EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF MANATEE COUNTY, INC.
ANNUAL REPORT
JULY 1, 2007 - JUNE 30, 2008
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EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF MANATEE COUNTY, INC.

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Our Mission...
To Provide School Readiness Programs that help all children develop the skills needed to achieve future educational success and to support the role of parents as their child’s first and most important teacher.

Our Vision...
Our community will support high quality early care and education opportunities for all children and their families, understanding that it is in the first years of life that a child’s future educational success is determined.

Coalition Staff
2007 - 2008

Linda Jimenez
Executive Director

Katharine Kissinger
Staff Assistant

Carol Wyeth
Finance Manager

Valerie Walton
Program Manager

Vickie Belke
Administrative Assistant

Lisa Nathanson
Contract Manager

Jennifer Caccia
VPK Specialist

Susan Crowley
Infant/Toddler Specialist

Jay Burnell
Resource Development

Cheryl Francis
VPK Specialist

Ashley May
Inclusion Specialist

Lissa Ledbetter
Early Learning Program Supervisor

Brenda Babeu
Early Learning Program Supervisor

Liz Zaccagnino
Outreach & Quality Initiatives Coordinator

Nancy Wilben
VPK Specialist

Fran Padilla
Early Literacy/Community Outreach

Dave Span
Finance Manager

Danielle St. Andre
Behavioral Specialist
OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS
JULY 2007 – JUNE 2008

Dr. J. Brian Murphy
Chair
The Eye Center
Gov. Appointment

Gary Bogart
Private Sector
Jake’s Automotive
Gov. Appointment
(July – April)

Dr. Chrissie Budd
Legislatively Required
Head Start

Peggy Connell
Children with Disabilities Rep

Sandra Edmondson
Legislatively Required
Manatee County Health Dept.

Janet Hamstra
Faith Based Childcare Rep

Carol Hunt
Conditional Member
Resource Connection for Kids

Annette Larkin
Center Based Childcare Rep

Peter Lear
Private Sector
Secretary/Treasurer
CPA Associates
(July-October)

Dianne Kopczynski
Private Sector
Secretary/Treasurer
CPA Associates
(October – June)

William Lee
Private Sector
Sysco
Gov. Appointment

Jahna Leinhauser
Private Sector
Manatee Chamber of Commerce
(October – June)

Karen Magee
Private Sector
Karen Magee and Associates

Janice Mee
Legislatively Required
Regional Workforce Board Appointee

Adam Mohammadbhoy
Private Sector
Vice Chair
Harlee & Bald, PA

Paulette Pace
Private Sector
Attorney

Jennifer Passmore
Board of County Commissioners’ Appointee

Dr. Kathy Stuckey
Manatee Community College

Ron Russell
School Board Superintendent Designee

Mary Beth Wehnes
Legislatively Required
Dept. of Children and Families
History of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County

The School Readiness Act of 1999 recognized that school readiness programs increase children’s chances of success in school and in life. In keeping with the research that gave rise to the legislation, and recognizing the needs of the Manatee County community, the Manatee County Local School Readiness Coalition, a 501c(3) organization, was established in 2000. The initial purpose of the Coalition was to implement the provisions of the School Readiness Act: to establish integrated and quality service delivery of publicly funded early care and education programs in Manatee County.

In January 2005, with the enactment of HB1A, the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program, the scope and responsibilities of the Coalition were expanded. The Coalition made the transition from the procedures and philosophy of the Partnership for School Readiness to the Agency for Workforce Innovation and the Office of Early Learning.

The Coalition, known as the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, has, in the years since its creation, continued to mature and evolve in many aspects: organization, fiscal management, visibility, and strength and involvement of board members.

The growth of the Coalition as the leader in early education and care in Manatee County is reflected in the decisive steps made by the Board: strategic planning to foster goals and objectives, diversification of contracting opportunities, innovative programs, internal management of services, and a continual emphasis on improving the education and care provided to our children.
Greetings! On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, and partners of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, Inc, we are pleased to present our Annual Report of early learning services provided to the children and families in Manatee County in Fiscal Year 2007-2008. The Coalition continues to focus on our mission to coordinate the services in early learning programs in an efficient manner in order to help all children develop the skills needed to achieve future educational success, to support the role of parents as their first and most important teacher, and continue to improve the quality of services available in the community.

Our vision, to support high quality school readiness opportunities for all children and their families, is built on the understanding that it is in the first years of life that a child’s future educational success is determined. This vision is shared and supported by our community providers, partners and business leaders in Manatee County.

In Fiscal Year 2007-2008, the Coalition entered into service contracts with three local agencies to support this mission and vision and we acknowledge their contributions and support:
- Manatee Community Action Agency—School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten services
- Manatee Community College—Professional development of early learning providers
- Family Partnership Center—Parent education programs to promote family involvement and the well-being of children.

The Coalition also acknowledges the contributions from Manatee County and United Way who provide the County Match funds needed to ensure that our at-risk children continue to receive the School Readiness services they need to become healthy, eager and successful learners. We also acknowledge the teachers, directors, and staff of our Manatee County Early Learning Programs who ensure that our children and families receive the highest quality of early education and care in our community.

Through these collective efforts, in Fiscal Year 2007-2008, we provided School Readiness Services to 3,501 At-Risk children, from birth to age 12, and Voluntary Prekindergarten services to 2,360 4-year-olds. On behalf of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, Community Partners and Providers, we look forward to working together on behalf of the children and families we serve and to increase the quality, quantity and capacity of early learning programs in Manatee County in the upcoming year.

Sincerely,

Paul Sharff, Chair
Overview of Programs

Fiscal year 2007-2008 continued to be another successful year of growth in the programs and services of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, in collaboration with their community partners, business leaders, and early learning providers, in the provision of high quality early learning services for the children and families in Manatee County.

The Coalition continued to support their vision, mission and goals for delivery of their School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten programs in partnership with Manatee Community Action Agency (Resource Connection for Kids), Manatee Community College, and the Manatee Family Partnership Center. The Coalition continued their implementation and management of the Quality Initiative program, to monitor program compliance, providing specialized services for programs serving Infants and Toddlers, promoting Inclusive Child Care for children with special needs, educating parents and supporting and developing early learning providers.

