age care industry is essential to Florida's growing economy. The School Readiness program provides partial scholarships to working families in need of child-care for young children, ages birth to 12 years old. Access to high-quality, affordable care and education helps to build a vibrant workforce for today and prepare the next generation of leaders. The academic success of Florida's students depends on a strong foundation in the early years.



**40,000**

Children Served

(School Readiness, Voluntary Prekindergarten  
and Early Head Start)



**21,040**

Parents in the Workforce



**6,699**

Parents Preparing to Enter the  
Workforce



**1,279**

Early Care and Education Small  
Businesses Supported

## A BENEFIT TO EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

Serving a wide-ranging workforce:



RETAIL



TOURISM/  
HOSPITALITY



HEALTHCARE



SERVICE  
INDUSTRY



SELF-EMPLOYED/  
SMALL BUSINESS



RESTAURANT



**Affordable high-quality early education  
is essential for Florida's growing  
economy and workforce.**