



Message From Our Board Chair & CEO

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) is dedicated to ensuring quality early education and lifelong success for every child. While our Coalition is one of 30 similar organizations in Florida, we are one of the most innovative, forward-thinking, and well-organized Early Learning Coalitions in the State. Despite the incredibly unique challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic presented, all of the many different hardships it has caused, we are pleased to share our many achievements and the significant progress that we accomplished during the 2019/20 fiscal year.

Over the period, the Coalition utilized its many partnerships to further its goals of increased quality care for our children and families. Beginning with a partnership with Feeding Tampa Bay, the ELC committed to feeding over 600 individuals on the first Saturday of each month by hosting a Food Pantry for those in need. ELC staff volunteered to facilitate these events, which were so welcomed in the local community.

Partnering with the Lakewood Ranch Rotary Club and the Books for Kids reading program, the ELC also expanded its housing capacity and distributed books by leasing a stand-alone book warehouse. This warehouse is utilized by several reading programs that the ELC funds and supports, including Dive Into Reading, Reading PALS, Deputy Friendly, Officer Friendly, Kiwanis Every Child a Reader, and the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

Our outstanding partnership with the local School Board brought us a donated school bus, which we converted into a state-of-the-art Mobile Learning Lab and Florida's first and only Mobile VPK Classroom. This was all made possible by non-profit donations and not tax dollars.

In May, the Manatee County Commissioners granted the funding of a new program approved by the Children's Services Advisory Board named Operation WIT (What Ever It Takes). This program will utilize ELC vehicles and infrastructure on weekends and will provide additional help and instruction for children at local churches and community events. All the equipment and expertise typically used during regular business hours Monday through Friday can now be utilized two extra days a week and at night. This increases our potential early education output by some 40%.

Every organization has many driving its success. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to our volunteer Board of Directors and thank them for their years of valuable service. Their leadership and guidance ensure the Coalition's mission and vision for Manatee County's children are attainable. We are also proud of our Community Partners, which are many, diverse, and priceless. Please see the listing of Board Members and Community Partners contained herein.

Along with our outstanding Board and Community Partners,

we need to recognize and thank our talented, loyal, and highly educated staff who work day in and day out to ensure local children and families are prepared to attend school. Our subsidized child care allows parents to work each day knowing their child is not only safe but learning at the same time. Our VPK entitlement program gives a notable boost to four-year-old children just before entering kindergarten.

Our work with community partners and the school district in child development and early literacy initiatives has never been more substantial and widespread.

Finally, as you read this report, please notice that **less than five percent** of the Coalition's budget goes to our organization's administrative cost. The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County sets itself apart from other Coalitions because we implement so many unique and impactful programs plus go above and beyond to find ways to fund these essential programs.

If you, or an organization that you know of, wish to invest in the early education of children, please be assured that any donation or grant to our Coalition will be very well spent and truly make a difference for the children of Manatee County.

Donations can be made at www.elc-manatee.org. We always welcome you to visit our offices in person or arrange for a Zoom meeting to learn more about all the programs, plans, initiatives, volunteer opportunities, and funding opportunities that we have.

Together, we will continue to make a difference, one child at a time, by working for the success of Manatee County's children.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Sharff
Chief Executive Officer



Adam Mohammadbhoy
Chairman of the Board



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*The information contained in this annual
report is based on data collected from
July 1, 2019- June 30, 2020*

COVID-19 Response

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March, The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) wanted to do everything we could to support our 'Untold First Responders' – childcare providers who were open every day during the health crisis looking after and continuing to educate our local children!

To help and support them, ELC procured paper products, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizers, and much more to distribute to them at no cost. With cleaning products in short supply, Chief Executive Office Paul Sharff investigated the idea of using pool grade chlorine to mix with water to create gallons of bleach for providers to use in their centers to keep their sites clean and germ-free.



PPE and other supplies were picked up by providers at the ELC office, as staff worked hard to get the cleaning packages ready. A huge thank you was owed to Dakin Dairy Farms, who generously donated 250 new gallon milk jugs to use for the mixing process that came complete with instructions from the Florida Department of Health (DOH). The pool chlorine was provided at cost by Galaxy Pools.

