



## Early Learning Coalition of Manatee 2008-2009 Annual Report

**Mission Statement:**

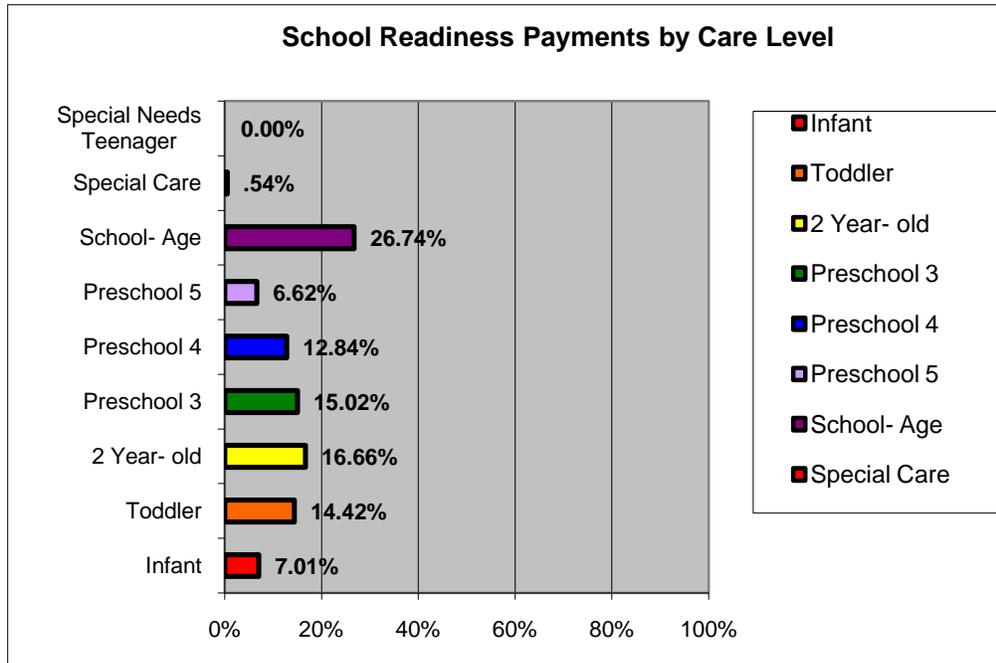
To provide and coordinate the services of School Readiness programs, in an efficient manner, in order to help all children develop the skills needed to achieve future educational success; to support the role of parents as their child’s first and most important teacher; and to continue to improve the quality of services available in the community.

**Data Summary:** The following information is based on data collected from July 1, 2008- June 30, 2009.

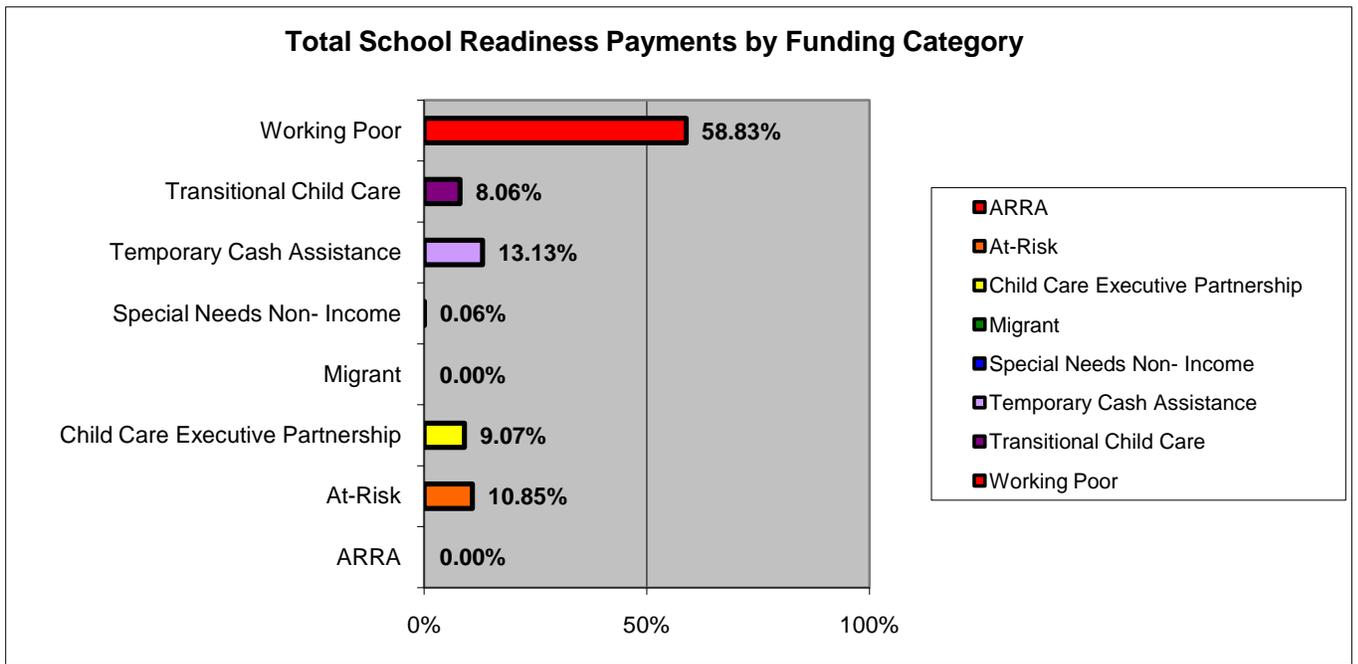
**Number of unduplicated School Readiness (SR) children and families:**