As a result of the growth of program operations, Coalition administrative staff was expanded to meet fiscal as well as program operational needs. In addition to a Finance Manager, hired to provide management and oversight of the Coalition’s fiscal operations, an Outreach and Quality Initiatives Coordinator joined the Coalition staff to serve as the liaison to community based task forces, ensure management of quality initiative programs, and assist in outreach efforts designed to recruit employers for the Child Care Executive Partnership Program. All quality initiative services formerly contracted as well as VPK provider enrollment, training, and monitoring was also directly managed by Coalition staff beginning in July 2007.

The visibility of the Coalition in the community continued to increase, with staff speaking at several service organizations as well participation in the local annual Children’s Summit, Children’s Week, and the Governor’s First State Children’s Summit.

The Coalition continued to prioritize the critical need for healthy and safe environments and quality programs for the children in Manatee County, with the development of School Readiness Provider Contracts with minimum standards and expected outcomes for all early learning providers receiving School Readiness funds. The Coalition recognizes the County Commission and local municipalities in their continued efforts in the development of a local licensing ordinance for all unlicensed and license-exempt early learning programs, as well as Manatee County and United Way for their contributions toward the School Readiness and Child Care Purchasing Pool Match funds.

The Coalition acknowledges their Partners who provided contracted services in Fiscal Year 2007-2008 on behalf of the children and families in Manatee County. Services for Child Care Resource and Referral, Eligibility and Enrollment, Provider Payments, Quality Assurance Services, and Child Health Services were provided by the Manatee Community Action Agency, Resource Connection for Kids (RC4K). The Quality Assurance component, including scholarships, articulation of continuing education credit, and training and technical assistance to school readiness providers, was delivered by Manatee Community College. And the Family Partnership of Manatee County provided family involvement and parent education services to the families in Manatee County to promote the importance and primary role of families in the healthy development and education of their children. The Coalition provided VPK Provider Outreach, Enrollment and Monitoring Services; Infant and Toddler, Family Literacy, Inclusion and Behavior Specialists; Child Care Executive Partnership Outreach and Awareness; Quality Enhancement Initiatives; and Administrative oversight to all VPK and School Readiness Services. The following provides an overview and analysis on these programs and services.
Resource and Referral Enrollment Management Services

In FY2007-2008, the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County contracted with the Manatee Community Action Agency (MCBA) in the amount of $255,571, to deliver Child Care Resource and Referral services as part of the larger integrated system of early care and education in the Manatee community. Serving as the portal for entry into early care and education programs, families were provided information, connections, and resources to "do what it takes" to make child care work for their children.

MCBA met the conditions specified in the ELC approved plan and in accordance with section 411.01, Florida Statute and other applicable state and federal laws; and provided services to meet the major program goals identified in the Resource and Referral and Enrollment Management Services contract.

During the course of the year, Resource Connection for Kids (MCBA) helped parents sort through child care options and assisted them in recognizing and selecting quality child care; provided start up information to new and potential child care providers; assisted current providers by providing technical assistance and support; maintained a database of information on community child care services; and provided technical assistance to employers seeking services for employees or considering a child care benefit.

1,309 unduplicated families received resource and referral services during the contract period resulting in 2,610 referrals. As each referral generally consists of at least 5 early childhood providers meeting the needs of the family, a total of 9,485 individual referrals were provided.

During the interview process, families may request a variety of services based on the needs and/or ages of their children. The majority of referrals were provided to families with one adult (73%) verses a two adult family (27%). 14% of families seeking referrals contacted Resource Connection for Kids for additional services during the year. Only 14 families requested services for a child with special needs, reporting developmental delay as the most frequent unique need.

Reason for Care: Families cited 1,300 reasons for seeking child care services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Care</th>
<th>863</th>
<th>66%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment/working</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/child need</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relocation</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer asked to leave</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job search</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver no longer available</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost too high</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhappy with quality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>less than 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top four issues families reported to be of concern when seeking child care services were the quality of services (34%), affordability of services (34%), location of services (12%), and the schedule of service availability (9%).
Statistical data on child care referrals are used to determine community child care needs, and to assist potential providers in the development of services. The following information reflects actual requests and/or demographics of families seeking services during the past year.

**Type of Care Requested:** Families requested a variety of child care settings resulting in 2,059 referrals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child care center</th>
<th>1332</th>
<th>65%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family child care home</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School age program</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large family child care</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer camp</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Age of Children:** Referrals were requested for 2,120 children

```
Infant   316   15%
1 year old 292   14%
2 year old 279   13%
3 year old 251   12%
4 year old 195   9%
5 year old 142   7%
School age elementary 489 23%
School age middle 124  6%
Unborn 32  2%
```

**Request by Type of Care:** Families requested 2,610 referrals for services to be delivered based on a variety of hours, days and frequency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full time care</td>
<td>1,120</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full year care</td>
<td>1,053</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After school care</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening care</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before school</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 hour care</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer only</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>less than 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>less than 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both full and part</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>less than 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop in care</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>less than 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School year</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>less than 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overnight</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>less than 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation/holidays</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>less than 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An additional responsibility included the management of the Manatee County database of existing child care providers and programs with the goal of documenting the many changes that occur as new programs start and other programs close. The child care provider listing is consistently updated because parents need accurate information. Hundreds of updates are made each year as child care programs move, open, close and change their services for families. The following information reflects data related to available services by type of child care provider.
Community Child Care Capacity: The capacity of child care services fluctuated with 60 new providers opening for services, 47 providers closing, resulting in a net gain of 13 new providers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Child Care Provider</th>
<th>Average # Open</th>
<th>Average Total Capacity</th>
<th>4th Qtr Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered Family Child Care Home</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Family Child Care Home</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Exempt Child Care Center</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2176</td>
<td>1209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Child Care Center</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>7619</td>
<td>6062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed School Age Only Provider</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>6119</td>
<td>1307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Exempt School Age Only Provider</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5268</td>
<td>2320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Start Centers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>22,689</td>
<td>17,051</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note: The 4th quarter data does not reflect the enrollment of licensed school age only providers which are typically housed in public school buildings and generally closed during June. As a result, the enrollment verses capacity is somewhat skewed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Weekly Rate by Provider Type for Full Time Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 year old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Age - PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 year old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Age - PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 year old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Age - PT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 year old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Age - PT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community Child Care Services: Family child care home providers and child care centers provide a variety of services to meet the needs of families. The chart below represents the percentage of providers delivering the listed services in 2007-2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Child Care Provider</th>
<th>Full Time Care</th>
<th>Part Time Care</th>
<th>Infant Care</th>
<th>School Age Care</th>
<th>Evening Care</th>
<th>Overnight Care</th>
<th>Weekend Care</th>
<th>Emergency Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered Family Child Care Home</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Family Child Care Home</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Exempt Child Care Center</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Child Care Center</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fiscal and Administrative Services and Slot Management