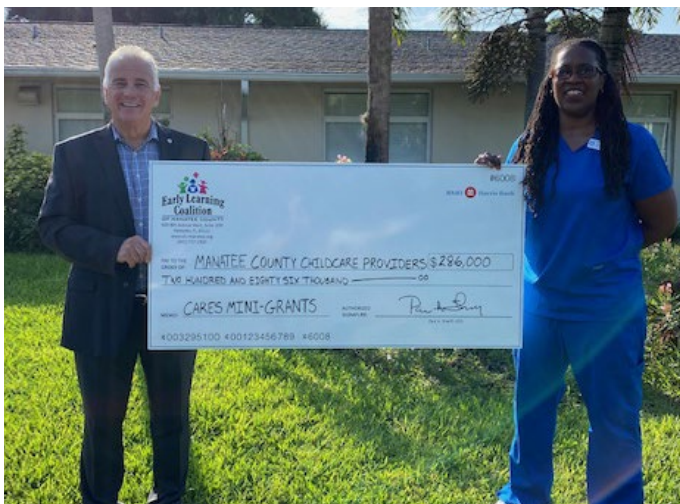
ELC has continued to use Manatee County CARES Grant dollars to purchase PPE supplies for providers and sanitized dozens of childcare centers around the County during the health crisis.

OEL CARES Grant

The ELC was awarded a \$1,451,958 grant through the Office of Early Learning to support local providers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Grants were designated for Health and Safety supplies; Infrastructure needs, and staff professional development to assist providers who were open or working to re-open their programs.

ELC Chief Executive Officer Paul Sharff is pictured below with Marjani Jones, ELC Board of Directors Provider Representative, and Annette Larkin, the owner of Happy Cubs, and an ELC Board Member.



What's New & Exciting



Mobile Learning

Our third educational vehicle, the Mobile Learning Lab, runs alongside the Book Bus and the STEAM Machine, adding additional resources to the ELC's community educational initiatives. We want our programs and fleet to provide a motivating setting that encourages children to become enthusiastic lifelong learners.

Our ever-popular STEAM program was modified to meet COVID-19 guidelines. These changes allowed for the continuation of teaching high-quality lessons that integrate Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math concepts to the early learners in our community. The reduced number of STEAM visits per site means a slightly smaller number of students served this year at 880.

Learning From Afar

Learning from Afar is a virtual educational structure designed to share STEAM, Math, Literacy, and Kids Fit lessons that coordinate with online read-aloud stories created and filmed by the ELC. Our online stories earned just over 11,000 YouTube views!



Feeding Tampa Bay

The second Saturday of each month, Feeding Tampa Bay brings fresh, dry, and frozen food to the ELC for distribution to Manatee County families. The ELC has added book donations to these events and contributed 1,863 books this fiscal year.



About the Early Learning Coalition

Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, Inc.

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County is a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency that in the years since its creation, continues 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, innovative programs, and a continual emphasis on improving the education and care provided to our 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.



The ELC lobby is open, airy and inviting to families. The space, variety of toys, books, and games provides a safe place for children to play and interact with each other.

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.



Our Programs & Services

Child Care Resource and Referral

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) is the "front door" to the Early Learning Coalition's services. *It is a service available to assist all families seeking quality and affordable child care options and local community resources. CCR&R can also be used as a free marketing tool for legally operating providers in Manatee County, as the information they provide is updated immediately in our database.*

Parents are educated on how to identify quality care, informed about different types of care, and are encouraged to continue looking for quality when placing their children in a child care facility. These services are provided at no charge. While CCR&R helps families find child care, it also provides information about other valuable community resources. This information is available in our lobby, on our website, and at NUMEROUS community events in which the ELC participates.

Promoting Early Literacy

The ELC contributed 42,864 books out in the community with the desire to close the achievement gap and prevent learning loss due to COVID-19 school closures.

New this year are QR codes, located on the new book labels, developed to survey families, and better define the current needs and our impact in the community.

Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH)

ELC Manatee launched CATCH, the Coordinated Approach to Child Health, this year with the support of 10 fully engaged childcare sites. CATCH is proven to prevent childhood obesity and is supported by 25 years and 120 academic papers indicating an 11% decrease in overweight and obesity.

CATCH creates healthy children by using the two following methods. The first enables children to identify healthy foods by using their easy to understand food labeling terms GO, SLOW, WHOA. The second increases the amount of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) children engage in each day.

Those We Serve

*In the 2019-2020 fiscal year
the Early Learning Coalition
of Manatee County provided
1,147 child care referrals*



Our Programs & Services

School Readiness - (SR) Child Care Funding Assistance

The School Readiness Program offers financial assistance to low-income families for early education and care so families can work towards becoming financially self-sufficient and their young children can be successful in school.

