



# EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

**Program Committee Meeting  
Minutes Friday, September 8, 2023  
9:00 – 11:00 am**

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Program Committee is to provide professional supports and leadership to advance the quality of early learning programs in Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee Counties

**Committee Members:**

**Presiding - Michele King** Committee Chair, ELC Board, Golisano Children’s Hospital

**Damaris Boone**, Redlands Christian Migrant Association  
**Danna Breeden**, Collier Health Dept and ELC Nurse  
**Rodrigo Gamboa-Dominguez**, Challenged Minds Learning Center  
**Patricia Dominguez**, Challenged Minds  
**Ashley Houk**, First Presbyterian Church, Naples  
**Heather Singleton**, Child’s Path  
**Michelle Starr**, Collier County Public Schools  
**Donna Hernandez**, Fort Myers Technical College  
**Penney Norton**, Division of Early Learning  
**Ana Neuhauser**, RCMA  
**Jodi Garrett**, Child’s Path  
**Joanne Pachiva**, Lee County School District  
**Stephanie Rode**, St. Andrews Catholic School  
**Donna Killion**, Discovery Day Academy IV

**Jami Slack**, Open Doors Preschool  
**Yara Duchesne**, RCMA  
**Jenn Faber**, Children’s Council  
**Dr. Carol Frink**, Lee County School District  
**Tia Knapp**, ABC Academy  
**Rachel McIntyre**, Open Doors Lehigh Acres and Estero  
**Jim Ragusa**, Guadalupe Center  
**Mary Grace Romo**, Lee County School District  
**Kelly Roy**, ELC Board Member – FSW  
**Char-Nequa Smith**, Florida Health Department  
**Paul Welch**, Sonrise Academy  
**Angela Anderson**, Guadalupe Center  
**Rita Dellatore**, Kid City  
**Marie Liebensohn**, Lee Memorial  
**Mandy Willis**, Faith Academy  
**JoAnne Fuciu**, Lee Memorial System  
**Megan Greeley-Gibson**, The Children’s Community Center  
**Rebecca McKellar**, Creative World

**Staff Members:**

**Dr. Melanie Stefanowicz**, CEO  
**Gilda Duran**, Chief Programs Officer  
**Leona Adkins**, Chief Quality Officer  
**Cheryl Carpenter**, Director of Early Childhood  
**Bronwyn Gogia**, Director of Assessment and Screening  
**Brenda Griffin**, Director of Professional Development

Agenda Items	Facilitator	Discussion and Actions
<b>01. Welcome</b>	Michele King	Meeting called to order @ 9:06 a.m. by Michele King

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<b>02. Approve:</b> Meeting Minutes for June 2, 2023	Michele King	Motion to approve meeting minutes for June 2, 2023 Jamie Slack Second Michelle Starr
<b>03.</b> Quality and Grant Updates	Leona Adkins	Grant amount \$12.4 million.
<b>04.</b> Enrollments and Waitlist; Program updates	Gilda Duran	VPK campaign was a success. 2,909 new applicants, this was the total number for the Ft. Myers and Naples offices.  Enrollment for FY23-24 7,470. FY 23-24 1,688.83 children have been pulled from the waitlist. Waitlist is updated weekly. Waitlist is currently at Zero.
<b>05.</b> Health & Safety updates and concerns	Danna Breeden	Florida Department of Health is no longer making recommendations regarding COVID-19. FDOH Working to increase awareness of small children drowning. Prevention. Funding has been made available. Special focus for children with autism as they are at a greater risk.  Provider Town Hall was scheduled for 9/12/2023 at 130 p.m. Continued Education Unit (CEU) will continue to be offered by ELC. Nurses Town Hall will be conducted on the second Tuesday every other month.
<b>06.</b> CLASS Assessment SR and VPK Provider Contracts	Cheryl Carpenter	Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) will be done first then VPK School Readiness (SR) with final (SR) Number of assessments done in YR 22-23 757 and for YR 23-24 808 are projected. VPK had Rule change to provide a hold harmless for one year for providers not meeting the required CLASS scores.  ELC contract with Teachstone will run through December 2023. ELC has no plans to renew at this time due to price increase. Cost has doubled. ELC will no longer be considering exemptions. Every provider will be assessed.
<b>07.</b> Child Assessment and ASQ updates	Bronwyn Gogia	Child Assessment for the Child Assessment Differential through Teaching Strategies, we started with 77 providers, 1 closed and 1 left voluntarily. Of the providers left in the program, 20 have not qualified with the percentage of staff certified as reliable on the Teaching Strategies Assessment. For this program 75% of teaching staff must be certified reliable on the assessment. This leaves 55 providers in the Child Assessment Differential program.
<b>08.</b> Training updates, Provider Profiles	Brenda Griffin	The training calendar is being updated as new training is needed. Reminders are sent out a week prior to scheduled training. VPK Child Assessment, the URL used by the state, has changed. All profiles are complete, but providers are still having difficulties with

		login and usernames. We found that all teachers must update their usernames, and passwords. Once changes are updated Providers will continue assessments. We have been available to assist providers with updating their information to continue assessments. Literacy Buddy Program is recruiting for the kickoff scheduled for November 2023.
<b>09. Open Discussion</b>	Michele King	Dr. Melanie shared that the Lasing Group would like to establish a focus group on the topic of Numeracy & Math, Dr. Melanie asked for 8 to 9 providers to volunteer.
<b>10. Next Meeting</b>	Michele King	Next meeting is scheduled for October 27, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.
<b>11. Adjournment</b>	Michele King	Meeting adjournment 10:46 a.m.

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