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County Contracted with MCAA (Resource Connection for Kids) in FY07-08 to provide Fiscal and Administrative Services and Slot Management of the School Readiness child care funds in the amount of $7,684,152. Key functional areas of this service include:

- Provide access to financial assistant to eligible families to the maximum extent possible, as funding permits and in accordance with statutory and local priorities;
- Support school readiness providers in their ability to maintain financial viability by making accurate and on-time payments for services provided to eligible families; and
- Secure and manage the required local match necessary to meet federal and state requirements.

Resource Connection for Kids provided eligibility and enrollment services for families on a daily basis, during routine office hours, with families accessing services by appointment or on a walk-in basis. During the year, the Child Care Resource Specialists determined eligibility, enrolled, re-enrolled, transferred, terminated, or re-certified families representing a total of 6,993 children. In addition, 1,085 families reported a job or income change, and 1,275 families met with a Specialist to discuss other miscellaneous changes. A total of 9,107 families signed in to be assisted with services during the year.

Children Enrolled: The data provides an overview of child enrollment in the school readiness, financially assisted program. The average daily enrollment for the year was 2,129.

![Child Enrollment by Month]

During the course of the year, a total of 3,473 unduplicated children were served through the school readiness program. Basic demographics of the children served are as follows:

![Ages Served]
A challenge for income eligible families is the waiting list for service which often requires more than a year wait. Priority is provided for TANF and At Risk eligible families, and during the contract year, no waiting period existed for those families meeting priority eligibility. All children, birth to twelve years of age, and those with special needs up to seventeen years, were placed into care from the waiting list chronologically. Income eligible children who were eleven or twelve years of age, without special needs, were required to have a younger sibling receiving subsidized child care services, for placement into the program.

### School Readiness Family Information

- Average income: $20,860
- Average family size: 3.45
- Average education level: 11.5
- Average age of parent: 31.18
Children Enrolled: The data below provides an overview of child enrollment in the school readiness program by OCA and BG categories. During the course of the year, a total of 3,473 unduplicated children were served through the school readiness program. The average daily enrollment for the year was 2,129. The number of children served in each OCA category is greater than the unduplicated count as children move from one category to another throughout the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BG Group</th>
<th>OCA</th>
<th>Child Count</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BG1 Protective Services</td>
<td>97ROO</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>$1,157,468.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG3 TANF</td>
<td>97GNW</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>$350,399.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG3R TANF At Risk</td>
<td>97GNW</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>$71,408.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG3T TANF</td>
<td>97GNW</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>$157,399.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG3W TANF Refugee</td>
<td>97GOO</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>$68,012.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG5 Transitional Child Care</td>
<td>97GOO</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>$663,985.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG5SNT Special Needs Teen</td>
<td>97GOO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$4,526.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG8 Working Poor</td>
<td>97POO</td>
<td>2154</td>
<td>$4,817,765.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCPB Child Care Purchasing Pool</td>
<td>97PPO</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>$680,902.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4163</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,971,858.29</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Child Health and Developmental Services

In FY2007-2008 the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County contracted with MCAA, in the amount of $388,866 to provide Child Health and Developmental Services which were delivered based on several functional areas including:

- Encourage and provide access to early screening of children for health and developmental issues;
- Provide information on the progress of children, birth to school age, whose families receiving financial assistance;
- Encourage and provide access to early intervention for developmental issues by linking children to formal evaluation for development; and
- Support parents by providing health related services.

Development Screening: Children, ages birth to five years of age, enrolled in school readiness programs receive routine developmental screening using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) within the first 45 days of enrollment, and every six months thereafter. The initial screening was completed by the parent when possible, and subsequent screening completed by the child care provider. Beginning July 2007, providers began training on the ASW-Web-based model developed by Resource Connection for Kids. By January 2008, 92% of providers delivering school readiness services were using the web-based system, and 8% continued to use the paper forms. Parental approval was received prior to screening, and the results of the ASQ, and all other screenings, were provided to the parent and child care provider.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jul 07</th>
<th>Aug 07</th>
<th>Sep 07</th>
<th>Oct 07</th>
<th>Nov 07</th>
<th>Dec 07</th>
<th>Jan 08</th>
<th>Feb 08</th>
<th>Mar 08</th>
<th>Apr 08</th>
<th>May 08</th>
<th>Jun 08</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children Screened</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children with developmental concerns: 1,274 children who scored below the cut-off in any of the five developmental areas received a file review by the Child Health and Development team. A variety of options were discussed including:

- Have skills reviewed at the next regular ASQ interval
- Have skills monitored in four weeks using the current ASQ
- Have a Level II screening completed to validate the first screening
- Have referral services coordinated
- Have a speech screening schedule
- Have a vision and hearing screening schedule
- Refer to ELC Inclusion Specialist

Referral process: The families of 208 children received assistance with intervention service referrals based on delays identified through the screening process. The Referral Coordinator provided the family with the linkage to service and helped to expedite service and provide support to the family.
Development Screening and Assessment Guide for Families: A booklet was developed for families to outline the importance of developmental assessment, and to explain the difference between a screening and assessment. Families receive the booklet in advance of their initial enrollment into school readiness services. All parents are invited to take part in the screening and assessment process.