The program considers a child's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; involves parents as their child's first teacher; prepares children to be ready for school; and gives parents information about child development and other topics of interest.

During Fiscal Year 19/20 the Coalition was able to offer funding assistance to all families on the school readiness wait list. Over 700 families received invitations to complete their funding request and enroll their children in the child care provider of their choice, allowing them to continue their efforts towards reaching self-sufficiency.

Family Portal

In 2015 the Office of Early Learning (OEL) introduced the Family Portal, which is a comprehensive statewide system where parents can apply for VPK and School Readiness online. The Family Portal can be accessed using any smart phone, tablet, or computer with internet access. Families can upload documents supporting eligibility, sign applications electronically, manage their wait list status and revalidation for school readiness, and print out VPK certificates of eligibility, allowing the entire application process to be completed online.

A computer resource room is available within the ELC office to assist families with the process. The resource room has eight computers, a scanner, and a wireless printer. The room also includes a community resource bulletin board along with a reading nook for children.

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) is a free program designed to prepare four-year-old children for kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success. VPK is available to all four year old's born on or before September 1st that reside in Florida, regardless of family income.

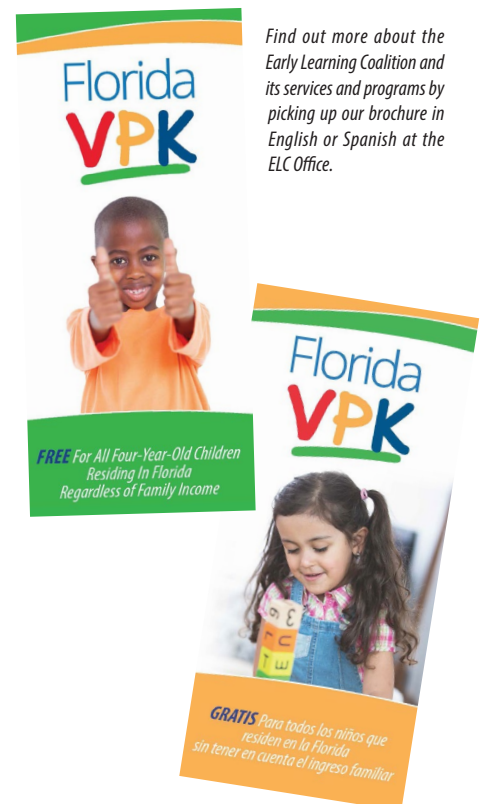
The VPK program is designed to provide four-year-old's access to quality prekindergarten educational experiences and prepare Florida's children for kindergarten by developing the emotional, intellectual, and social skills they need to become successful students. VPK includes standards for literacy skills, 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, a summer program, consisting of 300 instructional hours, or a Specialized Instructional Services (SIS) program which takes place outside the traditional classroom setting and is designed for 4-year-olds with special needs.

Those We Serve

*In the 2019-2020 fiscal year,
the Early Learning Coalition
of Manatee County served
3,046 Children
119 VPK Program Providers*

Those We Serve

*In the 2019-2020 fiscal year,
the Early Learning Coalition
of Manatee County's
School Readiness served
5,770 Children
98 Program Providers*



Our Programs & Services

Play and Learning Strategies (PALS)

Play and Learning Strategies, also known as PALS, is a research-based program that supports parents in their role as their child's first and most important teacher. Trained PALS coaches meet with parents, providing in-home early childhood education services that empower parents to successfully support their child's social-emotional, cognitive, and language development.

This results in a strengthened parent-child bond and a strong foundation for learning for the child. This foundation will prepare him/her for success in school. PALS I is designed for children 4 to 15 months. Weekly sessions are provided on early childhood topics, including understanding children's signals, responsiveness, reading with infants, and daily routines. PALS II is designed for children 18 to 48 months.

The PALS II weekly sessions expand on PALS I topics. PALS II also adds additional sessions related to the toddler's increased independence and limit-testing behaviors. The program is open to families in Manatee County with children ages 4 months to 48 months. There is no charge for services. PALS serves 35 families each year.



