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www.elc-marion.org

PROGRAM/VPK COMMITTEE MEETING
January 27, 2012 8:30 A.M.

NOTE: Meeting will be held at the United Way of Marion County office, 1401 NE 2nd Street, Ocala, FL 34470 (Behind the Cascades)

AGENDA

Roll Call

T. Rosario

CONSENT AGENDA

Section 1 – J. Johnson

CHAIR REPORT

Section 2 – J. Johnson

- Member resignation – Scott Hackmyer
- FY '10-11 Financial Audit available

CONSENT ITEMS

School Readiness Provider Pre-application Update

Handout – E. Deola

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Gold Seal Accreditation Follow up
Provider Market Rate
FY 2011-2012 Quality Year to Date Spending

Section 3 – E. Deola
Section 4 – R. Fricks/E. Deola
Handout – E. Deola

INFORMATION ITEMS

PROGRAM:

Introduction of new QI Dept. member: Thierry Woods
Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment Pilot Project
Ages & Stages Questionnaire Update
Environmental Rating Scales
Parent Fee Impact follow-up
New policy follow-up
Legislative Update

E. Deola
Section 5 – E. Deola
E. Deola
E. Deola
E. Deola
E. Deola
Section 6 – R. Fricks

VPK:

2009-2010 Kindergarten Readiness Rates
Curriculum Approval Process

E. Deola
Section 7 – E. Deola

SUCCESS BY 6:

SB6 Program Update

K. Howell

Article – Race to the Top

Public Comment

Adjournment

MEETING SCHEDULE
FY 2011 – 2012

Program/VPK Committee 8:30 a.m., Fri.	Success By 6 (SB6) Leadership Council 10:00 a.m., Fri.	SB6 Sub-Committees			Executive Committee 8:30 a.m., Wed.	Ad Hoc Committee 9:30 a.m., Wed.	Board 8:30 a.m., Thurs.
		Parenting Assistance 9:00 a.m.	Public Awareness 10:00 a.m.	Financial Support 11:00 a.m.			
			2/9/2012		2/8/2012		2/23/2012
3/16/2012	3/16/2012				3/14/2012		
			4/13/2012		4/11/2012		4/26/2012
5/18/2012	5/18/2012				5/9/2012		
			6/8/2012		6/13/2012		6/28/2012

- **Program/VPK Committee, SB6 Leadership Council and SB6 Sub-Committee meetings** will be held at United Way of Marion County, 1401 N.E. 2nd Street, Ocala, 34470
- **Executive Committee and Ad Hoc Committee meetings** will be held at Heritage Bank, 1409 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, 34470
- **Board meetings** will be held at ARC Marion, 2800 S.E. Maricamp Rd., Ocala, 34471 (Administrative Office – first building on the right). Parking is located behind the Administrative Office building.

To participate in this meeting via conference call, dial-in number is (888) 808-6959 & conference code is 0955728

Good Beginnings = Great Endings

Section 1

Consent Agenda

- November 18, 2011 Program/VPK Committee Meeting Minutes
- Current Event Report: July 2011 through December 2011
- Program Enrollment Summary Report for October 2011
- Waitlist Report as of January 20, 2012



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PROGRAM/VPK COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date: November 18, 2011

Place: United Way of Marion County, Inc. (UWMC) 1401 NE 2nd Street Ocala FL 34470

Time: 8:30 a.m.

Members Present

Cheri Erskin, George Gibson, Gwen Wilson, Judy Johnson (Program/VPK Committee Chair), Nancy Young, Scott Hackmyer, Linda Foy

Members Absent

Mary Beth Kyle, Melissa Hancock

Staff

Roseann Fricks (Executive Director), Elizabeth Deola (Quality Initiatives Director), Nasseam James (Compliance Director), Anita Winter (Business Development Director), Krissy Howell (Success By 6 (SB6) Manager), Tee Rosario (Administrative Services Director)

Call to Order

Judy Johnson called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Tee Rosario announced that this meeting was properly noticed; she called roll.

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCTION

- Judy Johnson read Melissa Hancock's bio. Ms. Hancock was raised in Panama City, Florida. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Florida State University in 1997.
Ms. Hancock taught fourth grade for two years and assisted with writing the curriculum for a conflict resolution program for grades K-5. Ms. Hancock returned to Florida State University where she obtained her Law degree in 2003. While in law school, Ms. Hancock was a member of the Phi Delta Phi Legal Fraternity and the Tallahassee chapter of Inns of Court. She also participated in an externship at Legal Services of North Florida. Ms. Hancock began working at The Firm in 2003 and practices in many areas of law, including real estate, family law, construction and civil trial practice. Ms. Hancock is admitted to practice before the United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida. Ms. Hancock is an active member of the Ocala Lions Club.
Roseann Fricks met with Ms. Hancock to discuss ELCMC.
- Judy Johnson introduced Linda Foy to the Program/VPK Committee. Linda Foy was on the ELCMC Board since its inception until her retirement as C.E.O. of Childhood Development Services, Inc. (CDS). Ms. Foy lives in Michigan part of the year as well. Ms. Foy has volunteered in numerous capacities; her latest endeavor being Brother's Keeper. Ms. Foy is an interviewer of services at Brother's Keeper.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Consent Agenda was accepted as presented. The following items were included in the Consent Agenda for review: September 16, 2011 Program/VPK Committee Meeting Minutes; Current Events Report: July 2011 through October 2011; Program Enrollment Summary Report for August and

September 2011; Waitlist Report as of November 16, 2011; and VPK Comparison Report through August 2011. BG1 (At-Risk) referrals are increasing.

CHAIR REPORT

Judy Johnson discussed the Chair Report. Highlights include:

- **Parent Fee Increase Update**

There was a recommendation from the Executive Committee to increase parent fees in which the Board requested additional information before considering for approval. At the October 27, 2011 Board meeting it was approved for implementation of Sliding Fee Schedule, Option B, 2011 Simplified Sliding Fee Schedule in a two-step implementation, as well as implementing a reduced fee for siblings in the amount of 25%.

George Gibson discussed the timeline which lead to the approval of the parent fee increase.

Additional information on the impact on the Wait List for School Readiness Services due to the parent fee increase will be presented at the January 2012 Program/VPK Committee meeting.

The parent fee increase was also in preparation of potential budget cuts for FY 2012 – 2013.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Gold Seal Accreditation Provider Survey Results/Follow Up

Elizabeth Deola discussed the Gold Seal Accreditation topic. Highlights include:

- At the October 2011 Market Day, ELCMC conducted a survey for child care providers on accreditation. There were 54 child care providers that completed the survey out of 137 that came to Market Day. As per the survey results, child care providers are aware of Gold Seal Accreditation. Additionally, child care providers are not becoming Gold Seal accredited due to costs; it is due to the requirements.
- In regards to the top three considerations or concerns about becoming accredited, 37% of the child care providers had no response.
- Elizabeth Deola asked for guidance from the Program/VPK Committee on next steps.

