



EARLY LEARNING COALITION  
OF MANATEE COUNTY, INC.  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
JULY 1, 2006 - JUNE 30, 2007

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## EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF MANATEE COUNTY, INC.

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### **Our Mission...**

To Provide School Readiness Programs that help all children develop the skills needed to achieve future educational success and to support the role of parents as their child's first and most important teacher.

### **Our Vision...**

Our community will support high quality early care and education opportunities for all children and their families, understanding that it is in the first years of life that a child's future educational success is determined.

### **Coalition Staff** **2006 - 2007**

Linda Jimenez  
Executive Director

Janet McBride  
Administrative Assistant

Valerie Walton  
Program Manager

Liz Zaccagnino  
Outreach & Quality Initiatives  
Coordinator

Jenifer Caccia  
VPK Specialist

Dave Spahn  
Finance Manager

# OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS JULY 2006 - JUNE 2007

**Dr. J. Brian Murphy**

**Chair**

*The Eye Center  
Gov. Appointment*

**Gary Bogart**

**Private Sector**

*Jake's Automotive  
Gov. Appointment  
(July - April)*

**Dr. Chrissie Budd**

**Legislatively Required**

*Head Start*

**Peggy Connell**

Children with Disabilities Rep

**Sandra Edmondson**

**Legislatively Required**

*Manatee County Health Dept.*

**Janet Hamstra**

*Faith Based Childcare Rep*

**Carol Hunt**

Conditional Member

*Resource Connection for Kids*

**Annette Larkin**

Center Based Childcare Rep

**Peter Lear**

**Private Sector**

**Secretary/Treasurer**

*CPA Associates  
(July-October)*

**Dianne Kopczynski**

**Private Sector**

**Secretary/Treasurer**

*CPA Associates  
(October - June)*

**William Lee**

**Private Sector**

*Sysco*

*Gov. Appointment*

**Jahna Leinhauser**

**Private Sector**

*Manatee Chamber of Commerce*

*(October - June)*

**Karen Magee**

**Private Sector**

*Karen Magee and Associates*

**Janice Mee**

**Legislatively Required**

*Regional Workforce Board Appointee*

**Adam Mohammadbhoy**

**Private Sector**

**Vice Chair**

*Harlee & Bald, PA*

**Paulette Pace**

**Private Sector**

*Attorney*

**Jennifer Passmore**

Board of County Commissioners' Appointee

**Dr. Kathy Stuckey**

*Manatee Community College*

**Ron Russell**

School Board Superintendent Designee

**Mary Beth Wehnes**

**Legislatively Required**

*Dept. of Children and Families*

## History of the Coalition

The School Readiness Act of 1999 recognized that school readiness programs increase children's chances of success in school and in life. In keeping with the research that gave rise to the legislation, and recognizing the needs of the Manatee County community, the Manatee County Local School Readiness Coalition, a 501c(3) organization, was established in 2000. The initial purpose of the Coalition was to implement the provisions of the School Readiness Act: to establish integrated and quality service delivery of publicly funded early care and education programs in Manatee County.

In January 2005, with the enactment of HB1A, the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program, the scope and responsibilities of the Coalition were expanded. The Coalition made the transition from the procedures and philosophy of the Partnership for School Readiness to the Agency for Workforce Innovation and the Office of Early Learning.

The Coalition, now known as the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, has, in the years since its creation, continued to mature and evolve in many aspects: organization, fiscal management, visibility, and strength and involvement of board members.

The growth of the Coalition as the leader in early education and care in Manatee County is reflected in the decisive steps made by the Board: strategic planning to foster goals and objectives, diversification of contracting opportunities, innovative programs, internal management of services, and a continual emphasis on improving the education and care provided to our children.





## Letter from the Chair

This has been a productive year for the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County.

The Coalition began a new and exciting relationship with Manatee Community College by executing a contract that provided funding for scholarships, allowing learning professionals to obtain training and continue their education at the college. With this contract, the Board's commitment to promote quality education within the early learning field was fulfilled.

The Coalition also entered into contracts with two local agencies for parent education programs to promote parental involvement in their child's learning and development.

Services directly managed by Coalition administrative staff were successful, and new programming was implemented. The administrative staff was expanded, with the addition of a Finance Manager and an Outreach & Quality Initiatives Coordinator.

The Board continued to pursue a County ordinance requiring the licensing of all home child care providers. As the year ended, the County Commission was considering the ordinance.

The Board approved a change of delivery services for the upcoming fiscal year. Quality Assurance services were approved to be delivered directly by the Coalition as well as contracted with Manatee Community College. With this decision, the Coalition's administrative staff will again be expanding in the upcoming year. The Board issued an Invitation to Negotiate for other services, and executed contracts with one service provider for Child Care Resource and Referral, Child Health Services, Eligibility, Enrollment, and Provider Payments, as well as some VPK services.

As the year ended, the Board had one vacant Gubernatorial seat awaiting appointment.

The Early Learning Coalition continues to strive to provide quality early child care services and looks to continued collaboration within Manatee County.

