



**Early**  
**Learning Coalition**  
**OF MANATEE COUNTY, INC.**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

*Helping children develop skills  
that they will need to be successful in school*



# Board of Directors

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The information contained in this annual report is based on data collected from July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012.

### Gubernatorial Appointees

Howard Veltz  
*Board Chair*

Susan Miller

Wanda Read-Burke

### Private Sector Appointed Members

Adam Mohammadbhoy  
*Vice-Chairman*

Dianne K. Kopczynski  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

Amy Cooley

Linda Guritz

Caroline Halfacre

Michael Hennesey

Dennis W. Jagdmann

Andrew D. Minor

Tim Pye

Melanie Shackelford

Walter Stern

Jackie West

### Legislatively Required Members

Nancy Beal  
*School District of Manatee County Designee*

Sandra Edmondson  
*Manatee County Health Department Designee*

Angela Harber  
*Faith-Based Provider Representative*

Debbie Kibler  
*Children With Disabilities Representative*

Deborah Ludwig  
*For-Profit Provider Representative*

Jennifer Passmore  
*Manatee County Government Appointee*

Kathy Patreka  
*Head Start Director*

Dr. Kathy Stuckey  
*State College of Florida Designee*

Mary Beth Wehnes  
*Department of Children and Families Designee*

Beverly Williams  
*Suncoast Workforce Designee*



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## *Message from the Chief Executive Officer*

### **Snapshot of our work, commitment to helping families**

It is my pleasure to present the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County's Annual Report for fiscal year 2011-2012. This year's Annual Report is a snapshot of our work and our commitment to helping families and children. We were determined to provide high quality Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten; access to quality and affordable child care for our families; support and training for our early learning providers; and to responsibly administer our budget. We believe we have met those goals.

The ELC of Manatee enjoyed an impressive and prodigious year while holding ourselves to the highest accountability standards possible. We continued to provide the much needed services for our families and our child care providers: 79.72% of the School Readiness budget was spent on direct payment to child care providers known as "child care slots", 11.3% supporting quality programs, 5.48% in non-direct services to families and only 3.5% on administrative costs. We served over 4076 children and families and over 250 child care providers through our state and local funders. Our programs were geared toward effective, quality child care and customer service for our clients, and most significantly, we endeavored to do better, serve more, and increase the quality of early learning and school age programs in Manatee County.

I think it only fair to mention that to achieve a quality early learning education system, an organization must have a dedicated staff that is committed each and every day to building relationships, forging partnerships and achieving progress in getting Manatee's children ready to learn when they enter school. Our Coalition is blessed with a great staff that has a combined experience in child care of over 180 years. In addition to our knowledgeable and professional staff, key to our continued success is the leadership of our Board of Directors, whose membership includes an all-encompassing group of community leaders, who support and guide us in our quest. Without these community leaders at the helm, our voyage in educational improvement would not be possible.

Our partnerships with Florida's Office of Early Learning, Manatee County Children's Services Board, Board of County Commissioners, School Board, United Way, city, state, and federal government bodies and our vast community organizations, are vital to the success of our Coalition. We feel very fortunate for our great relationships, and strive every day to enhance them. By doing so, we achieve a diversity of viewpoints, and resources that allow us to meaningfully improve school readiness and early literacy in Manatee County.

ELC of Manatee promises to continue to deliver the best services possible to ensure our providers receive the support they need, our young children are ready to learn and succeed when they enter kindergarten and our families are able to work, secure in the knowledge that their children are in safe and effective early education and school age programs.

*Sincerely,*

*Paul A. Sharff*

*"Providing funding for my son to attend preschool has allowed me to work and help support my family.*

*I know that while I am at work, my son is being well cared for by the teachers.*

*Thank you again for being such a wonderful help to me, my son, and my family."*

*– B. Romero*



# About Us

## OUR MISSION

To provide and coordinate the services of School Readiness 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 children's first and most important teachers; and to continue to improve the quality of services available in the community.

## OUR VISION

To provide and support high-quality school readiness 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.



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## Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, Inc.