Discussion on the floor. Judy Johnson asked if ELCMC has a tracking system or should create one that for example at the end of two or three years, ELCMC can tell a child care provider that they have been successful with their readiness scores, have a business plan and it's time to discuss becoming accredited. Elizabeth Deola responded that on five of the survey, question, 57% of the child care providers responded that they have explored the option of accreditation. There is an option to hold meetings, ex. twice a year for interested child care providers that might want additional information on becoming accredited.

Cheri Erskin discussed that her center's is not accredited due to the costs involved but maintains NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) standards at her center.

Cheri Erskin discussed that her centers' capacity is 132; Together for Children enrollment is 80 which is comfortable. Ms. Erskin is planning to have another VPK class beginning in January 2012. It will be a six hour class until the end of the school year.

Judy Johnson discussed that this item needs to come back to the Program/VPK Committee for discussion on options for incentives to become accredited or what ELCMC is doing that could be considered to be a dis incentive. Elizabeth Deola will create a list of services ELCMC is providing as supports to child care providers that are interested in becoming accredited and will be brought back to the Program/VPK Committee. Linda Foy requested that the information include how many family child care homes and centers are currently accredited.

Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment

Elizabeth Deola discussed the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment tool. Highlights include:

- The ELCMC Quality department attended the NAEYC conference that included a Teaching Strategies GOLD informational session. Roseann Fricks gave Elizabeth Deola the go-ahead with creating a pilot program for the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment. This Assessment will replace the E-LAP (Early Learning Accomplishment Profile) and LAP-D (Learning Accomplishment Profile Diagnostic) assessments currently used by ELCMC. The pilot program will launch in

January 2012. The ultimate goal is eliminating using the E-LAP and LAP-D assessments by July 1, 2012.

Elizabeth Deola discussed the tool in detail. Teaching Strategies GOLD is a web-based tool. The ELCMC Quality department is visiting the ELC of Southwest Florida on December 6, 2011 to be trained on said assessment tool.

- Roseann Fricks discussed that the Association of Early Learning Coalitions (AELC) adopted said assessment after much discussion at the state level. ELCs will use the same assessment. Children through grade two are able to be assessed using the assessment tool. It is available in Spanish and does have measurable outcomes. AELC is creating efficiencies and it is anticipated ELCs will have the ability to purchase said assessment through AELC at a discounted cost.

INFORMATION ITEMS

PROGRAM:

Child Support Enforcement Registration

Nasseam James discussed the Child Support Enforcement registration topic. Highlights include:

In F.S. 414.0195 there is a provision specific to the WAGES program. The provision includes a condition that to be eligible for receiving public assistance the family applying for services must comply with child support enforcement. The parent, caretaker relative, or teen parent must cooperate with child support enforcement in establishing paternity and modifying or enforcing a support order unless child support enforcement determines good cause. The entire family loses public assistance until it satisfies the requirement of registration. The goal of ELCMC is to implement child support enforcement requirements for the new calendar year as a condition to apply for school readiness services. It is already a law and a requirement of other public assistance programs. School readiness is a public assistance program.

Nasseam James has conducted research with two other ELCs (Sarasota and Florida's Heartland) that implemented the child support enforcement registration awhile back. In Sarasota, said program was implemented approximately two years ago and they are satisfied with the program. The ELC of Sarasota dropped services for approximately 300 children whose guardian that failed to comply.

However, for Florida's Heartland, they implemented the program for less than a year and decided that it was too much work to continue the program.

Judy Johnson requested that ELCMC move forward with implementation of requiring parents that apply for school readiness services and that are eligible to register through child support enforcement to do so.

Approximately 52% of the cases at ELCMC only had a letter of acknowledgement where parents stated they were not sure where the other parent was. The goal of implementation of said program is to reduce the number of children that truly do not need public assistance and increase the number of parents actually supporting their children that qualify for the school readiness program.

NAEYC Conference Summary

Discussed under Gold Seal Accreditation Provider Survey Results/Follow Up.

Infant/Toddler (I/T) Symposium Conference Summary

Elizabeth Deola discussed the I/T Symposium Conference Summary. Highlights include:

- The conference was very beneficial. The Quality department brought back materials to distribute to child care providers.

Inclusion Program update

Elizabeth Deola discussed the Inclusion Program update. Highlights include:

- It was beneficial for Elizabeth Deola to attend the I/T Symposium Conference as she is the Inclusion Specialist for Marion County. Elizabeth Deola brought back resources for Krissy Howell's (Success By 6 Manager) parent education programs. Elizabeth Deola will be including said resource information in the new inclusion program.
- To date, 15 children have been served under the inclusion program in Marion County.

Bulk Crib Purchase update

At the last Program/VPK Committee meeting, Cheri Erskin requested that ELCMC research the possibility of purchasing cribs in bulk for cost savings. Krissy Howell has researched this possibility for her Caring Through Cribs program.

Krissy Howell discussed that she has worked with Delta Crib to purchase cribs in bulk in the past. Prices are not available to date and once the information is acquired the information will be shared.

Elizabeth Deola conducted a survey for child care providers who serve infants to be able to offer them the cost savings on cribs once the prices are acquired.

Linda Foy requested that information on the Caring Through Cribs program be shared with Brother's Keeper and Interfaith Emergency Services.

Through the partnership with Kids Central, Inc. on the Caring Through Cribs program, Kids Central Inc. has purchased 400 cribs for Circuit 5, which includes Marion County.

SR Provider Pre-Application update status

At the last Program/VPK Committee meeting, Elizabeth Deola stated she would bring back any updates regarding the SR Provider Pre-Application status. There are no new updates to report at this time. Updates will be provided at a future Program/VPK Committee meeting.

VPK:

Program Update

Elizabeth Deola provided the Program update. Highlights include:

At the last Program/VPK Committee meeting, Chris Sandy discussed that the Marion County Public Schools hired an individual to go into the schools to ensure that those children that attended the VPK program were receiving the FLKRS (Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener) screening through their kindergarten program.

SUCCESS BY 6:

SB6 Program Update

Krissy Howell provided the SB6 Program update. Highlights include:

- There are approximately 24 parents attending each Active Parenting class. There will not be a class held in December 2011. Approximately 97 parents have attended the last four Active Parenting classes held at the Marion County Public Library (MCPL).
 - There will be another Active Parenting session from January through June 2012.
- 2011 Pajama Project (Pajamas for Bedtime!)
 - The pajama drive has begun. Homeless children will benefit from the drive.
 - SB6 partnered with the Marion County Public Library (MCPL) again this year as drop off centers at branches for the pajamas.
 - SB6 received a check for \$200 for the purchase of pajamas from the Friends of the Library in the Forest.
 - KTK Radio is participating in the pajama drive again this year. There are two events in Alachua/Marion Counties that KTK Radio supports; the pajama drive is one of the events.
- The Children First Breakfast event was successful and there was a great turn out. The baby bottle fund-raiser for SB6 held during the Breakfast event raised \$827. There is a meeting scheduled for the week of November 21st with Marion County Children's Alliance to finalize the profit/loss.