Sincerely,

Dr. J. Brian Murphy



## Overview of Programs

Fiscal year 2006-2007 was a year of dynamic change for the Coalition!

As the three gubernatorial appointees as well as other private sector members became more expert, it was recognized that new ways of doing business would only serve to enhance the services provided in the community.

As a result of the strategic planning process during the prior year, it was determined that collaborating with various community partners was a Coalition priority, and the Board executed contracts with several community partners (Manatee Community College, Family Partnership Center, and Children First) for new quality initiative services. All of these programs were well received in the community and the Board intends to continue offering those services as funding permits. Additionally, new and expanded directly managed Quality Initiative programming was implemented.

As a result of the growth of programs, Coalition administrative staff was expanded to meet operational needs. A Finance Manager was hired to perform duties previously performed by an outside bookkeeper, as well as ensuring fiscal invoicing, payment processing, cost allocation planning, fiscal monitoring, etc. were properly managed and information on the fiscal status of the Coalition provided to the Board on a timely basis. Additionally, an Outreach and Quality Initiatives Coordinator joined the Coalition staff to serve as the liaison to community based task forces, ensure management of quality initiative programs, and assist in outreach efforts designed to recruit employers for the Child Care Executive Partnership Program.

The visibility of the Coalition in the community continued to increase, with staff speaking at several Rotary Clubs as well participation in such activities as the local annual Children's Summit, Children's Week, and the statewide Children's Summit.

Recognizing the critical need for healthful and safe environments for our children, the Board continued the effort to work with the County Commission and local municipalities in the development of a local licensing ordinance for all family day care homes.

Fiscal year 2006-2007 was the third year of the procurement cycle for Child Care Resource and Referral, Eligibility and Enrollment, Provider Payments, Quality Assurance Services, and Child Health Services. After considering potential administrative cost savings and the goal of diversifying contractual arrangements, the Board voted to make changes in the service delivery system, issuing an Invitation to Negotiate for 3 distinct components: Child Care Resource and Referral and Eligibility and Enrollment, Provider Payments, and Child Health and Development Services. The Quality Assurance component, including training and technical assistance to school readiness providers, was determined to be a direct contract with Manatee Community College beginning in July 2007. All quality initiative services formerly contracted as well as VPK contracting, training, and monitoring would be directly managed by Coalition staff beginning in July 2007.

The Board recognized the need for additional Coalition staff, and approved several new staff positions to be effective July 2007.

# Voluntary Prekindergarten Program

The Coalition contracted with RC4K in the amount of \$4,919,670 for VPK eligibility, enrollment, provider payment, and attendance monitoring.

During 2006-2007, 80 providers, including the Manatee County School Board, faith-based, family day care, and private centers, participated in the program. Regularly scheduled provider meetings were held to assist them in understanding the requirements of the program.

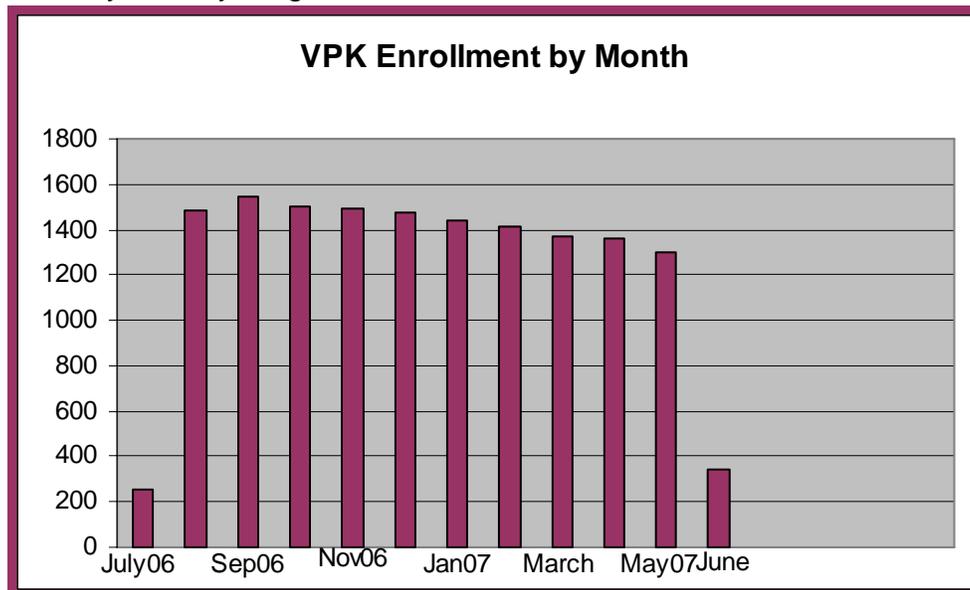
Enrollment fell short of the State projection, with 1758 children enrolled during the academic year and 450 enrolled during the summer session, for a total enrollment of 2208 for the fiscal year. The lower than expected enrollment presented a challenge, resulting in severely limited funds being available to support the administrative requirements of the program.

Performance Standards training was offered quarterly, with a total attendance by 36 providers and 4 Domain trainings were offered.

