

Quality Childcare Options – A Year-Round Necessity

From: Anita Winter

Early Learning Coalition of Marion County

Did you know that early learning services through the Coalition also provide quality childcare for low-income eligible families for children through the age of nine? And did you know that those services may include full year and extended day services for eligible children?

Full year is defined as 12 months of service – for example, a first grader may utilize full time care in the summer months when school is not in session and part-time or extended day care during the school year. Setting options include both private childcare and public school providers.

Extended day and full year services are vital to the working parent whose child is not old enough to be left alone during non-school hours. And these services are important to the child who receives additional educational support in a safe environment.

In selecting a quality childcare site, parents may need the options of setting which are open early morning and late afternoon hours to cover their working hours. Parents should research the structure and components of a childcare's extended day and summer programs just as they would if leaving a pre-school age child in full time care.

In Marion County, Childcare Resource and Referral (CCR&R) is available for all parents – income is not considered. If a parent only needs after-school care for a child while they are at work, they may request specifically those options. For parents who are working evenings and weekend shifts, CCR&R can provide care options for their children. CCR&R is also the initial step to determine if families are eligible for financial assistance for childcare. There are no fees associated with resource and referral assistance – the contact number in Marion County is (352) 369-2315, Early Learning Coalition.

For more information on the all the early learning programs in Marion County, the Voluntary Pre-kindergarten program including registration information, and Success By 6, please visit our website, www.elc-marion.org, or call the Coalition at (352) 369-2315.