School Readiness Provider Assessment File: School readiness providers were required to set up an assessment file for each financially assisted child. The provider maintains a copy of parental consent for screening, assessment and health screening in the file, along with the center copy of the results of the developmental screenings, child assessment, vision and hearing screening results, documentation of parent conferences, documentation of referrals and follow-up and any other information pertinent to the child’s screening, assessment and health information. Resource Connection for Kids monitored 40 providers and noted a 94% compliance rate with the requirement based on the sampling.

Child Health Services: During the contract period, health screening services were provided to over 600 children. The services included vision and hearing screening.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screening</th>
<th>Jul 07</th>
<th>Aug 07</th>
<th>Sep 07</th>
<th>Oct 07</th>
<th>Nov 07</th>
<th>Dec 07</th>
<th>Jan 08</th>
<th>Feb 08</th>
<th>Mar 08</th>
<th>Apr 08</th>
<th>May 08</th>
<th>Jun 08</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed Vision</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision Referral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed Hearing</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Child Assessment: The Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI-2) screening instrument was selected for the pre and post testing of school readiness children. The tool is norm-referenced, curriculum referenced and criterion referenced, and includes all domains of Personal-Social, Adaptive, Motor, Communication and Cognitive Ability. The assessments were conducted by professional staff with children face to face in child care centers and homes. The data is entered directly through a Palm application for each child assessed. The pre-test was conducted on a statistically significant sample of 854 children, and the post-test conducted on 552 children of the initial cohort, meeting the statistically significant sample requirement.

Results of pre-assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adaptive</th>
<th>Personal-Social</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Motor</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>BDI-2 Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Passed</td>
<td>97.1%</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>96.3%</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Referred</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of post-assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adaptive</th>
<th>Personal-Social</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Motor</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>BDI-2 Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Passed</td>
<td>97.7%</td>
<td>97.3%</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
<td>99.5%</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Referred</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the pre- and post-assessments indicate that children progressed in all areas of development within the six month period between the two assessments. The data is used to demonstrate how children are progressing as a group. The child assessment data indicates that although growth was noted, the two areas of development in terms of program improvement would be cognitive development and communication.
Voluntary PreKindergarten Program

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) is a legislatively mandated program designed to prepare every four-year-old in Florida for kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success. The VPK program gives each child an opportunity to perform better in school and throughout life with quality programs that include high literacy standards, accountability, appropriate curricula, substantial instruction periods, manageable class sizes, and qualified instructors. All eligible four-year-olds are entitled to participate in one of the VPK program options.

The Coalition contracted with MCAA in the amount of $5,145,447 for VPK eligibility, enrollment, provider payment, and attendance monitoring. Services were provided to ensure that all families were determine eligible for services based on program eligibility requirements, and were place into a VPK program of choice. VPK providers received payment for services during the year through a pre-payment and reconciliation process.

VPK Eligibility: Families were provided the opportunity to register their four-year old child into the program during regular office hours, and during a community roundup. Providers were invited to participate in the roundup, allowing parents the opportunity to discuss services and ask questions prior to making the decision for a VPK provider. Anxious parents waiting outside the Civic Center overnight, setting up tents, chairs and enjoying the company of other parents as they waiting for a prize placement in a VPK classroom.

VPK Enrollment and Certificate of Eligibility Issued:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jul 07</th>
<th>Aug 07</th>
<th>Sep 07</th>
<th>Oct 07</th>
<th>Nov 07</th>
<th>Dec 07</th>
<th>Jan 08</th>
<th>Feb 08</th>
<th>Mar 08</th>
<th>Apr 08</th>
<th>May 08</th>
<th>Jun 08</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment By Month</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>1763</td>
<td>1722</td>
<td>1788</td>
<td>1849</td>
<td>1829</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>1782</td>
<td>1704</td>
<td>1119</td>
<td>1176</td>
<td>1311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE Issued</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COE Returned</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>1117</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VPK Providers: During 2007-2008, the Early Learning Coalition provided enrollment and monitoring of VPK Providers. There are currently 95 Certified VPK Providers in Manatee County, up 10% from last year, including the Manatee County School Board, faith-based, family day care, and private centers. Regularly scheduled provider meetings were held to assist them in understanding the requirements of the program. Parents could choose a school-year VPK program or a Summer VPK Program. Enrollment in VPK rose this year, with 2,051 children enrolled during the academic year, up from 1,758 last year, and 312 enrolled during the summer session, for a total enrollment of 2,363 up from 2,208 for 2007-2008 fiscal year.

School Year VPK Providers

![Bar chart showing VPK Provider numbers by category for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.]

2007/2008:
- 18 Public Schools
- 64 Private Providers
- 1 Family Child Care Home
- 9 Faith-based Providers
- 92 Total

2008/2009:
- 17 Public Schools
- 69 Private Providers
- 2 Family Child Care Homes
- 7 Faith-based Providers
- 95 Total

Summer VPK Providers

![Bar chart showing VPK Provider numbers for 2008.]

VPK Provider Training, Monitoring, and Technical Assistance

The relationship between the Coalition and the Department of Education continued to be strengthened during the year, with the involvement of the Regional VPK Facilitator, participation in conference calls, and attendance at meetings. The DOE Regional VPK Facilitator offered quarterly Performance Standards training, with a total attendance by 36 providers and 4 Domain trainings were offered.

In addition, 41 providers were monitored for required compliance elements. Six providers were 100% compliant upon the initial monitoring, 11 providers required corrective actions and completed the actions within the required time frame, 2 programs were closed due to non-compliance, and 21 providers required corrective action that would continue into the new fiscal year.
VPK Outreach and Public Awareness

Through the use of the VPK Outreach and Public Awareness grant in the amount of $12,096, efforts were made to market the VPK program in the community. 5695 post cards were sent to all households in the county with 4 year old children; posters developed in English and Spanish were maintained in 63 sites in the county, including libraries, health clinics, pediatricians offices, community agencies, and Chamber of Commerce sites. The program was also marketed via newspaper ads, ads in public busses, and local family friendly magazines.

VPK Readiness Rate

All children who attend a Florida Kindergarten program are given a Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) within 45 days of entry to assess their readiness for school. Every child who attends a Florida VPK Program is tracked to the VPK school they attended and every VPK Provider is assigned a readiness rate.

