



Message From Our Board Chair & CEO

Despite the incredibly unique challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic presented, we are pleased to share our many achievements and the noteworthy progress we accomplished during the 2020/2021 fiscal year.

Our agency has been at the forefront of supporting the Early Child Care Community since the onset of the pandemic, and we are incredibly proud of everything the Early Learning Coalition (ELC) did to help our child care providers and families during such challenging times.

In the fiscal year 2020/2021, in addition to ordinary grants, the ELC received almost 4 million dollars from the State of Florida from CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) funding. These funds were distributed to over 160 child care providers to help recover from the pandemic by allowing them to stay open and operational. The funding also allowed to purchase of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies to keep the children, teachers, and staff safe and well. ELC also received over \$1 million from local Manatee County government CARES grants to fund numerous projects such as purchasing and installing over 250 commercial outside hand sanitizing stations for child care sites and elementary, middle, and High school locations. The County grant also enabled the Coalition to purchase and specially outfit a School Bus to act as a Mobile Community Center.

ELC partnered with Feeding Tampa Bay to man over 40 mobile food pantries at various sites throughout the County to meet the ongoing food poverty problem intensified by people losing their jobs due to COVID-19. Parents of school children were not allowed to be fed with federally funded school breakfast and lunch program dollars. The ELC partnered with Feeding Tampa Bay and Manatee County Government to feed those parents when their children were given their daily allocation. Whether it was food, PPE, sanitizing child care locations, distributing books, or engaging children with remote learning programs, the ELC supported the community in many numerous and varied ways. We could not have been prouder of our staff who worked above and beyond to do much for our local children and families.

What was even more remarkable was that ELC continued to innovate and integrate new imaginative ideas and programs during this perplexing time. We successfully brought the Reading Pals initiative back to Manatee County after being awarded that program by the Children's Movement of Florida. We introduced the Dream Machine – a new mobile educational vehicle donated by the Soar In 4 program – taking our fleet of vehicles to five, with more to come next year. From YouTube to virtual learning lessons, we went to them when the children could not come to us.

Every organization has many components that make it successful. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to our volunteer Board

of Directors and thank them for their years of valuable and significant service. Their leadership and guidance are what ensure the Coalition's mission and vision are attainable.

Along with our outstanding Board, our goals are achieved by an exceptional staff who work tirelessly day in and day out. Our subsidized School Readiness program allows parents to go off to work each day knowing their child is not only safe but learning at the same time. Our free VPK program gives a timely boost to four-year-old children just before entering kindergarten.

Our continued work with community partners and the Manatee County School District has allowed child development and early literacy initiatives to thrive and survive some extreme obstacles. We thank all our partners who support and engage with us in our mission.

Finally, as you read this report, please notice that less than five percent of the Coalition's budget goes to our organization's administrative costs. ELC Manatee sets itself apart from other Coalitions. We implement so many unique and impactful programs, going above and beyond to find revenue streams that support these critical initiatives while keeping our administrative costs to a minimum.

If you, or an organization that you know of, wish to invest in children's early education, please be assured that any donation or grant to our Coalition will be very well spent and truly impact local children. The ELC has maintained the Platinum Seal of Transparency bestowed by GuideStar, the world's charitable organization watchdog, for the last ten years. This level is only obtained by less than .02 percent of all non-profits worldwide.


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, and funding opportunities that we have.

Together, we will continue to make a difference by working every day to allow all the children of Manatee County to succeed and flourish.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Sharff
Chief Executive Officer



Adam Mohammadbhoj
Chairman of the Board

(941) 757-2900

600 8th Avenue West, Suite 100
Palmetto, Florida 34221

*The information contained in
this annual report is based on
data collected from
July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021*

Special Recognition & COVID-19 Response

Florida Commissioner of Education Award

Another highly prestigious award came the way of ELC after we received the Florida Commissioner of Education Award. The goal of the award is to recognize Florida's business leaders and partners that have shown the most commitment in bringing positive change and implementing bold, innovative approaches to improve the academic performance of students in Florida's education system and communities. These educational connections help Florida school districts gain a competitive edge in providing enhanced services to the students they serve. ELC is proud to have been recognized at the State level!

