

PROGRAM/VPK COMMITTEE MEETING

January 17, 2018

8:30am

AGENDA

Roll Call

B. Montalvo

CONSENT AGENDA

Section 1 – E. Deola

DISCUSSION/CONSENT ITEMS

- Committee Membership & Recruitment
- ELCMC Program Measurement Tool
- FY 17-18 Strategic Plan

E. Deola

Handout – E. Deola

Section 2 – E. Deola

INFORMATION ITEMS

- Progress Dunnellon
 - Introduction: Tonya Cox
- ELCMC Policy on Endorsements
- ELCMC Position Statement:
 - Screen Time for Children Ages Birth to Five Years
- Children’s Week Tallahassee Trip
- ELCMC Update
 - Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS)
 - Community Events

Section 3 – E. Deola

Handout – E. Deola

Section 4 – E. Deola

Section 5 – E. Deola

Section 6 – E. Deola/R. Fricks

SUCCESS BY 6 INITIATIVE

- Winter Wonderland Coat Drive

Section 7 – E. Deola

Public Comment

Adjournment



To join this meeting via
conference call,
dial 1-888-670-3525,
enter the conference code:
7148104574 #

Section 1

Consent Agenda

☞ Program/VPK Meeting Minutes from November 16, 2017

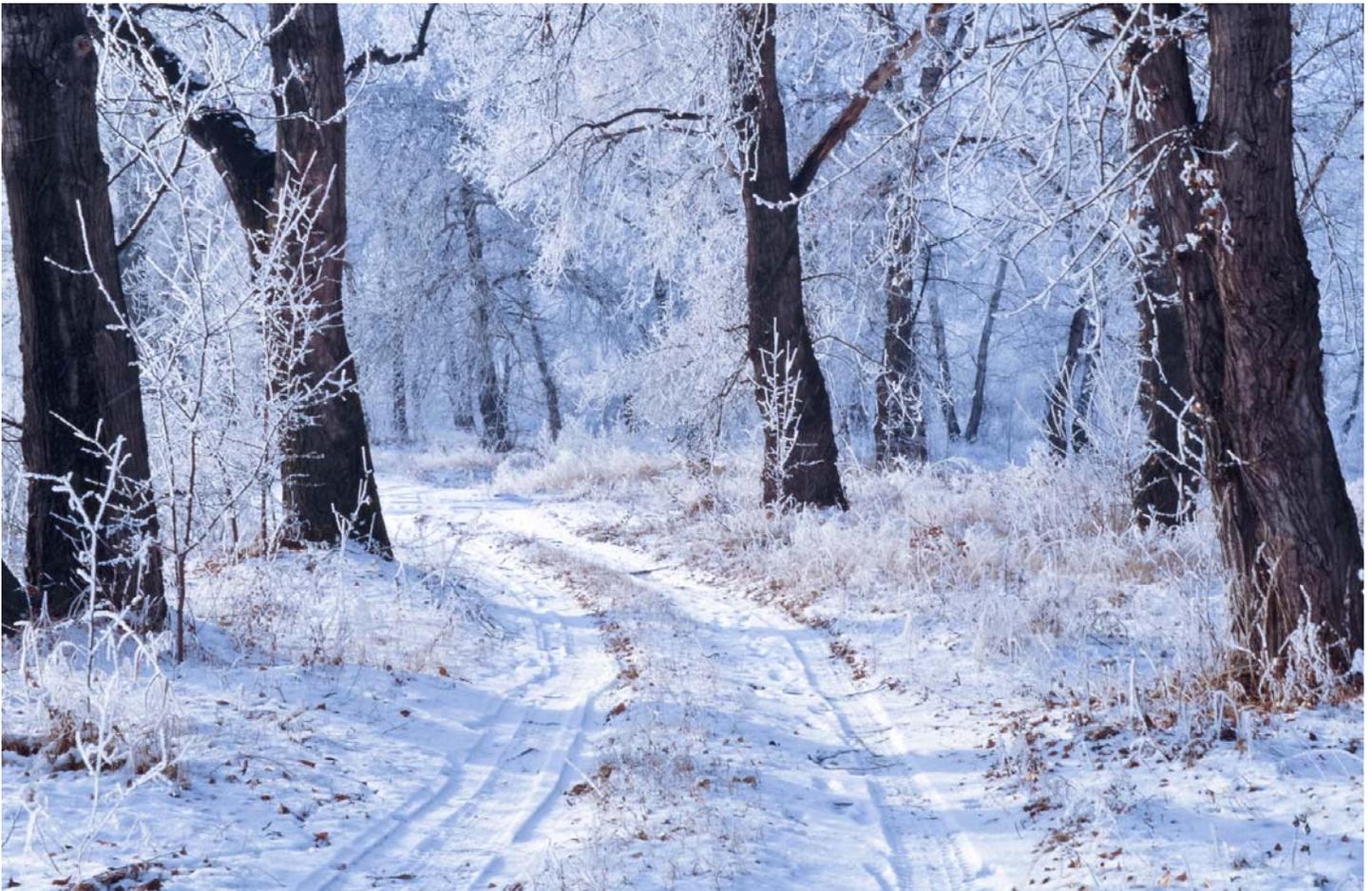
☞ Current Events Report through December 2017