The FLKRS is made up of two screening tools: ECHOS (Early Childhood Observation Screener) and DIBELS (Diagnostic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills). The DIBELS measure two domains: Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) and Initial Sound Fluency (ISF).

The following County map shows the percent of VPK providers at or above the state average of 244 on the FLKRS. In Manatee County, 26-50% of children are at or above the state average. (Highest combined score on FLKRS (ECHOS and DIBELS) is 300.

There were 13 Low Performing VPK Providers in Manatee County (FLKRS score below 211) in FY 2007-2008. There were 17 Low Performing VPK Providers in the prior year. Individual VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rates can be accessed on the VPK Website: [https://vpk.fldoe.org](https://vpk.fldoe.org).
The following chart shows how the Manatee Prekindergarten children compared with the Florida State results in the ECHOS Average

The following chart shows how the Manatee Prekindergarten children compared with the Florida State results in the DIBELS: Letter Naming Fluency and Initial Sound Fluency
The following chart shows the percentage of children "ready for kindergarten" in FY 05-06 as compared with FY 06-07.

**ELC of Manatee Children “Ready” on FLKRS Measures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>2005-06</th>
<th>2006-07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECHOS</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Naming</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Sound</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Low Performing Providers**

According to the VPK legislation and the State Board of Education, a VPK Provider who is determined to be a Low Performing Provider (LPP), scoring below 211 is placed on probation and must identify and implement a provider improvement plan. If a provider remains on probation for two consecutive years and fails to meet the minimum rate (for the third consecutive time), the provider will be removed from eligibility to deliver the VPK Education Program and receive state funds for the program.

The following graph shows the Manatee VPK Providers who have been determined Low Performing Providers in FY 2006-2007 and FY 2007-2008.

**School Year**

- **2006-2007**: 18
- **2007-2008**: 16

**Summer**

- **2006-2007**: 14
- **2007-2008**: 12

**Total**

- **2006-2007**: 32
- **2007-2008**: 28
Monitoring of VPK Providers

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County is responsible for monitoring the private sector VPK Programs and the School District of Manatee County monitors the School District Programs. The following chart shows the # of VPK Providers who were monitored for compliance and the results of the monitoring. Of the 95 VPK providers, 33 private sector programs were monitored for compliance; 6 programs were found to be non-compliant and 5 programs were required to submit a Corrective Action Plan.

Training and Technical Assistance to Manatee County VPK Providers

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County is responsible for training and technical assistance to the VPK Providers. Coalition staff and the DOE VPK Facilitator conducted trainings on the Florida VPK Standards, including the revised science and math domains; Emergent Literacy training; and specialized training for the Low Performing Providers. In FY07-08, there were 7 Domain Trainings; 6 Specialty Trainings, and 8 Performance Standards Trainings.
**Coalition Quality Initiatives Overview**

**Manatee Community College—Professional Development Scholarships, Program Assessment, Training and Technical Assistance**

In this exciting professional development initiative, the Coalition contracted with Manatee Community College in the amount of $175,660 for a scholarship and education program for school readiness teachers, and $120,004 for Program Assessment, Training and Technical Assistance.

**Technical Assistance**

- 100% of school readiness providers were offered technical assistance opportunities through: on-site visits, quarterly newsletters, telephone calls, quarterly training calendars, emails, and mail correspondence
- Four (4) newsletters developed and disseminated to School Readiness Providers
- Sixty-one (61) visits to Resource Library by school readiness providers using (225) resource items
- Five (5) referrals to Small Business Development Center and, One (1) referral to GED
- Nine (9) School readiness providers referred for ERS-QIP action plans
  - Five (5) ERS-QIP action plans completed and referred for reassessment
  - Four (4) ERS-QIP action plans currently in progress
- Monitoring (Pre-Amendment Contractual Duties – Sept. 2007 to Jan. 2008)
  - 100% of contracted school readiness providers were monitored on two sections of the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS)
  - 63 school readiness providers (63 out of 121) submitted self-assessments (52% of the voucher school readiness providers)

**Training**

- (429) total registrants for training and in-service events
- Curriculum Development: Eight (8) programs offered
  - Creative Curriculum – sessions offered three times
  - Beyond Centers & Circle Time – sessions offered three times
  - Beyond Cribs & Rattles – sessions offered two times
  - Forty (40) Additional Training Topics Offered
  - Nine (9) Provider Mtgs. - In-service topics (each one offered day and evening)
- Annual Training Conference
  - 140 ELC of Manatee County School Readiness Providers attended
- Seven (7) Provider Brown Bag Luncheons offered on-site for Gold Seal Accreditation. They included: APPLE NAC NAEYC UMAP
  - Pre & Post Test Knowledge Gain Assessment
  - Curriculum Development - Percent Increase (47%)
  - Additional Training Topics – Percent Increase (19%)
  - Provider Brown Bag – Percent Increase (25%)

**Early Learning Child Caregivers Scholarships / State Mandated 40+5 Classes**

- Credit Scholarship Program
  - Total of seventy-six (76) participants received scholarships
  - (252) credit courses were paid for by scholarship allowing financial support for staff pursing a Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC), director credential, and/or higher degree
  - (53) child care providers have received FCCPC formerly ODA-E
  - (31) staff members of school readiness providers are pursing their associate degree in early childhood education (2008 State of Florida mandate for child care workers)
  - (16) State of Florida director credentials have been received by staff of school readiness providers
- Non-credit / State mandated 40+5 classes
  - Total of seven (7) classes conducted (Six English and One Spanish)
  - (135) registrants – (118) staff of school readiness providers completed 40+5
Family Partnership Center—Parent Partner Program, Musical Motion, Teenage Parent Program

Parent Partner Program:
- Program participants: 17
- Home Visits (60-90 minutes each) completed: 250

Outcomes Achieved:
- 100% of parents that participated for 5 visits or more have reported increased knowledge in three or more of the targeted areas (brain development, limit setting, teaching literacy skills, etc.) and that they are using the information presented to enhance their child’s school readiness.
- 100% of the parents that participated for less than 5 sessions have reported increased knowledge in one of the targeted areas and intend to use the information presented to enhance their child’s school readiness skills.