In addition, 41 providers were monitored for required compliance elements. Six providers were 100% compliant upon the initial monitoring, 11 providers required corrective actions and completed the actions within the required time frame, 2 programs were closed due to non-compliance, and 21 providers required corrective action that would continue into the new fiscal year.

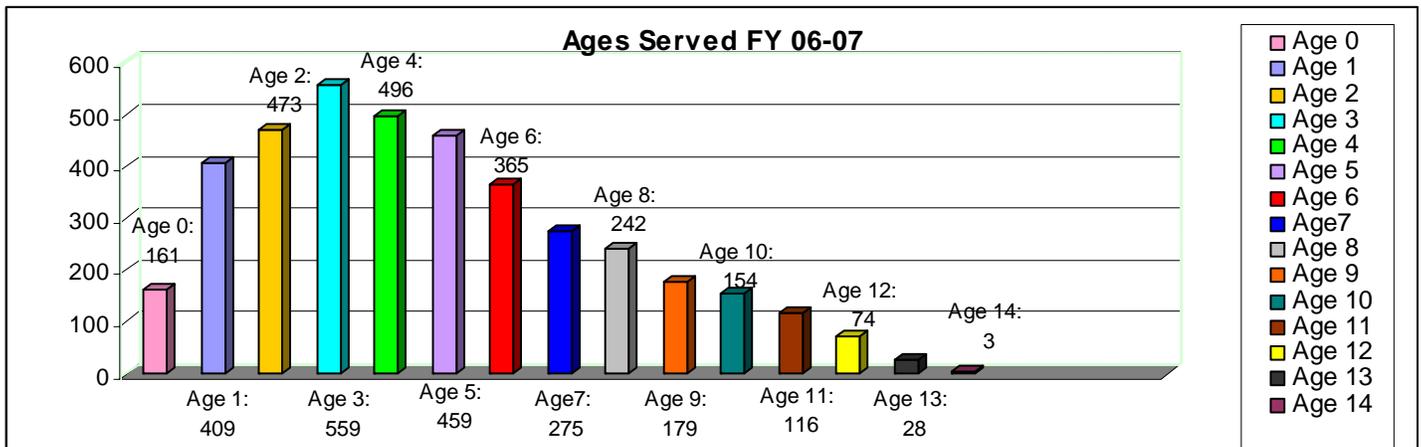
The relationship between the Coalition and the Department of Education strengthened during the year, with the involvement of the Regional VPK Facilitator, participation in conference calls, and attendance at meetings.

Through the use of Outreach and Public Awareness grant in the amount of \$11,849, efforts were made to market the VPK program in the community. 5695 post cards were sent to all households in the county with 4 year old children; posters developed in English and Spanish were maintained in 63 sites in the county, including libraries, health clinics, pediatricians offices, community agencies, and Chamber of Commerce sites. The program was also marketed via newspaper ads, ads in public busses, and local family friendly magazines.



## School Readiness / Childcare Services

The Coalition's service provider, Resource Connection for Kids, provided school readiness/childcare services to eligible children between the ages of birth through twelve years of age, and special needs children between the ages of thirteen through seventeen. The contract year ended with a total of 3,993 unduplicated children served. The percentage of total enrollment by age was: 3% infants, 9% toddlers, 13% 2 year olds, 37% preschoolers, 37% school age and 1% special needs children (13-17 years old).



## Childcare Resource & Referral & Single Point of Entry

The Coalition provides quality Child Care Resource & Referral Services through a contract with Resource Connection for Kids. These services include helping all interested parents and caregivers find child care that best suits their family's needs. RC4K maintains a comprehensive database of all child care providers and supplies families with unbiased, computer generated referrals.

RC4K also maintains the single point of entry for families seeking preschool services in Manatee County. Through the use of the single point of entry, all community resources were considered as families were assisted with their child care needs, increasing the availability of support and eliminating the duplication of efforts by community organizations.

Families received information about all early childhood services in the community including scholarships available through the Coalition, quality indicators, checklists for quality, access to child care program licensing files and other items that supported the family as they made their child care decisions. Families seeking financial assistance were placed on a central waiting list which was shared with other early childhood programs in the community.

During the contract period the following services were provided to families:

