A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

It is with great pleasure that I present the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County’s Annual Report for fiscal year 2014-2015. It has been another hugely encouraging 12 months of performance from our hard-working staff and dedicated board of directors which culminated in an award that filled us all with great pride and satisfaction.

In June of 2015, we were named Non Profit of the Year in Education by the Tampa Bay Business Journal which encompasses 8 counties and almost 5 million residents. This award is an amazing recognition of everything we do each and every day to enhance the lives of the children of Manatee County. It was an extremely proud moment for our entire team, and testament to the progress our coalition has made over recent years.

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County has continued to be a valuable resource to our partner Coalitions across the state, sharing our knowledge in technology, as well as serving as School Readiness and VPK program subject matter experts.

One of the most exciting new ventures that we embarked upon this fiscal year was the statewide Cradle to College Partnership with the Florida Prepaid College Board. This initiative involved 25 of our sister coalitions around the state, and saw almost 160,000 Family Activity calendars distributed to families in the VPK program. Manatee County ELC was responsible for the planning, design and distribution of these calendars and again led the way in enhancing crucial resources for families across the whole state of Florida.

NEXTGEN Family Magazine continued to develop and grow as a unique publication for our local community. Distribution has grown to almost 30,000 copies per issue with direct distribution to all elementary school children in the county. Many local non-profits were featured in the six issues we published in 2014-15, and we continue to highlight the good work of many individuals, local companies and schools, as well as offer our readers an insight into what is going on in and around Manatee County through educational articles. NEXTGEN serves as a child care resource guide as well. This venture has continued to generate funds that we spend directly on our programs, and we are constantly exploring new ways to grow NEXTGEN and increase its distribution and reach.

Thank you for taking the time to look over our annual report. The Early Learning Coalition operates on a 5% administrative rate for our school readiness programs and a 4% administrative rate for our VPK programs. If you have any questions about this report, please feel free to contact me directly.

These continue to be exciting times at the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, please consider volunteering or donating to support our mission.

Sincerely,
Paul A. Sharff, Chief Executive Officer
2015 Non Profit Of The Year In Education

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) was awarded the 2015 Non-Profit of the Year Award in Education by the Tampa Bay Business Journal in June of 2015. The Tampa Bay Business Journal recognizes Tampa Bay-based 501(c)(3), non-foundation community organizations benefiting residents of Greater Tampa Bay who are fiscally responsible and accountable with regard to program outcomes. The ELC was one of 48 finalists that were selected from hundreds of Tampa Bay non-profit entries by a distinguished panel of independent judges.

All finalists were honored and category winners announced at an awards ceremony held at the Museum of Science and Industry in Tampa. The ELC edged out seven other finalists to win the award in the Education category.

The award recognizes the ELC’s excellence in advancing our mission and vision through sustainable and new services, measuring outcomes/successes, strategic planning, innovative practices, other awards, customer testimonials, and fiscal responsibility.

From Cradle To College Campaign

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) led the way in an exciting new partnership, From Cradle to College TM to support Florida’s Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK) in coordination with the Early Learning Advisory Council and in partnership with the Florida Prepaid College Board.

The first-of-its-kind partnership saw the distribution of VPK calendars that feature learning resources and college savings information for the approximately 160,000 families with four-year-old children enrolled in Voluntary Prekindergarten programs across the state.

Manatee County ELC designed, produced and distributed the VPK calendars for the 26 participating coalitions around the state, with each coalition receiving an individualized calendar to distribute to their families.

NEXTGEN Family Magazine

NEXTGEN Family Magazine was distributed six times throughout 2014-15 and continues to be extremely well received in the local community for its presence as a unique resource guide for Manatee County families.

Distribution of the magazine increased to almost 30,000, the bulk of which remains an exclusive arrangement with the Manatee County School District to place a copy into the backpacks of all K through Fifth Grade students in the county school system.

NEXTGEN is also distributed to private schools, local hospitals, doctor’s offices, county administrative buildings and continues to grow and grow.
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
- Developmental Screening & Intervention
- Family Engagement and Parenting
- Inclusive Child Care
- Community Outreach

**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.

Find out more about the Early Learning Coalition and its services and programs by picking up our brochure in English or Spanish at the ELC Office.
Child Care Resource and Referral

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) is the “front door” to the Early Learning Coalition’s multiple services. It 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.