Additional outcomes measured:
- 95% of parents reported increased confidence in their ability to parent their young child. (Confidence enhances parental ability to set and enforce appropriate limits.)
- 100% of parents reported reduced feelings of isolation (child abuse risk factor)
- 100% of parents in the program more than 5 sessions reported improved behavior in the targeted child.

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County contracted with the Family Partnership Center in FY2007-2008 for $55,008, for the following three parenting programs that addressed the needs of the Early Learning Population in our County:
- The Parent Partner Program (Home Visiting)
- Musical Motion (Parent Child Activity Groups), and
- Teen Age Parenting Program (TAPP) at Community High and Harlee Middle Schools

Musical Motion
Unduplicated program participants: 231
Number of 80 minute sessions: 88
Number of locations: 9
- Bethel Baptist Church
- Community of Christ
- College Park Retirement Center
- Tillman Full Service Family Center (In Spanish)
- Braden River Library
- Palmetto Library
- Happy Cubs
- Hope Lutheran Child Care Centers

Additional Music Motion sessions were offered throughout the community free to the ELC population in cooperation with community agencies:
- Two, in conjunction with ELC activities at the Central Library in May, by the Hope Lutheran
- Two at Hope Lutheran (one in Spanish, one in English) at the International Children’s Festival in May
- Another program will be offered June 18th at South County Library.

Teenage Parenting Program
Program Participants: 45
Classes (60 minutes each) provided 80
Number of locations: 2 (Central High School and Harlee Middle School)

Outcomes Achieved:
- 100% of the teen parents reported increased knowledge in three or more of the targeted areas (child development, limit setting, teaching literacy skills, early learning activities to do at home, etc.) and that they are using the information presented to enhance their child’s school readiness. All of these parents participated in more than 5 sessions.

Additional outcomes measured:
- 100% of the teen mothers reported more confidence in their parenting.
- 100% of the teen mothers reported that the program made them feel more supported as a parent.
Imagination Library—Dolly Parton Reading Initiative

The Coalition continued to collaborate with many community agencies and sites to present and distribute the Imagination Library and Born Learning programs and materials. The effort not only expanded the emphasis on Quality in the community, but it also enhanced the Coalition's intent to further the existing collaborative relationships in the community, which remains a primary strategic priority of the Coalition. At the conclusion of the fiscal year, 1,256 children were enrolled in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. The Coalition expended $30,020 for the Imagination Library.

![Imagination Library books ordered by month]

"My daughter really enjoys getting her books. We have spent many hours reading them. Thank you for such a wonderful service"

Training Incentives Program—Professional Development Incentive Classroom Materials

A new quality initiative program, Training Incentives Points ("T.I.P.") was approved by the Board. The program is directed to center and home based child care providers who deliver services to Manatee County school readiness children ages 0-5. The purpose of the program is to motivate participation and commitment of child care providers to continue their education and training. Eligible child care providers have an opportunity to earn cumulative points as they receive ongoing education. The points are redeemed and used to "purchase" materials of the provider's choice. The materials choices support the environment rating scale(s) and are used to enhance program quality. There was a total of $817 spent on the TIP Initiative in FY07-08.
WAGES Program—Professional Development Incentive—Teacher Stipends

The WAGES Program provides salary stipends for child care practitioners in amounts based on a scale determined by levels of education and longevity of employment. It is intended to serve as an incentive for increasing the educational levels of child care practitioners and rewarding their ongoing commitment to their workplace. In FY 07-08, the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee provided WAGES incentive funds to 64 teachers, for a total of $60,000. 68 participants received at least one 6 month supplement check during this reporting period; these participants worked in 31 different child care programs serving approximately 2,434 children. The following charts give information on program retention, program requirements, new applicant information and inactive/ineligible information.

**Professional Retention**

The annual turnover rate of active participants at that time was 11% based on an overall population of 64 participants in the reporting area. This population includes those individuals that were active during July 2007 – June 2008 (57) and those who left their center during this time (7).

**Program Requirements**

Active participants meet all eligibility requirements and have worked at least six months in their child care programs. Active participants might also include individuals who have left a child care program, but have since worked six eligible months at a new site. People who became ineligible for other reasons (i.e. position change within center, became over-income due to raise, center closure, failure to obtain necessary coursework) are not included in the report.

The annual turnover percentage is obtained by dividing the total number of participants who left their center into the total number of participants:

- Total participants: 64
- Active participants: 57
- Left Center: 7
- Turnover Percentage: 11%
- National Turnover Rate: 40%

**Education Information**

- 12% of the participants have a BA/BS in other field
- 11% of the participants have an AS/AAS in Early Childhood
- 7% of the participants have an AS/AAS in other field
- 18% of the participants have the Directors Credential
- 19% of the participants have a FCCPC (formally the Florida CDA Equivalency)

Director Credential plus FCCPC (formally the FL CDA-E)
- 45 Credit hours plus 18 ECs credits: 2
- 45 Credit hours toward an AS in Early Childhood: 3
- Average increase in WAGES$ supplement: $262.50

**New Applicant Information**

- There were 20 new applicants that were approved to be paid their first salary supplement check during this reporting period.
- 5 new applicants have applied and are on the wait list for Manatee County.

**Inactive/Ineligible Information**

- 7 participants left their child care program during this reporting period.
- 5 participant was dropped from WAGES do to center closure.
- 2 participants were dropped from WAGES do to non compliance of program rules.
- 2 participant was dropped from WAGES do to being over the income cap.
- 2 participants were dropped from WAGES do to failure to obtain education higher than a level 1 within the two years requirement.

- Total Investment Amount: $60,000.00
- Supplement Amount: $51,000.00
- Amount Spent to Date in Supplements: $49,820.61
- Amount Spent to Date in Admin: $9,000.00

Quality Initiative expenditures for the fiscal year totaled $441,509.
School Readiness Performance Data

Data from the Department of Education reveals that 3,185 Manatee County children were determined to have valid scores in the 2007 administration of the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener/ECHOS. Of those children, 41% were in the Consistently Demonstrating category, 44% were in the Emerging/Progressing category and 16% were in the Not Yet Demonstrating category. Those results compare to statewide results of 42%, 44% and 14% respectively. The 2007 administration of the DIBELS reveals that of the 3,101 children screened in letter naming fluency, 62% were in the above average/low risk category (70% Statewide Average), and 38% were in the moderate/high risk category (30% Statewide Average). In the initial sounds screening of 3,016 children, 60% were above average/low risk (63% Statewide Average) and 41% were moderate/high risk (37% Statewide Average). Although Manatee’s children did not fare as well as the statewide averages, they did show increased readiness results from the 2006 administration of the ECHOS and DIBELS.

