



**Early Learning
Coalition**
OF MANATEE COUNTY

2013-2014

Annual Report

Our Board of Directors



OF MANATEE COUNTY

(941) 757-2900

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Palmetto, Florida 34221
www.elc-manatee.org



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*Denotes Executive Committee

The information contained in this annual report is based on data collected from July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014

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A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

It is with great pleasure that I present the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County's Annual Report for fiscal year 2013-2014. At the end of June 2013, the Coalition moved into our new offices in Palmetto. What a great way to start off this fiscal year – new space, new energy, new legislation and renewed focus on supporting our families and providers in Manatee County. In August 2013, new child care priorities were established by the Florida legislating body whose intent was to focus on children age birth to school age in at-risk situations and those on the coalition wait lists.

With our School Readiness funding from the Office of Early Learning and the help of our community partners, Manatee County Children's Services Board and United Way, during the fiscal year 2013-2014 the Coalition reduced the starting wait list number of 1049 by placing 866 children into child care programs in Manatee County. As exciting as that is, there are still more children being added to the wait list daily. As of June 30, 2014, there were 615 children waiting for child care funding. We continue to offer child care placement opportunities to our families as funding is available.

Currently, the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County operates with less than 4% administrative cost. As we move forward into the next fiscal year, we will continue to look for ways to streamline these costs, thus allowing us to bring as many children as possible into quality early care and educational programs which helps Manatee children become strong and successful in learning and in life.

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County has continued to be a valuable resource to our partner Coalitions across the state, sharing our knowledge in technology, as well as serving as School Readiness and VPK program subject matter experts.

One of the most exciting new ventures that we embarked upon was the introduction of our unique family magazine NEXTGEN, which launched at the end of May 2013. NEXTGEN is a go-to resource guide for families and offers wide-ranging content, including articles on early learning issues, fellow non-profits, community champions, and many other family topics.

The publication saw us partner with the Manatee School District in a distribution agreement that allows us to place over 25,000 copies into the backpacks of all elementary students in the county. An additional 5,000 copies are distributed to our providers, local hospitals, dental and medical offices plus other high traffic areas.

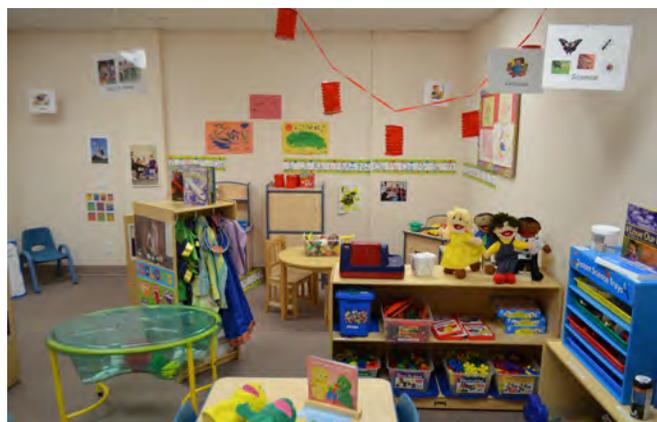
This venture has generated funds that we spend directly on our programs. We are also in the early stages of discussions with other Coalitions regarding statewide syndication of NEXTGEN, which would increase the revenue streams and further benefit our children's programs.

These are exciting times at the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County!

Sincerely,
Paul A. Sharff, Chief Executive Officer



Paul Sharff, CEO of the Early Learning Coalition (ELC) of Manatee County attends the Fourth Annual Every Child A Reader Event - a collaboration with the Kiwanis Club of Bradenton and the Rays Baseball Foundation.



Our model preschool classroom is set up to demonstrate to parents what to look for in a quality Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) or School Readiness classroom.

NEXTGEN

family magazine

About the Early Learning Coalition

Our Mission

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 children's first and most important teachers; and to continue to improve the quality of services available in the community.

Our Vision

To provide and support high-quality school readiness 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.

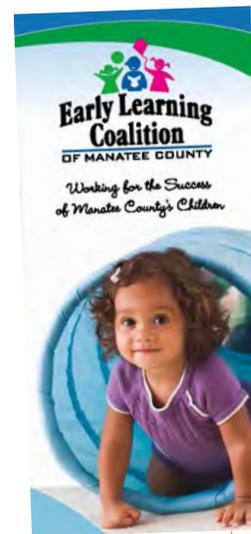
The ELC lobby is open, airy and inviting to families. The open space and variety of toys, books, and games provides a safe place for children to play and interact with each other.

Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, Inc.