COVID-19 Response

ELC was widely recognized for our continued efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Last August, we applied for \$1,062,000 in two Manatee County CARES grants. The funding was assigned to pay for Food Distribution events; child care for First Responders; mass purchasing of PPE for child care providers; cleaning and paper products for child care providers; equipment to sanitize child care facilities; hand sanitizing stations and solutions for local schools and ELC child care providers; equipment and technology to facilitate online learning platforms.

Most of the work in carrying out the above was in addition to the daily duties carried out by employees and required work at night and on weekends.

- Meals were distributed at over 80 food pantries in the evenings and on weekends.
- Over 80 child care centers were sanitized. ELC purchased backpack-style sanitizing machines and trained staff to respond to COVID cases at child care facilities or requests for preventative treatments.
- ELC used CARES funding to purchase and install 206 outdoor weather-proof hand sanitizing at local schools and child care centers.
- ELC also found that First Responders needed extended child care and, due to school closures, needed child care for the first time because their children were not in school. ELC worked with the Manatee County government and the Division of Early Learning to allow free child care for all First Responders who had this need. This initiative was very much appreciated by all First Responders and their families and allowed them to go out in the community to do their crucial work during such a difficult time.



What's New & Exciting

ReadingPals...

ReadingPals is back in Manatee County, thanks to the ELC! The program has a long local history but had not been operational for a few years. This statewide program - funded by the Children's Movement of Florida - is designed for community volunteers to commit to working with a child or small group of children for 30-60 minutes per week for 25 weeks during the school year.

The Manatee County program has gained participation from six voluntary pre-kindergarten programs, permitting volunteers to meet with children weekly to share high-quality stories. In addition, the Coalition provides lesson materials for volunteers and a book with coordinating home-based lessons for each child weekly. We are proud to serve over 90 students!

Like the Coalition itself, the ELC Manatee ReadingPals program is unique. We use our educational fleet, specifically the new Dream Machine, as a ReadingPals command center. The team loads books, lessons, tables, chairs, and laptops into the bus and rolls into the child care sites daily. As a result, volunteers and children can spread out and enjoy their books together in style. Further unique, our ELC program is attempting a hybrid model of using technology to engage students in reading using a virtual platform Vello and RazKids.

With our hybrid model, volunteers can genuinely touch on the three pillars of ReadingPals. That is teaching 21st-century skills by showcasing how to utilize Chromebooks, enhancing social-emotional development with skills embedded into the weekly plans, and of course, improving literacy rates by targeting early comprehension, language skills and by building at-home libraries with great books!

The Dream Machine!

ELC was proud to unveil the newest member of its mobile educational fleet. Meet the Dream Machine, where children are asked to play, dream, and then achieve! The Dream Machine is a 2001 International 3400 local church bus that was transformed into the ELC's latest mobile classroom and helps deliver programs such as STEAM, CATCH, and ReadingPals. Fully renovated, it is designed to inspire children to get creative as it boasts a nature-themed interior with puffy white clouds, a whimsical sunshine, a tree of books, and flying birds.

The Dream Machine was largely funded through Manatee County's Soar In 4 initiative and will attend the Soar In 4 monthly events to support the united mission of improving educational experiences for all children in the county. ELC is also eternally grateful to the business partners who have supported the early education mission. We humbly thank Soar In 4, Sarasota Bay Club, Manatee County CSAB Board, The CBD Store, Bob Boast Volkswagen, Carl Reynolds Law, Callaghan Tires, Willis Smith Construction, Bank of America, and our very own NEXTGEN Family Magazine for their generous contributions to the newest vehicle.

ELC strives to be creative and innovative for the betterment of Manatee County's earliest learners so that they can achieve their dreams!



