ELC AWARDED $10,000 GRANT FROM MANATEE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION TO FUND THE SPOT ON PROGRAM

Palmetto, Florida, January 17th, 2022 – The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County (ELC) has been awarded a grant for $10,000 through the Manatee Community Foundation to help financially support their Spot On Program. The Spot On Program seeks to reduce communication, self-regulation, and functional life skill deficits that may interfere with student progression in the early learning environment.

This grant is made possible through the Weichel Family Fund of the Manatee Community Foundation.

Many times, young children in preschool classrooms with limited social or academic communication abilities struggle to meet school expectations. These children may have access to therapy, but the carry-over between the therapeutic setting and home or school life is often unavailable. Spot On seeks to create teams of therapists, teachers, and families to support the child in all environments. Spot On funds 30 minutes of professional development and collaboration per child per week. This same practice is also applied toward addressing skill concerns with self-regulation and functional life skills. These skills can be critical in the early learning setting to help children become more independent and make the social and academic gains necessary for kindergarten preparedness.

Darrell King, ELC Chief Executive Officer, said: "We would like to thank the Manatee Community Foundation for their generous contribution, prioritizing Early Learning in our community. With this grant, we will be able to continue Spot On. Spot On has the potential to close learning gaps, intervene early, and uplift the learning environment for participating children."

The kindergarten readiness rates in Manatee County represent a call to professional action, and we feel Spot On answers this cry. When bringing therapeutic practices into the classroom, the barriers children who struggle to communicate or self-regulate face are often lowered as suddenly their teachers have access to strategies to support their unique needs. A child is a complex being with needs outside of the academic domain. Spot On feels that to reach academic standards, one must address the needs of the whole child. With access to weekly training and support, teachers can grow in skills beyond pedagogy and incorporate therapeutic practices into their entire day, allowing students to progress faster.

Moreover, the learning environment is elevated when the learned strategies are applied to all children in the classroom. These modifications allow for more appropriate developmental functioning, which creates
less frustration and more success for children. Finally, when children have access to adults with the skills to meet their needs, it is a win for all!

* **About Manatee Community Foundation**

Manatee Community Foundation partners with citizens to strengthen and enhance our community through philanthropy, education, and service—now and forever. Since 1998, the Foundation has awarded more than $43 million in grants and scholarships. For more information, visit www.ManateeCF.org or call (941) 747-7765.

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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 2101