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County is a 501(c)3 non-profit agency that provides and coordinates the services of school readiness programs in order to help all children develop the skills needed to achieve educational success. We strive to improve the quality of services available in the community and aim to invest in the future of Manatee County through the early care and education of its children.

## Our Programs and Services

- Child Care Resource and Referral
- Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)
- School Readiness
- Early Literacy Initiatives
- Quality Initiatives
- Professional Development
- Health Activities
- Family Engagement and Parenting Initiatives
- Inclusive Child Care
- Community Outreach



Party in the Park



Every Child a Reader

DeSoto Children's Parade

# Thank You

## Our Community Collaborations

American Red Cross  
Department of Children and Families Child Care Licensing  
Family Network on Disabilities  
Family Partnership Center  
Florida Association for the Education of Young Children  
Florida Family Child Care Home Association  
Head Start  
Healthy Start  
Hernando DeSoto Historical Society  
Home Child Care Providers Association of Manatee County  
Homeless Coalition  
HOPE Family Services  
Kiwanis Club of Bradenton  
Lions Club of Bradenton  
Manatee Association for the Education of Young Children  
Manatee Children's Services  
Manatee County Chamber of Commerce  
Manatee County Government Children's Services Advisory Board  
Manatee County Housing Authority  
Manatee Education Foundation  
Manatee Hope  
Manatee Sheriff's Department  
Manatee Sunrise Kiwanis Club  
Pinellas County Schools Child Care Worker Training Program  
Pittsburgh Pirates  
Safe Children's Coalition  
Safe Kids Coalition (All Children's Hospital)  
Salvation Army  
School District of Manatee County  
State College of Florida and the Foundation for State College of Florida  
Suncoast Workforce  
Take Stock in Children  
United Way  
Whole Child Manatee



DeSoto Children's Parade



Early Childhood Conference



Thank you to our many reading volunteers



Every Child a Reader



Children's Reading Corner

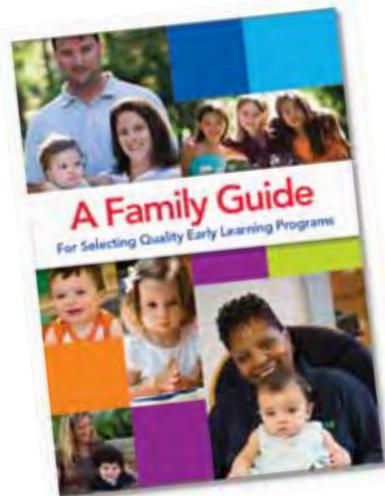
# Our Programs and Services

## Those we serve

In 2011-2012, the Early Learning Coalition provided 1,244 child care referrals

*"The Early Learning Coalition is always so helpful! Lovely staff."*

*— J. Johnson*



Parents can download these two publications from the ELC website to help them select quality programs.



## Child Care Resource and Referral

Child Care Resource and Referral service is a free marketing tool for legally operating providers in Manatee County, as the information that they provide is updated immediately in our database. Referral lists are available to private paying customers, as well as Early Learning Coalition (ELC) funded customers looking for child care services in Manatee County. Parents are educated on how to identify quality care, are informed about different types of care and are encouraged to continue looking for quality once their children are placed in a child care facility.

ELC staffs attend numerous seminars and collaborative meetings to both disseminate information and to learn about community programs that could benefit children and families. ELC staff conducts one-to-one education in the office, provides literature in the lobby and participates in many community events such as the Manatee County Children's Summit, Health Fair, Job Fair, Children's Parade and Party in the Park. The ELC has obtained a Mobile Outreach Resource Vehicle for use in community events to promote the School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten programs, as well as educate the public about the ELC's role as a community partner.

**The ELC offers free, unbiased, personalized information on child care programs and providers including:**

- A customized search for child care based on criteria, such as location, schedule, curriculum, environment, special needs, and more;
- Information on rates, fees, hours, and credentials of providers; and
- Educational support for parents with questions on childhood development.