ReadingPals

MENTOR TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



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

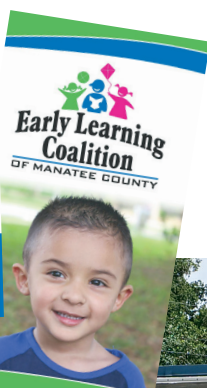
To provide and coordinate the services of School Readiness programs in an efficient manner, in order to help all children develop the skills needed to achieve future educational success; to support the role of parents as their children's first and most important teachers; and to continue to improve the quality of services available in the community.

Our Vision

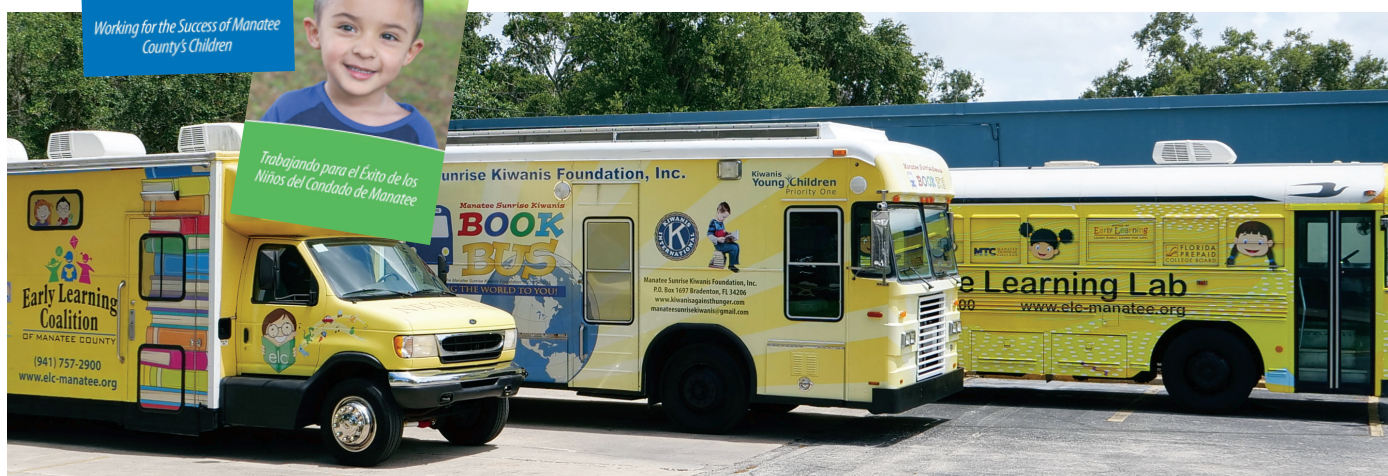
To provide and support high-quality School Readiness opportunities for all children and their families, understanding that it is in the first years of life that a child's future educational success is determined.



The ELC utilizes a fleet of Mobile Learning Labs and Educational Busses to take STEAM Education, Childhood Health Programs, and Literacy on the road directly to schools, and child care providers across Manatee County. For information regarding Mobile Learning, please contact Community Engagement at (941) 757-2900 ext. 2500.



Find out more about the Early Learning Coalition and its programs and services 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.

Those We Serve

*In the 2020-2021 fiscal year
the Early Learning Coalition
of Manatee County provided
1,082 child care referrals*

Promoting Early Literacy

As part of the Coalition's initiative for Family Literacy Opportunities, high-quality children's books are shared around the community. Our books are new, displayed by age, and feature varied topics to interest any young reader. Additionally, the books boast family tips stickers that share ideas for reading at any age. Over 33,000 books at a host of different locations, from Feeding Tampa Bay Food Distributions to restaurant-hosted Books Nooks to the Manatee Performing Arts Center's Family Move Night. Our team strives to bring a love of reading everywhere they go!

Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH)

ELC understands that to improve educational outcomes for young children; we need to care about the health of the child. With that, the ELC supports and encourages CATCH, the Coordinated Approach to Child Health, a national program that encourages physical education and nutrition instruction in classrooms. With this program, child care providers are offered training, the curriculum, physical education materials, and model lessons provided by ELC staff, all with no charge to the child care facility.

