

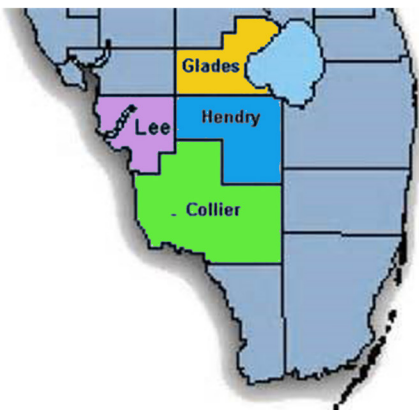
Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida

Supports Our Youngest Learners Amid the Pandemic Through February 2021



The Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida (ELCSWFL) through the Office of Early Learning (OEL), has allocated more than **\$10.6 million** to support Southwest Florida's youngest learners. These funds, from Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF), General Revenue (GR), Preschool Development Grant (PDG), and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), were used to provide the resources and support needed to help providers remain open or re-open as soon as they could safely do so. A description of ELCSWFL's responses to provide resources and supports to both families and childcare providers in Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee Counties is below. Each of the supports provided is consistent with the following principles:

\$10.6 MILLION
to support children ages birth - 5



- ♥ Strategically rebuild the early childhood education and care field with an emphasis on quality providers.
- ♥ Provide local childcare providers with flexibility, as appropriate to leverage established partnerships and available resources.
- ♥ Redirect existing federal discretionary funding, as appropriate, to support families and providers.
- ♥ Enhance the early childhood education and care workforce through incentives to gain new skills and expand existing skills, competency, and professionalism.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

ELCSWFL implemented the following actions to provide support to both School Readiness (SR) and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) families and childcare providers.

Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) March - December 2020

- Spring 2020: Distributed to providers **\$2.384 million** in mini grants to meet infrastructure, cleaning, and supply needs as well as teacher training stipends. Directly distributed cleaning supplies.
- March – August 15, 2020: Suspended termination of SR childcare services, and extended timelines for submission of paperwork by parents to maintain eligibility for families.
- May – October 2020: Provided flexibility for eligibility for SR childcare by adding “job search” as a purpose for care for families.
- April – December 2020: Waived required SR copayments for parents and reimbursed SR (birth-age 5 and school age programs) based on enrollment as opposed to attendance.

Preschool Development Grant (PDG) \$201,435

The PDG funds, designed to strengthen Florida's overall early childhood system to improve quality early learning experiences for children, were redirected to provide mini grants to support the provision of mental health services to childcare staff and the families they serve, as well as provided support for the use of high-quality curriculum by SR providers.

General Revenue Funds (GR) \$2.16M

April-September 2020: Reimbursed SR/VPK providers based on enrollment as opposed to attendance.



CARES ACT RESPONSE

The information below describes ELCSWFL's use of the CARES ACT funds to support our service area's childcare providers and the families they serve.

CHILD CARE FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS - \$2,944,928



In April 2020, ELCSWFL, in coordination with the Office of Early Learning gave priority access to childcare services for health care and first responder professionals. This provided expedited access and referrals for children of first responders and health care workers. More than **130** eligible early learning/childcare providers with SR contracts received a monthly bonus/incentive of **\$500** per child (with a maximum limit of **\$12,000** per provider location).

“At a time when we could find nothing in the stores, and on-line was impossible to get, the coalition provided us with so many PPE items. We are very grateful.

- Josanna Ward, Odyssey Preschool Academy”

FOUR GRANT PHASES TO MORE THAN 320 CHILD CARE PROVIDERS \$2,935,629



Phase 1

Emergency Child Care Relief Grants for Early Learning/Child Care Providers: **\$1,515,225**
SR, VPK, and non-contracted providers that were open for business as of April 30, 2020 received grants to continue their services. These providers may have had intermittent closures, and providers that closed permanently after April 30, 2020 were not eligible for these funds.



Phase 2

High-Quality Reopening Support Grants for Early Learning/Child Care Providers: **\$375,000**
SR, VPK, and non-contracted providers that were closed on April 30, 2020 and reopened by August 31, 2020 received grants. These providers were required to have a Gold Seal designation or a program assessment (CLASS score) of 3.5 or higher.



Phase 3

Contracted SR/VPK Providers: **\$443,404**
SR and VPK providers, including contracted public/charter school providers and program assessment (CLASS) exempt providers that were closed on April 30, 2020 and reopened by August 31, 2020 received grants to assist in reopening during the COVID-19 crisis.



Phase 4

Additional Support to Providers: **\$602,000**
SR and VPK providers operational/open on October 15, 2020 were provided additional funding to assist them in remaining open during the COVID-19 crisis.