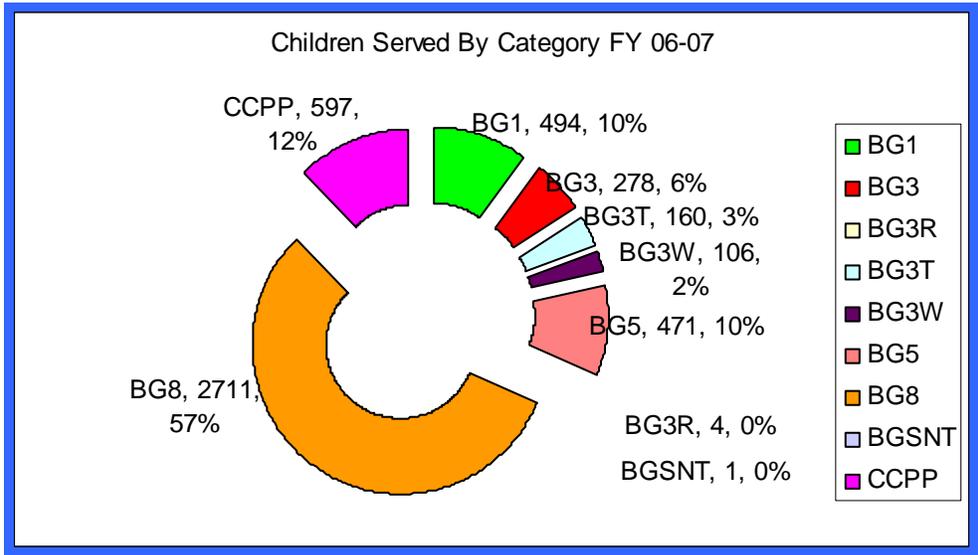
- 1,217 families requested and received child care CCRR services;
- 39 new providers were added to the database including 27 registered family child care homes, 2 licensed family child care homes, and 10 licensed child care centers,

# Eligibility and Enrollment Services

The Coalition’s service provider provided eligibility and enrollment services to families on a daily basis, during routine office hours with families accessing services as a walk in or by appointment. During the fiscal year, the staff determined eligibility, enrolled or re-certified families for a total of 4,886 children. Re-certification occurs at a minimum every six months or more frequently based on changes to family size, employment or school, marital status, or other factors affecting income. During the contract year 1,247 families reported an income change.



General Statistics	
Enrollment/Re-enrollment	4,230
Recertification	1,964
Families requesting transfer	1,146
Miscellaneous family updates	2,452
Families signed in for service	11,823
Families seen for service	11,399



**BG1** - At Risk Eligibility; **BG3W** - Welfare Transition Working; **BG5** – Transitional; **BG3R** - TANF At- Risk (Relative)  
**BG3T** - Welfare Transition Diversion; **BG3** - Welfare Transition (Non-working) ;**BG8**- Working Poor **BGSNT** –Special Needs Teen  
 CCPP - Child Care Purchasing Pool

# Inclusion Services

The Coalition provided Inclusion services through a contract with Resource Connection for Kids.

Warm Line Contacts	193	Technical Assistance	156
Training contacts	92	Assessments & consultation services	127

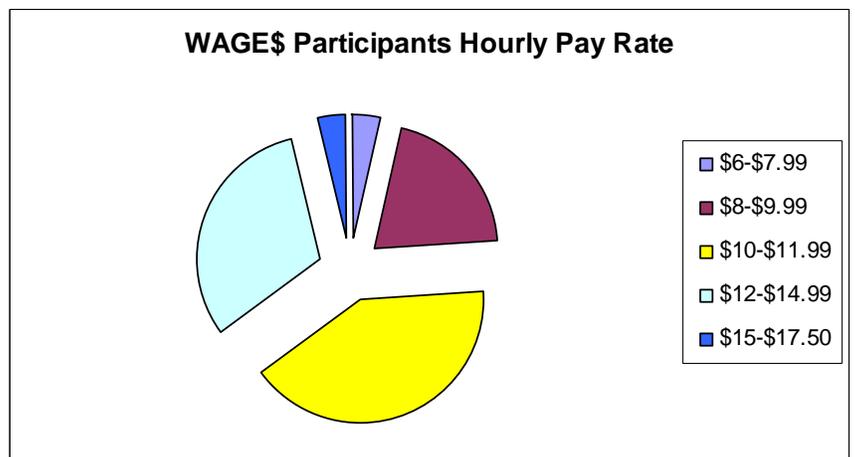
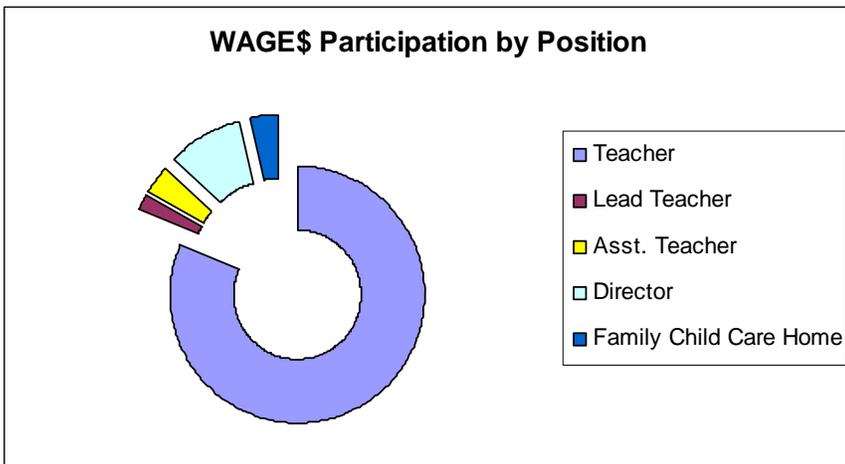
# Coalition Quality Initiatives Overview