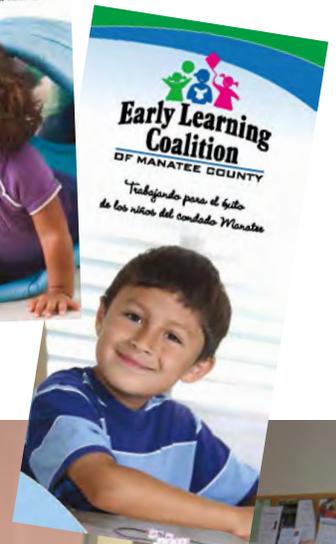
The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County is a 501(c)3 non-profit agency that provides and coordinates the services of school readiness programs in order to help all children develop the skills needed to achieve educational success. We strive to improve the quality of services available in the community and aim to invest in the future of Manatee County through the early care and education of its children.

Our Programs and Services

- Child Care Resource and Referral
- Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)
- School Readiness
- Early Literacy Initiatives
- Quality Initiatives
- Professional Development
- Developmental Screening and Intervention
- Family Engagement and Parenting
- Inclusive Child Care
- Community Outreach



Find out more about the Early Learning Coalition and its services and programs by picking up our brochure in English or Spanish at the ELC Office.



Child Care Resource and Referral

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) is the "front door" to the Early Learning Coalition's multiple services. *It is a free marketing tool for legally operating providers in Manatee County, as the information that they provide is updated immediately in our database.* Referral lists are available to private paying customers, as well as Early Learning Coalition (ELC) funded customers looking for child care services in Manatee County. Parents are educated on how to identify quality care, are informed about different types of care and are encouraged to continue looking for quality once their children are placed in a child care facility.

Our highly dedicated and trained staff members conduct one-to-one education in the office and provide early learning literature in the lobby. They also participate in many community events to increase the awareness of the ELC's services. Examples of community events include The Children's Summit, the Stand Down for the Homeless, the Children's Parade and the Party in the Park.

While CCR&R helps families find child care, it also provides information about other valuable family resources in the community. The CCR&R telephone service is available Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m.-6:00 p.m. and from 8:00 am.-12:00 noon on Fridays. Website access is always available. These services are provided at no charge.

Child Care Resource and Referral Offers Families

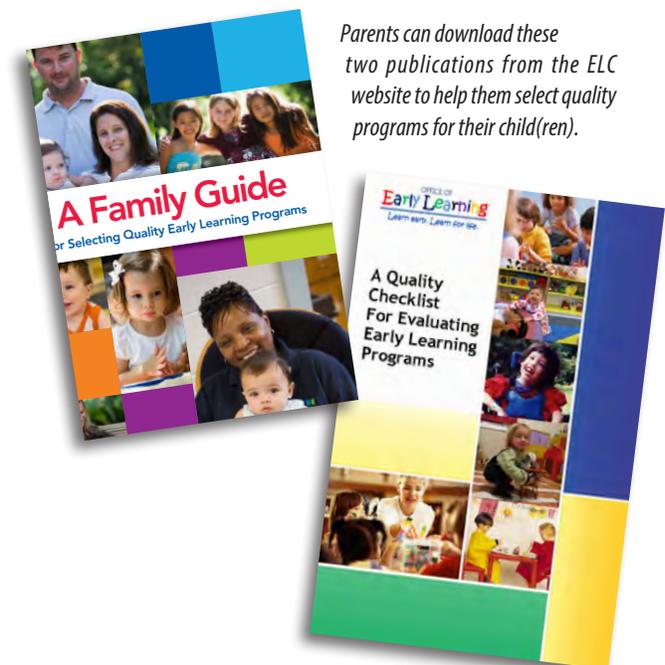
- A free, unbiased and customized list of child care options, based on the specific needs of the family
- Information about providers such as location, hours and schedule, curriculum, fees, special needs, teacher credentials, licensing standards and more
- Guidelines on how to identify quality child care

Child Care Resource and Referral Offers the Community

- Child care supply and demand information
- Child care market rates
- Statistical information

Those We Serve

In the 2013-2014 fiscal year the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County provided 1,245 child care referrals



Parents can download these two publications from the ELC website to help them select quality programs for their child(ren).

Our Programs & Services

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) is free for all four-year-old children in Florida. Families do not have income requirements or restrictions.

VPK began as a constitutional amendment that was passed by Florida voters in 2002 and signed into law in January 2005. Children must be four-years-old on or before September 1st and must be a Florida resident. The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) provides applications and information to parents, and also registers child care providers.

The VPK program is designed to provide four-year-olds access to quality prekindergarten educational experiences and prepare Florida's children for kindergarten by developing the skills they need to become good readers and successful students. VPK includes standards for literacy skills, strict accountability, appropriate curricula, substantial instruction periods, manageable class sizes and qualified instructors. Parents have the option of enrolling children in a school-year program, consisting of 540 instructional hours, or a summer program, consisting of 300 instructional hours.