SR Children	SR Families
3794	2057

**School Readiness: Percentage of total payments (including match) by care level:**



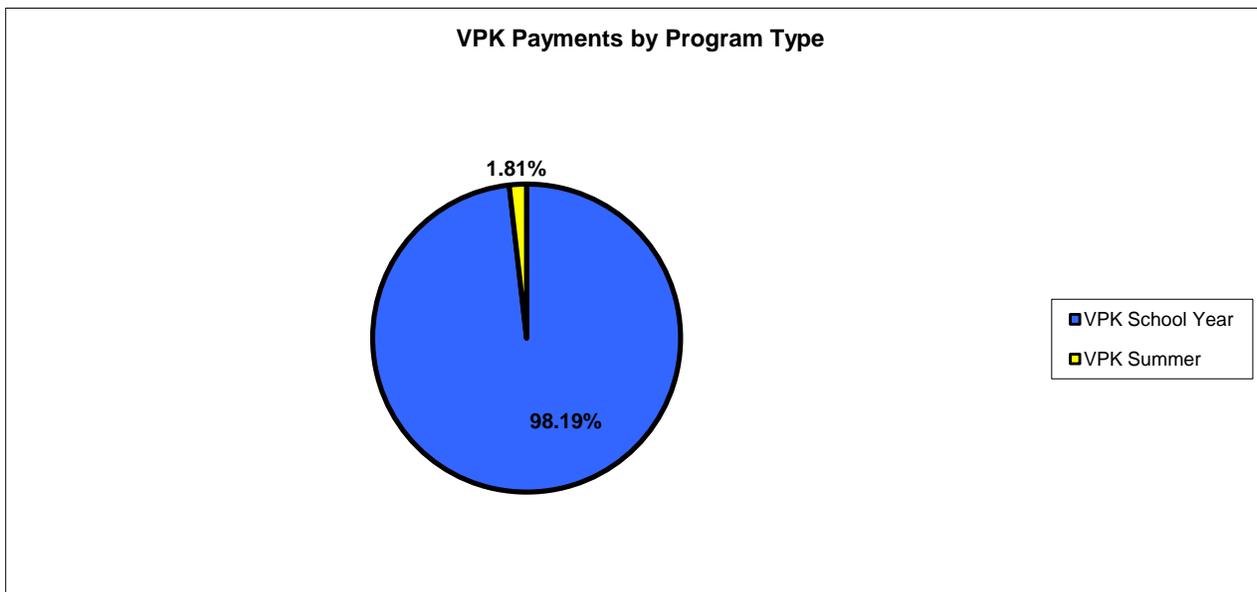
**School Readiness: Percentage of total payments (including match) by funding category:**