  
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# Voluntary Prekindergarten

## VPK is free for all four-year-olds in Florida regardless of family income

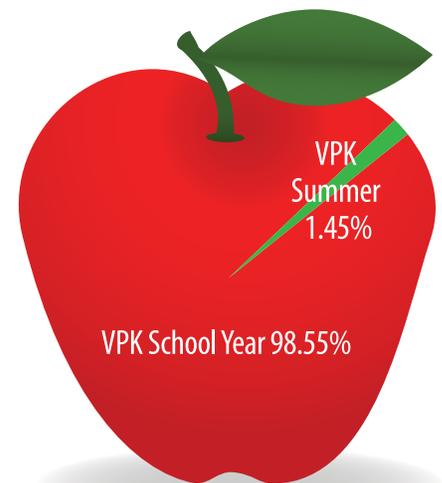
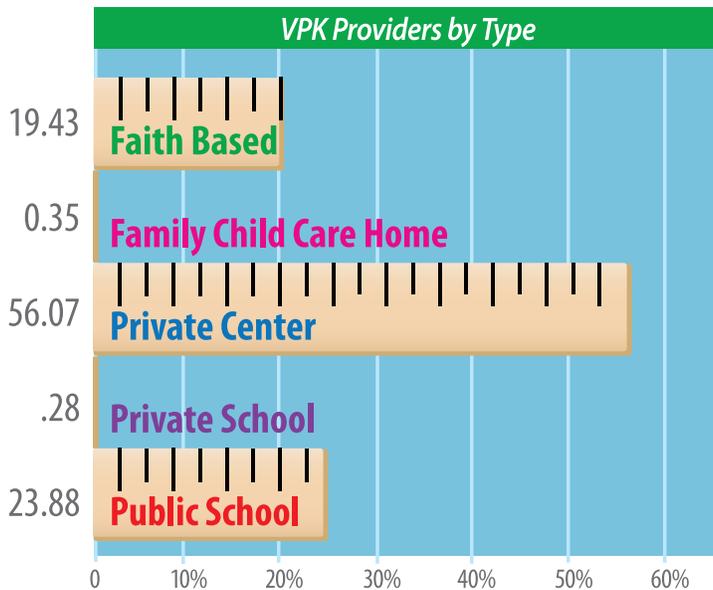
Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) began as a constitutional amendment passed by Florida voters in November 2002 and signed into law January 2, 2005.

VPK is a free program aimed to prepare four-year-old children for kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success. VPK is available to all four-year-olds born on or before September 1 who reside in Florida, regardless of family income. Parents come to the Early Learning Coalition (ELC) office to establish child eligibility and select the School Year Program or Summer Program option. Parents receive a Certificate of Eligibility and may enroll their child at the VPK provider of their choice.

VPK programs are offered by public, private and faith-based providers who meet state eligibility requirements. Providers determine their own program hours and days.

The ELC supplied mini-grants to the Manatee Education Foundation for their "Cash for Classrooms Grants" which allowed nine Pre-K teachers to buy needed supplies for their classrooms to enhance their VPK and Pre-K ESE classrooms.

*"If not for staff taking the time and care for people I would not be where I am today! Thanks for being awesome!"*



*"Gracias por sus atenciones y me ha cido de gran utilidat su informacion sobre el programa."*

– Y. Romen

**Total Percentage of VPK Payments by Program Type**

# Our Programs and Services

*"Very nice, respectful (and) also understanding." – M. Cummings*

## Those we serve

3,721 Children  
1,983 Families  
154 Providers

## School Readiness

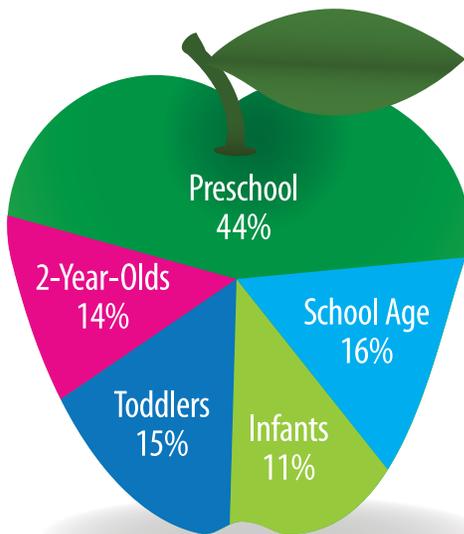
### Child care funding assistance

School Readiness funding enables parents to remain in the workforce and obtain self-sufficiency by assisting them in obtaining affordable, high-quality child care. Working families with low incomes that are on the wait list are offered child care assistance as funding becomes available.