Article

Article from the Children's Defense Fund was included for review.

OTHER BUSINESS

- The Race to the Top grant has been submitted to the Federal Government. The grant focuses on quality child care throughout the state. There is a potential of \$100 million for Florida. Grant notification will be on December 2011.
- The draft results from the Auditor General's report at ELCs throughout the state has been released. The Auditor General's Office is clear that the Office of Early Learning needs to move

forward with implementation of a statewide quality rating system for childcare. The Program/VPK Committee will be informed of the final report from the Auditor General's Office at an upcoming Program/VPK Committee meeting.

- Scott Hackmyer thanked Roseann Fricks for her excellent presentation at the Public Policy Institute.
- Any articles to be published in The Voice newsletter need to be submitted today to be published in the upcoming issue.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned with no further discussion.

Recorder: Tee Rosario

Accepted By _____ Date

CURRENT EVENTS
Executive Director Report FY 2011 - 2012

	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	Yr. Total
Customer (Parent/Caregiver) Service													
Meetings													
SRS	376	452	403	341	402	475							2,449
VPK	331	523	149	74	56	54							1,187
Packets Reviewed - SRS	4	20	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A							24
Incoming Calls	1,496	3,904	1,899	2,151	2,022	1,761							13,233
Outgoing Calls	1,778	2,029	1,694	1,677	1,416	1,395							9,989
CCR&R Interviews	1,037	1,294	991	701	706	727							5,456
Number of SR Children Served (paid for)	3,109	2,594	2,647	2,702	2,533	2,574							16,159
Number of VPK Children Served (paid for)	1,842	315	2,048	2,056	2,192	2,087							10,540
Customer (Child Care Provider (CCP)) Service													
SR Payments - Business Days Early	0	0	1	0	1	2							4
VPK Payments - Business Days Early	0	5	5	3	6	7							26
VPK Advance Payments - Business Days Early	0	0	2	3	7	8							20
Compliance													
Monitoring Visits	0	0	0	1	3	10							14
Files Monitored													
SRS - Parent/Child	18	14	13	30	12	15							102
SRS - CCP	0	10	0	0	2	0							12
VPK - Parent/Child	25	11	10	14	10	9							79
VPK - CCP	0	10	6	8	4	24							52
Fraud Prevention Referrals (total of 1st, 2nd, 3rd offense)	18	30	*22	15	11	12							70
Live Scan Appointments	n/a	n/a	7	17	2	7							33
Quality Initiative Services													
Number of SR CCP	176	183	179	178									716
Number of VPK CCP	72	71	76	80									299
CCP Technical Assistance	75	153	202	43	175	212							860
Trainings Provided/Attendees	0	2/33	2/37	4/69	3/45	2/28							13/212
Trainings Cancelled Due To Insufficient Registration	n/a	n/a	2	1	0	1							3
Meetings with Potential CCP													
SRS	2	8	5	3	5	2							25
VPK	75	5	5	4	5	4							98
New CCP													
SRS	12	7	1	0	0	2							22
VPK	75	3	8	4	0	2							92
CCP no longer contracted to provide services													
SRS	12	4	5	1	0	0							22
VPK	0	0	3	1	0	0							4
CCP closed for business	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A							0
Child Assessments	295	585	523	130	23	102							1,658
Community Awareness													
Events Attended	5	9	9	5	14	3							45
Meetings Attended	46	68	66	64	58	20							322
Upcoming Outreach Events	4	2	3	5	1	1							16
Children's Books, Parent Resources, Etc. distributed to the Community (Events/Agencies/Businesses)	2,005	1,343	607	187	3,048	1,134							8,324
ELCMC Website Statistics -													
Number of Visits	2,104	2,770	1,920	1,740	1,558	1,519							11,611
Average Visits Per Day	68	89	64	56	51.83	49							378
Parent Education													
Trainings Conducted	3	4	5	4	5	2							23
Staff Development													
Trainings Attended	5	3	8	18	8	5							47
*approximate													

For specific details on any of the above activities please contact Tee Rosario at trosario@elc-marion.org

updated 10/6/11tr, revised 12/20/11

SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM
 ENROLLMENT SUMMARY
 AS OF DATE: 11/30/2011

ELIGIBILITY CATEGORIES	CHILD CARE SERVICE I				CHILD CARE SERVICE II								CCS III			
	PROT SCVS	OUT OF HOME	TANF AT-RISK (RCG)	TOTAL CCSI	WAGES	TCC 1ST	TCC 2ND	TCC/ TED	MIGRANTS	TEENS	INC ELIG <100%	TOTAL CCSII	INC ELIG 100-185%	PURCH POOL	RESPITE CARE	TOTAL
< 12 MTH																
BEGINING COUNT	27	15	0	42	21	11	0	0	3	0	13	48	0	3	0	93
CHILDREN ADDED	9	7	0	16	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	22
TRANSFER IN	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	4
CHILDREN DLTD	5	0	0	5	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	12
TRANSFER OUT	3	0	0	3	5	0	0	0	1	0	2	8	0	0	0	11
END COUNT	28	22	0	50	16	13	0	0	2	0	12	43	0	3	0	96
FULL TIME	28	21	0	49	16	10	0	0	2	0	7	35	0	3	0	87
PART TIME	0	1	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	5	8	0	0	0	9
COMBINATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 TO <24 MTH																
BEGINING COUNT	33	35	1	69	26	10	0	0	6	0	119	161	16	2	0	248
CHILDREN ADDED	11	2	0	13	9	0	0	0	2	0	1	12	0	0	0	25
TRANSFER IN	4	0	0	4	4	2	0	0	1	0	4	11	0	0	0	15
CHILDREN DLTD	3	4	0	7	7	2	0	0	1	0	8	18	0	0	0	25
TRANSFER OUT	8	3	0	11	4	1	0	0	0	0	13	18	2	0	0	31
END COUNT	37	30	1	68	28	9	0	0	8	0	103	148	14	2	0	232
FULL TIME	37	29	1	67	28	9	0	0	8	0	79	124	12	2	0	205
PART TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	21	2	0	0	23
COMBINATION	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	4
24 TO <36 MTH																
BEGINING COUNT	42	33	9	84	31	16	0	0	9	0	205	261	21	2	0	368
CHILDREN ADDED	14	7	0	21	9	0	0	0	3	0	0	12	0	0	0	33
TRANSFER IN	5	2	1	8	3	6	0	0	0	0	15	24	6	0	0	38
CHILDREN DLTD	12	3	0	15	4	2	0	0	0	0	9	15	1	0	0	31
TRANSFER OUT	4	6	2	12	7	0	0	0	2	0	21	30	2	0	0	44
END COUNT	45	33	8	86	32	20	0	0	10	0	190	252	24	2	0	364
FULL TIME	45	32	8	85	31	15	0	0	10	0	151	207	24	2	0	318
PART TIME	0	1	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	38	42	0	0	0	43
COMBINATION	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	3