## Quality Initiative Services

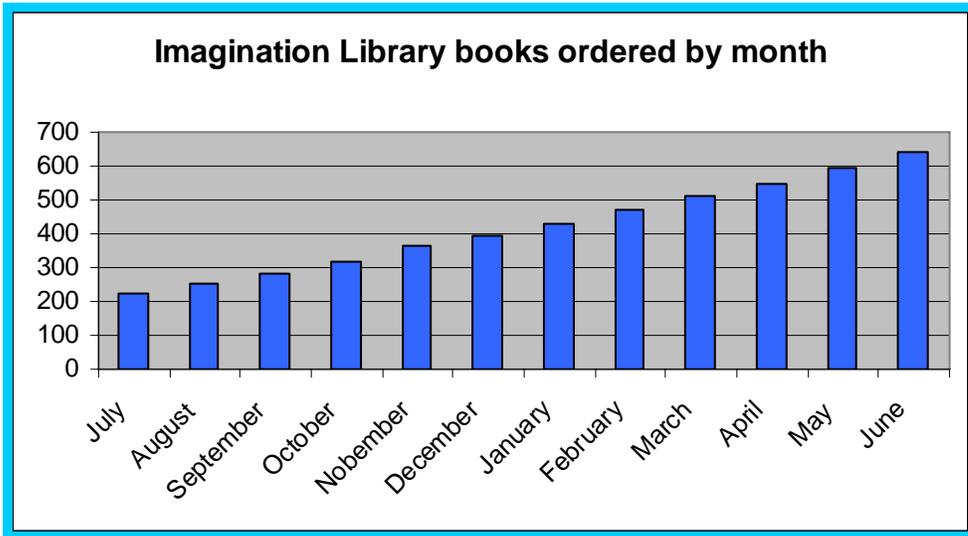
In an exciting new program, the Coalition contracted with Manatee Community College in the amount of \$68,000 for a scholarship program for school readiness teachers, allowing them to reap the benefit of a strong educational program at no cost. In further diversification of programming, the Coalition also entered into contracts with two local agencies, the Family Partnership Center (\$13,300) and Children First (\$12,000), for parenting education programs that support one of the prime missions of the Coalition, that of recognizing that parents are the first and foremost teachers of young children.

The Coalition continued to collaborate with many community agencies and sites to present and distribute the Imagination Library and Born Learning programs and materials. The effort not only expanded the emphasis on Quality in the community, but it also enhanced the Coalition's intent to further the existing collaborative relationships in the community, which remains a primary strategic priority of the Coalition.

The WAGE\$ Florida program was again funded, and the year ended with 54 participants enrolled and 3 on a waiting list.

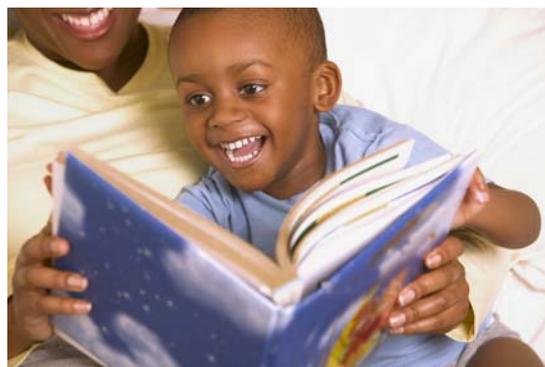


At the conclusion of the fiscal year, 644 children were enrolled in Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. The Coalition expended \$12,742.57 for the Imagination Library.



A new quality initiative program, Training Incentives Points (“T.I.P.”) was approved by the Board. The program is directed to center and home based child care providers who deliver services to Manatee County school readiness children ages 0-5. The purpose of the program is to motivate participation and commitment of child care providers to continue their education and training. Eligible child care providers have an opportunity to earn cumulative points as they receive ongoing education. The points are redeemed and used to “purchase” materials of the provider’s choice. The materials choices support the environment rating scale(s) and are used to enhance program quality.

Quality Initiative expenditures for the fiscal year totaled \$193,111.



## School Readiness Performance Data

Data from the Department of Education reveals that 3,195 Manatee County children were determined to have valid scores in the 2006 administration of the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener/ECHOS. Of those children, 38% were in the Consistently Demonstrating category, 45% were in the Emerging/Progressing category and 17% were in the Not Yet Demonstrating category. Those results compare to statewide results of 42%, 44% and 14% respectively. The 2006 administration of the DIBELS reveals that of the 3,102 children screened in letter naming fluency, 60% were in the above average/low risk category and 40% were in the moderate/high risk category. In the initial sounds screening of 3,016 children, 59% were above average/low risk and 41% were moderate/high risk. Manatee's children did not fare as well as the statewide averages, but did show increased readiness results from the 2005 administration of the DIBELS.

## Best Practices

### Scholarships for Early Learning Teachers

Through a new collaboration between the Early Learning Coalition and Manatee Community College, local school readiness child care centers and family child care homes were able to obtain scholarships to enroll in classes to obtain their CDAE and college credit hours. This contract, which started January 2, 2007, also provided the opportunity for school readiness teachers to enroll in the 45 hours of training at no cost. Twenty scholarships were given on the credited side of the college and 41 scholarships were given for the 45 hour training.

