

Early Learning Coalition
OF MANATEE COUNTY

Board of Directors Orientation

Thank you for joining our Board of Directors. With your expertise and support, we can make a lasting impact on early education, shaping brighter futures for our children.

“The first 5 years have so much to do with how the next 80 turn out.”

- Bill Gates

Welcome to the Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County!

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks for your dedication to this crucial role in shaping the futures of our local children. Your commitment to our mission is invaluable.

Please take some time to review this orientation. We eagerly anticipate welcoming you on an agency tour soon.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Together, we will change lives - one child at a time.

Darrell King
Chief Executive Officer



Early Learning Coalition
OF MANATEE COUNTY



The History of Florida's Early Learning System

In 1999, Florida passed the School Readiness Act, which combined all early childhood education and child care programs into one system. This new system, called the Florida Partnership for School Readiness, was set up to manage these programs at the local level, either by county or across multiple counties. Key features of these programs include:

- Using developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Maintaining propper staff-to-child ratios.
- Ensuring parents can make informed choices about child care providers.

The programs are run by child care providers and schools, funded by both state and federal money.

In 2005, Florida introduced the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK). This program guarantees free early education for all children who turn 4-years-old by September 1st of the school year. The goal is to help kids develop language and cognitive skills through basic education.

At the same time, the management of school readiness programs shifted from the Florida Partnership for School Readiness to the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI). The Florida Division of Early Learning (DEL), part of the Department of Education, now oversees statewide policies and coordination. There are 30 Early Learning Coalitions that run these programs locally. Since 2005, they have also managed the VPK Program, which is offered by both private and public schools and funded entirely by the state.

Early Learning Coalition
OF MANATEE COUNTY

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County is a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency that, in the years since its creation, continues 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, innovative programs, and a continual emphasis on improving the education and care provided to our children.

Our Programs & Services:

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

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.

Our Federal Programs

Child Care Resource & Referral

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) is the "front door" to the Early Learning Coalition's services. It is a service available to assist all families seeking quality and affordable child care options and local community resources. CCR&R can also be used as a free marketing tool for legally operating providers in Manatee County, as the information they provide is updated immediately in our database.

Parents are educated on how to identify quality care, informed about different types of care, and are encouraged to continue looking for quality when placing their children in a child care facility. These services are provided at no charge. While CCR&R helps families find child care, it also provides information about other valuable community resources. This information is available in our lobby, on our website, and at NUMEROUS community events in which the ELC participates.

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County provided:

311 Child Care Referrals

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) is a free program designed to prepare four-year-old children for kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success. VPK is available to all four year old's born on or before September 1st that reside in Florida, regardless of family income.

The VPK program is designed to provide four-year-old's access to quality prekindergarten educational experiences and prepare Florida's children for kindergarten by developing the emotional, intellectual, and social skills they need to become 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, a summer program, consisting of 300 instructional hours, or a Specialized Instructional Services (SIS) program which takes place outside the traditional classroom setting and is designed for 4-year-olds with special needs.

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County served:

2,932 Children
118 VPK Program Providers

School Readiness - (SR) Child Care Funding Assistance

The School Readiness Program offers financial assistance to low-income families for early education and care so families can work towards becoming financially self-sufficient and their young children can be successful in school.

The program considers a child's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; involves parents as their child's first teacher; prepares children to be ready for school; and gives parents information about child development and other topics of interest.

During Fiscal Year 22/23, the Coalition offered funding assistance to all families on the school readiness waitlist. 1,876 families received invitations to complete their funding request and enroll their children in the child care providers of their choice, allowing them to continue their efforts towards reaching self-sufficiency.