**Number of unduplicated Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education children and families:**

VPK Children	VPK Families
2573	2532

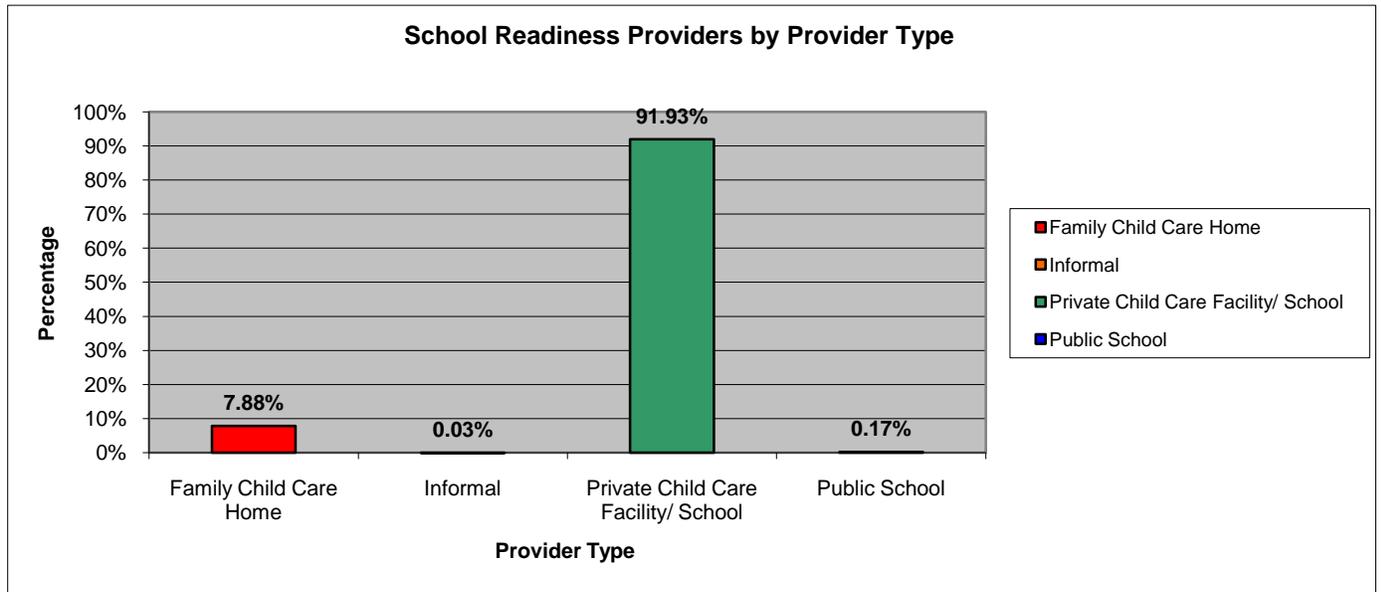
**Total percentage of VPK payments by program type:**



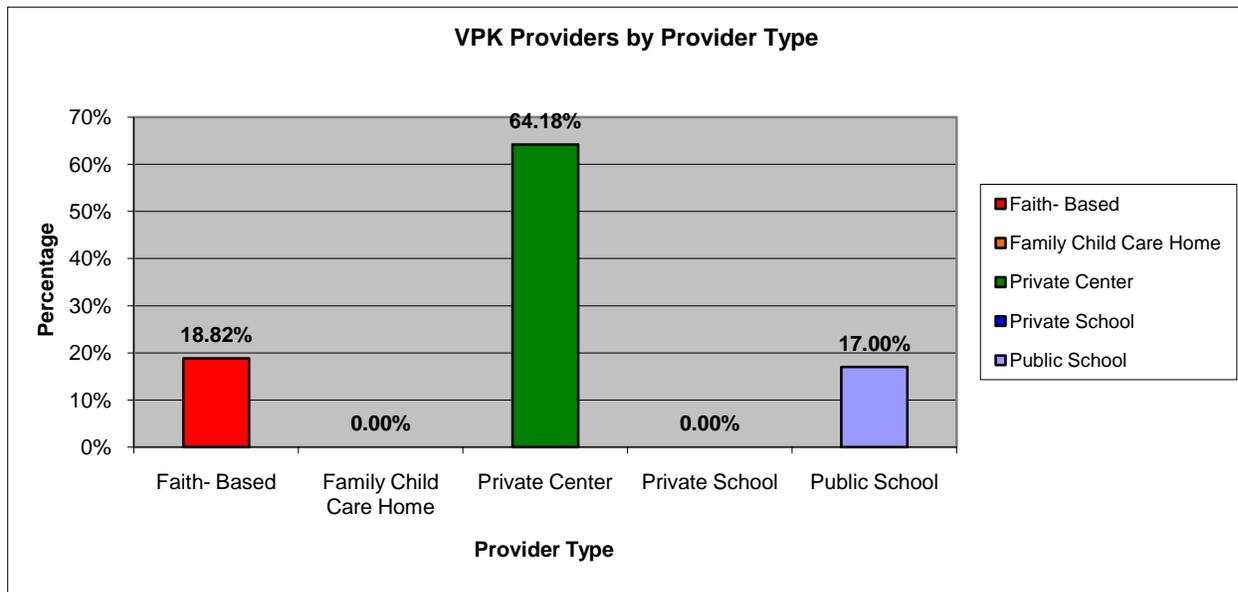
**Total number of providers that participate in the coalition’s early learning programs:**

School Readiness Providers	Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Providers
212	106

**Participating School Readiness providers by provider type:**



**Participating VPK providers by provider type:**



## **Service Delivery Summary:**

During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, the Early Learning Coalition (ELC) of Manatee experienced significant changes in its service delivery system. Two service contracts, Manatee Community Action Agency (MCAA) and Manatee Community College (MCC), were terminated during the year. Delivery of services for Child Care Resource and Referral was not renewed on the 08-09 MCAA Contract, and was taken in house by the ELC as of July 1, 2008. Eligibility and Enrollment, Provider Payment, and Child Screening and Assessment Services were transferred to the Coalition in a single move on April 1, 2009. The services provided by MCC were Provider Education and Training, Technical Assistance, and the Resource Library. These services transitioned to the Coalition over a three month period beginning in January 2009. Provider Monitoring was also provided by MCC via a sub contract with independent contractors and moved to the ELC-Manatee in July 2008 and is now being conducted by a team of Early Learning Specialists – each of which has their own specialized area of expertise.