Best Practices--Teachers

Scholarships for Early Learning Teachers
Through a new collaboration between the Early Learning Coalition and Manatee Community College, local school readiness child care centers and family child care homes were able to obtain scholarships to enroll in classes to obtain their CDAE and college credit hours. This contract, which started January 2, 2007, also provided the opportunity for school readiness teachers to enroll in the 45 hours of training at no cost. A total of seventy-six (76) scholarships were given on the credited side of the college and 118 teachers were given scholarships and completed the 45 hour training.

252 credit courses were paid for by scholarship allowing financial support for staff pursuing a Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC), director credential, and/or higher degree. 53 child care providers have received the FCCPC, formerly CDA-E. 31 staff members of school readiness providers are pursuing their associate degree in early childhood education (2008 State of Florida mandate for child care workers; and 15 State of Florida director credentials have been received by staff or school readiness providers.

Feedback from participants:

"I would like to thank you for providing me with a scholarship to achieve my CDA. This opportunity has been very uplifting for me. My family, friends and colleagues have been very supportive of me. I feel like a real 'college' student in all I have achieved in such a short period of time. I hopefully am going to get my A.A. if I have money available to me."

"Thank you so much for helping me find my way to MCC! This is my first college experience & I love it! I feel like a new person. I'm better at my job, in my life and you have started me on my way down to 'degree-land'. Hopefully I can afford to continue my education, but the opportunity has been wonderful and with all the great things I've learned I hope I will be a better teacher."

"I would like to thank you for helping me shine and spread my light on others in my life. My life has changed and I feel so good about myself. The children at my center have become more creative and independent. I hope that more caregivers will have the same opportunity as I did. I will continue my education in early childhood education."
Best Practices--Parents

Parent Partner Program
Through a continued contract between the Early Learning Coalition and the Family Partnership Center, provided a Parent Partner Program for home visiting to 17 participants. There were 350 home visits completed at 60-90 minutes each. 100% of parents that participated for 5 visits or more have reported increased knowledge in three or more of the targeted areas (brain development, limit setting, teaching literacy skills, etc.) and that they are using the information presented to enhance their child’s school readiness. 100% of the parents that participated for less than 5 sessions have reported increased knowledge in one of the targeted areas and intend to use the information presented to enhance their child’s school readiness skills.

Feedback from participants:

"Great advice and helpful books and handouts. Affordable! I feel like a better parent, now. Julian is so wonderful and I will miss her visits so much. I tell everyone about this incredible program."
Vanessa, Mother of three

"I have recommended the program to other people. I appreciated all of the help and advice and the information I’ve received. One-on-one discussion was perfect for my situation and my understanding."
Kathy, Mother of One

Musical Motion Program
Through a continued contract between the Early Learning Coalition and the Family Partnership Center, provided a Musical Motion Program for 231 children and families free of charge in 88 one-hour sessions in 9 locations. 100% of the teen parents reported increased knowledge in three or more of the targeted areas (child development, limit setting, teaching literacy skills, early learning activities to do at home, etc.) and that they are using the information presented to enhance their child’s school readiness. All of these parents participated in more than 5 sessions. 100% of the parents that participated for less than 5 sessions have reported increased knowledge in one of the targeted areas and intend to use the information presented to enhance their child’s school readiness skills.

Feedback from participants:

"Great class! Both of my kids love coming, and when we miss, we do a mini-version at home."

"Thank you for offering this class so that my child can meet other children."

"Congratulations for the good work. My son is loving this class!"
We are very glad with the program, we don’t want to miss any class."

"Fun, flexible, welcoming positive—you do a great job!"

"Musical Motion has helped me think and discuss parenting topics, participate in new activities with my children to learn cute stories, and to meet other moms."
Coalition Analysis

The Coalition was represented in a wide range of community organizations and collaborative activities, including the Parenting Education Coalition, the Whole Child Project Manatee, Infant and Young Child Mental Health Task Force, the Children’s Summit, Early Success Program, Healthy Start Coalition and Children’s Day.

Additional coordination with other community services included Healthy Families, Family Partnership Center, Safe Children Coalition, Manatee Glens, Community Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Manatee Children’s Services, Manatee Memorial Hospital, Early Steps, Teenage Parent Program, Manatee Sheriffs Office, Manatee County Rural Health, Woman’s Resource Center, Manatee County Libraries and local Pediatrician offices.

Coalition staff presented information regarding CCEP at local child care programs: Education Time, Happy Cubs of Blake Hospital, and Happy Go Lucky Child Care Centers as well as Dr. Joseph Pace’s office to expand the CCEP allocation.

The Coalition’s service provider, Manatee Community College held an early childhood conference, on February 23, 2008 entitled, “Brain Power: Stimulating Daily Activities for Infants, Toddlers, and Special Needs Children.” Planning and implementation involved a variety of local community organizations. These organizations included Manatee County Head Start and Early Head Start, Manatee County School District, Sarasota County School District, Sarasota Child Care Connection and Children First.

With the incorporation of cost reimbursements contracts, the Coalition was able to have stronger accountability regarding expenditures. Underutilized administrative school readiness funds were reallocated to the service provider for direct childcare services. The Coalition faced no projected deficit in school readiness funding during the year; no consideration of disenrollment or re-prioritizing of children to be served was necessary.

Plans to take enrollment, eligibility, child health services and payment for providers in house for the FY08-09 year were placed on hold while the Board re-assesses the costs and benefits associated with these services and the pros/cons for making this change in service structure. A change in Coalition Board membership and staff assignments will bring a greater focus to accountability with monitoring contracts and providers as well as evaluating Coalition progress in their Early Learning Plan.