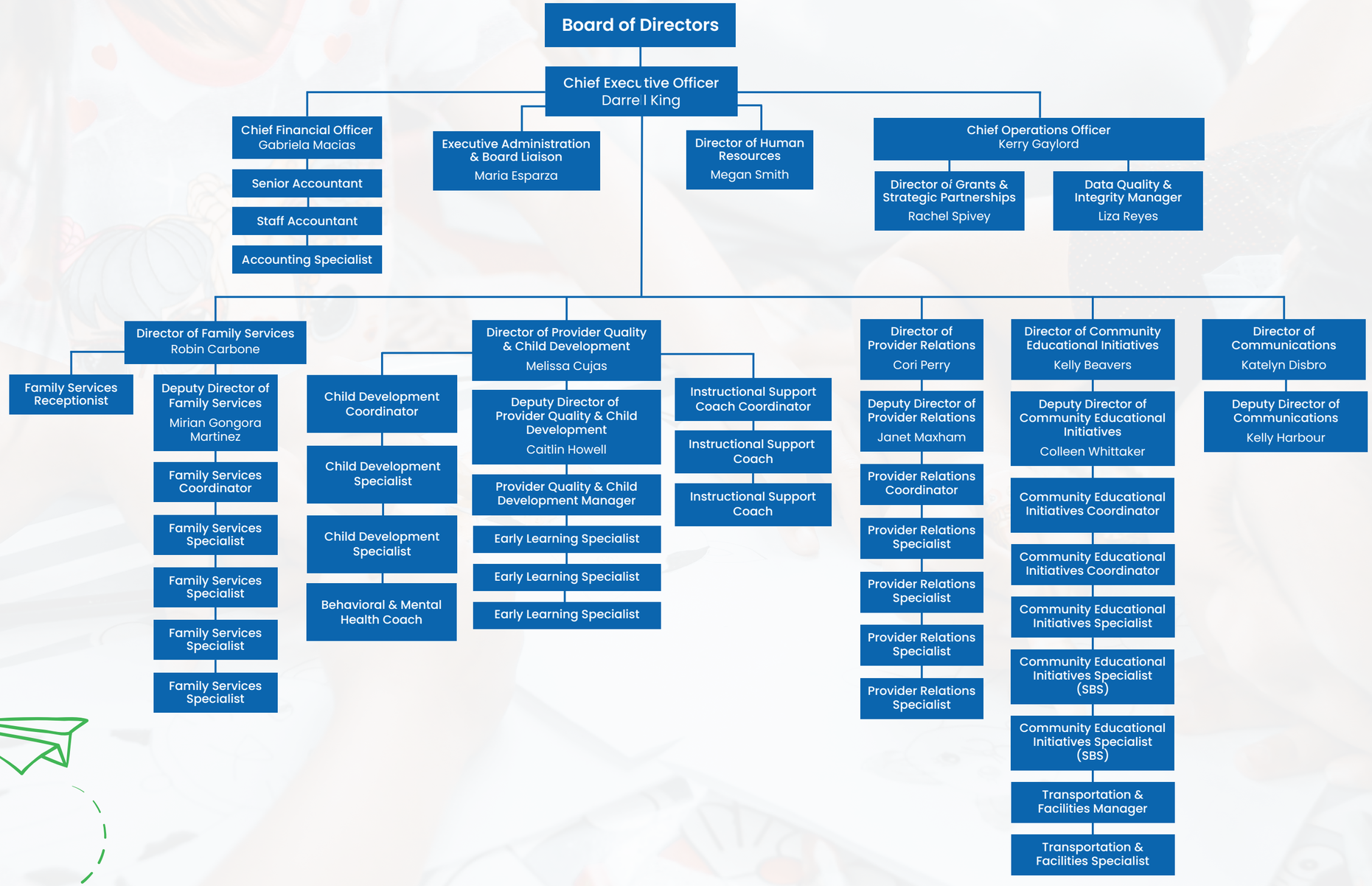
In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County's School Readiness served:

4,292 Children
146 Program Providers

We Focus on Service & Community Culture

Early Learning Coalition
OF MANATEE COUNTY

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County is **committed** to **supporting** our **community** and team with **integrity**, **innovation**, and **investment**.





Early Learning Coalition
OF MANATEE COUNTY

Serving on our Board is a rewarding adventure, helping to create change and innovations for family, children, and child care providers.

Florida's Sunshine Law as it relates to Coalition Board membership and meetings:



There are three basic requirements:

- Meetings of public boards or commissions must be open to the public
- Reasonable notice of such meetings must be given
- Minutes of the meetings must be taken, promptly recorded, and open to public inspection

Early Learning Coalition
OF MANATEE COUNTY

Coalition Board Composition

- Chair - Private Sector Governor Appointed
- Private Sector Governor Appointed Representative
- Private Sector Governor Appointed Representative
- Department of Children and Families Designee (x2)
- Manatee County School Board Designee
- Regional Workforce Board Designee
- County Health Department Designee
- State College Representative
- Board of County Commissioners Representative
- Head Start Representative
- Private For-Profit Child Care Provider Representative
- Faith-Based Child Care Provider Representative
- Programs for Children with Disabilities Representative
- Children’s Services Advisory Board Designee
- Private Sector Representatives



Board Responsibilities

- Governing the organization by setting broad policies and objectives.
- Developing strategic framework and assigning priorities.
- Acquire and maintain sufficient resources for the organization's operation and to adequately finance services for the community.
- Advocate for the children and families of Manatee County.