VPK programs are offered by public, private, and faith-based providers that meet Florida eligibility requirements. Providers determine their program hours and daily schedule.



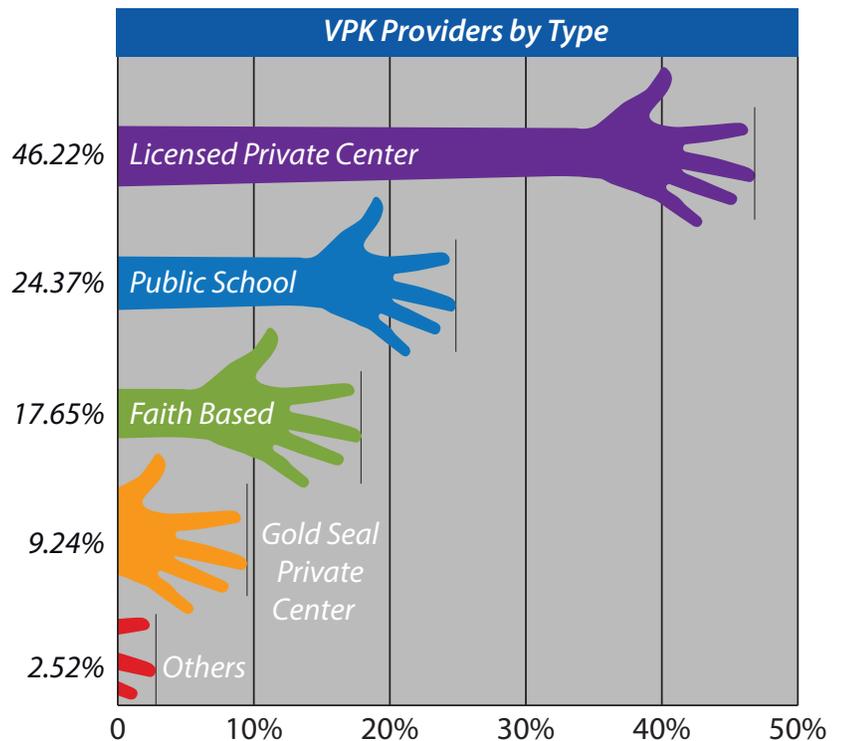
Find out more about the VPK program by picking up our brochure in English or Spanish at the ELC office.

Those We Serve

In the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County served
3,178 Children
 119 VPK Program Providers



Total Percentage of VPK Payments by Program Type



School Readiness - Child Care Funding Assistance

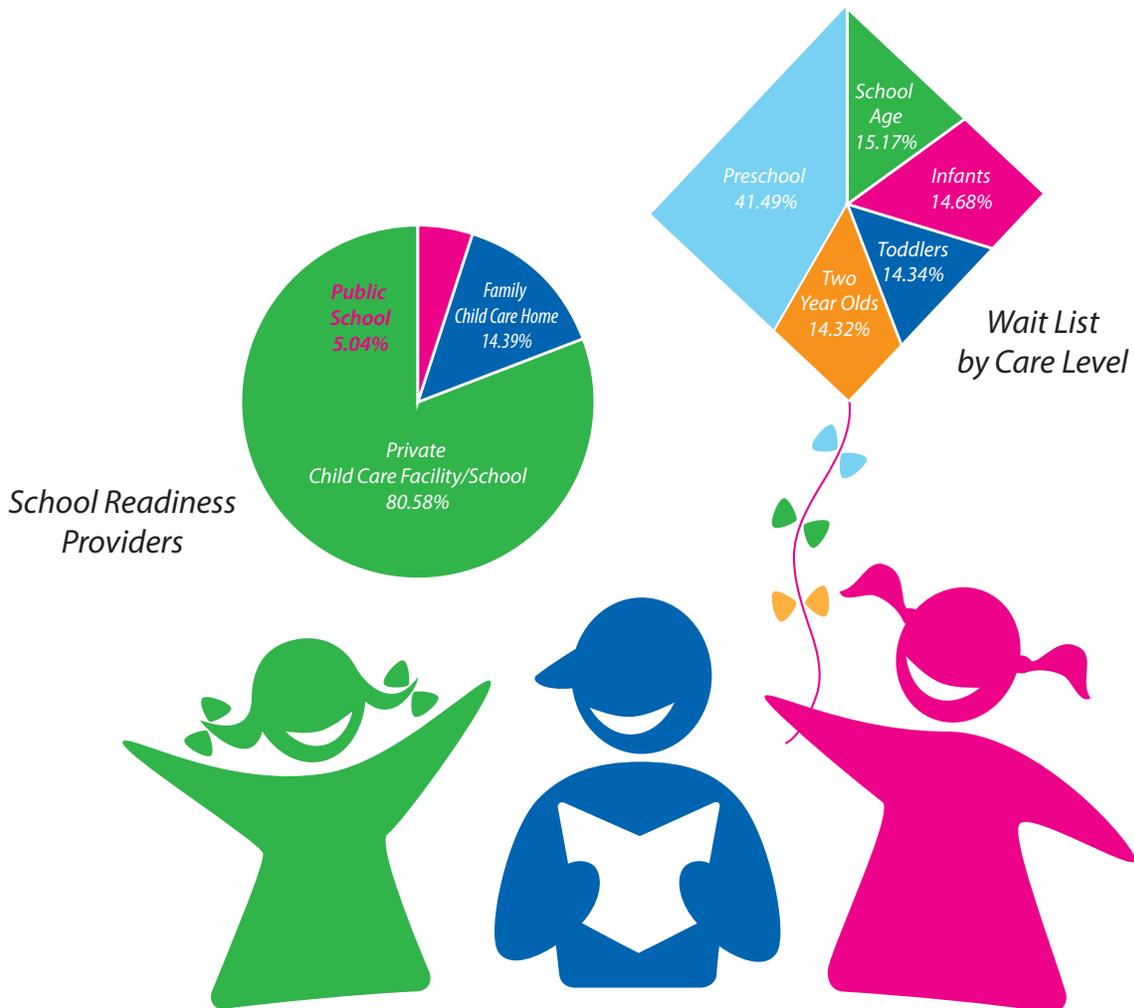
The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) enrolled or funded 866 children from the wait list into programs during the fiscal year 2013-2014. There were 615 children on the wait list in Manatee County, as of July 1, 2014. These children and families are on the wait list due to the lack of available funding.