Our highly dedicated and trained staff members conduct one-to-one education in the office and provide early learning literature in the lobby. They also participate in many community events to increase the awareness of the ELC’s services. Examples of community events include The Children’s Summit, Stand Down for the Homeless, the Children’s Parade and Party in the Park.

While CCR&R helps families find child care, it also provides information about other valuable family resources in the community. The CCR&R telephone service is available Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m.-6:00 p.m. and from 8:00 am.-12:00 noon on Fridays. Website access is always available. These services are provided at no charge.

Child Care Resource and Referral Offers Families

- A free, unbiased and customized list of child care options, based on the specific needs of the family
- Information about providers such as location, hours and schedule, curriculum, fees, special needs, teacher credentials, licensing standards and more
- Guidelines on how to identify quality child care

Promoting Inclusive Childcare

The Early Learning Coalition helps to expand child care options for children with disabilities and their families by supporting the inclusion of children with special needs in early childhood settings. As such, the Coalition has designated one person as its inclusion contact. The Inclusion Specialist participates in scheduled monthly conference calls and quarterly regional meetings.

Services are available to early care and education providers to increase staff knowledge and competence in serving children with disabilities or behavioral challenges. These services include training, onsite technical assistance, community resource information, and environmental adaptations.

A toll-free Warm Line is available to parents and early care and education providers needing information related to the disability or special health care needs of children, birth to five years of age.

A Coalition staff member participates in the Healthy Start Manatee community meetings and is a member of the Florida Association for Infant Mental Health. The ELC Inclusion Specialist is a Certified Passenger Safety Technician and participates in car seat safety checks. The ELC partners with the Manatee County School Board and local agencies to participate in community events and promote inclusive child care.
Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) is free for all four-year-old children in Florida. Families do not have income requirements or restrictions.

VPK began as a constitutional amendment that was passed by Florida voters in 2002 and signed into law in January 2005. Children must be four-years-old on or before September 1st and must be a Florida resident. The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) provides applications and information to parents, and also registers child care providers.

The VPK program is designed to provide four-year-olds access to quality prekindergarten educational experiences and prepare Florida’s children for kindergarten by developing the skills they need to become good readers and successful students. VPK includes standards for literacy skills, strict accountability, appropriate curricula, substantial instruction periods, manageable class sizes, and qualified instructors. Parents have the option of enrolling children in a school-year program, consisting of 540 instructional hours, or a summer program, consisting of 300 instructional hours.

VPK programs are offered by public, private, and faith-based providers that meet Florida eligibility requirements. Providers determine their program hours and daily schedule.

**Those We Serve**

In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County served 3,055 Children

116 VPK Program Providers

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**VPK Providers by Type**

- **Licensed Private Center**: 50%
- **Public School**: 25.80%
- **Gold Seal Private Center**: 11.29%
- **Faith Based**: 10.48%
- **Others**: 2.43%

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Find out more about the VPK program by picking up our brochure in English or Spanish at the ELC office.
School Readiness - Child Care Funding Assistance

The Early Earning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) enrolled or funded 261 children from the wait list into programs during the fiscal year 2014-2015.

There were 1,388 children on the wait list in Manatee County, as of July 1, 2015. These children and families are on the wait list due to the lack of available funding.

School Readiness financial assistance helps working parents with the cost of child care (frequently called a child care subsidy). These services include extended-day, extended-year, and school-age care to support parents in gaining and retaining employment and becoming financially self-sufficient. Generally, families with children who are 12 years-old or younger may receive help through the school readiness program. Families include those that are transitioning from welfare to work, at-risk of child abuse or neglect, low-income employed families, teen parents, migrant farm workers, and families of children with special needs.

Each family will be assessed a daily fee for each child for whom they receive financial assistance based on family income and size. All families eligible for School Readiness financial assistance may select the provider of their choice. However, the ELC will only pay for child care if the child care provider has been approved by the ELC.

Those We Serve

In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County's School Readiness served
4,999 Children
150 Program Providers
Our Programs & Services

Supporting Early Language, Literacy and Math Concepts Development

As part of the Coalition’s Plan initiative for Family Literacy Opportunities, the Coalition received over 30,000 low cost books from grant opportunities through First Book and Usborne Books.