SOAR In 4

In efforts to further support our community, the ELC partnered with Soar in 4. The mission of Soar in 4 is to ensure children from families of all races, ethnicities, incomes, abilities, and languages have the opportunities and support they need to build success in school and beyond. Creating a network of parents, community organizations, and neighborhood businesses, they plan and carry out activities and opportunities that support young children's healthy growth, development, and school readiness.

Raising A Reader

RAR's goal for children is to stimulate the imagination, connect to a larger world, and formulate bonding memories for families with young children. Each week, for several weeks, a child borrows and brings home a bag of high-quality books. At the end of the program, to help sustain the practice of borrowing and sharing books, families are connected to their local library to continue the joy of reading together at home. RAR was in 9 childcare sites this fiscal year.



Developmental Screening and Early Intervention

Early detection of potential developmental delays allows children to reach their fullest potential and enter kindergarten ready to learn.

The ELC 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. 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.

Coalition staff participates in the Healthy Start Manatee community meetings, and the ELC Inclusion Specialist is a Certified Passenger Safety Technician and participates in car seat safety checks. An ELC staff member is a member of the Florida Association of Infant Mental Health. The ELC partners with the Manatee County School Board and local agencies to participate in community events.

Screening & Assessment staff completed 2,233 Ages and Stages Questionnaires developmental screenings. Of these screenings, 581 demonstrated potential developmental delays, and families were provided with Individual Early Care Plans, which include age and skill specific activities for families to use at home. The families of eight children identified as needing further evaluation were aided in coordinating referrals to other community agencies.

Early Intervention Outcomes

Child Screenings	2,233
Child Assessments	818
Community Referrals	8

Professional Development

2019-2020 Professional Development Statistics (including annual Conference):

- 69 sessions provided on 60 individual topics
- 682 student contacts
- 214.75 training hours

Nemours Reading BrightStart!

Nemours Reading Bright Start! (NRBS!) is a supplemental literacy intervention curriculum developed by the Nemours Foundation and dedicated to the prevention of reading failure in young children.

The ELC implemented its Practice-Based Coaching program using NRBS! in November 2015. Teachers complete implementation training. Each classroom is provided with a complete curriculum, and each teacher is assigned a coach. The coach makes regular visits to each classroom to ensure the fidelity of the implementation, to facilitate professional learning, and to coach for teaching-practice improvement.

During the 2019-2020 year, ELC served 86 teachers in 59 classrooms in 25 programs. The participating teachers indicated overwhelmingly that they enjoyed use of this program. ELC pre-screened 718 children using the Get Ready to Read-Revised Screening Tool.

Due to the COVID-19 emergency declarations and prohibitions, beginning with March 2020 we could no longer visit classrooms nor screen the children for progress. The number of children either demonstrating readiness on the initial screening or a limited mid-year screening was 544 or just over 75%. With at least 1/3 of the program remaining, another 96 or 14% were making progress toward readiness.

Special Recognition

NEXTGEN Family Magazine

NEXTGEN Family Magazine continues to go from strength to strength and remains the go to resource for families in Manatee County.

Now approaching it's seventh anniversary, the magazine again showcased all that is good in the local community through articles and pictures.

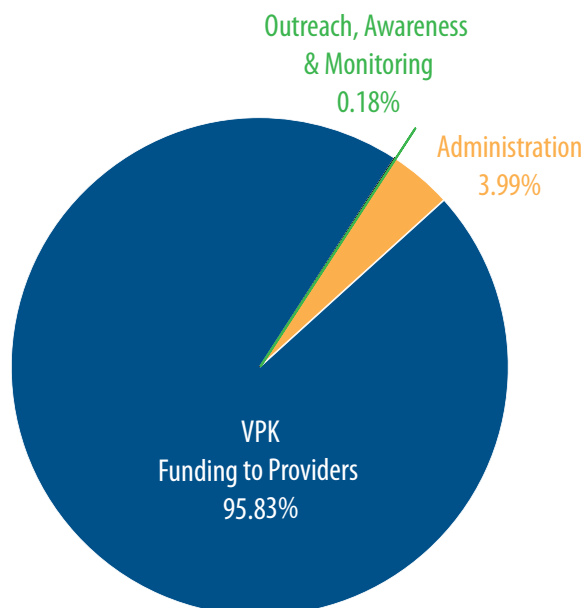
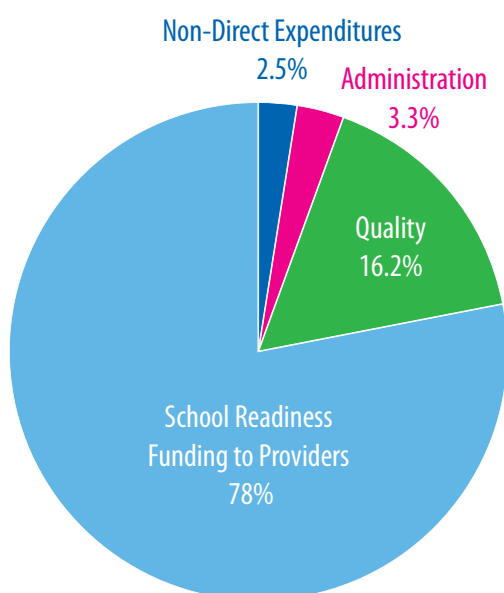
In response to the school closures due to COVID-19, a digital version of the April/ May 2020 issue was sent to over 40,000 families.