The ELC Manatee experienced rapid staff growth from approximately 12 team members to our current level of 36 in order to facilitate the changes in service delivery. Several members of the new team were formerly employed by the previous central agency. This not only brought a wealth of knowledge and experience, it also ensured a seamless transition of services. The new team was trained in large part by sister coalitions who generously provided assistance, welcomed visits and loaned employees. ELC Manatee staff owes a great deal of gratitude to the following Early Learning Coalitions: Big Bend, Broward, Duval, Flagler/Volusia, Heartland, Hillsborough, Marion, Miami/Dade, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Pinellas, Polk, Sarasota, Southwest Florida, and St. Lucie.

Anticipated cost savings of over \$500,000 are expected due to this transition in service delivery. This added to the additional \$600,000 obtained for the CCPP match for the 2009-2010 year will give Manatee County an additional \$1.1M for child care in the new fiscal year. In addition, County funds were reallocated to the Coalition in April, satisfying the state match requirement. The ELC-Manatee applied and was granted funding by Manatee County Government and by United Way of Manatee County in the amount of \$276,872.00 (which is subject to matching funds) for FY 09-10.

These extra funds are especially significant during today's tough economic times as Manatee County has seen an increase in families seeking assistance. In moving services in house, the Coalition has been able to work more effectively and efficiently with more emphasis on direct services to children. This resulted in an increase in the number of School Readiness children served from 3473 (07-08) to 3794 (08-09). VPK children served went from 2363 (07-08) to 2573 (08-09).

Through outreach efforts new providers contracted with the ELC which offset some of the provider closings caused by the poor economy. Part of this outreach was focused on the relationship between the ELC-Manatee and our Providers. Several of the ELC Directors worked together in rewriting the School Readiness and VPK Provider Agreements making them more comprehensive and inclusive. The next step was organizing a mandatory Provider Orientation session which was offered at numerous times and locations for the convenience of the attendees. The Coalition then began the implementation of a new policy requiring all child care providers contracted with the ELC of Manatee to carry liability insurance. The Coalition is

pleased to report that at the start of this fiscal year, 100% have complied. In addition the number of VPK providers has increased by 10% over last year.

The Coalition hired a new Executive Director, Paul Sharff, and reconstituted the Board of Directors to meet statutory requirements. The ELC–Manatee board is comprised of 22 members who are community leaders and representatives of various organizations that support the early learning community. The Board deliberated thoughtfully and fully weighed the options to continue with a subrecipient or bring services in house. The projected cost savings were ultimately the deciding factor in transitioning services in house.

Another focus area was the outreach to other community organizations. The ELC began collaborating with many community resources such as Jobs, Etc.; Safe Children’s Coalition, Homeless Coalition; Whole Child; the Manatee Sheriff’s Department; the Manatee Community Foundation; and other United Way Agencies. In addition the Coalition worked closely with community groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Kiwanis Club to assess the needs of children in Manatee County and discover how the Coalition can assist in meeting those needs. This outreach also extends to the individual citizens of this community in educating them as to how the ELC-Manatee can help them.

The Quality Committee and Quality Initiatives team have worked very hard in developing a quality rating system for providers with a 5 year plan. This was approved by the ELC’s Board of Directors in June of 2008 and introduced during this fiscal year. It will be fully implemented by June 30<sup>th</sup> of 2010, with enforcement beginning in the 2011-2012 fiscal year. The quality rating system will give parents the opportunity to select child care that meets federal and state quality standards. In addition the Coalition will provide continuous technical assistance and training to help the providers meet their quality goal.