Individual Board Member Responsibilities

- Regular attendance at Board meetings.
- Become informed about early learning policy and issues.
- Review Board Materials.
- Participation on a Committee.
- Abide by Sunshine Law Restrictions.
- Advocate for children.

Early Learning Coalition
OF MANATEE COUNTY

Board Protocol & Procedures

- The Coalition operates under a set of approved By-Laws.
- The Coalition is governed by both state and federal statute.
- The Coalition adheres to the requirements of the Sunshine Law:

1. All meetings where two or more board members are present must be publicly noticed.
2. Board members may not speak to each other regarding past, present, or potential board business outside of an advertised meeting.
3. All documentation is public record.
4. Minutes must be taken for each meeting.
5. The Coalition Board follows standard practices based on Robert's Rules of Order.

Board Committee Meeting Schedule

Board Committee	Time
Executive	(Quarterly) 4 times per year.
Finance	(Quarterly) 4 times per year.
Governance	Minimum 2 times per year.
Strategic Planning	Every 4 years.
Full Board	(Quarterly) 4 times per year.

Early Learning Coalition
OF MANATEE COUNTY



Early Learning Coalition
OF MANATEE COUNTY

What Make Us Unique? Our Innovations!

Educational Fleet

Our largest and most exciting educational initiative rolls along year-round bringing a host of unique educational programs to family events and child care sites. We transformed three school buses into classrooms on wheels that bring developmentally stimulating activities and books to early learners throughout Manatee County.

Our fleet goes almost everywhere we go, outfitted with bookshelves, classroom-like storage, hands-on learning materials, flexible tables and seating, classroom-like technology, and much more!



Mobile Learning Lab

STEAM Machine

ELC Explorer

What Make Us Unique? Our Innovations!



FRAME THEIR LEARNING with STEAM

Science • Technology • Engineering • Arts • Mathematics

Frame Their Learning is designed to help teachers ask more thought-provoking questions to help improve exchanges with students and encourage high-quality thinking, learning, and retention. This program, combined with STEAM lessons, supports teachers by practicing the skills and tools presented to them while students engage in 3 different STEAM lessons aboard our STEAM Machine and 3 trainings. STEAM experiences integrate two or more concepts from science, technology, engineering, art, and math into engaging lessons, explore stations, or challenges. By fostering curiosity, exploration, and creativity, STEAM helps children develop strong problem-solving skills.



ReadingPals

A national program offered under the director of the Children's Movement of Florida Manatee County ReadingPals, we provide mentors to VPK (4-year-old) children at local childcare sites to positively influence students' understanding of the fundamental building blocks of early literacy. Students receive copies of the read-aloud books to enjoy at home. In addition, through genuine and impactful relationships, mentors help enhance a solid social-emotional foundation for young learners. Mentors meet weekly in person with 1-3 students at a time (25+ sessions). Screening, training, continuous mentor support, and books are provided by the ELC of Manatee County.



Nemours Reading BrightStart!

Nemours is an innovative, multisensory supplemental curriculum specifically created to teach early literacy and foundational reading skills to small groups of three, four and five-year-olds screened and deemed at risk for reading failure. In tandem with the coaches support, the curriculum assists teachers in implementing high-quality literacy instruction to support children in achieving the age-appropriate literacy skills predictive of becoming successful readers as measured by the Get Ready to Read! Revised Screening Tool. The coaches support includes but is not limited o providing curriculum materials, technical assistance, training, coaching, and chid progress monitoring to all participating classrooms.



EarlyBird

A game-based evaluation assessing literacy and identifying potential reading challenges early before they become reading problems. Administered on an iPad the program is fun and easy to use as it ulitlizes engaging games to assess and score children's reading skills. The assessments cover letter name and sound recognition, rhyming, oral language comprehension like vocabulary, and oral sentence composition. EarlyBird uses voice recognition instead of a facilitator to score the students while playing the games. The comprehensive results are given to teachers to target these issues within the classroom and give more individualized help to struggling students. ELC team members offer support and coaching following the three annual assessment periods.



LENA GROW™

Provides practice-based professional development for infant, toddler, pre-K teachers, and family child care providers. By wearing talk pedometers, teacher and child interactions are recorded to document conversational turns in the classroom. LENA helps to improve children's lanuage, literacy, and social-emotional development while improving both teacher satisfaction and classroom quality.

Thank you for joining our team!

We look forward to seeing you at one of our tours and events throughout the year!
Please feel free to reach out at any time if you have any questions.











Darrell King
(941) 757-2912
dking@elc-manatee.org

Kerry Gaylord
(941) 212-4991
kgaylord@elc-manatee.org

Maria Esparza
(941) 212-4989
mesparza@elc-manatee.org