All of the 20 students enrolled for the CDAE started the program for Personal Enrichment. By the end of the semester, over 50% of the students had changed to a degree seeking status, 70% stated they were either signed up or intended to sign up for Early Childhood classes at MCC during the summer, paying their own tuition and 95% had joined the Florida Future Education Association Club MCC chapter (part of the National Teacher Association).

### **Feedback from participants:**

"Thank you so much for the opportunity to go to MCC and further my career. I am a single mom of two young children. This time has inspired me to continue on. I hope to return in the fall semester."

"I would like to thank you for providing me with a scholarship to achieve my CDA. This opportunity has been very uplifting for me. My family, friends and colleagues have been very supportive of me. I feel like a real 'college' student in all I have achieved in such a short period of time. I hopefully am going to get my A.A. if I have money available to me."

"Thank you so much for helping me find my way to MCC! This is my first college experience & I love it! I feel like a new person. I'm better at my job, in my life and you have started me on my way down to 'degree-land'. Hopefully I can afford to continue my education, but the opportunity has been wonderful and with all the great things I've learned I hope I will be a better teacher."

"I would like to thank you for helping me shine and spread my light on others in my life. My life has changed and I feel so good about myself. The children at my center have become more creative and independent. I hope that more caregivers will have the same opportunity as I did. I will continue my education in early childhood education."



## Coalition Analysis

The Coalition was represented in a wide range of community organizations and collaborative activities, including the Parenting Education Coalition, the Whole Child Project Manatee, Infant and Young Child Mental Health Task Force, the Children's Summit, Early Success Program, Healthy Start Coalition and Children's Day.

Additional coordination with other community services included Healthy Families, Family Partnership Center, Safe Children Coalition, Manatee Glens, Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Manatee Children's Services, Manatee Memorial Hospital, Early Steps, Teenage Parent Program, Manatee Sheriffs Office, Manatee County Rural Health, Woman's Resource Center, Manatee County Libraries and local Pediatrician offices.

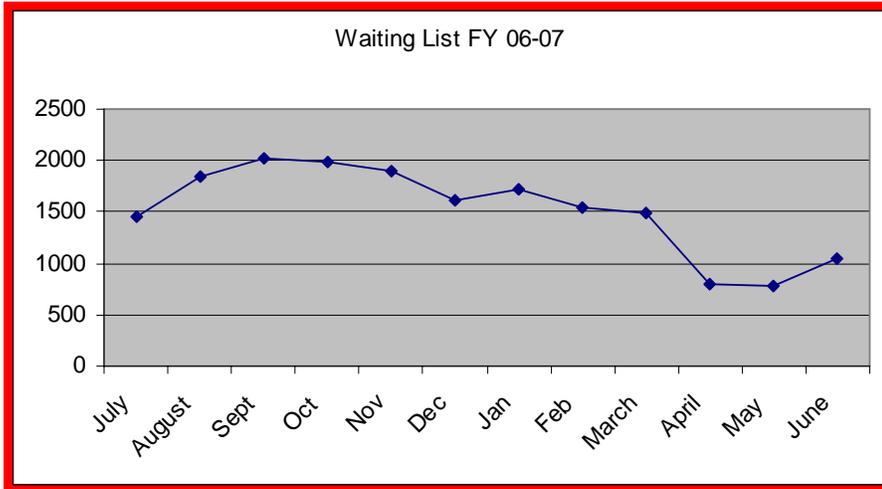
Coalition staff presented information regarding CCEP at local businesses including Home Depot, Manatee Memorial Hospital, Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch, Rotary Club of East Manatee and Progressive Employer Services.

The Coalition's service provider held a bi-county early childhood conference. Planning and implementation involved a variety of local community organizations. These organizations included Manatee County Head Start and Early Head Start, Manatee County School District, Sarasota County School District, Sarasota Child Care Connection and Children First.

With the incorporation of cost reimbursements contracts, the Coalition was able to have stronger accountability regarding expenditures. Underutilized administrative school readiness funds were reallocated to the service provider for direct childcare services. The Coalition faced no projected deficit in school readiness funding during the year; no consideration of disenrollment or re-prioritizing of children to be served was necessary.

## Waiting List

An income eligible waiting list for child care subsidies existed throughout the entire contract year although placement from the waiting list continued for eight months ending in May 2007.



## Child Placement from Waiting List

1328 income eligible children were placed from the waiting list in FY 06-07.