**Quality Activity Summary:**

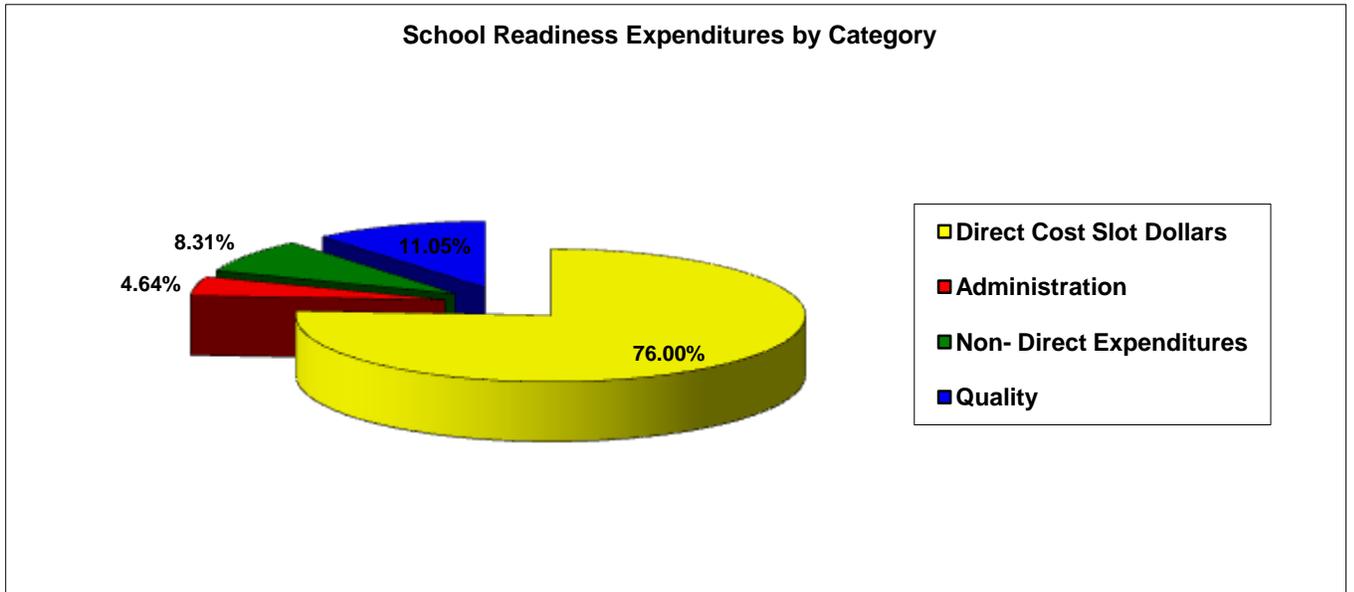
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Narrative</b>
What opportunities are offered by the Coalition for comprehensive consumer education?	A member of the Resource and Referral team speaks at all of the orientation sessions offered at Jobs, Etc. ELC staff attends numerous seminars and collaborative meetings to both disseminate information and to learn about community programs that could benefit children and families. The Coalition staff conducts one-on-one education in the office; provides literature in the lobby; and participates in many community events such as the Children’s Summit, the Health Fair, Job Fair, Pride Park Fall Festival, Children’s Parade, and the Family Celebration of Lights. A Provider Program Showcase was held on ELC grounds to enroll children in VPK. In addition, staff attended VPK Roundups at various provider locations throughout the county including the School Board. Recently, the ELC-Manatee began collaborating with Manatee Rural Health Department to utilize at least two of their facilities for R&R services beginning in Fall 2009.
Provide a list of grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting State and local standards.	A number of grant programs were in place during the 2008-2009 year to support providers in their pursuit of meeting or exceeding state and local standards for continuing education. These programs included: a college scholarship program that paid for providers to earn their 40 +5 hour state minimum requirement hours, their Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC), their Director’s Credential, and/or their Associate’s degree at the State College of Florida (SCF – f.k.a. Manatee Community College or MCC). In-service trainings and CEUs were also offered free of charge throughout the year. Another grant program, the Textbook Loan program, allowed providers to check-out the needed textbooks for their coursework at SCF each semester, free of charge.
Describe the process for monitoring compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements.	Individual monitoring reports from DCF Child Care Licensing for licensed facilities and homes are reviewed by the Quality team. They check the DCF Child Care Licensing website to ensure that no non-compliance visits for safety reasons were made on registered family day care homes, license-exempt accredited programs and non-licensed programs (i.e. YMCA afterschool programs, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.). ELC staff also performs on-site monitoring in every program care-group using a set of monitoring tools that were a loosely based composite of minimum standards level (“3”) of the Environment Rating Scales, developmentally appropriate practices and the Florida Child Care Assessment Tool, among others. The tools rate environmental indicators including health and safety concerns. The Coalition has also developed new strategies which include:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implementing a regular monthly meeting with ELC staff and DCF Child Care Licensing. Coalition staff had met previously with Licensing, but it was not continued on a regular basis. These meetings are now a regular monthly occurrence and have been since the first meeting January 28, 2009.</li> <li>2. Increasing accountability for minimum health and safety standards by review of licensing records, notice to programs of serious non-compliance issues perhaps affecting their agreement status, and progressive enforcement including possible fines, up to and including termination of agreement.</li> <li>3. Developing a health and safety checklist based on licensing standards that can be used in non-monitored programs. Two checklists were incorporated into the 2009-2010 School Readiness Provider Agreement.</li> <li>4. Establishing a baseline of scores on the Environment Rating Scales for all School Readiness Programs during 2009-2010.</li> </ol>
<p>Provide a list of available professional development opportunities that the coalition offers, including training, education, and technical assistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory School Readiness and VPK Provider Orientations</li> <li>• On-site technical assistance to providers</li> <li>• On-site provider training seminars</li> <li>• Environmental Rating Scale training</li> <li>• Curriculum trainings</li> <li>• FCCPC scholarships</li> <li>• Director’s Credentials scholarships</li> <li>• Scholarships for providers seeking a college degree in Early Childhood Education</li> <li>• 40+5 scholarships</li> <li>• Annual Early Childhood Conference for Providers</li> </ul>
<p>Describe initiatives by the coalition to improve salaries and other compensation for child care providers.</p>	<p>In addition to the continuing education programs, scholarships and the Gold Seal Rating incentive, the WAGE\$ program rewarded continuity of care and continued education by providing a supplement to teachers’ salaries. The TIPS (training incentive points) program purchased quality learning materials for classrooms by allowing teachers to earn “points” for continued education coursework. These points were redeemed for early learning classroom materials. Approximately \$35,000 was spent on new classroom materials for the Coalition’s School Readiness providers who chose to participate. The Resource Library (with over 200 quality early childhood and school age materials) was also made available to providers to check-out, free of charge, for their classrooms. The TIPS program and Resource Library both strived to make more quality learning materials available to providers. Six scholarship and reward/incentive programs have been implemented for the 09-10 school year.</p>

