Early Learning Coalition Southwest Florida
"Position on Quality in
Early Care and Education"
June 2013

The Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida takes the position that the quality of early care and education is of the highest imperative. Kindergarten is too late. A strong and growing body of evidence in support of high quality early care and education continues to support the need to improve the quality of programs for children birth through age 5:

- Better literacy results and overall academic improvements for those attending pre-K over those who didn't (Lipsey, 2011);
- Helps to bridge the literacy gap between children from low socioeconomic backgrounds and those with greater means (Hustedt, 2007; Lamy, 2005) ;
- Longitudinal studies indicate strong high school graduation and reduced crime rates (Reynolds, 2001; Schweinhart, 1993) ;
- Reduces grade retention and special education (Barnett, 2013);
- Reversing the childhood obesity trend (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2012);
- Leading economists support properly funded investment in early childhood programs as a sound economic investment strategy with a large return on investment (Rolnick, 2003; Heckman, 2013).

In order to implement a program of high quality early care and learning, these elements are needed (Mission Readiness: Military Leaders for Kids, 2013):

- Highly skill teachers with appropriate compensation
- Comprehensive and age-appropriate curricula
- Strong family involvement and effective parent coaching;
- Higher staff-to-child ratios to ensure each child gets sufficient attention
- Small, age appropriate class sizes and;
- Screening and referral services for development, health or behavior problems[7]

If we wait until children go to kindergarten to make the investment we miss a valuable opportunity. Investing in high quality early care and education is essential to ensure that our children are well educated in both the short and long term! Kindergarten is too late. Join us as a supporter of high quality early care and education, for children birth to age 5, today!

- ☐ Community members - contact your state and federal legislators and educate them on the importance of high quality early care and education.

For a full bibliography, go to www.elcofswfl.org

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