School Readiness financial assistance helps working parents with the cost of child care (frequently called a child care subsidy). These services include extended-day, extended-year, and school-age care to support parents in gaining and retaining employment and becoming financially self-sufficient. Generally, families with children who are 12 years-old or younger may receive help through the school readiness program. Families include those that are transitioning from welfare to work, at-risk of child abuse or neglect, low-income employed families, teen parents, migrant farm workers and families of children with special needs.

The family will pay a monthly fee for each child for whom they receive financial assistance based on family income and size. All families eligible for School Readiness financial assistance may select the provider of their choice. However, the ELC will only pay for child care if the child care provider has been approved by the ELC.

Those We Serve

In the 2013-2014 fiscal year,
the Early Learning Coalition
of Manatee County's
School Readiness served
4,033 Children
139 Program Providers



Supporting Early Language, Literacy and Math Concepts Development

As part of the Coalition's Plan initiative for Family Literacy Opportunities, the Coalition received over 25,000 free books from grants through First Book:

- A book is given to every child at every community event that the Coalition participates in, with information about the importance of early literacy included as a parent guide.

- Over 3,200 developmentally and age appropriate childrens books are given to the families who visit the office.

- Childrens books are present in the lobby of the Coalition office for parents to read to their children while they wait for their appointment. Other literature is present in the lobby encouraging the development of literacy at home.

- Over 5,000 books were donated to law enforcement agencies in Manatee County for distribution to children being removed from the home during protective service investigations.

- The ELC and the Kiwanis Club of Bradenton partnered with the Rays Baseball Foundation in the 4th annual Every Child A Reader program this year, bringing together 126 volunteers and 191 classrooms for a morning of reading to children in the 3-5 year old age group. After the reading, each classroom retained a book, and each of the children received a copy of the book to take home to continue the reading relationship with their parents for a total of 3,310 books.

- Over 100 books were distributed to children attending the story readings by area dignitaries at the Party in the Park. This is an annual child advocacy event at the end of the route of the Children's Parade. The books were donated by the Children's Week state level organization.

- Literacy for the Holidays is a Coalition program

that distributes a book to each child in each of the contracted programs, no matter the funding source or school readiness/VPK status. For the 2013 holidays, the Coalition distributed over 10,000 books.

- Every child enrolling in VPK received a backpack containing a book and literacy information for the parent.

- The Coalition posted articles of interest in these areas on its website. Articles were published in the Parrish Village News through February 2014 on a variety of pertinent topics.

The Coalition continued to offer training and technical assistance on literacy building skills, i.e. Integrating the Standards: Phonological Awareness.

The Coalition offered 17 classes and trained 330 persons on the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-Olds. Coalition staff offered four 10-part series of "Making the Most of Classroom Interactions," a course which looks in-depth at the 10 dimensions of the Preschool CLASS Assessment, three of which deal with language and concept development.