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	PROT SCVS	OUT OF HOME	TANF AT-RISK (RCG)	TOTAL CCSI	WAGES	TCC 1ST	TCC 2ND	TCC/ TED	MIGRANTS	TEENS	INC ELIG < 100%	TOTAL CCSII	INC ELIG 100-185%	PURCH POOL	RESPITE CARE	TOTAL
36 TO <48 MTH																
BEGINING COUNT	53	27	8	88	29	8	0	0	10	0	224	271	25	3	0	387
CHILDREN ADDED	15	5	0	20	7	1	0	0	2	0	2	12	3	0	0	35
TRANSFER IN	1	6	1	8	4	3	0	0	2	0	19	28	3	0	0	39
CHILDREN DLTD	14	4	0	18	4	0	0	0	0	0	14	18	2	1	0	39
TRANSFER OUT	5	2	3	10	6	0	0	0	0	0	23	29	2	0	0	41
END COUNT	50	32	6	88	30	12	0	0	14	0	208	264	27	2	0	381
FULL TIME	47	30	6	83	29	9	0	0	11	0	170	219	25	2	0	329
PART TIME	1	2	0	3	0	3	0	0	3	0	34	40	2	0	0	45
COMBINATION	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	0	0	0	7
48 TO <60 MTH																
BEGINING COUNT	29	22	9	60	27	4	0	0	11	0	244	286	21	3	0	370
CHILDREN ADDED	5	3	0	8	6	1	0	0	0	0	1	8	3	0	0	19
TRANSFER IN	4	4	2	10	5	3	0	0	0	0	24	32	7	0	0	49
CHILDREN DLTD	5	4	0	9	5	1	0	0	0	0	16	22	2	2	0	35
TRANSFER OUT	5	1	2	8	5	0	0	0	3	0	21	29	6	0	0	43
END COUNT	28	24	9	61	28	7	0	0	8	0	232	275	23	1	0	360
FULL TIME	25	24	9	58	26	6	0	0	7	0	186	225	22	1	0	306
PART TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	38	39	0	0	0	39
COMBINATION	3	0	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	8	11	1	0	0	15
60 TO <72 MTH																
BEGINING COUNT	23	17	8	48	19	5	0	0	1	0	198	223	17	1	0	289
CHILDREN ADDED	9	2	0	11	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	17
TRANSFER IN	2	0	1	3	2	4	0	0	1	0	16	23	10	0	0	36
CHILDREN DLTD	5	3	0	8	2	1	0	0	0	0	7	10	1	0	0	19
TRANSFER OUT	0	3	1	4	5	1	0	0	0	0	23	29	3	0	0	36
END COUNT	29	13	8	50	20	7	0	0	2	0	184	213	23	1	0	287
FULL TIME	9	2	2	13	6	2	0	0	2	0	49	59	5	0	0	77
PART TIME	3	1	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	35	37	4	0	0	45
COMBINATION	17	10	6	33	13	4	0	0	0	0	100	117	14	1	0	165

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	PROT SCVS	OUT OF HOME	TANF AT-RISK (RCG)	TOTAL CCSI	WAGES	TCC 1ST	TCC 2ND	TCC/ TED	MIGRANTS	TEENS	INC ELIG < 100%	TOTAL CCSII	INC ELIG 100-185%	PURCH POOL	RESPITE CARE	TOTAL
IN SCHOOL																
BEGINING COUNT	54	55	84	193	55	22	0	0	0	0	591	668	52	7	0	920
CHILDREN ADDED	20	7	1	28	12	0	0	0	0	0	1	13	0	0	0	41
TRANSFER IN	4	1	1	6	3	5	0	0	0	0	28	36	7	0	0	49
CHILDREN DLTD	6	6	3	15	8	4	0	0	0	0	47	59	5	0	0	79
TRANSFER OUT	8	4	0	12	4	0	0	0	0	0	6	10	2	0	0	24
END COUNT	64	53	83	200	58	23	0	0	0	0	567	648	52	7	0	907
FULL TIME	1	3	6	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	22	3	0	0	35
PART TIME	5	5	7	17	8	8	0	0	0	0	134	150	8	0	0	175
COMBINATION	58	45	70	173	50	15	0	0	0	0	411	476	41	7	0	697
SPECIAL NEEDS TEENAGER																
BEGINING COUNT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHILDREN ADDED	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRANSFER IN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHILDREN DLTD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRANSFER OUT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
END COUNT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
FULL TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
COMBINATION	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL ALL	281	207	115	603	212	91	0	0	44	0	1,496	1,843	163	18	0	2,627

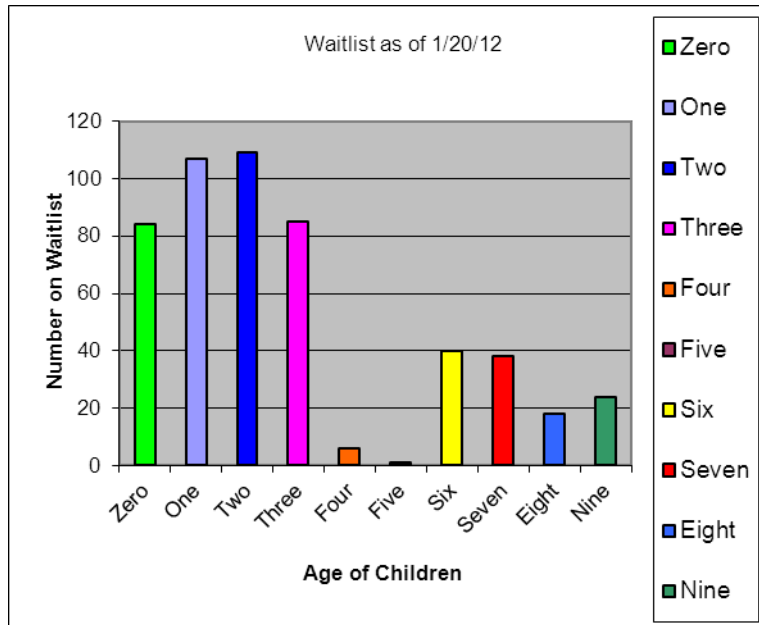
SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM
 ENROLLMENT SUMMARY
 AS OF DATE: 11/30/2011