Grant Expenditures

2019-2020 Total Funding

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) received federal and state funding of \$20,217,283 during this fiscal year. 78% of School Readiness funds and 95.83% 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 3.3% and 3.99% respectively. *The ELC was awarded additional local grant dollars of \$2,463,854, and CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) dollars of \$1,451,958.*



A Heart Felt Thank You To Our Community Partners

American Red Cross
Angus Graham Family Foundation
Anna Maria Oyster Bar
BMO Harris Bank
Bradenton Police Department
BrightHouse/Spectrum Network
CareerSource Suncoast
Children's Forum
Children's Medical Services
Community Foundation of Manatee County
Community Foundation of Sarasota County
Department of Children and Families Child Care Licensing
Drug Free Manatee
Early Childhood Court
East Coast Migrant Head Start
Easter Seals of Southwest Florida
Family Network on Disabilities
Feeding Tampa Bay
First Book
Florida Association for the Education of Young Children
Florida Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
Florida Department of Education
Florida Department of Health in Manatee County
Florida Family Child Care Home Association
Florida Occupant Protection Resource Center
Florida Office of Early Learning
Florida Prepaid College Board
Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranch - Sarasota-Manatee
Florida Winefest & Auction
From Cradle to College™ Foundation
FSU Autism Institute
Gulfcoast Early Steps
Healthy Start Coalition
Hernando DeSoto Historical Society
Home Child Care Providers Association of Manatee County
HOPE Family Services
Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital
Kiwanis Club of Bradenton
Lakewood Ranch Community Fund
Lions Club of Bradenton
Manatee Children's Services
Manatee Community Foundation
Manatee County Chamber of Commerce
Manatee County Chapter FLAEYC
Manatee County Children's Services Advisory Board
Manatee County Crime Stoppers
Manatee County Housing Authority
Manatee County Juvenile Justice Strategic Planning Committee
Manatee County Public Library System
Manatee County Sheriff's Office
Manatee Educational Television (METV)

Manatee Education Foundation
Manatee High School Key Club
Manatee Hope
Manatee Infant Mental Health Association
Manatee Performing Arts Center
Manatee River Fair Association
Manatee School for the Arts Key Club
Manatee Sunrise Kiwanis Club
MCR Health
Michael Saunders & Company Foundation
MLK Day of Service
North Manatee Kiwanis Club
Palmetto High School Key Club
Palmetto Police Department
Parenting Matters
Parrish Community High School Key Club
Patterson Foundation
People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) Coalition
Pinellas County Schools Child Care Worker Training Program
Pittsburgh Pirates Organization/Bradenton Marauders
Police Athletic League of Manatee
Raising a Reader Network
Rays Baseball Foundation
Redlands Christian Migrant Association
Rotary Club of Lakewood Ranch
Safe Children's Coalition
Safe Kids Florida Suncoast
Save the Children Network
Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization
School District of Manatee County
Service Club of Manatee
SOLVE House
Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc.
Southern Early Childhood Association
State College of Florida and the Foundation for SCF
Step Up Suncoast
Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness
Take Stock in Children
The Bishop Museum of Science and Nature
The Giving Partner
Training and Technical Assistance Support Center, UCF
Turning Points /Galvano One Stop Center
Twiga Foundation
UF Lastinger Center
United Way Suncoast
Van Wezel Performing Arts Center
Volunteers of America
Whole Child Manatee
William G. & Marie Selby Foundation
Women's Resource Center

THANK YOU TO OUR 2019/2020 BOARD MEMBERS



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