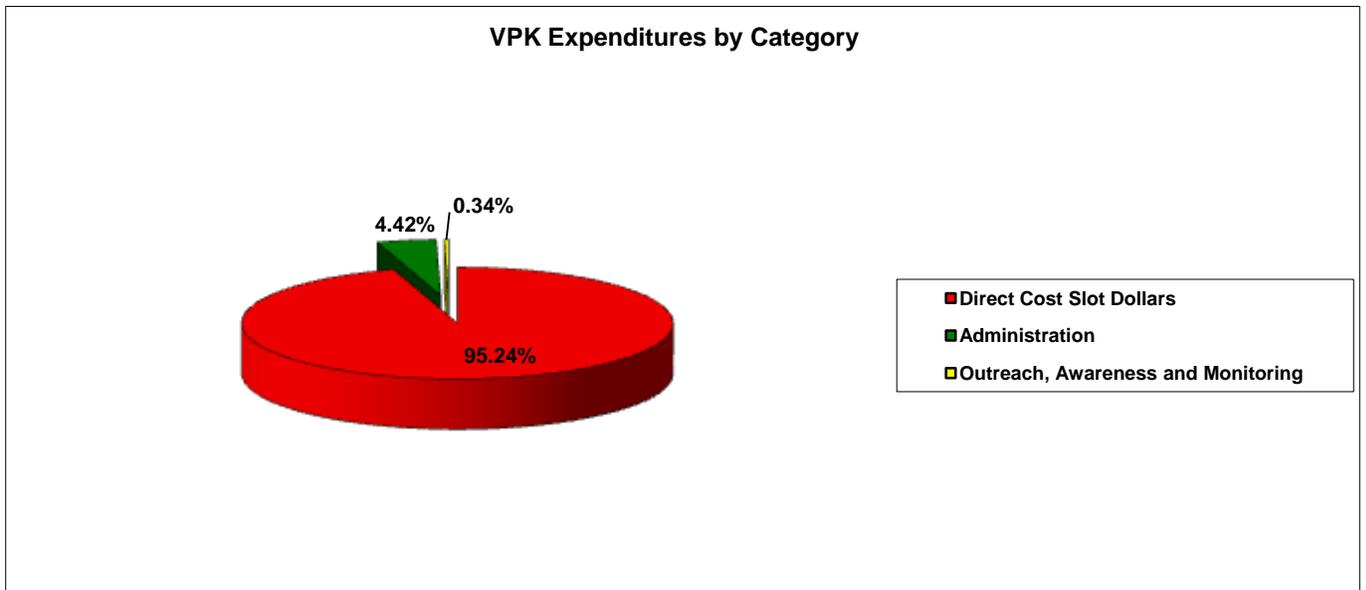
<p>Describe activities to support a Quality Rating System.</p>	<p>The Quality Team began working on and continues to work to improve the rating reliability of ELC assessors. The Coalition implemented training sessions for providers beginning in December, 2008, on use of the different Environment Rating Scales. ELC purchased Thinkpad™ notebook computers for the Quality Team and purchased licenses for the Environment Rating Scale Data System. The Quality Committee of the ELC-Manatee Board discussed and developed a rating system during the year and the Board of Directors voted in favor of adopting this comprehensive integrated system in June. This system was introduced in July 2009 - which will serve as a baseline year. By FY 2011-2012 providers will be expected to receive a score of 3 or better on a scale of 1 to 7. The Coalition also honors the Gold Star licensing accreditation and has started a process of working toward licensing of all family child care homes in Manatee County. The original proposal was withdrawn, discussion, however, has continued throughout the year and another attempt is anticipated in FY 2009-2010.</p>
<p>Provide information on activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development.</p>	<p>The Resource &amp; Referral department distributes parent newsletters and posts information online which includes information on literacy, math, science, etc. The Coalition also developed and maintains a Resource Lending Library containing materials that support activities in these areas. The materials are available for check out by School Readiness and VPK providers to use in early childhood classrooms to assist in developing these skills in young children. The Coalition has two staff members who have become approved to teach the instructor-led Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors course. This course teaches participants about enhancing the emergent literacy skills of four-year old children. The ELC newsletter, <i>The Education Enquirer</i>, is a monthly publication filled with activity suggestions that support skill development in all of the above mentioned areas. The Coalition staff provides technical assistance and on-site in-service training sessions to assist the provider in developing these skills.</p>
<p>What activities has the coalition implemented to promote inclusive child care?</p>	<p>The ELC designated one person as its inclusion contact. The staff developed a flyer describing services to be offered to the community and participates in regular monthly conference calls. Staff has attended the "Addressing Challenging Behaviors" Conference where the program professionals were trained on delivery of training using Positive Behavioral Support program (CSEFEL materials), and attended sessions on supporting children with autism and children with communication difficulties. The Coalition offers at least two large group training sessions quarterly, along with many additional on-site training sessions that are provider specific. The ELC staff has also disseminated information about the Americans with Disabilities Act. One current ELC employee, the</p>