ELIGIBILITY CATEGORIES	CHILD CARE SERVICE I				CHILD CARE SERVICE II								CCS III			
	PROT SCVS	OUT OF HOME	TANF AT-RISK (RCG)	TOTAL CCSI	WAGES	TCC 1ST	TCC 2ND	TCC/ TED	MIGRANTS	TEENS	INC ELIG <100%	TOTAL CCSII	INC ELIG 100-185%	PURCH POOL	RESPIRE CARE	TOTAL
MEMO - SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN INCLUDED IN THE ABOVE COUNTS IN THEIR CHRONOLOGICAL CARE LEVEL																
< 12 MTH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 TO <24 MTH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24 TO <36 MTH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
36 TO <48 MTH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
48 TO <60 MTH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
60 TO <72 MTH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IN SCHOOL	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7	0	0	0	10
SPECIAL NEEDS TEENAGER	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL SPECIAL NEEDS	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	7	9	0	0	0	12

NOTE: DATABASE IS UPDATED THROUGH 11/30/2011

-- END OF REPORT --

WAITLIST REPORT January 20, 2012

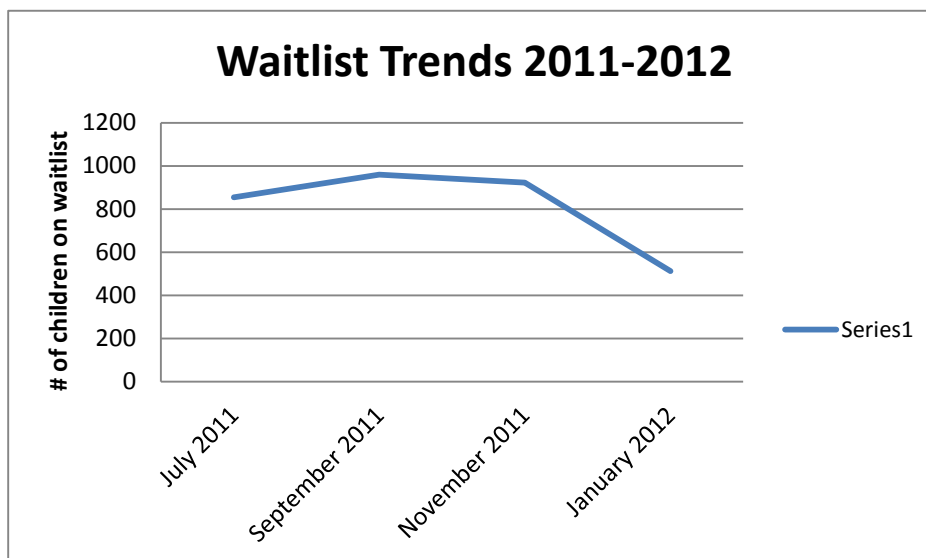


Children on waitlist as of January 20, 2012:

5 years old and under = 392

6 to 9 years old = 120

TOTAL: 512



Section 2



Devereux Kids

215 N. W. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue Ocala, FL 34475 (352) 732-3300 Fax (866) 390-6742

December 25, 2011

Roseann Fricks, Executive Director
Early Learning Coalition of Marion County
3303 SE Lake Weir Avenue, Suite #2
Ocala, FL 34471

Dear Roseann,

For a number of reasons I have made the decision to retire from Devereux Kids effective January 6, 2012. After thirty three years in the school system I made a commitment for three years to start the Devereux program in West Ocala. Three and one half years later I feel the program has been successfully started and I am confident Devereux will find just the right person to place in this position so the program will stay strong in its role of helping build strong families and communities. Due to my decision to retire I also respectfully submit my resignation from the Early Learning Coalition Pre-K Advisory Board.

One of the pleasures during my tenure as a school principal and with Devereux has been the opportunity to meet and work with outstanding people such as you. I will admit, you are one of my favorites. I love the work you do, the passion and leadership you show and your unwavering commitment to the importance of early learning. I do hope to stay active in the community and know our paths will continue to cross, Of course, I will get to see you on Fridays at Kiwanis. I look forward to our continued friendship

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve on your Advisory Board. I wish everyone at the Early Learning Coalition continued success.

Sincerely,

Scott Hackmyer
Community Facilitator



Section 3

Program Supports for Providers Pursuing Accreditation

- **Accreditation Renewal Reimbursement** – the Coalition will reimburse the entire renewal fee to the provider
- **Technical Assistance** – as requested, the Coalition will work with providers to help research the appropriate accreditation agency
- **Monthly Market Day** – information provided on multiple resources to assist in improving overall site quality and support accreditation requirements
- **Professional Development** – the Coalition offers a multitude of professional development opportunities on various topics.
- **Continuing Education Units (CEU)** - All professional development trainings are CEU approved to assist child care providers and their staff in maintaining a level of education and renewing their credentials
- **Peer Mentoring** – the Coalition provides assistance in connecting providers with their peers who may be able to assist them in pursuing accreditation opportunities.
- **Community Involvement & Relationship Building** – the Coalition works with our local community businesses and college programs to provide information on continuing education and resources that would benefit the early learning field

1/13/12 ED

Section 4

Florida's Office of Early Learning

2011 Market Rate Survey

Executive Director Call – October 28, 2011

Time Period

- The 2011 prevailing market rate is based on provider profile updates conducted between 06/01/2010 and May 31, 2011

Process

- Each early learning coalition surveys all legally operating providers in their communities to collect provider demographic, program, and rate information. Provider information is updated in the state's information system.
- The OEL pulls into a consolidated database all coalition data from the distributed state information system.
- The OEL creates a data subset of providers to include in the prevailing market rate calculation based on provider type groups and rate categories.
- The OEL calculates the 75th percentile using the market rate data subset.
- The OEL writes a Market Rate Overview document that provides detailed information about the process. The document is available on SharePoint: Coalitions Zone>Reference Materials and User Guides>Prevailing Market Rate>2011

Changes to Prevailing Market Rate

- During the 2011 legislative session, Senate Bill 2014 revised Section 402.3051, Florida Statutes, which defines the market rate requirements. Significant changes include:
 - Increasing the number of rate categories from 18 to 74
 - Adding a part time prevailing market rate
 - Adding a prevailing market rate for Gold Seal providers
 - Increasing from 3 to 7 the provider types
 - Decreasing from 6 to 4 the age categories

Completion Statistics

- Provider update completion rate: 89.58%
- Of the provider types included in the prevailing market rate, the percentage with rates included: 90.10%

2011 Prevailing Market Rate Reports

The OEL has created two Prevailing Market Rate reports.

The Abridged version, which meets the minimum statutory requirements, is available on the OEL website.

http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/EarlyLearning/Documents/Fiscal-MarketRate/AbridgedMarket_Rate_2011_FT-PT.pdf

The Full version, which includes additional rate information including average, median, and most frequent private rates plus an analysis of the SR reimbursement rate in relation to the private pay rate, is available on the SharePoint Coalitions Zone.