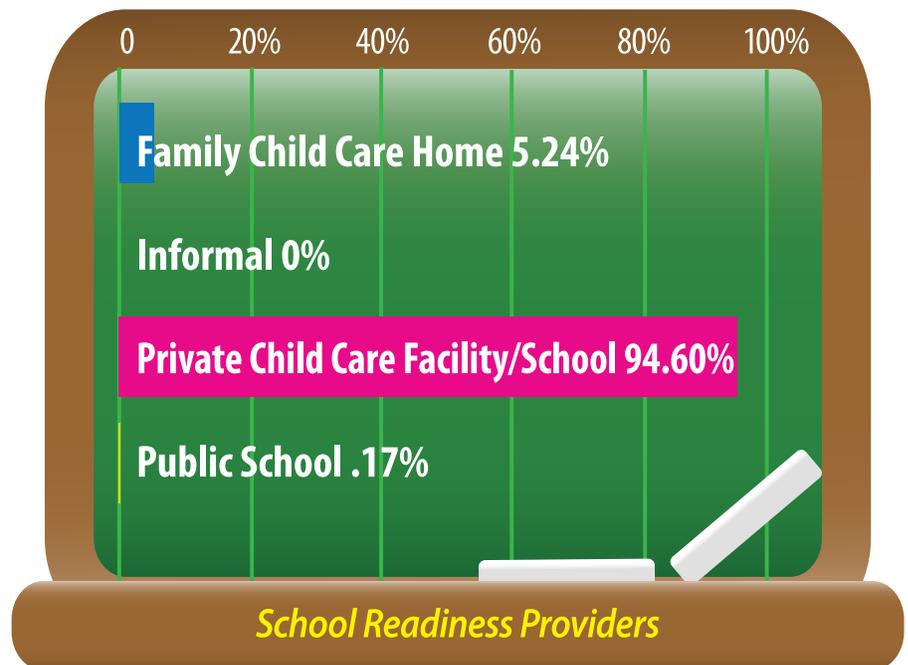
Assistance to at-risk families working with Suncoast Workforce, Safe Children's Coalition, the Manatee County Sheriff's Office and Manatee County Children's Services are available immediately. Assistance is also provided to teen parents, migrant farm worker families and families of children with special needs.

**During the fiscal year 2011-12, the Early Learning Coalition (ELC) was able to place 380 children from the wait list into programs with child care funding assistance.**

*As of July 1, 2012 there are 1092 children still waiting for child care assistance in Manatee County.* Our goal is to completely eliminate the wait list for assistance through expanded funding and grant opportunities.



