



# EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

**Program Committee Meeting  
Minutes Friday, October 27, 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.</b> Welcome	Michele King	Meeting called to order @ 9:07 a.m. by Michele King followed by attendee introductions

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<b>02. Approve:</b> Meeting Minutes for September 08, 2023	Michele King	Motion to approve meeting minutes for September 8, 2023, Motion: Heather Singleton Second: Rita Dellatore
<b>03.</b> Quality and Grant Updates	Leona Adkins	ARPA Discretionary Grant will be released in phases due to the size of the grant and the many components. Defined different component areas.
<b>04.</b> Enrollments and Waitlist; Program updates	Gilda Duran	Currently reassessing Match-funding program to help target and bring in families right below the 200% federal poverty level. SR has now been included in the successful VPK campaign.  Current enrollments: Total SR = 5565 (Collier 1362, Hendry 439, Glades 112, Lee 3752), Total VPK = 6102 (Collier 1374, Hendry 358, Glades 0, Lee 4370). Currently No Waitlist as applicants is pulled from the list weekly for enrollments
<b>05.</b> Health & Safety updates and concerns	Danna Breeden	Brenda Griffin reported for Danna Breeden:  There has been an uptick in RSV and FLU. COVID reports are on the decline.
<b>06.</b> CLASS Assessment SR and VPK Provider Contracts	Cheryl Carpenter	Program Assessments are increasing due to increased enrollments. The new VPK rule was passed by the State Board of Education (effective mid-November). We are providing Spanish speaking observers for Spanish speaking providers. Providers that score below 4 will have 30 days to report that they would like to have a 2nd paid reassessment. VPK is allowed 3 VPK calendar black-out dates
<b>07.</b> Child Assessment and ASQ updates	Bronwyn Gogia	ASQs: Up to September 2023 - 20 Child Referrals (14 Lee County, 5 Collier County, 1 Hendry County). Early Steps Referrals 1st Quarter: 20 Early Steps, 23 FDLRS; Child Assessments: 53 Providers - TS Gold Assessments - Last day: 10/31/23; VPK: 856 Not assessed for 1st progress monitoring - sending out Non-compliances; 72% scored below 690 with 28% scoring above 690. Benchmarks: PM1 57.79%, On-watch 12%, Intervention 16.5%, Urgent 12.98%. Will also re-send out Teachstone virtual classes constant contact.
<b>08.</b> Training updates, Provider Profiles	Brenda Griffin	Currently in the process of adding all new training to the calendar. Literacy Buddy letters are being mailed out today. 1000 children / 526 Volunteers. Books are scheduled to go out to children in November, February, and April.

<b>09. Open Discussion</b>	Michele King	Dr. Melanie is working on local match funding; Senate Bill 120 Introduced; Provider rates: statewide studies are being performed, funding is available to raise rates during the study; Goal is to create community awareness as VPK applicants are unaware of what SR service provide to children. Adding SR to the current VPK Campaign / Working on Branding; Goal is to be 100% by 2030.
<b>10. Next Meeting</b>	Michele King	Next meeting is scheduled for January 12, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.
<b>11. Adjournment</b>	Michele King	Meeting adjournment 10:56 a.m.

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