

School Readiness



Children who are ready for kindergarten are primed for success. School readiness programs are offered to income-eligible families and others to ensure they receive the best start possible on their education journey. School Readiness offers developmental screening and age-appropriate curriculum to prepare preschoolers for Kindergarten. When children attend good preschools, parents are free to work or to complete their education.



6,652 children received services at 222 different early learning programs in any given month.



Early Childhood Specialists

The Early Childhood Specialists have conducted provider training sessions, completed technical assistance visits, conducted teacher observations and assessments, provided one-on-one coaching support for teachers, and supported providers in implementing best practices around all four counties.

Additionally, the ECS team supported and coached over 250 providers through the implementation of the new web-based statewide data system, Florida's Early Learning Provider Services Portal, where they completed the Provider Profile and their SR/VPK contracts.



Child Care Resource & Referral

Child Care Resource & Referral is a free service which helps families find quality childcare. CCR&R also assists families in choosing before and after school programs or summer education programs.

We received 11,267 requests for child care information from families regarding School Readiness, Voluntary Prekindergarten and child care services.

Voluntary Prekindergarten

The VPK program is a free to all Florida families. In 2002, voters approved a ballot initiative for a high-quality prekindergarten program for every 4-year old (and sometimes 5-year olds). There are no income requirements to attend up to 540 hours of preschool during the regular school year, or 300 hours of summertime preschool. The VPK program helps preschool children get ready for kindergarten --the start of their education journey. 8,671 children attended 305 different VPK programs in our 4-county region. This includes children served by the Redlands Christian Migrant Association.



Professional Development

Our coalition recognizes that professional development is an important component of quality early care and education for young children. The State of Florida has adopted the Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners. The program defines a set of knowledge and skill standards that are necessary for those who work directly with children. We support that effort by offering a variety of training opportunities. 1,171 teachers participated in 73 trainings.



Southwest Florida Stars



Southwest Florida Stars is a voluntary Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) used to improve and communicate the level of quality in early childhood programs. Southwest Florida Stars rates child care centers and family child care homes through a process of site visits and off-site data collection resulting in a 1 to 5 star rating. 38 early learning programs voluntarily participated in this rating system. 12 programs reached a 5-star rating.



Literacy Buddy Program

The Literacy Buddy Program works with volunteers to provide books to 3, 4 & 5 year old children in preschools overseen by our coalition. The program also encourages children to take their first steps toward reading and writing by corresponding with their adult volunteer. The books provided by the volunteer are for the child to keep. The exchange of books and letters happens three times during the school year. 1,260 children wrote letters to 916 adult volunteers to tell them about their interests and received a total of 3,780 books.

Inclusion

Warm Line

866-863-1366

Inclusion Warm Line is a free support, information and referral service for families of children with special needs or disabilities in our 4-county region.

The Inclusion Coordinator is available for on-site environmental technical assistance, educational support for programming, teacher and challenging behavior observations.



Our Inclusion Coordinator provided technical assistance to community child care providers and teachers through 591 phone conferences and conducted 231 on-site facility observations, 322 program visits for specific concerns, 64 collaborative conferences with other agencies, and 91 individual conferences with families.

Performance Funding Project

This project offers additional School Readiness funding to Providers based on improvements in quality using the Classroom Assessment System (CLASS). When training activities are met, providers can expect to realize a tiered reimbursement of 3-10% extra per School Readiness child depending on the CLASS score. Quality improvement strategies are used. Strategies may include the following:

- Making the Most of Classroom Interactions - PreK is 20 hours, Infant/Toddler is 24 hours
- SR Teacher Training - 2 courses
- Locally developed IACET (International Association of Continuing Education and Training - by which we are certified) approved courses
- Certified coaching - minimum 20 hours/classroom
- Professional Development Pathway progress - toward a certification, credential or degree in Early Childhood

The Performance Funding Project prepares providers for the 2019-2020 contracting year. All providers must reach a minimum CLASS score to be able to contract with the Early Learning Coalition for School Readiness. Providers will be placed in tiers and will be eligible for tiered reimbursement in addition to regular School Readiness payment. 38 Providers are now participating.





A Message from our CEO

Dear Friends:

Our 2017-2018 Annual Report is an update on our organizational performance for this past year. As you can see by the sheer numbers, we reach a big portion of our community in our work with children and families. As part of a statewide system designed to assure access to high quality early learning programs, we are

committed to this work and strive to improve our efforts each year.