Wait List by Care Level



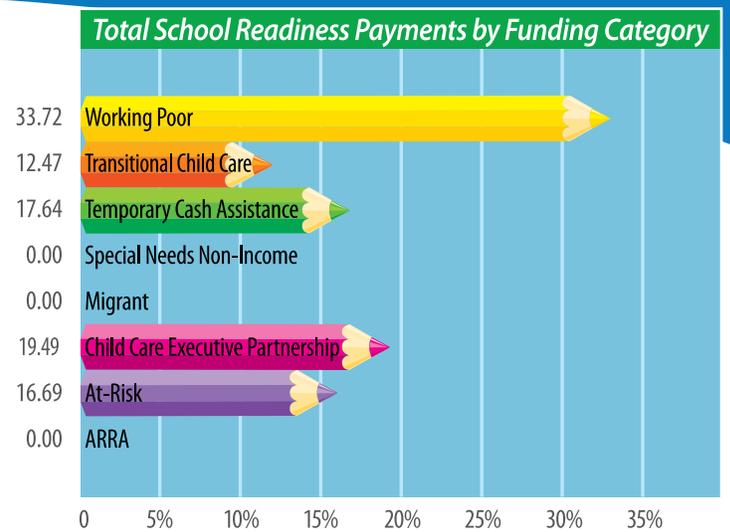
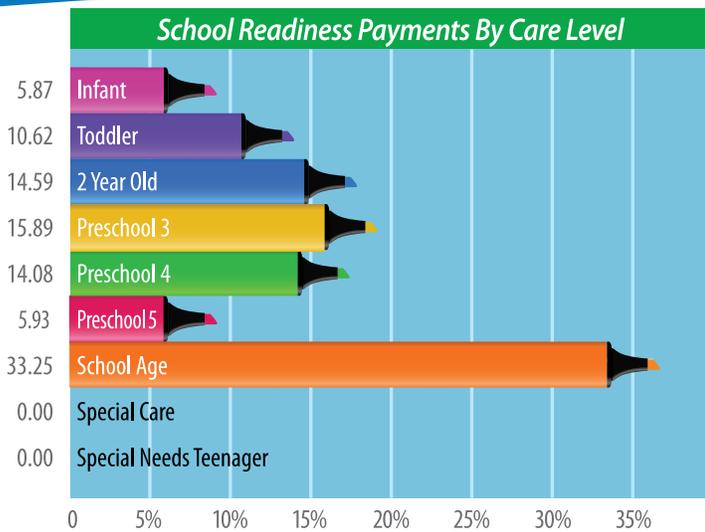
School Readiness Providers



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## Early Literacy Initiatives

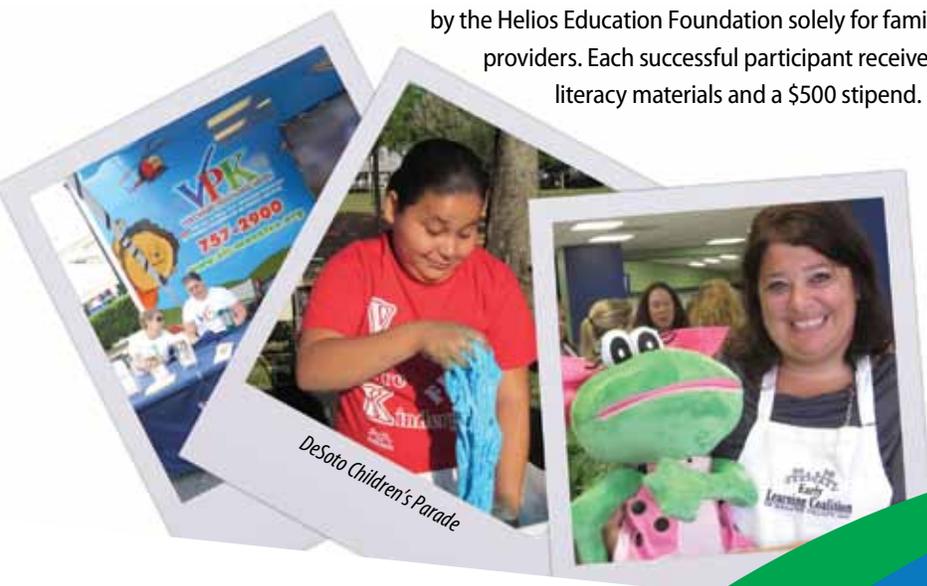
As part of the Early Learning Coalition's (ELC) Plan Initiative for Family Literacy Opportunities, children's books are present in the lobby of the ELC office for parents to read to their children while they wait for their appointments. Books were delivered to child care providers and given to children in the community through our Early Literacy Outreach Program. **Over 3,200 developmentally and age appropriate children's books were distributed to the families who visit the office, with information about the importance of early literacy included as a parent guide.**

The Quality Department publishes and posts an on-line parent newsletter which includes information on literacy, math, science and more. The ELC newsletter, *ELC Parent Pages*, is a quarterly publication filled with activities that support skill development in all of the above-mentioned areas in addition to general program information. The ELC staff provides technical assistance and on-site in-service training sessions to assist providers in developing these skills in the children they serve.