	<p>Inclusion Specialist, has been installed as a member of the Board of Directors of the Family Network on Disabilities for Sarasota and Manatee Counties. Coalition team members actively participate with providers, parents and the community at-large to promote inclusive early childhood settings. An inclusion flyer was developed and is sent to every provider when new, potential or annual provider packets are mailed. All parents of special needs children are informed of our inclusion services when they go through Resource &amp; Referral.</p>
<p>How does the coalition conform to Healthy Child Care America and other health activities including those designed to promote the social and emotional development of children?</p>	<p>The ELC-Manatee screens all School Readiness children for vision and hearing. The ELC staff also conducts developmental screenings (ASQ) at 6 month intervals. The Battelle Development Inventory is utilized as needed to assess children from birth to five years old. The ELC-Manatee also has a newsletter distributed monthly. The June edition contained an article entitled "Health &amp; Safety Ideas for the Young Child". In addition, the Coalition lobby contains information for the public on the Kid Care program. The Environment Rating Scales (ERS), defers to <u>Caring for Our Children</u> , the guide book of standards for Healthy Child Care America, when any question about health and safety procedures arises.</p>
<p>Please describe other quality activities that increase parental choice, and improve the quality and availability of child care. (§98.51(a)(1) and (2))</p>	<p>Parents are educated on how to identify quality care; informed about different types of care; and are encouraged to continue looking for quality once their children are placed in a child care facility. School Readiness parents who wish to use a provider who is not contracted with the ELC are encouraged to discuss quality and types of care with the provider. On several occasions, staff has explained the ELC agreement to parents, who in turn have prompted the providers to contract with the ELC. This increases availability. As mentioned earlier, the ELC also started a process to achieve licensing of all family child care homes in Manatee County. The original proposal was withdrawn, but discussion has and will continue. The Coalition planned and implemented a provider showcase, "Summer Blast." Providers were invited to set up booths and promote their programs to attending parents. Over 50 programs participated at the ELC site and materials were distributed on quality child care indicators and how to choose care.</p>

**Fiscal Summary:** During the 2008 - 2009 fiscal year, the coalition's total **School Readiness Program** operating budget was \$9,930,069.00. Below is a breakout of expenditures by category.



During the 2008 - 2009 fiscal year, the coalition's total **Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program** operating budget was \$6,152,347. Below is a breakout of expenditures by category.



## **Program Year Summary:**

Throughout the 08-09 fiscal year, the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County faced and overcame many challenges. The Coalition welcomed a new Executive Director and Chairman of the Board of Directors, continued its efforts to rejuvenate the Board of Directors, tripled the size of the staff, and moved all services (with the exception of the Parenting program) in house - all resulting in an increase in the number of children and families served.

Some remodeling of the Coalition offices was necessary to accommodate the growth in staff and equipment which included converting a loading bay (approximately 1800 square feet donated by the landlord) into a training room. This room houses the Lending Library and is utilized for provider trainings, seminars, and board meetings, in addition to being offered to other non-profits for their meetings.

Because the services were delivered by contractors and the ELC during the fiscal year, the outcomes for many programs are in two time segments instead of one. The following are summaries on various programs:

### **Parenting:**

1) Teen Age Parenting Program (TAPP) – 27 teen moms were reached with an average of 6 parents per class

- 98% indicated they have “a better understanding of my child’s behavior and growth”
- 100% indicated they have “learned more activities to enhance my young child’s development”
- 99% indicate that they have “learned more about the Forty Developmental Assets”
- 100% of parents in the program for more than 6 sessions indicated they were using what they learned

2) Parent Child Activity Group (Musical Motion) – 88 total sessions with an average of 8 parents and 10 children participating

- 98% reported a better understanding of the growth and development of their preschool children
- 99% reported learning and using new ways to set limits on their child’s behavior
- 98% reported learning new activities to enhance their child’s development and learning abilities