☞ Notice of Meetings as of November 14, 2017

☞ Budget Reports as presented to the Board in December 2017

☞ Items Available for review:

- Customer Service Survey Results for November and December 2017



**Early Learning Coalition of Marion County:
Program/VPK Committee
Meeting Minutes**

Date/Time: November 16, 2017, 8:30am
Location: ELCMC Office, Board Room
Members Present: Dr. Heidi Maier, Suzanne McGuire, Jenny Ransone
Members Absent: Melissa Hancock, Pastor John Delcamp, Deidra Boodoo, Cole Shannahan
Conference Call: Gwen Wilson, Karen Vega, Paola Lopez
Guests: None
Staff Present: Roseann Fricks, Elizabeth Deola, Beatriz Montalvo

Agenda Item	Summary/Discussion	Action
Call to Order	Beatriz Montalvo called the meeting to order at 8:34am and called roll. Consent Agenda included minutes from the September 28, 2017 meeting, the current events report through October 2017, and the current Notice of Meetings as of November 14, 2017. Customer Service Surveys were available for review including the months of September and October 2017.	Unanimous consent was given by the committee to accept the information as presented.
CONSENT AGENDA		
CONSENT ITEMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Heidi Maier submitted her written resignation to the Committee as she was unable to attend meetings as they were currently scheduled. Out of courtesy to the Superintendent, the committee considered holding meetings at a more convenient time to allow her to attend. The committee considered several options and settled to move meetings from Thursday mornings to Wednesday mornings. Dr. Maier was informed of the new dates and confirmed her intent to rejoin the committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee consented to Dr. Maier rejoining the committee.
DISCUSSION ITEMS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruby Phillips discussed the Ages & Stages questionnaire tool and the new process being developed by Quality Initiatives Staff. Providers will begin conducting and tracking the ASQ screening tool for all children ages birth to five years old participating in the school readiness program. Training is currently taking place with providers to prepare them to take over this process. Current practice is that parents coming into ELCMC to complete the enrollment into the school readiness program complete the tool during their office visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Press Release: Due Date: January 2018 Order materials for marketing of program Update Judging Criteria Work with Roseann Fricks to invite guest Judges.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ages & Stages Questionnaire 		