This is an exciting time for early learning. New standards for program quality of School Readiness programs are being implemented and in the coming years, providers will be paid more for high quality programs. We are proud of our early learning community and the willingness of our caring, professionals to respond to this challenge. Voluntary Prekindergarten continues to offer all of Florida's children the opportunity for a free, preschool experience. The end result of this work - better programs and children who are more prepared for kindergarten!

Many thanks to our Board of Directors who come from many walks of life and provide the ELC the benefit of their knowledge and time. We are grateful for the hard working ELC staff who keep pace with many, big changes - like a new portal to provide greater efficiencies for all our work. The collective impact of work in our region, connecting early learning with the workforce and economic development, helps us to broaden the message about the importance of high quality early learning and why it is so important.

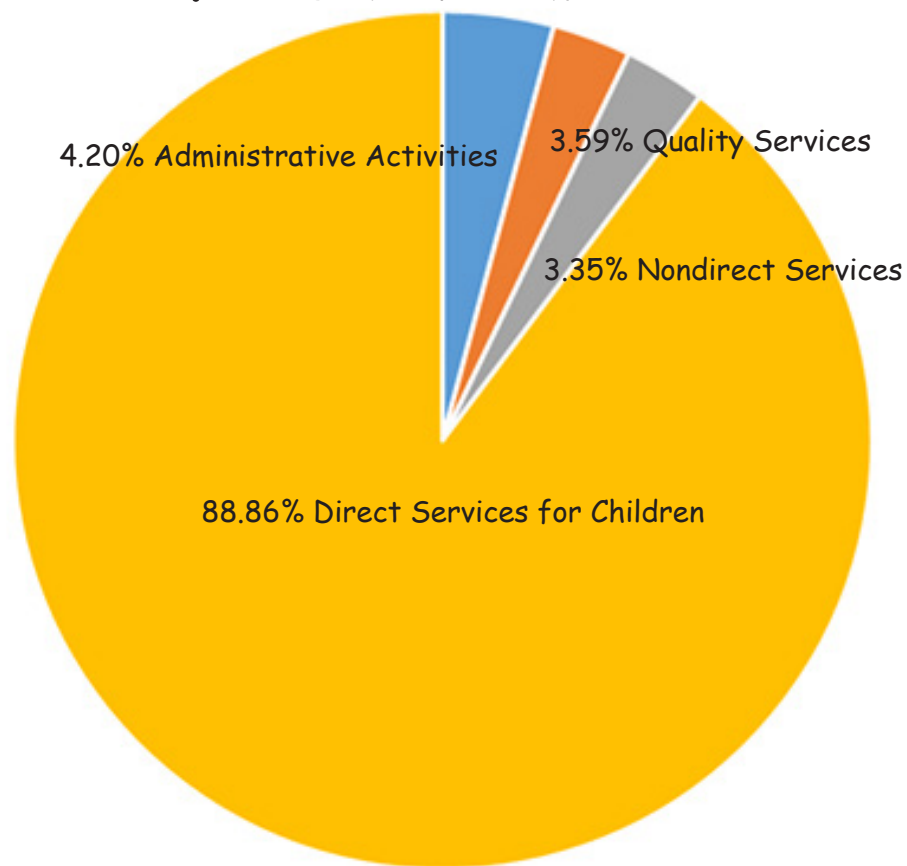
Here's to another great year!

Susan E. Block, Ed.M.

2017 - 2018 Fiscal Year

Details of Expenditures

Administrative Activities:	\$1,770,405.00
Quality Services:	\$1,513,825.00
Nondirect Services:	\$1,409,793.00
Direct Services for Children:	\$37,428,827.00
Total:	\$42,122,850.00



Board of Directors

Our Board Chair



Dear Early Learning Supporters,
At the ELC of SWFL, we take great pride in "nurturing the young children of Southwest Florida and those who care for them!" I am proud to share with you The ELC of SWFL's 2017-2018 Annual Report. The report emphasizes the accomplishments of the past year. Highlights of this year included implementation of a new provider portal, increased enrollment of School Readiness children and expansion of our Literacy Buddy Program.

In addition to our work on behalf of young children, we work throughout Southwest Florida to share the importance of early learning as an economic driver, both in the short and long term. I encourage you to follow us on www.ELCofSWFL.org, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Victor Mraz
Interim Board Chair

2017-2018 Board Members

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Susan Block, Ed. M.
Chief Executive Officer
Ex Officio



EARLY LEARNING
COALITION
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Annual Report 2017 - 2018



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