Coalition staff offered several training sessions supporting development of pre-literacy and early math concepts. "Mathematize!" was designed to show providers and parents how to select and use children's books to teach math concepts. "Phonological Awareness" was presented by Lakeshore Learning Materials. "Put the FUN in Fundamentals of Math and Science" trained providers on how to teach math and science in a fun way with many self-made materials. "Read to Talk: Dialogic Reading" emphasized the specific strategy of using books to stimulate oral language, comprehension, and cognitive processing skills. "Successful Sendoff to VPK" explored what teachers of three-year-olds need to be assuring their children learn to be successful in VPK, including much language, literacy and math.



Quality Initiatives For Child Care Providers

The Coalition continued the training hours of four to six per scale for training sessions on use of the different Environment Rating Scales. Providers who did not receive an overall score of 3.5 or higher were provided individualized technical assistance and encouraged to attend ERS training sessions. 83% of the programs scored above 3.5 and 75% increased their score from the previous year.

The Coalition offered providers an opportunity to participate in our QRIS program, Quality Counts for Manatee Children. Providers were invited to participate based on their interests, School Readiness agreement monitoring results, and ERS base scores. A total of three new programs received a star level, and were awarded stipends totaling \$4,250. They join the 23 renewing providers, for a total participation of 26 providers.

The three new participants in the QRIS system were provided with on-site, individualized training on "How to Perform the QRIS Self-Study." The Environment Rating Scales continued as the basis for quality improvement with all contracted School Readiness providers. The providers scoring below 3.5 were provided with individualized technical assistance and training according to their specific needs. A Quality Improvement Plan was also developed for each provider.

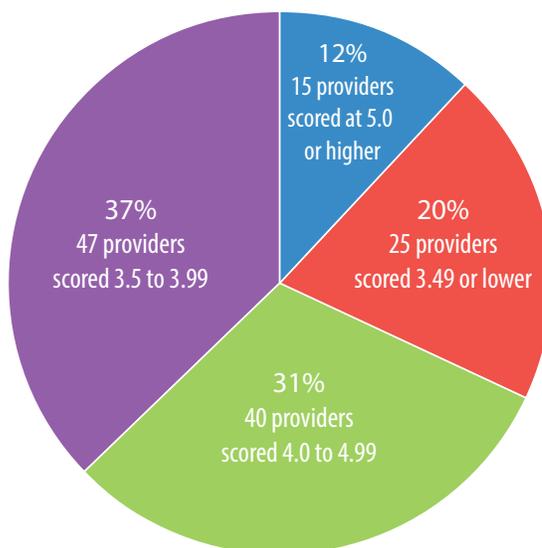
Star-Rated Providers

- ★★★★★ 4 Providers
- ★★★★ 9 Providers
- ★★★ 9 Providers
- ★★ 4 Providers

"The quality counts for children's program significantly aligned with our high quality standards and objectives. The program also provided a system of measuring our continuous efforts. It is our belief that any center participating with the quality counts for children's process will undoubtedly improve the quality of care to the children they serve. The high level standards encompass all aspects of the child care operation. The arduous training expectation is just one facet of the superior standards. A Readiness Learning Academy is proud to say we participated with this effective program and on behalf of the children we serve, we look forward to maintaining our five-star status our staff worked so diligently to obtain. Thank you to the staff of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County for the opportunity to participate in this program."

*- Deborah Ludwig, Owner
A Readiness Learning Academy*

2013-2014 ERS Provider Scores



Professional Development

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) continued its commitment to professional development opportunities for early childhood practitioners by providing a myriad of learning experiences designed to improve the knowledge, skills and behaviors as well as the attitudes and values of the early childhood workforce that promote young children's optimal learning and development.

The ELC's professional development supports the five key aspects of the teacher's role and effective teaching:

1. Creating a caring community of learners
2. Teaching to enhance development and learning
3. Planning curriculum to achieve important goals
4. Assessing children's development and learning
5. Establishing reciprocal relationships with families

Highlights of professional development activities include:

- Early Math and Science workshops based on Twiga Foundation's BLOCK Fest™
- On-site technical assistance to providers as requested and suggested
- On-site and large group provider Environmental Rating Scale training
- Four 10-session series of Making the Most of Classroom Interactions, a professional development opportunity authored and licensed by Teachstone, Inc. This series looks at each of the ten dimensions of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, a rating tool that measures the effectiveness of teacher-child interactions.
- Positive Behavior Support large group and on-site training
- Literacy building and development training
- Early science workshops based on NAEYC's publication "Ramps and Pathways" and other credible resources

- Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Birth Through Five
- FCCPC credential and renewal scholarships
- Director's Credentials and renewal scholarships
- Scholarships for providers seeking associate and baccalaureate degrees in Early Childhood Education at the State College of Florida
- Annual Early Childhood Conference for Providers
- Scholarships for two family child care home providers to attend the Florida Family Child Care Home Association annual conference
- Training on how to perform the Ages and Stages Questionnaire and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire Social-Emotional tools
- Training on Teaching Strategies Gold, offered several times throughout the year
- Coalition staff collaborated in presenting workshops at the AELC Fall Symposium in November, 2013

Professional Development Statistics

- 158 sessions provided on 51 individual topics
- 1855 student contacts
- 406.25 training hours



Participants wait for the start of the 2014 Manatee Conference on Young Children.



McGruff the Crime Dog and Gilly from Mote Marine Aquarium participate in a BLOCK Fest with local children following the 2014 Children's Parade at the Party in the Park.

Developmental Screening and Early Intervention

The Child Development Team strives to detect developmental delays as early as possible. Early detection of potential developmental delays allows children to reach their full potential and enter kindergarten ready to learn.

Child Screening

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) offers families with children under five years of age developmental screenings to help ensure they are reaching their age-appropriate developmental milestones. Children are screened for development, utilizing the Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ), in the following five developmental skill areas: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem-solving and personal-social. Assistance and education are provided to families of children whose scores fall below the typical range. When necessary, an ELC Screening and Assessment Specialist will assist a family with a referral to a community agency that will provide a more in-depth evaluation of the child's abilities.

Vision and Hearing Screening

The ELC offers vision and hearing screenings for children under five years old. These screenings are conducted by ELC Screening and Assessment Specialists on-site, at the child's early learning provider. Results of the vision and hearing screenings are provided to the child's parent and the early learning provider. If a vision or hearing deficit is detected at the time of screening, community resources are provided to the child's parent.

Child Assessment

The Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI) is utilized to assess the progress of children from birth to five years old. Children are assessed every 6-12 months by an ELC Screening and Assessment Specialist on-site, at the child's early learning provider. The assessment results are shared with the parent and the early learning provider to provide insight on what skills a child has mastered, what skills are emerging and future learning objectives.

Parenting Initiatives

12 family engagement events with BLOCK Fest™ materials, funded by the PNC Foundation, were held from January through June, 2014. These were in a variety of settings including child care facilities, public schools, the county's central library, and an outdoor park. Participating families received "Playing and Learning with Blocks," a Twiga Foundation publication, in either English or Spanish. Participants included



188 adults and 368 children between eight months and 10 years with 116 books distributed.

One parent engagement event was offered by Coalition staff and community partners. Two kindergarten teachers from Palma Sola Elementary School and that school's principal spoke with families at one of the VPK sites on preparing their children to enter kindergarten.

Relative Caregiver – Parent Partner Program (In Home Parenting): a total of 95 home visits at 13 households and 13 participating relative caregivers with 27 children ages birth to twelve years of age were served. Both English and Spanish home visits were conducted.

The Grandparents as Parents Program through Manatee Children's Services has a monthly support group for relative caregivers and the children in their charge. The ELC funds a coordinator and child care personnel for three hours for this event. During 2013-2014, the Coalition paid for 33 hours of coordination and care for these meetings which served 269 adults with 457 children.



Promoting Inclusive Child Care

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) strives to strengthen Manatee's child care system to more effectively support the needs of children with disabilities and their families. The ELC designated one person as its Inclusion Specialist. The staff participates in scheduled monthly conference calls. The ELC helps to expand child care options for children with disabilities and their families by supporting the inclusion of children with special needs in early childhood settings. Services are available to early care and education providers to increase staff knowledge and competence in serving children with disabilities or behavioral challenges. These services include training, on-site technical assistance, community resource information and environmental adaptations.

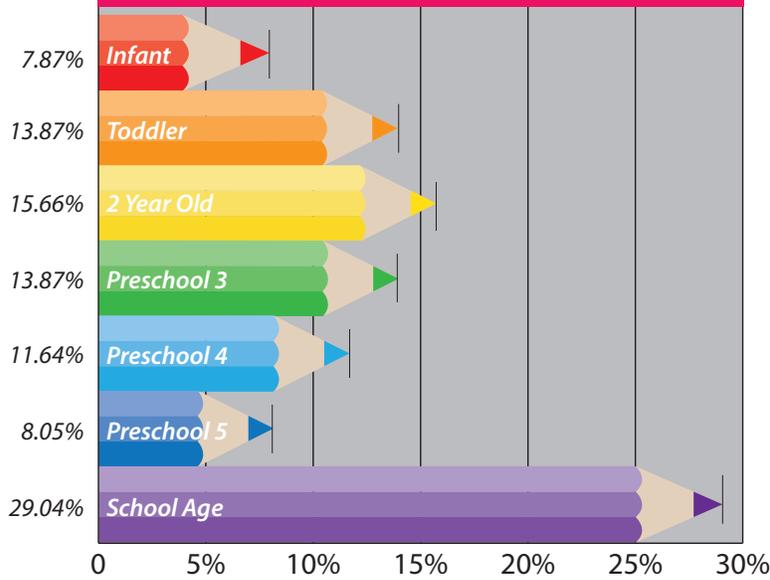
A toll-free Warm Line is available to parents and early care and education providers needing information related to the disability or special health care needs of children from birth to five years of age.