Coalitions Zone>Reference Materials and User Guides>Prevailing Market Rate>2011

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF: _____

Serving the counties of: _____

DAILY PAYMENT-RATE SCHEDULE (Effective _____)

			Full-Time Daily Rates						
(EFS CARE CODE) - description			Licensed or Exempt Providers	Gold Seal	Licensed Homes	Gold Seal	Registered Home	Informal Providers	Before or After School
Infant	(INF)	<12 MTH							
	(TOD)	12<24 MTH							
	(2YR)	24 <36 MTH							
Preschool	(PR3)	36 <48 MTH							
	(PR4)	48 <60 MTH							
	(PR5)	60 <72 MTH							
	(SCH)	In School							
	(SPCR)	Special needs							
			Part-Time Daily Rates						
(EFS CARE CODE) - description			Licensed or Exempt Providers	Gold Seal	Licensed Homes	Gold Seal	Registered Homes	Informal Providers	Before or After School
Infant	(INF)	<12 MTH							
	(TOD)	12<24 MTH							
	(2YR)	24 <36 MTH							
Preschool	(PR3)	36 <48 MTH							
	(PR4)	48 <60 MTH							
	(PR5)	60 <72 MTH							
	(SCH)	In School							
	(SPCR)	Special needs							

Additional Information:

Has your coalition adopted a sibling discount rate? No Yes _____% of the payment rate.

What is the projected number of children to be served within the fiscal year(s) this schedule covers? 3,798

2011 Market Rate Report
ELC of Marion County
Marion County

[HOME](#)

Full Time Rates

Part Time Rates

Non Gold Seal

Gold Seal

Non Gold Seal

Gold Seal

Care Level	Market Rate		
	Private Rates Included	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
Infant	33	\$207.85	\$150.00
Toddler	43	\$173.21	\$133.50
Preschool-age	46	\$225.00	\$115.00
School-age	31	\$165.13	\$105.00

Private Rates Included	Market Rate	
	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
6	\$150.00	\$150.00
8	\$125.00	\$117.50
8	\$110.00	\$110.00
7	\$120.00	\$110.00

Care Level	Market Rate		
	Private Rates Included	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
Infant	16	\$165.00	\$130.00
Toddler	24	\$135.00	\$105.00
Preschool-age	24	\$190.00	\$95.00
School-age	18	\$107.00	\$90.00

Private Rates Included	Market Rate	
	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
3	*	*
6	\$115.00	\$108.00
6	\$89.33	\$86.67
3	*	*

Large Family Child Care Homes (FCCH)

Care Level	Market Rate		
	Private Rates Included	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
Infant	8	\$200.00	\$150.00
Toddler	7	\$200.00	\$142.50
Preschool-age	8	\$175.00	\$135.00
School-age	7	\$175.00	\$135.00

Private Rates Included	Market Rate	
	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
4	\$250.00	\$250.00
4	\$250.00	\$250.00
4	\$225.00	\$225.00
4	\$250.00	\$225.00

Large Family Child Care Homes (FCCH)

Care Level	Market Rate		
	Private Rates Included	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
Infant	6	\$150.00	\$125.00
Toddler	6	\$150.00	\$112.50
Preschool-age	7	\$166.67	\$90.00
School-age	5	\$150.00	\$65.00

Private Rates Included	Market Rate	
	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
4	\$250.00	\$250.00
4	\$250.00	\$250.00
4	\$225.00	\$225.00
4	\$225.00	\$225.00

Family Child Care Homes (FCCH)

Care Level	Market Rate		
	Private Rates Included	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
Infant	69	\$205.00	\$140.00
Toddler	71	\$205.00	\$125.00
Preschool-age	72	\$200.00	\$125.00
School-age	55	\$195.00	\$110.00

Private Rates Included	Market Rate	
	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
No Data	No Data	No Data
No Data	No Data	No Data
No Data	No Data	No Data
No Data	No Data	No Data

Family Child Care Homes (FCCH)

Care Level	Market Rate		
	Private Rates Included	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
Infant	42	\$175.00	\$130.00
Toddler	44	\$170.00	\$112.50
Preschool-age	44	\$161.67	\$100.00
School-age	36	\$155.00	\$100.00

Private Rates Included	Market Rate	
	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
No Data	No Data	No Data
No Data	No Data	No Data
No Data	No Data	No Data
No Data	No Data	No Data

Public School

Care Level	Market Rate		
	Private Rates Included	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
Preschool-age	No Data	No Data	No Data
School-age	No Data	No Data	No Data

Private Rates Included	Market Rate	
	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
No Data	No Data	No Data
No Data	No Data	No Data

Public School

Care Level	Market Rate		
	Private Rates Included	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
Preschool-age	No Data	No Data	No Data
School-age	No Data	No Data	No Data

Private Rates Included	Market Rate	
	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
No Data	No Data	No Data
No Data	No Data	No Data

Non-Public Schools

Care Level	Market Rate		
	Private Rates Included	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
Preschool-age	No Data	No Data	No Data
School-age	No Data	No Data	No Data

Private Rates Included	Market Rate	
	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
No Data	No Data	No Data
No Data	No Data	No Data

Non-Public Schools

Care Level	Market Rate		
	Private Rates Included	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
Preschool-age	No Data	No Data	No Data
School-age	No Data	No Data	No Data

Private Rates Included	Market Rate	
	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
No Data	No Data	No Data
No Data	No Data	No Data

Faith Based Exempt

Care Level	Market Rate		
	Private Rates Included	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
Infant	13	\$150.00	\$145.00
Toddler	15	\$122.50	\$117.50
Preschool-age	15	\$110.00	\$106.33
School-age	12	\$160.00	\$100.00

Faith Based Exempt

Care Level	Market Rate		
	Private Rates Included	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
Infant	10	\$145.00	\$130.00
Toddler	11	\$117.50	\$97.50
Preschool-age	11	\$100.00	\$85.00
School-age	6	\$100.00	\$85.00

The rates provided have been converted to weekly rates. For quality assurance purposes, the following rates have been excluded: full time or part time rates above \$300.00, full time rates less than \$50.00, and part time rates less than \$25.00.

*** is displayed when the number of Private Rates Included at the county level is less than 4. Refer to the state level data in these instances.

Providers not included in the rate calculation include: Head Start Only, Playgroup, Summer Camp/Recreational Programs, Sick Care Agency, Nanny/Aupair Agency, and Family Friends and Neighbor providers.

After School

Care Level	Market Rate		
	Private Rates Included	Maximum Private Rate	Prevailing Market Rate
Preschool-age	No Data	No Data	No Data
School-age	No Data	No Data	No Data

Section 5

Teaching Strategies GOLD Pilot Project

The Early Learning Coalition of Marion County is conducting a pilot project utilizing Teaching Strategies GOLD. Teaching Strategies Gold is an assessment tool that the state will begin using by 2013. This assessment will **REPLACE** the E-Lap and Lap D assessments currently being utilized in Marion County effective July 1, 2012.

This exciting opportunity is being piloted in a select group of contracted child care providers. Your site has been randomly selected to participate in this program to receive the first opportunity to try the new assessment!

Why should you participate?