3) Parenting Partner Program (In Home Parenting) – total of 250 home visits with 24 participating parents

- 100% reported and demonstrated increased knowledge of child development
- 100% demonstrated a minimum of 5 new, effective parenting skills
- 100% no longer scored above a “T” score of 60 on either of the ECBI subtests

## **Provider Education:**

### 1) Technical Assistance (TA)

- 100% of school readiness providers were offered technical assistance opportunities through on-site visits, quarterly newsletters, telephone calls, quarterly training calendars, emails, and mail correspondence
- Two newsletters developed and disseminated to School Readiness Providers through the July – January time period. Since then a newsletter is developed and disseminated on a monthly basis
- 274 times childcare centers received TA (July 08 – Jan 09)

### 2) Training

- Fall 2008 – Open house for Childcare Providers
- FCCPC information session for Childcare Providers
- 9 Provider Orientations (January 09 – June 09)
- 54 site visits to Childcare Centers (July 08 - January 09); 12 more from April 09 – June 09
- 114 Child care providers attended Technical Assistance training
- 18 in service trainings held (July 08 - February 09) 94 attendees total; 41 in service trainings from February 09 – June 09
- 9 Curriculum Development Classes held (July 08 – March 09) 155 total attendees
- 6 Provider Meetings (July 08 – December 08) 38 total attendees; 4 more between January 09 – March 09. Providers started conducting their own meetings in April 09
- Second Annual Training Conference: 102 ELC of Manatee County SR Providers attended

### 3) Resource Library

- 25 different childcare providers utilized the Resource Library
- 17 centers and 8 family home providers utilized the RL
- 33 visits were made by the childcare providers

### 4) 40 + 5 Classes

- 7 class programs conducted (6 English and 1 Spanish)
- 148 child care providers registered for the 40+5 program
  - 83% passed the Cohort IV state exam (13 students took 4 tests & 1 student took 2 tests)
  - 100% passed the Cohort V state exam (9 students took 3 tests exam)

### 5) Credit Classes

- 103 Scholarships awarded (363 credit hours funded)
- 41 FCCPCs awarded
- 47 Director's Credentials awarded

## **Child Care Resource and Referral:**

- Number of Referrals:
  - Quarter 1 – 241
  - Quarter 2 – 265
  - Quarter 3 – 306
  - Quarter 4 – 288
  - Total - 1100

### **Community Outreach:**

- Attendance at numerous networking events and community collaborative meetings
- Sponsorship of and participation in the Children's Parade and Children's Summit
- Participation in Family Celebration of Lights; Pride Park Fall Festival; and Health Fair
- Hosting a Provider Program Showcase on ELC grounds; VPK Roundups at various provider locations including the School Board site
- Presentations at orientations for Jobs, etc.
- Advertising on 3 bus benches featuring Resource & Referral and VPK
- Utilization of newspapers and television news stations, as well as an educational television station
- Social Networking via a Twitter account. Exploring the feasibility of a Facebook page and other social media networking opportunities
- Listing of ELC services in community resource data bases such as: 211, Whole Child Project, Homeless Coalition, etc.

### **Health & Development Screenings and Assessments:**

#### 1) Number of ASQ Screenings:

- Quarter 1 – 735 with 22 referrals  
Quarter 2 – 843 with 17 referrals  
Quarter 3 - 1220 with 51 referrals  
Quarter 4 - 753 with 29 referrals  
Total - 3551 with 119 referrals

#### 2) Number of Battelle Assessments:

- 418 Pretests administered; 93.2% passed
- 236 Post tests administered; 94.7% passed
- 94.7% of children assessed were ready for school

#### 3) Vision Screenings:

- 717 with 69 referrals

#### 4) Hearing Screenings

- 699 with 142 referrals

### **Provider Monitoring:**

#### 1) Agreement Monitoring

- 155 sites monitored
- All programs monitored in substantial compliance with agreement

#### 2) Checklist (Environment) Monitoring

- 229 sites total that could be monitored
- 219 checklist monitorings were performed
  - 76.7% scored above average
  - 13.7% scored average
  - 9.6% scored below average

This past year has been a dramatic and remarkable year for the ELC of Manatee County. From the successful consolidation of services in house to the increases in children in care, the Early Learning in Manatee County has taken a new and better approach that promises real and sustained improvements in the Early Learning system in the years to come. In less than three months, Manatee Coalition staff has accomplished a year-long process without any reduction in services to providers or the families being served. With a new board, new staff and new Executive Director, 2008-2009 was a watershed year of change. Services have not only been redeployed but expanded due to reductions in administrative cost and program overhead. This new program model promises better customer service; reduced administration and duplication, increased quality; more provider training and financial assistance and increased monitoring and oversight. As noted in the pages of this Annual Report, Manatee County is on the move; just think what possibilities next year will bring!