Coalition staff participates in the Training and Technical Assistance (TATS) community meetings. The ELC Inclusion Specialist currently serves as the President of the Board of Directors of the Family Network on Disabilities for Sarasota and Manatee Counties. Two of the ELC staff are active members of the Florida Association of Infant Mental Health.

The Coalition continues to participate in the Learn the Signs – Act Early program with the Florida Department of Health. Early care and education providers are offered training and materials on developmental milestones and how to identify signs that a child may benefit from evaluation and early intervention. All parents of special-needs children are informed of our inclusion services when they utilize our resource and referral service.

"Because of the ELC my family is able to function as a whole."

School Readiness Payments by Care Level

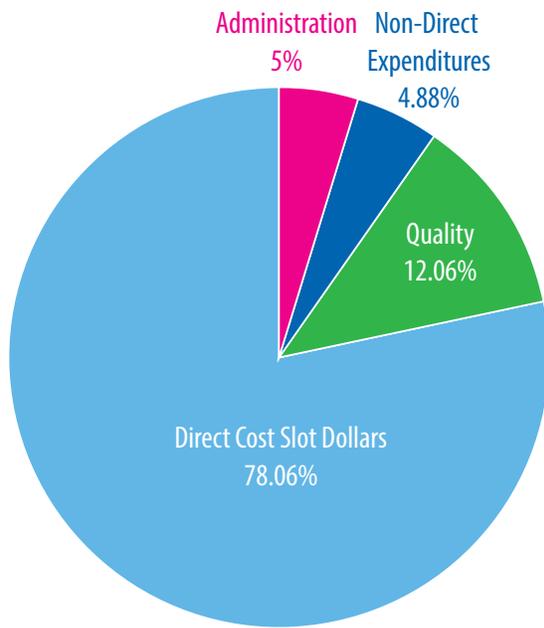


2013-2014 Total Funding

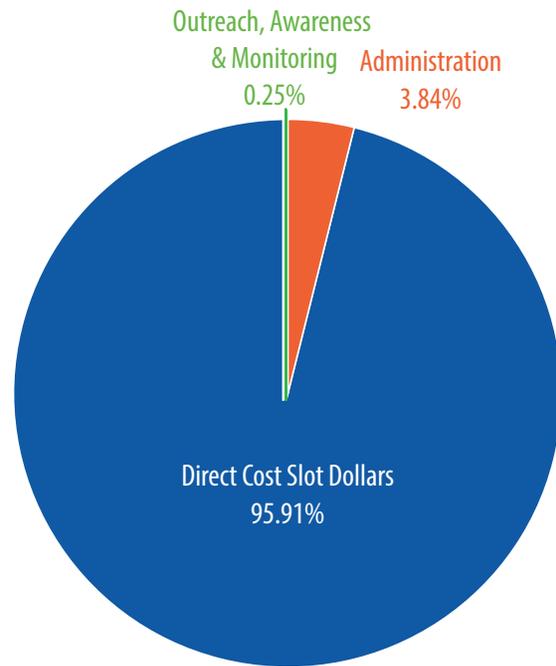
The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) received federal, and state funding in excess of \$16,600,000 during this fiscal year. Over 78% of School Readiness funds and 96% of Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) funds were spent directly on child care services through our local child care providers and school district. Our overall administrative costs for these programs were 5% and 3.84% respectively.

The ELC was awarded additional local grant dollars in excess of \$1,749,000.

Manatee County Government	\$1,427,243
United Way	\$100,000
School Board of Manatee County	\$92,244
CareerSource Suncoast	\$67,473
Florida Department of Education	\$39,069
Conquistador Historical Society	\$7,500
State College of Florida - MLK Day of Service	\$6,528
Rays Baseball Foundation	\$5,000
PNC Foundation	\$4,300
Manatee County Housing Authority	\$309



School Readiness Expenditures by Category



VPK Expenditures by Category

INVEST IN TOMORROW!