## Fiscal Information 2006 - 2007

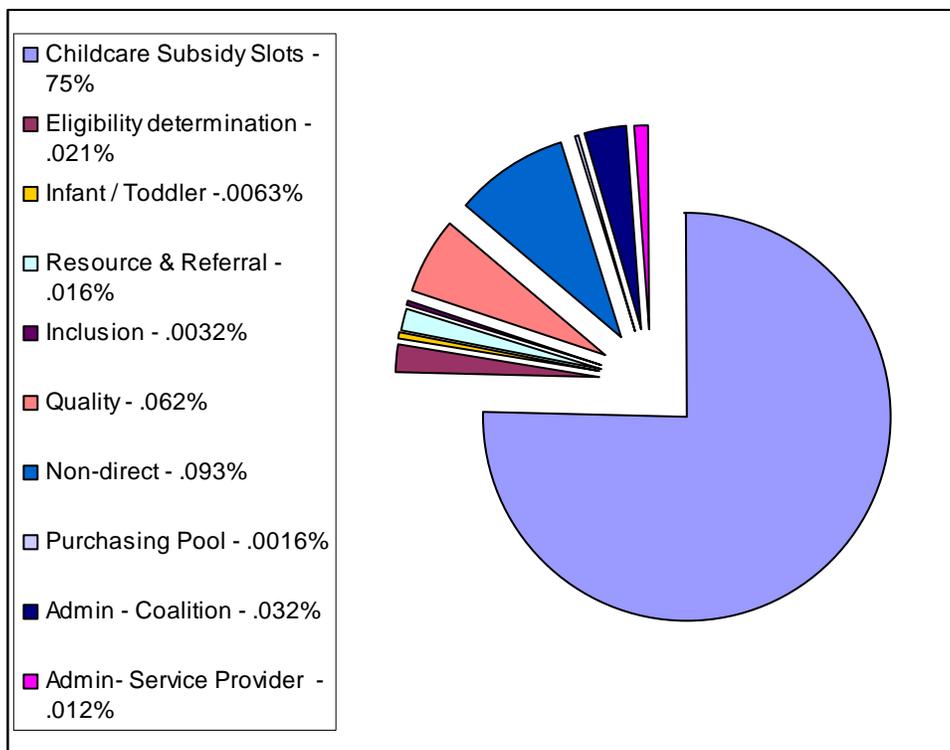
On July 1, 2006, the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, Inc. received a grant award in the amount of \$10,026,724 for School Readiness and \$6,749,811 for the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

Program from the Agency for Workforce Innovation/ Office of Early Learning. Additionally, AWI awarded the Coalition \$ 11,849 for VPK Outreach and Awareness and \$6,991 for VPK monitoring.

The Coalition executed an agreement with one sub recipient, Resource Connection for Kids in the amount of \$9,378,728 for School Readiness Services. The budget to manage school readiness administration of the Coalition was held to \$450,216 or 4.51%.

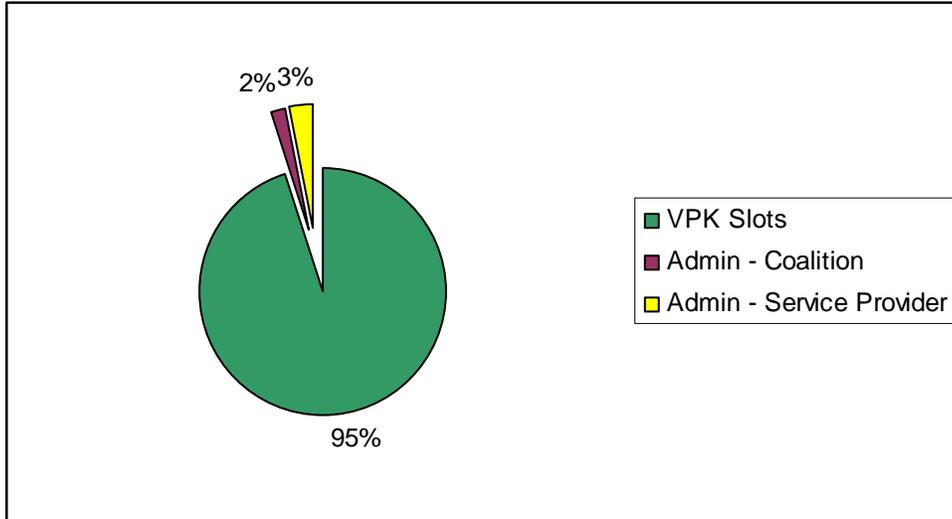
Through review of utilization throughout the year, the Coalition utilized 99.64% of the total budget and did not sustain a fiscal deficit. As noted in the chart below, Coalition expenditures for the year left a surplus of \$36,251.

**Fiscal Year 2006 - 2007  
School Readiness  
Total Budget \$10,026,724  
Total Expenses \$9,990,473**



The Coalition executed an agreement with one sub recipient, Resource Connection for Kids in the amount of \$4,919,670 for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Services. The grant agreement was based on the state's projected enrollment. A total of \$201,661 was expended in administrative services, with \$59,094 spent in Enrollment services, \$32,364 in Monitoring services and \$112,674 in Administration. The total expended in child care slots was \$4,087,421. The total VPK expenses were \$4,303,443.