The ELC participated with Sarasota and Polk Coalitions in implementing the Family Providers Focus on Literacy (FPFL) program, a literacy skill-building training and coaching program funded by the Helios Education Foundation solely for family child care providers. Each successful participant received \$500 worth of literacy materials and a \$500 stipend.

Over 3,200 children's books were given to families who visited the ELC

The ELC received over 25,000 free books from grant opportunities through First Book and Usborne Books.



# Programs and Services

- ★★★★ 7 Providers
- ★★★ 7 Providers
- ★★ 3 Providers
- ★ 1 Provider

## Quality Initiatives

### For Child Care Providers

The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) works with child care providers in Manatee County to ensure they have the best possible environment for the children in their care. Teachers and facilities are given support through trainings, technical assistance, materials, health and safety checks, continuing education opportunities and quality incentive programs.

ELC staff also performs on-site monitoring in every program care-group using a set of monitoring tools that are based on a composite of the suggested minimum standards level ("3.0") of the Environment Rating Scales, developmentally appropriate practices and the Florida Child Care Assessment Tool, among others. The Environmental Rating Scales have proven reliability and validity and are used internationally to assess classroom environments. The scales view child development from a comprehensive, or global, point of view, examining a wide variety of areas that all contribute to positive children development.

*Through these steps, in addition to the efforts of the providers, the ELC has been able to assist all the contracted providers in obtaining a score of three or above on the Environmental Rating Scale.*

Quality Counts for Children is Manatee County's voluntary quality rating system which uses licensing as a foundation and sets a continuum of clearly defined levels of increasing quality. This quality rating improvement system is based on a point system in which a program receives points for every quality benchmark it achieves. Quality Counts for Children has five levels of quality above licensing standards for which the providers are given a star rating.



## Professional Development

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) is proud to offer a number of professional development opportunities for practitioners to help ensure quality learning experiences for the children they serve. The Coalition offered their fourth Annual Early Childhood Conference for Providers.

Professional development in-service trainings were offered throughout the year on a variety of topics. The ELC provided professional development reimbursements up to \$100 per person for accessing opportunities outside of State College of Florida and the ELC.

The ELC provided training and textbooks on Creative Curriculum for Preschool Administration and Coaching for Creative Curriculum for Preschool Implementation in the amount of \$15,000.

Houghton Mifflin-Harcourt was contracted to provide Early Childhood Family Involvement training for \$3,500.

### Environment Rating Scale Monitoring

- ✓ 313 assessments were performed at 165 sites
- ✓ 90% of the programs scored above 3.0
- ✓ 64% increased their score from the previous year

Quality Counts  
For Children  
Provider Stipends  
\$24,750



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*A number of grant programs were in place during the 2011-2012 year to support providers in meeting or exceeding state and local standards for continuing education.*

*These programs included:*

- ✓ Scholarships for providers seeking Florida Child Care Professional Credentials or renewals, director credentials or renewals, associate and baccalaureate degrees in Early Childhood Education at State College of Florida (SCF).
- ✓ The Textbook Loan Program allowed providers to check out textbooks needed for their coursework at SCF each semester, free of charge.
- ✓ Scholarships for six family child care home providers to attend the Florida Family Child Care Home Association annual conference

The ELC also has 11 staff members that are certified to conduct Red Cross certification classes for our Early Care and Education providers in the community.

*"I am looking forward to implementing this in my classroom."*

*- Training Attendee*



# Health Activities

## Designed to Promote the Social and Emotional Development

**The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) offers a variety of programs to help with early detection of physical or learning challenges in a child's life.**

The ELC expanded the developmental screenings (ASQ3) services to include all Manatee County children ages 0-5, based on need and parent consent. The ASQ SE is utilized for screening social/emotional delays. The Battelle Development Inventory is utilized to assess children's progress from birth to five years old. The Coalition also screens School Readiness children for vision and hearing.

Positive behavior training continues to be offered based on the Pyramid model developed by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning. Plans are underway in 2012-2013 to participate in a community project with the Training and Technical Assistance Community group to provide this training in conjunction with the School District of Manatee County and Manatee County Head Start so that preschool programs that feed into participating schools receive training and possibly coaching on use of the Pyramid model.