The inaugural issue of NEXTGEN family magazine arrived in May of this year and was an instant success in the local community. Published bi-monthly by the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC), this unique 100-page magazine filled a void in the local market which had no dedicated resource guide for parents and families.



The aim of the project was to also generate valuable additional revenue for the Early Learning Coalition for our many programs, as every dollar grossed through advertising is reinvested and spent in our fiscal year.

The concept behind NEXTGEN was to create a quality publication full of family content, articles on leading local figures and organizations, with early-learning and quality childcare very much integral to the content. In every issue, all childcare providers are given a free business card listing in a dedicated directory.

Central to the development of NEXTGEN was a distribution partnership with the School District of Manatee County which allowed over 25,000 copies to be placed directly into the backpacks of all K-5th grade elementary students in the public school system.

A further 5000 copies were distributed to private schools, 200 child-care providers, local doctor and dentist offices, hospitals, libraries and other high traffic areas. Some of the many advertising partners attracted include:

Blake Hospital
BMO Harris Bank
Bright House
Coastal Orthopedics
Florida Pre-Paid College Board

LAKESHORE Learning
LWR Memorial
Manatee Memorial Hospital
Michael Saunders Realty
Mosaic

Neal Communities
Nestle
Pittsburgh Pirates
SRQ Airport
Synovus Bank

Already, there has been interest from other coalitions about a possible syndication of NEXTGEN, which would again increase revenue generation, and these options are being explored. As the official publication of the Early Learning Coalition, NEXTGEN will act as a revenue stream that creates additional funding to underpin further initiatives and help get children off the waiting list and into the programs that we offer and support.

NEXTGEN

family magazine

Names on Giving Tree Recognizes Those Who Donate to ELC Programs

The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) of Manatee County's goal is to provide quality early learning experiences for all children. This effort is made possible by state and county funding and the generous gifts of our donors.

The Giving Tree, located in the ELC lobby, was created to recognize those who have contributed to support our family engagement, early literacy, child screening and quality programs.

For the following levels of donation, the names of contributors are added to the Giving Tree:

- \$50 - \$99 Small Leaf
- \$100 - \$249 Orange
- \$250 - \$499 Large Leaf
- \$500 - \$999 Large Branch
- \$1,000 - \$4,999 Ladder Steps
- \$5,000 or more Orange Basket



"If you want to invest in early learning and get the most impact for your valuable dollar, supporting the Early Learning Coalition is a sure manner for you to achieve both of those goals."

- Paul Sharff, CEO

A Heart Felt Thank You To Our Partners

- All Children's Hospital
- American Red Cross
- CareerSource Suncoast
- Children's Medical Services
- Department of Children and Families Child Care Licensing
- East Coast Migrant Head Start
- Easter Seals of Southwest Florida
- Family Network on Disabilities
- Family Partnership Center
- Florida Association for the Education of Young Children
- Florida Family Child Care Home Association
- Gulfcoast Early Steps
- Healthy Start Coalition
- Hernando DeSoto Historical Society
- Home Child Care Providers Association of Manatee County
- HOPE Family Services
- Kiwanis Club of Bradenton
- Lions Club of Bradenton
- Manatee Association for the Education of Young Children
- Manatee Children's Services
- Manatee Community Action Agency/Head Start, CATCH grant
- Manatee County Chamber of Commerce
- Manatee County Government Children's Services Advisory Board
- Manatee County Housing Authority
- Manatee Education Foundation
- Manatee Hope
- Manatee Parenting Education Coalition (MPEC)/Manatee Infant Mental Health Association
- Manatee Sheriffs Department
- Manatee Sunrise Kiwanis Club
- People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) Coalition
- Pinellas County Schools Child Care Worker Training Program
- Pittsburgh Pirates Organization/Bradenton Marauders
- PNC Foundation
- Police Athletic League of Manatee
- Rays Baseball Foundation
- Redlands Christian Migrant Association
- Safe Children's Coalition
- School District of Manatee County
- State College of Florida and the Foundation for State College of Florida
- Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness
- Take Stock in Children
- Training and Technical Assistance Support Center, University of Central Florida
- Turning Points/Galvano One Stop Center
- Twiga Foundation
- United Way of Manatee County
- Whole Child Manatee

“It's nice to feel that the ELC is on our side & wants to help us succeed. Thank you for your help.”

- Child Care Provider

“Helpful staff, very kind, patient and considerate. I was provided with plenty of brochures and contacts to help me.”

- Parent

“Very nice, caring and courteous - Thank you.”

- Parent



600 Eighth Avenue West, Suite 100
Palmetto, Florida 34221
www.elc-manatee.org