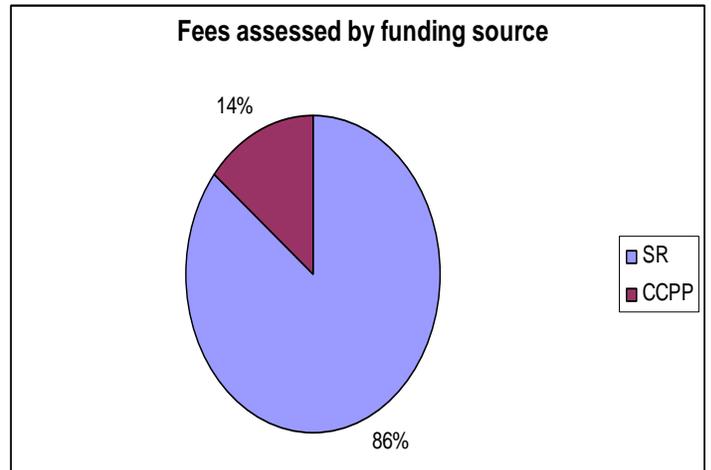
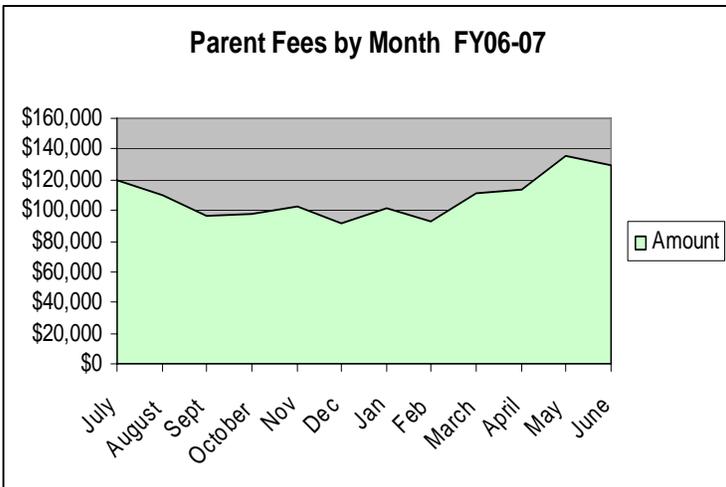
**Fiscal Year 2006-2007  
Voluntary Pre - Kindergarten  
Total Expenses \$4,303,443**



## Parent Co-Payment

Families receiving school readiness services are assessed a co-payment at the time of enrollment, re-certification or other changes to income and/or family size. The co-payment is paid directly to the childcare provider with the balance of the daily expense paid directly to the provider by the Coalition's contractor, Resource Connection for Kids.

A total of \$1,300,577 was assessed for the period July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007. The 2006-2007 assessed fees represents 11% of all funding available for school readiness services including all federal, state and local sources.





## Program Summary



The 2006-2007 fiscal year brought changes to the programs and operations of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee, as the Board considered new and efficient ways of providing services. Those changes were marked with positive feedback and enhanced relationships in the community. The success of the changes laid the groundwork for determining that Coalition operations can successfully be adapted to new ways of doing business in the future.

The VPK program continues to grow, despite the enrollment being lower than expected. Providers are receptive to training and want to participate in the program. Even before the year ended in June, parents started enrolling children for the fall, clearly an indication that outreach efforts have been successful and that parents see the benefit of early education.

The quality initiative projects managed at the administrative level complement the quality services contracted to the service provider. The projects are clearly a success, as measured by response from applicants or feedback from the community. At the end of the year, 433 new children had been enrolled in the Imagination Library, 58 teachers participated in the WAGE\$ Florida program with only a 7% turnover rate, and agencies frequently contacted the coalition office requesting more Born Learning materials. Community partners recognize the role and leadership of the coalition in the community.

## 2006-2007 Success Stories

### Provider Success

A Family Child Care provider, who had completed training hours beyond the yearly requirement, participated in the Training Incentive Points Program and was able to enhance several different areas of her classroom. This program allowed her to receive many materials that she had not been able to afford. The provider expressed to Coalition staff that classroom time was now more beneficial for the children due to incorporating more activities and she was able to expand their learning experiences thanks to this program. She expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to enhance her program.

### Family Success

In home parenting classes were provided thru the contract with Family Partnership Center to a mom of a 4 year old son attending child care. The mom is mildly mentally disabled and was limited in what she could learn in standard parenting groups. The family had also been victims of domestic violence. The son was displaying some typical behaviors of 4 year olds and the mom could not understand it and did not know how to deal with him. Through the in home sessions, FPC was able to provide lots of information on typical 4 year old development, helped the mom build language skills and coached her in managing discipline, establishing routines and consequences. The mom continues to work with FPC and enjoys all the assistance that is available to her.

### Quality Initiatives Success

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library has been very well received within Manatee County. Enrollment has more than doubled during this fiscal year and many more agencies are contacting the Coalition for brochures to distribute to parents they serve.

*"My daughter really enjoys getting her books. We have spent many hours reading them. Thank you for such a wonderful service"*

"I have four grandchildren and my grandson is enrolled in the Imagination Library. Even though my granddaughters are not the right age to qualify, they are enjoying the books too. Every month when the new book comes, I have all four 'grands' on my lap to read. It has really made this an enjoyable time for all of us. Thank you so much for the wonderful gift of reading and family