The ELC funds a Child Care Coordinator and child care staff member to provide caregiving services for grandparents and relatives who have been granted custody of young children. While the "kin" are provided with training and support group services by Manatee Children's Services staff, the children are provided with social/emotional and other School Readiness skill building opportunities in a safe environment.

<b>Health and Development Screening/Assessments</b>
2557 Screenings
20 Referrals
<b>Battelle Assessments</b>
• 247 Pretests administered
96% passed
• 139 post tests administered
94% passed
• 94% of children assessed were ready for school
<b>499 Vision Screenings</b>
39 Referrals
<b>476 Hearing Screenings</b>
71 Referrals

# Programs and Services

## Family Engagement

### And Parenting Initiatives

*"I have a better understanding about my kid's growth from hearing from other parents. Also I learned from the teacher that a lot of what goes on at home has a big effect on how the kids act and how we are the biggest role models they have."*

*-Parent who attended Musical Motion*

*"A unified loving front with my husband is most effective with the kids. Being clear headed will allow me to be more objective and calmly deal with relationships I have with each member of the family."*

The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) contracts with the Family Partnership Center to provide in-home parenting and group parenting sessions to Manatee County families on or near the edge of involvement with the legal system due to abuse and/or neglect.

Families are provided with parenting skills. Learning opportunities are introduced to developmentally appropriate expectations, and parents are educated on how to support their children in reaching their maximum potentials.

Below is a summary of the two programs offered.

#### MUSICAL MOTION: Parent Child Activity Group

There were 15 total sessions at three locations with an average of 13 parents and 18 children participating in each. Seven of the sessions were in Spanish and eight were in English.

- 99% reported a better understanding of the growth and development of their preschool child or children.
- 98% reported learning (if attended under 5 sessions) and/or using( if attended 5 or more sessions) new ways to set limits on their child(ren)'s behaviors.
- 99% reported learning new activities to enhance their child's development and learning abilities, and using presented information to enhance their child's school readiness.

#### TEAMIN' UP FOR TOTS: Parenting Partner/ In Home Parenting

There were 445 home visits at 54 households with 58 participating parents; both English and Spanish language home visits were conducted. Outcomes for participating parents were the ability to demonstrate an increased knowledge of child development and demonstrate five new and effective parenting skills.

- 99% of participants met this outcome.
- 98% of parents reported using presented information to enhance their child's school readiness
- 100% no longer scored above a "T" score of 60 on either of the ECBI subtests.



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# Promoting Inclusive Child Care

All parents of special needs children are informed of our inclusion services through our **Child Care Resource and Referral Department**. The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) team members actively participate with providers, parents and the community to promote inclusive early childhood settings.

The ELC Inclusion Specialist performs observations in classrooms and makes recommendations for accommodations and modifications. This staff also responds to Warm Line calls within 24 hours and frequently discusses “next steps” with parents of children demonstrating needs for further evaluation. The ELC offers at least two large-group training sessions quarterly, along with many additional on-site training sessions that are provider specific. The staff has also disseminated information about the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Over 3000 books were donated to law enforcement agencies in Manatee County for distribution to children being removed from the home during protective service investigations.

## Community Outreach

The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) values the relationships that have been established with community partners through our outreach programs and is proud to highlight just a few in this year’s annual report.

The ELC and the Kiwanis Club of Bradenton partnered in the Second Annual Every Child a Reader program this year, bringing together 70 volunteers and 84 classrooms for a morning of reading to children in the 3-5 year old age group. After the reading, each of the 1,258 children received a copy of the book to take home to continue the reading relationship with their parents.

All 100 children attending the story readings by area dignitaries at the Party in the Park received a copy of the book that was read. Party in the Park is an annual child advocacy event at the end of the route of the Children’s Parade. The books were donated by Children’s Week.

A book is given to every child at every community event in which the Coalition participates, with information about the importance of early literacy included as a parent guide.

