

Our Mission

Our mission is to enhance the quality of children's lives by providing families, early childhood educators, care-givers and community partners in Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee Counties, with opportunities to positively impact the future.



Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida, Inc.

5256 Summerlin Commons Way, Suite 201
Ft. Myers, Florida 33907
Phone: (239) 267-4105 • Fax: (239) 267-4109
Toll Free: 1-866-863-1366
Office Hours: 8am-5pm Monday - Friday

The Early Learning Coalition seeks to enhance the quality of children's lives by:

- Assessing student learning by doing pre and post tests** with 2,466 children to determine advances in their skill and knowledge as a result of participation in the subsidized child care program known as School Readiness. While not all children remain in care throughout the full year, 1,163 children, birth to age three and 1,303 children ages three to five were assessed on at least one check point on Teaching Strategies Gold. Training was offered in multiple venues: 20 formal trainings - 3 in Spanish, 6 trainings on Observation - 1 in Spanish, 89 onsite mentoring sessions - 12 in Spanish and 12 hrs. of training assistance to Collier Public Schools. For the first time online training was available and 165 participants completed 1 – 4 of the Gold Basics online modules (56 completed all 4). In addition, there were over 1,580 documented phone calls with ELC staff - 79 in Spanish, which offered ongoing support to practitioners on such topics as basic computer skills, understanding the assessment system, implementation of the assessment, and analyzing the assessment results to inform instruction.
- Supporting children's literacy development through the Literacy Buddies Program** by pairing children in childcare with community volunteers. Buddies agree to receive three letters from a child requesting a book of interest to them. 1,348 children were matched with about 1,100 Buddies, some of which agreed to receive letters from more than one child. 46 child care facilities participated in Literacy Buddies, and very significant growth was demonstrated in the children's literacy skills over the eight month course of the program. Children also learned that writing is used for real purposes, to communicate their requests and to express appreciation.
- Providing information to community partners about the work of the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida.** The ELC website received 36,156 visits in 2010-2011, an increase of approximately 8,000 visits since last year. 14,222 unique visitors visited the ELC website.



The Early Learning Coalition seeks to enhance the quality of children's lives by:

- Contracting for subsidized child care services** with 352 School Readiness providers; 259 of which offer early learning / early care services for Infants and Toddlers.
- Contracting for Voluntary Prekindergarten Services**, the state-wide program for all Florida four years olds, in 270 sites.
- Reviewing whether contracted child care providers maintain safe and healthy environments** for children by verifying inspections of licensed facilities with the Department of Children and Families and by inspecting unlicensed facilities.
- Assisting unlicensed facilities** to correct identified health and safety hazards for children in their care. In 2010 – 2011, 53 such facilities were visited; 186 violations were cited, DOWN by 47% from the previous year. 180 of those violations were corrected, and the remaining 6 are in process. Eight unlicensed facilities became licensed with the support of the ELC's Health and Safety Inspector.



The Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida by the Numbers, 2010-2011

The Early Learning Coalition seeks to enhance the quality of children's lives by:

- **Determining the quality of programs offered by contracted child care providers** by evaluating them on a nationally known, reliable and valid assessment, the Environment Rating Scales. In the first year of implementation, FY09, only 33% of child care providers scored the minimally acceptable score of three. In the second year, FY10, 67% of providers scored a three or above. This past fiscal year, FY11, the Coalition assessed 449 child care settings, and 83% scored a three or above. These figures document the increases in the quality of child care programs realized with Early Learning Coalition support over the past three years.
- **Offering professional development to early learning / early care professionals** so that they may engage in continuous quality improvement initiatives to upgrade their programs. 4,073 individuals attended 201 trainings. Additionally, ELC staff engaged in over 2,500 telephone conversations regarding professional development topics. 74 scholarships were awarded to individuals pursuing careers in early childhood education, and 100 National Child Development Associate packets were funded for child care providers. This is the first step toward national certification as an early child care professional.
- **Enrolling children in contracted programs that have been inspected for health and safety issues and assessed for the quality of their programs.** (Except in limited instances – the Coalition does not inspect VPK only programs.) A total of 8,119 children were enrolled in the VPK program during 2010-2011. An additional 1,134 were enrolled in Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) VPK programs serving migrant children across the state, which the ELC also administers. Additionally, 6,353 children were enrolled in the subsidized child care program known as School Readiness.



- **Screening children for Hearing and Vision concerns.** 5,682 children went through ELC screenings during 2010 – 2011. Since Hearing and Vision screenings were initiated by the ELC, 39,389 children in Southwest Florida have been tested.
- **Screening children to determine if they are developing typically, and providing support for children who score below the typically developing range.** 3,816 children were screened in 2010 – 2011 on a nationally known, reliable and valid instrument, the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. 74% of children screened scored in the typically developing range. The 977 children who did not score in the typically developing range received Individualized Learning Plans that identified activities their parents and teachers should engage in to address any potential deficits in development. 86% of children who received Individualized Learning Plans showed improvement to "typical" after eight or sixteen weeks of planned interventions. 277 children were referred on to the ELC's Inclusion Coordinator for further analysis or for referral to an outside agency. Additionally, the Inclusion Coordinator had 383 telephone conferences with parents or teachers; conducted 37 on-site visits for observations; and had 40 conferences with other agencies to collaborate on care.



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Kathleen Reynolds, Ph.D,
CEO, Early Learning Coalition of SW FL