

Minutes of a Meeting of the Program Committee of Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida.

January 3rd, 2025

Time and Place of Meeting

A meeting of the Program Committee of Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida was held on January 3rd, 2025, commencing at approximately 9:00am EST at the primary offices located at 2675 Winkler Avenue, Suite 300, Fort Myers, Florida. A virtual option was provided to participants via Microsoft Teams.

Call to Order

Michele King presided as Chairman of the meeting; Melanie Stefanowicz served as secretary of the meeting and kept the minutes. Ms. King called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00am EST.

Agenda

Welcome & Public Comment

Welcome & Public Comment was presented. No one from the public attended and there was no public comment.

Meeting Agenda Adoption

The Meeting Agenda was presented for Adoption. Motion was made by Jamie Slack to adopt the agenda and seconded by Ana Neuhauser. The agenda was adopted.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes were presented. Motion was made by Amanda Thomas to approve the minutes and seconded by Ana Neuhauser. The Program Committee unanimously approved the meeting minutes for November 1, 2024.

Program Services Department Updates

Gilda Duran, Chief Program Officer, presented updates from the Program Services Department. A full discussion followed. No action was required.

- **SR enrollment 4,742 children and 2,893 families**
- Collier enrollment: 1,187
- Hendry enrollment: 324
- Glades enrollment: 19
- Lee enrollment: 3,212
- VPK applications for calendar year 2024: 9,567
- **VPK enrollment: 6,842**
- Collier enrollment: 1,713
- Hendry enrollment: 350

- Glades enrollment: 58
- Lee enrollment: 4,721
- The VPK enrollment window for the 2025 calendar year opened on January 1, 2025 and the Coalition has received 237 VPK applications as of January 3, 2025.
- We continue to clear the wait list on a weekly basis.
- The Coalition received 9,208 Child Care Resource & Referral inquiries during the calendar year 2024.
- The Program Department is working on an aggressive outreach plan to include marketing School Readiness.

Early Childhood Education Department

Cheryl Carpenter, Director of Early Childhood Education Department was presented the updates from the Early Childhood Department. A full discussion followed. No formal action was taken or required.

- CLASS assessments will resume in January and will be conducted by Teachstone, the Children's Forum, and the Early Childhood Specialists.
- We are 47.5% complete with CLASS assessments with 380 observations completed.
- Comparative CLASS score data was shared showing the distribution of scores by provider type.

Contracts and Professional Development

The section, Contracts and Professional Development, was presented by Brenda Griffin, Director of Professional Development. A full discussion followed. No formal action was taken or required.

- 41 participants completed the Pyramid Model training series which included five training sessions and a Community of Practice
- Humana Health completed a book drive in December. The book drive ended with Humana employees reading at 2 sites and donated over 150 books for children to take home and donated to the center for their library.
- The Early Childhood Specialists are creating new trainings to submit for approval to add to the training calendar. The trainings are based on the feedback from provider surveys.
- The ELC was nominated by Pi Beta Phi and received a \$2000 book grant to buy books from First Book to distribute as part of our literacy program.
- Pi Beta Phi is hosting a Dr. Seuss book drive during the months of December and January. They will collect Dr. Seuss books during their holiday celebrations to be given to children during readings at 2 sites dressed as the Cat in the Hat in honor of Dr. Seuss's birthday which is March 2nd.
- The 2nd cohort Lena Grow training has finished and the 3rd is expected to start mid-January. If providers are interested, they can call or email before February 28th.
- Since our last meeting we have signed contracts with 16 new SR providers to sign and 5 VPK providers.
- Health and Safety updates were shared by Daana Breeden.

Assessment and Screening

The section, Assessment and Screening, was presented by Bronwyn Gogia, Director of Assessment and Screening. A full discussion followed. No formal action was taken or required.

- The winter checkpoint for Teaching Strategies was reviewed. There are 49 providers participating in this initiative and two providers have completed.
- The 2nd VPK FAST assessment window is open and the calendar dates for this window vary by individual provider VPK Calendars.
- A total of 8% of our VPK children have been assessed for the Mid-Year Assessment. Of these assessed children, 80% are At or Above the Benchmark, 10% are On Watch, and 10% are needing Intervention.
- For Progress Monitoring 1, 62% of the children were At or Above the Benchmark, 14% were On Watch and 24% were needing Intervention.
- Child Screenings - A total of 203 children screened with the ASQ3 screener, 132 screened with the Social Emotional Screener for a total of 335 screenings completed.
- Individual Learning Plans for these children in the Concern Area.

Strategic Plan Update

The section, Strategic Plan Update, was presented by Coalition staff members. A full discussion followed. No formal action was taken or required.

The Ready Together Alliance initiative was discussed, and the community of practice structure was shared. The pilot for this initiative will begin in the area feeding into Orangewood Elementary. Kickoff meetings are in the planning process.

The Summer Bridge program was shared. This program is the result of legislation that was adopted during 2024 session. School districts must provide a summer learning opportunity for those children scoring in the lowest 10% on the VPK Assessment. The second administration of the VPK FAST will be used as a predictor of those children who may be eligible.

An update on the progress of the Homeschool Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPOY) program was shared. Coalition staff are working with collective impact partners to see how we can implement this program in SWFL.

Legislative session begins in April. The Coalition is asking for providers to share success and family stories that can be used in advocacy materials and presentations.

Hurricane Ian Disaster Relief Funding - we are waiting for the DEL to release information regarding this grant funding opportunity.

New Business | Open Discussion

No new business was presented.

Next Meeting:

The section, Next Meeting:, was presented. A full discussion followed. No formal action was taken or required.

Next Meeting; Adjournment

There being no further business, upon motion from Jamie Slack and second from Ana Neuhauser, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:15 a.m. EST. The next meeting was scheduled for March 7, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. EST.

Respectfully submitted,