The CATCH program makes learning to be healthy, fun, and easy through games where every child is active and engaged. The program seeks to increase the amount of time children engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity because an active and healthy body attributes to having an active and healthy mind. Beyond physical education, CATCH gives children the knowledge and opportunity to understand the value of healthy food, so they can feel power in making their own healthy decisions. Nutrition knowledge is taught using child-friendly vocabulary.

This vocabulary teaches children to consume more "GO" foods such as fruit and vegetables and less "WHOA" foods such as candy and colas. The nutrition lessons feature easy to enjoy character puppets to maximize engagement and enjoyment.

With these resources and the CATCH curriculum, our providers continue to witness the great benefits it has on their students, "We really enjoy adding the different activities its help our children to stay engaged, and they love learning about WHOA and GO foods! This program has had such a positive influence on all our children. Hopefully, these programs will continue to positively impact our children and help them to continue to make healthy choices the rest of their lives!" The ELC CATCH program served 75 children in the 2020-2021 year and intends to expand its outreach to 150 children in the upcoming year.



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 20/21, the Coalition offered funding assistance to all families on the school readiness waitlist. Over 1400 families received invitations to complete their funding request and enroll their children in the child care providers of their choice, allowing them to continue their efforts towards reaching self-sufficiency.

Those We Serve

*In the 2020-2021 fiscal year,
the Early Learning Coalition
of Manatee County's
School Readiness served
3,964 Children
133 Program Providers*

Family Portal

In 2015 the Office of Early Learning (OEL), now Division of Early Learning (DEL), 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 2020-2021 fiscal year,
the Early Learning Coalition
of Manatee County served
2,365 Children
118 VPK Program Providers*



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

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 16 months. Weekly sessions on early childhood topics include understanding children's signals, responsiveness, reading with infants, and daily routines. PALS II is designed for children 17 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 over 50 families each year.



SOAR In 4 & Words on the Bus

In efforts to link to the community at large, the ELC has partnered with Soar In 4, a monthly movement 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. The ELC provides books at these events and brings activities designed to match the featured text, so children have an opportunity to deeply enjoy the book.

The ELC team developed a new fleet program titled Words on the Bus to further connect the community. Words on the Bus uses the Soar In 4 featured spotlight books monthly to engage local Pre-K sites. Words on the Bus is a book-embedded vocabulary program that features a paired dramatic play activity. Words on the Bus is currently in 8 child care sites and has served over 100 students since its launch. Words on the Bus goes to the selected sites monthly and encourages families to attend Soar In 4.



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 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 children's disability or special health care needs, 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 2,904 Ages and Stages Questionnaires developmental screenings. Of these screenings, 788 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 13 children who were identified as needing further evaluation were aided in coordinating referrals to other community agencies.

Early Intervention Outcomes

Child Screenings	2,904
Child Assessments	788
Community Referrals	13

Professional Development

2020-2021 Professional Development Statistics (including annual Conference):

- 42 sessions provided on 29 individual topics
- 1,152 student contacts
- 314.50 training hours

Nemours Reading BrightStart!

