MANATEE COUNTY COALITION ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL READINESS FUNDING

Palmetto, Florida, June 23rd, 2020 – The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) School Readiness child care funding is currently available to eligible families. School Readiness funding assists families in obtaining affordable, high quality child care. Funding for these families is part of the Office of Early Learning budget that has earmarked 60 million dollars across the state to enroll children in programs designed to ensure school readiness and reading on grade level by third grade.

Interested families should visit the Florida Office of Early Learning’s Family Portal online here: https://familyservices.floridaearlylearning.com/Account/LogOn, and submit a School Readiness application. The Coalition anticipates being able to serve families who apply for funding starting in mid-July.

Children are eligible for child care funding assistance from birth through 12 years of age. If families meet the below eligibility criteria, they may qualify for child care funding either through a referring agency or by applying to our wait list:

- Parents must be working, enrolled in school, disabled, or seeking employment
- The total gross household income must be at or below 85% of the State Median Income
- Parents or guardians that receive cash assistance for the family or for the relative children;
- Children under Protective Services or in foster care – regardless of income;
- Families receiving assistance through Salvation Army, HOPE, Community Haven, Easter Seals, or Manatee Children’s Services Kinship Program;
- Children living in a low-income family where parent/guardian is seeking employment, working or attending school at least 20 hours per week. (Income eligibility requirements apply.) or a combination of school and work to equal 20 hours a week
- For a two-parent home, both must be seeking employment, working or engaged in eligible education activities a combined total of 40 hours/week

Sharon Oakes, Chief Operations Officer of the Coalition, said: “We are excited for the opportunity to provide our families with the child care they need in order to provide for their children. It’s been a difficult year for many of our clients, and we hope to relieve some of their worries with this funding.”

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Families wishing to speak to someone about School Readiness child care funding may contact the ELC’s Family Services department at (941) 757-2900 ext. 2200 -- or by emailing, familieservices@elc-manatee.org -- however all applications must be made online through the Family Portal.

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County, Inc. is a multi-service agency dedicated to helping children develop skills that they will need to be successful in school and life. The agency's focus is on 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 and the critical role of parents, as their child's first and most important teacher.

To learn more about Coalition's services, go to www.elc-manatee.org or call 941-757-2900, extension 2100.