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**MEDIA RELEASE**  
Palmetto, FL  
December 4th, 2017

**EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF MANATEE COUNTY IMPLEMENTS PEARLS NOTIFICATION SYSTEM**

**Palmetto, Florida, December 4th, 2017** – The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) of Manatee County, Inc. is today pleased to announce the implementation of our new PEARLS Notification System.

PEARLS is the Coalition’s newest program - and stands for Preschool Emergency Alert Response Learning System. The Coalition has partnered with local law enforcement (Palmetto Police Department, Bradenton Police Department, and Manatee County Sheriff’s Office) to develop the program that educates childcare providers on possible ways to handle emergency situations.

The PEARLS program has been on-going for the past five months, with 319 Early Childhood teachers in 37 Manatee County centers already trained.

Today sees the launch of the Notification System – which is the first of its kind in the State of Florida. Law Enforcement will alert the Coalition of significant police activity, and the Coalition will send out a phone notification to alert the childcare providers within approximately a two-mile radius of that activity.

It will be up to the center director's discretion (or that of their assignee) to determine how to best handle the situation. We sincerely hope that there is no need for a notification call - but should there be, local childcare centers will all be better prepared.

ELC Chief Executive Officer, Paul Sharff, said: “I truly believe that this program makes the children of Manatee County safer.”

**\* For further information on PEARLS – or to arrange training – please contact Peggy Sammons on 941-757-2900 extension 269.**

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*The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, Inc. is a multi-service agency dedicated to helping children develop skills that they will need to be successful in school and life. The agency's focus is on 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 and the critical role of parents, as their child's first and most important teacher. To learn more about Coalition's services, go to [www.elc-manatee.org](http://www.elc-manatee.org) or call 941-757-2900, extension 212.*



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