1. **NO MORE LAP's!** ☺
2. **FREE** training on the assessments including **FREE** CEU's
3. The opportunity to familiarize your site with conducting Teaching Strategies Gold and give you that heads-up opportunity before it becomes a part of your School Readiness Provider Contract in July 2012

Trainings will be offered on the following dates/times:

Tuesday, January 17: 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Thursday, January 19: 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Tuesday, January 31: 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Thursday, February 7: 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Participants will receive
2 hours of in-service
training and the option
of receiving .2 CEUs at no cost!

Participation in the GOLD Pilot is a privilege, NOT a requirement. Participation in the GOLD Pilot requires regular access to a computer with internet capabilities. The Coalition will require all contracted providers to utilize the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment by July 1, 2012. If you chose not to participate in the GOLD Pilot, then you will be required to complete post E-lap and Lap D Assessments on all school readiness children at your site for the remainder of this fiscal year.

If you are interested in participating in the GOLD Pilot, please complete the questionnaire and return it to the QI Department at the Coalition no later than **FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 2012.**

3304 SE Lake Weir Avenue, Suite 2
Ocala, FL 34471

Phone (352)369-2315

Fax (352) 369-2475

Teaching Strategies GOLD Pilot Application

SITE NAME: _____

DIRECTOR: _____ **PHONE:** _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

Please provide the following information pertaining to your site:

1. How many classrooms do you have at your site that serve school readiness children? _____
2. Teaching Strategies GOLD is an assessment that MUST be completed by the teachers in the classroom. How many teachers will need to be trained at your site? _____
3. Check the equipment you have available to use during your normal business hours:

<input type="checkbox"/> Computer with Internet	<input type="checkbox"/> Printer	<input type="checkbox"/> Laptop computer with Internet
<input type="checkbox"/> Tablet Computer with Internet (i-pad)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fax Machine	
4. On a scale of 1 through 5, rate how comfortable you are with using the computer to do the following functions: (1 being uncomfortable and 5 being extremely comfortable)

Access Email	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Browse the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Conduct Research	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Complete Data Entry	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
5. How many School Readiness Children do you have enrolled? _____
6. What dates would you like to send your Director and teachers to training at the Coalition office? (Check all that apply and write in the # of staff attending)

<input type="checkbox"/> Tues. Jan 17 th # of staff attending: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Thurs. Jan 19 th # of staff attending: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Tues. Jan 31 st # of staff attending: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Thurs. Feb 7 th # of staff attending: _____

SUBMIT THIS FORM NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, JANUARY 13th

Teaching Strategies GOLD Pilot Program Procedure

Effective Date: January 19, 2012

Subject: This procedure covers how the Coalition conducts the pre and post assessments using the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment program.

Background: Florida Statute 411.01(5)(c)2.d states that Coalitions are responsible for ensuring that an age-appropriate assessment is administered to children when they enter a program and an age-appropriate assessment is administered to children when they leave the program.

References: F.S. 411.01(5)(c)2.d

Procedure: The Quality Initiatives Department will conduct a pilot program of the Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment from January-June 2012. The pilot assessment will consist of no less than five (5) contracted school readiness providers and will not exceed twenty (20) contracted school readiness providers.

Application Process:

Providers interested in participating in the Teaching Strategies GOLD Pilot Program (TS GOLD Pilot) will complete and submit an application to the Quality Initiatives (QI) department.

Upon review of the application by QI department staff, the provider is then invited to participate in an orientation session. Applications are approved as long as the provider is in good standing with the Coalition financially and has maintained all Coalition requirements throughout the fiscal year.

Orientation:

The orientation session will be delivered to the Site Director and one additional key staff member. During the orientation the provider will review and sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The provider will also receive at the orientation a packet including the following items:

1. Orientation Agenda
2. Copy of the MOU (unsigned)
3. Timeline of TS GOLD Pilot trainings, meetings, due dates
4. Certificate of Attendance
5. TS GOLD Touring Guide

Training:

Once the Director and key staff member have attended orientation, training is required for all provider staff members participating in the TS GOLD Pilot. Provider staff must complete an on-line 6 hour training session available at www.teachingstrategies.com as

In partnership with

well as two (2) face-to-face sessions on the topics of Child Observation and Documentation and Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment Data Entry and Review.

Classroom Observation:

Once training has been delivered to provider staff members they are to begin implementing the observation portion of the assessment. Daily anecdotal notations should be made while observing the children through different stages of their day. This information is then entered into the TS GOLD Website at the conclusion of each day or as time allows throughout the day. Data must be entered daily.

Checkpoints:

In order to comply with F.S. 411.01(5)(c)2.d which requires a pre and a post assessment of all children participating in the school readiness program the Coalition has established a checkpoint when the assessment(s) will be finalized. For the TS GOLD Pilot, the check point has been set to April 20, 2012. Participating providers must review all observations entered into the TS GOLD website and assign a developmental level to each child based on their observations of each child individually.

Data Review:

Beginning April 24, 2012 QI Department Staff will review the information entered into the TS GOLD website. Children who score two levels below their developmental age-range will be referred to the appropriate entity. Providers will receive report materials to encourage increased family involvement and be provided with options for working with the child directly to increase the particular level that is below the developmental norm.

Feedback and Technical Assistance:

QI Department Staff will review all data in the TS GOLD website and provide feedback directly to the provider on their observation notes posted in the system. Feedback will be encouraging and supportive while offering pointers that will allow the teacher the opportunity to expand his/her knowledge within the realm of child development and observation.

QI Department Staff may periodically review information entered into the TS GOLD website and provide feedback immediately to the provider to assist in increasing the quality of the information entered.

Section 6

Governor's Budget Recommendations: Early Learning

- **The 2012-2013 budget contains approximately \$3.8 million of recurring state funds for the School Readiness program. This allocation ensures that Florida is able to draw down every federal dollar available.**
- **Increases the VPK program by approximately \$7.7 million to maintain the current base student allocations of \$2,383 for the school year program and \$2,026 for the summer program, and account for the estimated increase in participation.**
- **Authorizes approximately \$1.4 million for Head Start State Advisory Council**
- **Eliminates three positions and some operational funding from the Office of Early Learning (\$182,553).**
- **Removes \$30.2 million in TANF funding from the School Readiness Program that was placed into reserve in the current year.**
- **Backs out \$21 million of non-recurring budget and then any unspent dollars during the fiscal year would need to be re-appropriated in the back of the bill. .**
- **Does not fund the Early Learning Information System**

Section 7

DRAFT

for discussion and feedback purposes

Florida Department of Education

2012 VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN (VPK) EDUCATION PROGRAM CURRICULUM APPROVAL PROCESS

TIMELINE AND PROCESS OVERVIEW

TIMELINE IS SUBJECT TO ADJUSTMENT BASED ON FEEDBACK.