Currently, the Coalition provides In-House services for Child Care Resource and Referral, Infant and Toddler Provider Support, Early Learning Resources, Behavior Training Support, Inclusion Services, Outreach and Community Awareness, VPK Provider Enrollment, and Quality Initiatives/Quality Assurance Services.
Waiting List

An income eligible waiting list for child care subsidies existed throughout the entire contract year although placement from the waiting list continued for eight months ending in May 2008.

Child Placement from Waiting List

Children Enrolled: The data provides an overview of child enrollment in the school readiness, financially assisted program. The average daily enrollment for the year was 2,129.

During the course of the year, a total of 3,473 unduplicated children were served through the school readiness program. Basic demographics of the children served are as follows:
Fiscal Information 2007 - 2008

On July 1, 2007, the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, Inc. received a grant award in the amount of $9,926,724 for School Readiness and $5,362,549 for the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program from the Agency for Workforce Innovation/Office of Early Learning. Additionally, AWI awarded the Coalition $19,970 for VPK Outreach, Awareness and for VPK monitoring.

The Coalition executed an agreement with one sub recipient, Resource Connection for Kids in the amount of $8,328,589 for School Readiness Services. The budget to manage school readiness administration of the Coalition was held to $462,454 or 5%, which is at the allowable expenditure for administration of the School Readiness funds.

Through review of utilization throughout the year, the Coalition utilized 97.53% of the total budget and did not sustain a fiscal deficit. As noted in the chart below, Coalition expenditures for the year left a surplus of $245,663.

The Coalition executed an agreement with one sub recipient, Resource Connection for Kids in the amount of $5,145,447 for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Services. The grant agreement was based on the state's projected enrollment. A total of $123,323 was expended in administrative services, with $65,852 spent in Enrollment services, $28,380 in Monitoring services and $123,324 in Administration. The total expended in child care slots was $5,098,552. The total VPK expenses were $5,326,980.
Fiscal Year 2007-2008
Voluntary Pre - Kindergarten
Total Expenses $5,325,980

Parent Co-Payment

Families receiving school readiness services are assessed a co-payment at the time of enrollment, re-certification or other changes to income and/or family size. The co-payment is paid directly to the childcare provider with the balance of the daily expense paid directly to the provider by the Coalition’s contractor, Resource Connection for Kids.

A total of $1,300,577 was assessed for the period July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007. The 2006-2007 assessed fees represents 11% of all funding available for school readiness services including all federal, state and local sources.
Program Summary

The 2007-2008 fiscal year brought changes to the programs and operations of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee, as the Board considered new and efficient ways of providing services. Plans to take enrollment, eligibility, child health services and payment for providers in house for the FY08-09 year were placed on hold while the Board reassesses the costs and benefits associated with these services and the pros/cons for making this change in service structure. A change in Coalition Board membership and staff assignments will bring a greater focus to accountability with monitoring contracts and providers as well as evaluating Coalition progress in their Early Learning Plan.

Currently, the Coalition provides In-House services for Child Care Resource and Referral, Infant and Toddler Provider Support, Early Learning Resources, Behavior Training Support, Inclusion Services, Outreach and Community Awareness, VPK Provider Enrollment, and Quality Initiatives/Quality Assurance Services.

The VPK program continues to grow, and in FY08-09 the Coalition will engage in additional outreach and monitoring efforts to build the capacity and quality of VPK services. Providers continue to be receptive to training and want to participate in more of the program’s quality initiatives. Although the total of Low Performing Providers (LPP), scoring below 211 on the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS), was reduced from 40 in FY06-07 to 33 in FY07-08, additional monitoring and support for the VPK Providers will be a focal point for the VPK Program in FY08-09 to lower the LPP rate and raise the School Readiness Rate.

Due to additional expenses associated with the larger office space acquired in FY07-08 in anticipation of bringing all SR and VPK services In-House, and the mandatory budget cuts to the SR and VPK Programs, the Coalition had to reconsider funding for some of the Quality Initiative Programs, such as the Imagination Library. Although this was a successful initiative, the Board is interested in focusing on the most at-risk children with the limited funding. Other successful initiatives that will continue to be funded in FY08-09 are: the WAGES Florida program with only a 7% turnover rate, Family Partnership Center, with three successful programs—Parent Partner Programs (home visiting); Musical Motion (Parent/Child Activity Groups); and Teen Age Parenting Program (TAPP) at Community High and Harlee Middle Schools; and Manatee Community College who provide education and technical assistance services to the Manatee Community Providers.
2007-2008 Success Stories

Provider Success
Through the Coalition’s Contract with Manatee Community College, 100% of school readiness providers were offered technical assistance opportunities through: on-site visits, quarterly newsletters, telephone calls, quarterly training calendars, emails, and mail correspondence. Relationships and communication increased through 4 quarterly newsletters developed and disseminated to School Readiness Providers with professional development information. In addition, there were sixty-one (61) visits to Resource Library by school readiness providers using (225) resource items. In addition, 100% of contracted school readiness providers were monitored on two sections of the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS), which will be expanded in FY08-09.

Family Success
Through the Teenage Parent Program funded by the Coalition, and served by the Family Partnership Center, a total of 45 students participated in the program in 80 classes at Central High School and Harlee Middle School. 100% of the teen parents reported increased knowledge in three or more of the targeted areas (child development, limit setting, teaching literacy skills, early learning activities to do at home, etc.) and that they are using the information presented to enhance their child’s school readiness. All of these parents participated in more than 5 sessions. The following is feedback from these parents:

“I like when we bring the babies, Ms. Denise puts music on and we talk about what our babies do!”

“I remember how they explain to us how to be a true parent. They show us skills and demonstrate to us how other parents feel.”

“What I remember the most was the way babies grew and develop and the way they learn things.”

“One of the most important things that I remember is that being a teen parent isn’t easy but not impossible either, especially with so much support.”

Quality Initiatives Success
In the WAGES Florida Program, the Coalition was able to provide incentive stipends to 68 early learning teachers who received at least one 6 month supplement check during FY07-08; these participants worked in 31 different child care programs serving approximately 2,434 children. This incentive helped to lower the teacher turnover rate to 11%. The national teacher turnover rate is 40%.