A book is given to every child at every community event that the Coalition participates in:

- Teenage Parent Program (TAPP) 38 books
- VPK Roundup with Manatee County School Board 126 books
- Daughtrey Elementary Literacy Night 162 books
- Manatee County Fair over 2,000 books
- Manatee Crime Stoppers Safe Kids Event 1,000 books
- Still Pointe House of Power 200 books
- Over 3,500 developmentally and age appropriate children’s books to the families who visit the office.

- Children’s books are present in the lobby of the Coalition office for parents to read to their children while they wait for their appointment. Other literature is present in the lobby and staff offices encouraging the development of literacy at home.

- Over 5,000 books were donated to law enforcement agencies in Manatee County for distribution to children being removed from the home during protective service investigations.

- Over 400 books were distributed to children attending the story readings by area dignitaries at the Party in the Park. This is an annual child advocacy event at the end of the route of the Children’s Parade. The books were donated by the Children’s Week state level organization.

- Literacy for the Holidays is a Coalition program that distributes a book to each child in each of the contracted programs, no matter the funding source or school readiness/VPK status. For the 2014 holidays, the Coalition distributed over 12,000 books.

- Every Child a Reader: The ELC and the Kiwanis of Bradenton partnered with the Rays Baseball Foundation in the fifth annual Every Child a Reader program this year, bringing together 88 volunteers, 195 classrooms and over 3,000 children in the 3-5 age group. After the reading, each of the children received a copy of the book to take home to continue the reading relationship with their parent.

The Early Literacy Coordinator implemented the Raising a Reader program at two early learning centers serving 50 children and providing training to seven early childhood teachers and directors.

Raising a Reader is an evidence-based early literacy and family engagement program that helps parents build the habit of book sharing. Each week a child brings home a bag of high quality books. To help sustain the habit of borrowing and sharing books at end of the program families are connected to their local library.

The ELC of Manatee has a designated Infant and Toddler Specialist. This staff member participates in all Office of Early Learning conference calls and takes the lead on infant and toddler issues at the coalition.
Our Programs & Services

Developmental Screening and Early Intervention

The Child Development Team strives to detect developmental delays as early as possible. Early detection of potential developmental delays allow children to reach their fullest potential and enter kindergarten ready to learn.

**Child Screening**

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) offers families with children under five years of age developmental screenings to help ensure they are reaching their age-appropriate developmental milestones. Children are screened for development, utilizing the Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ), in the following five developmental skill areas: communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving and personal-social. Assistance and education are provided to families of children whose scores fall below the typical range. When necessary, an ELC Screening and Assessment Specialist will assist a family with a referral to a community agency that will provide a more in-depth evaluation of the child’s abilities.

**Vision and Hearing Screening**

The ELC offers vision and hearing screenings for children under five years old. These screenings are conducted by ELC Screening and Assessment Specialists at the child’s early learning provider. Results of the vision and hearing screenings are provided to the child’s parent and the early learning provider. If a vision or hearing deficit is detected at the time of screening, community resources are provided to the child’s parent.

**Child Assessment**

The Battelle Developmental Inventory (BDI) is utilized to assess the progress of children from birth to five years old. Children are assessed every 6-12 months by an ELC Screening and Assessment Specialist at the child’s early learning provider. The assessment results are shared with the parent and the early learning provider to provide insight on what skills a child has mastered, what skills are emerging and future learning objectives.

**Professional Development**

*Highlights of professional development activities include:*

- Early Math and Science workshops based on the Twiga Foundation’s BLOCK Fest™.
- On-site technical assistance to providers as requested and suggested
- On-site and large group provider Environmental Rating Scale training
- One 10-session series of Making the Most of Classroom Interactions, a professional development opportunity authored and licensed by Teachstone, Inc. This series looks at each of the ten dimensions of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, a rating tool that measures the effectiveness of teacher-child interactions.
- Positive Behavior Support large group and onsite training
- Literacy building and development training
- Florida Early Learning and Development Standards for Birth Through Five
- FCCPC credential and renewal scholarships
- Director’s Credentials and renewal scholarships
- Scholarships for providers seeking Associate or Baccalaureate degrees in Early Childhood Education at State College of Florida
- Annual Early Childhood Conference for Providers
- Scholarships for two family child care home providers to attend the Florida Family Child Care Home Association annual conference
- Training on how to perform the Ages & Stages Questionnaire and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire Social-Emotional tools was offered
- Training on Teaching Strategies Gold was offered several times throughout the year.
- Coalition staff collaborated in presenting workshops at the AELC Fall Symposium in November, 2014.
- Coalition staff provided seven sessions of the American Red Cross Adult & Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED course to a total of 129 participants. The Red Cross Babysitter’s Training with Pediatric First Aid & CPR certification was provided to 26 local youth, 11 to 14 years of age, who were interested in babysitting.