DATE	MAJOR ACTIVITIES
January 2012	Publicize Process
	Release Draft Specifications for public feedback (Survey open through January 27, 2012)
	Begin to identify reviewers
February 2012	Determine what modifications will be made to Draft Specifications, based on public feedback
	Draft Policies and Procedures to Chancellor
	Draft Specifications to Chancellor
	Policies and Procedures approved
	Specifications approved
	Publisher Meeting
March 2012	Reviewer Training
	Intent to Submit forms received
	All materials (including curriculum, assessment, & professional development) materials submitted for review (Two month window for reviews to be completed)
April 2012	
May 2012	Deadline for review submission to DOE
	Collation of reviews and reliability checks
Late June/Early July 2012	Final report to Chancellor
	Final report approved
	Dissemination of Final Report

Article

Education Week, Published Online: January 3, 2012

Challenges Lie Ahead for Early-Learning Grant Winners

By Lesli A. Maxwell

The nine states splitting \$500 million in Race to the Top early-learning grants must now deliver on a slate of ambitious promises to improve the quality of early-childhood education for tens of thousands of low-income children who rely on a patchwork of publicly financed child-care and preschool programs.

By awarding millions of federal dollars to the states with winning bids for the Early Learning Challenge grants, the U.S. Department of Education is providing opportunity for—and exerting high-profile pressure on—California, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Washington state to prepare more of their low-income and at-risk children for success as they enter kindergarten.

The states in the winners' circle—27 other states and the District of Columbia also competed but did not win grants—face many challenges as they try to put into practice their pledges to set standards, improve teacher quality, assess school readiness, and expand access.

“Unknown budgets will be a barrier for many states, and bringing so many different people, agencies, and programs together in ways that they never have before will make meeting all the commitments they've made in their plans a big challenge,” said Laura Bornfreund, an early-education policy analyst for the New America Foundation, a Washington think tank.

Likewise, creating consensus around a definition of school readiness and measuring that is a work in progress in every state. So is ensuring that the new initiatives jump-started with the federal windfall can last beyond the four-year life of the grants, early-childhood experts say.

“All of these states are in for a major undertaking,” Ms. Bornfreund said.

Rating Program Quality

At the heart of every state's initiative is a plan to design or expand public rating guides that parents and others can use to judge the quality of early-childhood programs. Most states' systems will use stars to rate programs, similar to the way restaurants and movies are graded.

The guides—called Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, or QRIS—will vary by state, but broadly they must outline standards of quality for early-childhood programs and rate how each program measures up to them. The rating systems must include tiers that clearly delineate the quality of early-education programs. The more standards a program meets, the higher the rating it will receive.

Many of the winning states, including Delaware and Massachusetts, have pledged to provide strong incentives for early-childhood providers to take part in the rating systems by offering financial rewards, professional development, and higher reimbursement rates to those that do.

Maryland and North Carolina are years ahead of most other winners when it comes to having a system in place for rating quality, said Harriet Dichter, the vice president of the Ounce of Prevention Fund, a Chicago-based early-childhood-advocacy group.

Those two states, along with Massachusetts and Washington, will also benefit from having merged the oversight of their diverse range of early-childhood programs into one office. In many states, multiple agencies oversee a myriad of public and private early-childhood programs, such as the federally funded Head Start and Early Head Start programs, state-financed prekindergarten, nonprofit and for-profit centers, and family child-care providers. “Those are huge assets to have as these states move forward,” Ms. Dichter said. “But every state will be challenged in their efforts to integrate the various pieces of their plans. You don’t create high-quality early-childhood education for at-risk kids by doing only one thing. It all has to work together.”

Ahead of the Game

North Carolina—widely seen as a leader in early-childhood education—has had its rating system for more than a decade, and 78 percent of the state’s providers already participate in it, said C. Robin Britt, the chairman of the state early-childhood advisory council. The state is one of a few that require providers to join in the rating system as a condition of basic licensing. It will make its rating system more rigorous in the upper tiers by, among other changes, adding standards related to family engagement.

“Providers are going to have to have meaningful opportunities for families to be involved with their child’s experience to earn the higher ratings,” Mr. Britt said.

North Carolina is one of three states—Maryland and Minnesota are the others—that will target extra resources to distinct regions. Mr. Britt said North Carolina will set up a “transformation zone” in the state’s northeastern counties where communities are poor and rural.

“We want to home in on these distressed communities where there have historically been very few resources for early childhood,” he said.

A major challenge for North Carolina is the fate of its prekindergarten program. The state legislature slashed spending on prekindergarten last summer—cutting more than 5,000 children out of the program—and added a fee requirement as part of its strategy to close a budget shortfall. A state judge ruled that the fee was unconstitutional, a decision currently under appeal.

In Maryland, early-childhood officials will funnel extra resources to school attendance areas with high concentrations of Title I schools, said Rolf Grafwallner, an assistant state superintendent who oversees early-childhood programs.

“When you are in a low-income neighborhood, there is a tremendous scarcity of high-quality programs for young children,” Mr. Grafwallner said. “Our aim is to get the programs that exist there into [the rating system] and provide supports to them so they can improve and move up the ratings scale.”

Maryland will also partner with Ohio to develop a new kindergarten entry assessment to measure how well young children are prepared for school and how well individual programs have prepared them.

Consortium Approach

California—a state that many observers did not expect to see among the winners of the federal grants—is taking a regional approach. Sixteen regional “consortia” made up of early-childhood providers and other groups like school

districts and county offices of education will devise local rating systems based on guidelines provided by the state, said Camille Maben, the director of the child-development division in the California Department of Education.

The state's standards, or "foundations," for infant, toddler, and preschooler development, must be incorporated into the local rating systems, including those that are specific to young English-language learners. The local systems must also use a school-readiness tool that relies on observations of new kindergartners to determine how they are doing in math, language and literacy, and social and emotional development. Those observations will also grade how well the early-childhood programs that students participated in prepared them.

The local consortia will largely decide which standards must be met before providers can move from one quality tier to the next in the rating systems, Ms. Maben said.

But questions about the long-term budget stability and sustainability of the new early-childhood initiatives hang over California more than any other winning state. The state has been mired in a fiscal crisis for five years, a situation that has subjected early-childhood programs to deep spending cuts, Ms. Maben said. It is also the only winning state to be awarded less money than it requested, having received \$53 million of its \$100 million request. That has prompted a few of the local consortia to reconsider their participation, Ms. Maben said.

"Even with less money to work with, I'll be surprised if any of them decides not to go forward," she said. "This is the best bang for the buck when it comes to getting children ready for success in school."

Ms. Dichter, of the Ounce of Prevention Fund, said the fact that 36 states and the District of Columbia applied for the grants and that most submitted strong applications underscores the need for more investment in early-childhood programs. The recently approved federal budget for the fiscal year that began Oct. 1 appropriates \$550 million for a new round of Race to the Top awards in 2012. Early-childhood advocates hope some of that money might be set aside for additional early-learning challenge grants.

"The biggest takeaway from this entire competition is that early childhood needs much more money than what was available in this round of Race to the Top," Ms. Dichter said. "The pool of applicants was very good beyond the nine winners."