



Name	Code of Ethics Policy
Applicable to	Board of Directors
Location	Board Manual
Effective Date	9/16/2015
Date(s) of Revision	
Legal and Other References	COA Ethical Practices 1; Conflict of Interest Policy; Florida's Office of Early learning Grant Agreement

Purpose: This Code of Ethics establishes standards for the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County Board of Directors’ conduct that will assure the highest level of public service. Recognizing that compliance with any ethical standards rests primarily on personal integrity, and also recognizing in general the integrity of Board members, it nevertheless sets forth those acts or omissions of acts that could be deemed injurious to the general mission of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County. This Code of Ethics is not intended, nor should it be construed as, an attempt to unreasonably intrude upon the individual Board member’s right to privacy and the right to participate freely in a democratic society and economy.

Policy Statement The Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County is the architect of policy governing the operations of the Coalition and retains legal and fiscal responsibility for the Coalition.

Recognizing that the Board members are chosen or appointed from a broad range of fields and professions and community interests renders difficult the circumscription of external interests and activities of the Board. It is the intent that, insofar as is possible, the members of the Board of Directors are generally enjoined to follow the standards of conduct which are outlined in the Statement of Commitment and Ethical Guidelines sections of this policy. Further, it is expected that a Board member will voluntarily and fully outline his or her personal interests and potential conflicts of interest prior to assuming their seat on the board pursuant to the ELCMC Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure. Each Board member will sign the Code of Ethic's Statement of Commitment and Procedures on an annual basis.

Definitions

"*Claim*" shall mean any demand, written or oral, made upon the Board to fulfill an obligation arising from law or equity.

"*Board member and/or Director*" shall mean one of the persons serving on the Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County.

"*Contract*" shall mean any obligation to do something arising from an exchange of promises or consideration between persons, regardless of the particular form in which it is stated.

"*Employee*" shall mean any person appointed or hired, whether full or part time, seasonal, temporary, paid or unpaid, on a fixed or unfixed term, provisional or permanent.

"*Enrollee*" shall broadly mean any program participant in any program operated by the ELCMC.

"*Family*" shall mean the spouse, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, or half-sister, or a person living in a stable family relationship.

"*Interest*" shall mean a benefit or advantage of an economic or tangible nature that a person or a member of his or her family would gain or lose as a result of any decision, or action or omission to decide or act, on the part of the Board.

"*Organization*" shall mean the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELCMC).

"*Person*" shall mean any individual, corporation, partnership, business entity, association, organization, and may include a Board member.

"*Public Information*" shall mean information obtainable pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, Florida Government in the Sunshine Law and ELCMC guidelines adopted pursuant thereto.



Procedure Name	Statement of Commitment and Procedures
Relevant Policy	Code of Ethics
Applicable to:	Board of Directors
Location	
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Legal and Other References	COA Ethical Practices, Conflict of Interest policy, Code of Conduct, and Florida's Office of Early Learning grant agreement.

Statement of Commitment

“In establishing policy for and on behalf of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County’s members, I am a custodian in trust of the assets of their organization. The members recognize the need for competent and committed elected board members to serve their organization and have put their trust in my sincerity and abilities. In return, the members deserve my utmost effort, dedication, and support.”

“Therefore, as a board member of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, I acknowledge and commit that I will observe a high standard of ethics and conduct as I deliver my best efforts, skills and resources in the interest of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County and its members. I will perform my duties as board member in such a manner that members’ confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County are conserved and enhanced. To do otherwise would be a breach of the trust which the membership has bestowed upon me.”

Ethical Guidelines

General

1. I will always hold the betterment of the membership of the organization as my priority, including during all participation in discussions and voting matters.
2. I recognize that I am obligated to act in a manner which will bear the closest public scrutiny.
3. It is my responsibility to contribute to the board any suggestions of ways to improve the organization’s policies, standards, practices or ethics.
4. I will not abuse my position as a board member by suggesting to any organization employee that I am entitled to or expect any special treatment beyond regular members of the organization.
5. I will declare any conflict of interest, be it real, potential, or apparent, which is not immediately obvious with regard to any matter being discussed in my presence during a meeting.
6. If the board decides at any time during a meeting that I have a conflict, I will accept their request that I refrain from participating in the discussion I understand that the board’s decision will be recorded in the minutes, either with or without the reasons for the decision being also recorded.
7. No Board member may use his or her position on the Board to intimidate, coerce, persuade or otherwise influence any of the activities or employees of the Board.
8. All board members shall read, sign and submit the Code of Ethics statement, which shall be kept on file by the Executive Director.

Approved by Board of Directors
September 16, 2015

Information

9. I will not knowingly take advantage of or benefit from information that is obtained in the course of my official duties and responsibilities as a board member, and that is not generally available to membership.
10. I will be alert to information which the organization can use to develop improved policies and strategies.
11. I will protect the organizations information closely and will not release or share confidential information without the permission, preferably in writing, of the person who provided it.
12. I will maintain confidentiality of all information that the board deems ought to be kept confidential.

Resources

13. I will be mindful of resources which are in my trust on behalf of the organization, and will help establish policies which ensure the maximization of secure and protected resources.

Gifts and Hospitality

14. Should business associates or others offer me hospitality, gifts, favors, or benefits on a personal basis because of the business the organization does with them, I will recognize that such offers may be an effort to secure advantage from me, and I will reject such offers on the basis that it is against the organization's policy to accept gifts from business contacts. The most I will accept will be normal promotional handouts of a nominal value.

Representing the Organization

15. As part of my duties as a board member, I represent the organization informally and formally to other associations, societies, government officials, and business representatives. I recognize that it is important that I represent the organization in such a way as to leave others with a positive impression of the organization. In my duties I will preserve and enhance the good reputation of the organization and will avoid behavior which might damage its image.

Interpretation

16. The chairperson of the organization shall ensure that the practice of this policy will be fair, just, and equitable in all situations of interpretation and application.

Enforcement

17. The chairperson is ultimately responsible for immediate interpretation, application and enforcement of the board members' code of ethics policy. All complaints concerning a possible code of ethics violation shall be made in writing to or by the chairperson with a copy provided to the complainant.

The Chairperson shall make an initial determination of the issue and shall attempt initial resolution of the problem with the complainer and the complainant. If this initial attempt at resolution is not successful, the Chairperson shall appoint an ad-hoc committee composed of three board members to investigate the complaint. The ad-hoc committee is required to investigate as required and submit a written report to the chairperson within 30 days. The chairperson will render his/her decision within ten days of receiving the ad-hoc committee's report. The Chairperson's decision may be appealed in writing to the full Board for consideration the board's next regular meeting at the organization's next regular scheduled meeting for a final decision. The final decision shall be delivered in writing to the complainer and complainant.