*[I learned to. . .] “have children be a part of making the classroom rules, (to) be mindful of the time the child spends in the thinking area, (and) the importance of speaking to a child in a positive way.”*

*- Training Attendee*

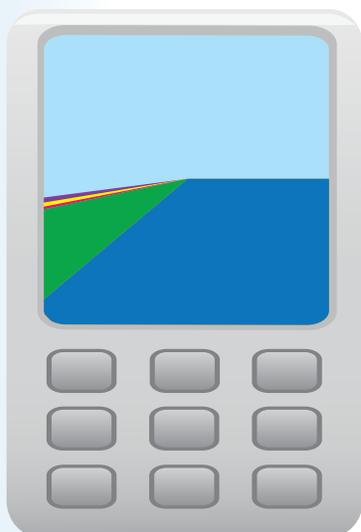
*[I learned] “promoting children’s successes is key to social and emotional skills.”*

*- Training Attendee*



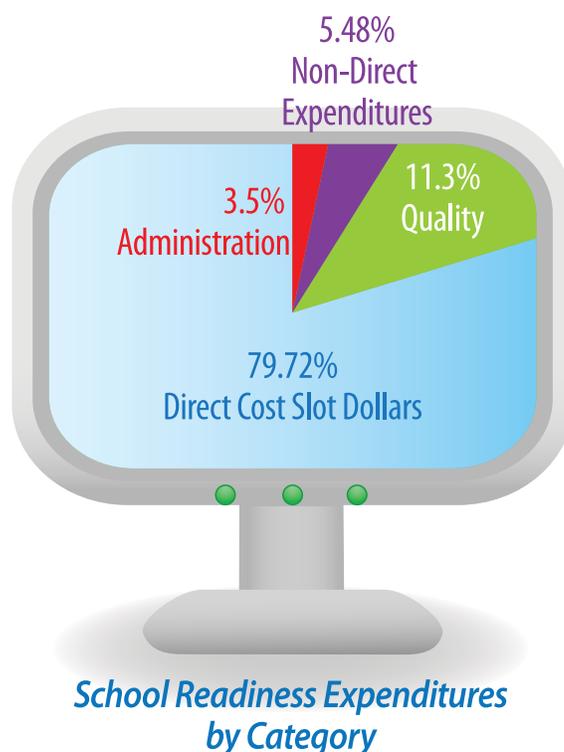
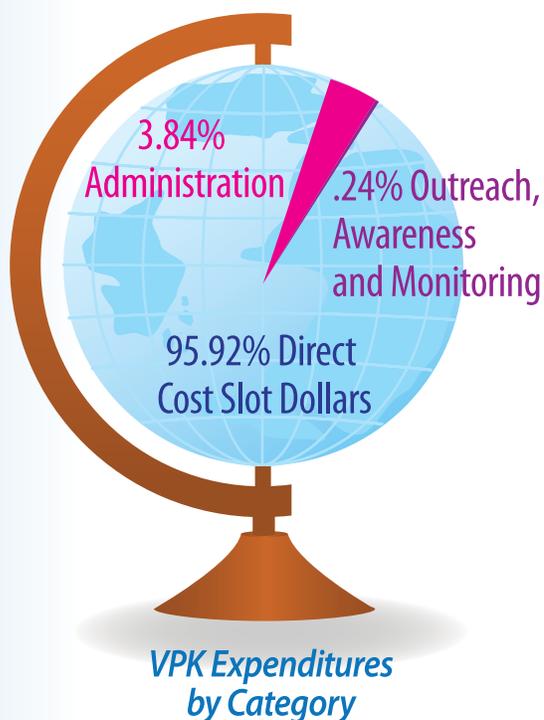
# Grant Revenues and Expenditures

## 2011-2012 Total Funding For The Early Learning Coalition



52.38%	School Readiness (\$9,685,218)
38.98%	Voluntary Prekindergarten (\$7,208,250)
7.72%	Manatee County Government (\$1,427,243)
.47%	United Way (\$87,000)
.42%	Helios Foundation (\$78,537)
.02%	Manatee County Housing Authority (\$4,000)

The Early Learning Coalition received funding from federal, state and local sources in excess of \$18,490,000 during this fiscal year. Over 79% of School Readiness funds and 95% of VPK funds were spent directly on child care services through our local child care providers and school district. Our overall administrative costs for these programs were under 4%.





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