**Professional Development Statistics**

- 123 sessions provided on 57 individual topics
- 1881 student contacts
- 303.5 training hours

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**Early Intervention Outcomes**

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Names on Giving Tree Recognizes Those Who Donate to ELC Programs

The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) of Manatee County’s goal is to provide quality early learning experiences for all children. This effort is made possible by state and county funding and the generous gifts of our donors.

The Giving Tree, located in the ELC lobby, was created to recognize those who have contributed to support our family engagement, early literacy, child screening and quality programs.

For the following levels of donation, the names of contributors are added to the Giving Tree:

- $50 - $99  Small Leaf
- $100 - $249  Orange
- $250 - $499  Large Leaf
- $500 - $999  Large Branch
- $1,000 - $4,999  Ladder Steps
- $5,000 or more  Orange Basket

“If you want to invest in early learning and get the most impact for your valuable dollar, supporting the Early Learning Coalition is a sure manner for you to achieve both of those goals.”

- Paul Sharff, CEO

A Heart Felt Thank You To Our Partners

- All Children's Hospital
- American Red Cross
- Angus W. Graham Jr. Family Foundation
- BMO Harris Bank
- CareerSource Suncoast
- Children's Medical Services
- Department of Children and Families Child Care Licensing
- East Coast Migrant Head Start
- Easter Seals of Southwest Florida
- Family Network on Disabilities
- Family Partnership Center
- Florida Association for the Education of Young Children
- Florida Family Child Care Home Association
- Florida Prepaid College Board
- Florida Winefest & Auction
- Gulfcoast Early Steps
- Healthy Start Coalition
- Hernando DeSoto Historical Society
- Home Child Care Providers Association of Manatee County
- HOPE Family Services
- Kiwanis Club of Bradenton
- Lions Club of Bradenton
- Manatee Association for the Education of Young Children
- Manatee Children's Services
- Manatee Community Action Agency/HS, CATCH Grant
- Manatee County Chamber of Commerce
- Manatee County Children’s Services Advisory Board
- Manatee County Housing Authority
- Manatee Education Foundation
- Manatee Hope
- Manatee Infant Mental Health Association
- Manatee County Sheriff’s Office
- Manatee Sunrise Kiwanis Club
- People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) Coalition
- Pittsburgh Pirates Organization/Bradenton Marauders
- PNC Foundation
- Police Athletic League of Manatee
- Rays Baseball Foundation
- Redlands Christian Migrant Association
- Safe Children's Coalition
- School District of Manatee County
- State College of Florida and the Foundation for SCF
- Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness
- Take Stock in Children
- Training and Technical Assistance Support Center, UCF
- Turning Points/Galvano One Stop Center
- Twiga Foundation
- United Way of Manatee County
- Whole Child Manatee
2014-2015 Total Funding

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) received federal, and state funding in excess of $16,000,000 during this fiscal year. Over 80% of School Readiness funds and 96% of Voluntary Prekindergarten (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 4.41% and 4.0% respectively.

The ELC was awarded additional local grant dollars in excess of $1,830,000.

Manatee County Government $1,565,561
School Board of Manatee County $129,884
United Way $81,675
CareerSource Suncoast $13,999
Manatee Community Foundation $8,000
Conquistador Historical Society $7,500
Rays Baseball Foundation $5,000
BMO Harris Bank $5,000
Florida Winefest $5,000
Kiwanis Club Bradenton $5,000
Graham Foundation $2,000
Florida Department of Education $1,940
Manatee County Housing Authority $780
To Donate call (941) 757-2902 or Visit www.elc-manatee.org