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

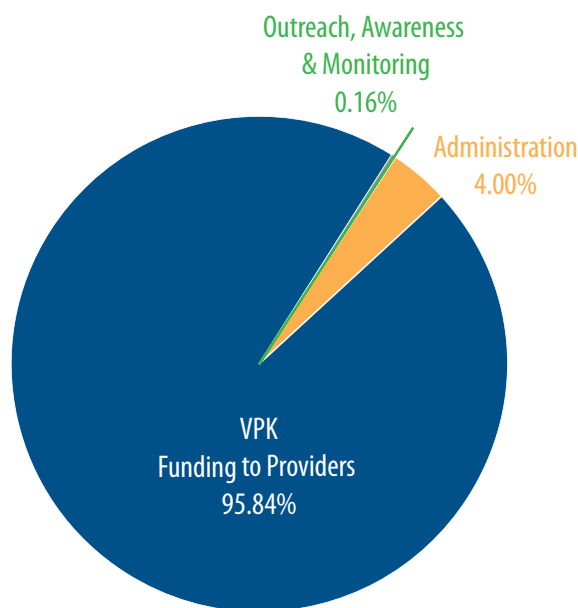
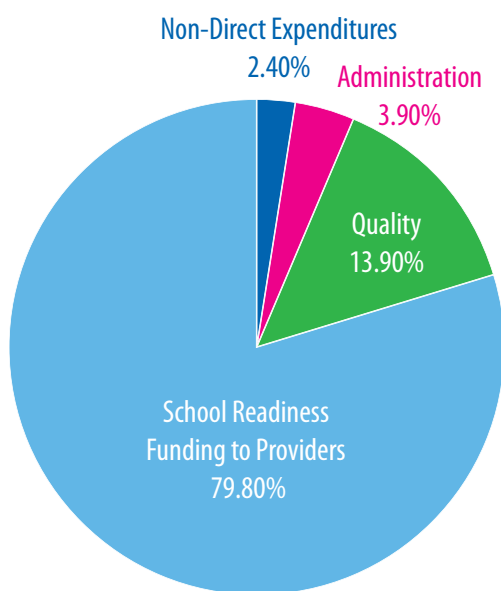
The ELC implemented its Practice-Based Coaching program using NRBS! in November 2015. Teachers' complete implementation training. Each classroom is provided with a complete curriculum, and each teacher is assigned a coach. The coach makes regular visits to each classroom to ensure the implementation's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

During the 2020-2021 year, ELC served 57 classrooms in 25 providers, including 4 school district classrooms at 3 elementary school sites. The participating teachers indicated overwhelmingly that they enjoyed the use of this program. ELC performed pre, mid, and post-screenings on children using the Get Ready to Read-Revised Screening Tool. Screening Results indicated that 90% of the three- and four-year-old children scored on target to be ready for kindergarten.

Grant Expenditures

2020-2021 Total Funding

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) received federal and state funding of \$20,100,866, including \$73,539 in PDG (Preschool Development Grant Services) during this fiscal year. 79.8% of School Readiness funds and 95.84% 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 3.9% and 4% respectively. *The ELC was awarded additional local grant dollars of \$2,534,359, Manatee Cares \$940,793, CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) dollars of \$1,790,488, and CRRSA (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Act) dollars of \$2,030,472.*



NEXTGEN Family Magazine

NEXTGEN Family Magazine continues to go from strength to strength and remains the go-to resource for local families.

Now approaching its eighth anniversary, the magazine again showcased all that is good in the local community through articles, interviews, and pictures.

NEXTGEN will celebrate its 50th issue in August of 2022 and is part of the Manatee County fabric.



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
CareerSource Suncoast
Children's Forum
Children's Guardian Fund
Children's Medical Services
Christ Episcopal Church
Community Foundation of Manatee County
Community Foundation of Sarasota County
Conquistador Historical Foundation
Department of Children and Families Child Care Licensing
Dive Into Reading
Division of Early Learning
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 Prepaid College Board
Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranch - Sarasota-Manatee
Florida Winefest & Auction
From Cradle to College Foundation
FSU Autism Institute
Guardian Ad Litem Program
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 Business Alliance
Lakewood Ranch Community Fund
Lions Club of Bradenton
Manatee Children's Services
Manatee Community Foundation
Manatee County 100 Club
Manatee County Board of Education
Manatee County Chamber of Commerce
Manatee County Chapter FLAAYC
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 Advisory Board
Manatee County Sheriff's Office
Manatee Education Foundation

Manatee Educational Television (METV)
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
National Commission for Certifying Agencies
National Early Childhood Program Accreditation
North Manatee Kiwanis Club
Palmetto High School Key Club
Palmetto Police Department
PARC
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 Bradenton
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
Soar In 4
SOLVE House
Southeastern Guide Dogs, Inc.
Southern Early Childhood Association
Spectrum Network
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
USF Child and Family Studies
Van Wezel Performing Arts Center
Volunteers of America
Whole Child Manatee
William G. & Marie Selby Foundation
Women's Resource Center

THANK YOU TO OUR 2020/2021 BOARD MEMBERS



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