Agenda Item	Summary/Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELCMC Program Measurement Tool Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elizabeth discussed the ELCM Measurement Tool handed out to the committee members. The tool will offer an organized way to keep track of the performance of programs ELCMC offers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Maier asked for the copy to be sent to her electronically for use in her programs.
<p>INFORMATION ITEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY 17-18 Strategic Plan Update • Progress Dunnellon • Early Learning Summit 	<p>Elizabeth Deola discussed the Strategic Plan in detail and reviewed each of the components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ELCMC Measurement Tools: discussed with the handout. ○ Inclusion Services Program: Additional training is scheduled and programming considerations are currently being researched and reviewed. ○ Early Learning Performance Funding Pilot Project – Yr. 3: we have eight child care providers participating this year. ○ Early Learning with A Heart Program: Press release is being developed for distribution in January. Judging criteria and procurement of judges is being developed. ○ Bridging the Gap – Year 3: Additional contact with participating programs will occur in January 2018. ○ Summer Slide Initiative: Will be addressed in February/March 2018. ○ Community Involvement Events: Community Events document was discussed with the committee with the encouragement for members to participate. <p>Elizabeth discussed the Progress Dunnellon Program in detail. ELCMC continues to look for a part-time employee to run this program. Elizabeth is currently working with mindSpark staff in Colorado to develop the program. Programmatic materials are in development. Elizabeth Deola, Jolynne Knoll and Roseann Fricks continue to represent ELCMC at the Progress Dunnellon Meetings. Elizabeth is Chair of the Communications Committee and Jolynne participates in the Transportation Committee developed within this program.</p> <p>Elizabeth Deola discussed the Early Learning Summit Half-Time Report held on August 23, 2017 and shared the parent survey that was updated. All community members are encouraged to collect completed surveys and submit them to ELC for processing. Once the deadline arrives, surveys will be calculated and next steps developed based on the outcome.</p>	<p>None at this time.</p> <p>Continue the same action: Finalize all program components and hire new staff member.</p> <p>Continue the same action: Tabulate survey results and report to summit committee for next steps and follow up meeting.</p>

Agenda Item	Summary/Discussion	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Week Tallahassee Trip ELCMC Update 	<p>Elizabeth Deola reminded members to share the invitation to the Tallahassee trip. The trip will occur on Tuesday, January 23, 2018. Elizabeth will have the Save the Date out by the November meeting.</p> <p>Elizabeth Deola provided a brief update on Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria. There has been no reports of long term damage to our local child care providers. ELCMC received a generous donation of organic rice cereal from Good 360. As of this meeting 2800 cases of cereal had been distributed throughout the community and to hurricane victims. Ages & Stages, Professional development, VPK Special Research Project and local community events were discussed in detail. The FLKRS screening was discussed as well. Dr. Maier shared that the state of Florida has not set the cut off score to determine whether a provider was successful in preparing children the enter kindergarten. Phonemic awareness seems to be the area needing attention. More information will be revealed as the assessment information is released.</p>	<p>Send out Eventbrite invitation to community.</p> <p>None at this time.</p>
<p>SUCCESS BY 6 INITIATIVE</p>	<p>Elizabeth Deola discussed the Born Learning Trail at the Reddick Public Library. The ribbon cutting is scheduled for November 30, 2017. All committee members and the community are encouraged to come and support the grand opening if their schedules allow. The Kiwanis Club of Ocala was again publicly thanks for their continued support of children's safety programming. Their financial generosity allowed the Success by 6 program to order infant car seats and pack n' plays for families who do not have the ability to acquire these items.</p> <p>The Children First Breakfast was successful once again with the keynote speaker being Missions: Readiness. The breakfast boasts around 300 attendees and continues to prove to be a powerful tool to educate the community on the importance of early education.</p>	<p>Share the Ribbon Cutting Date as established.</p>
<p>Public Comment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Karen Vega with OASN shared that they have diapers available for children approximately 8-12 years old for distribution to anyone who needs them. 	
<p>Adjournment</p>	<p>Elizabeth Deola adjourned the meeting.</p>	<p>The meeting adjourned at 10:30am</p>

-Reported by: Elizabeth Deola, Chief Program Officer, ELCMC

NOTE – For additional information on any of the above items, please contact Elizabeth Deola at edeola@elc-marion.org.

CURRENT EVENTS
CEO Report 2017 - 2018

	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	
Customer (Parent/Caregiver) Service													
Meetings													YTD Total
School Readiness	502	582	292	328	365	267							2,336
VPK	57	95	18	15	20	12							217
Inclusion Services	12	20	8	10	4	6							60
Incoming Calls	8,828	3,579	1,873	2,171	1,842	1,580							19,873
Outgoing Calls	2,846	3,029	2,111	2,243	1,785	1,694							13,708
CCR&R Interviews	507	543	196	418	372	296							2,332
Children Enrolled													YTD Average
School Readiness	3,060	3,029	2,889	2,795	2,799	2,782							2,892
VPK - Fall Program		2,077	2,245	2,338	2,357	2,354							0
VPK - Summer Program	135	135											135
Children Served													YTD Average
School Readiness	2,635	2,626	2,296	2,413	2,481								2,490
VPK - Fall Program		1,943	2,200	2,307	2,385								0
VPK - Summer Program	130	129											130
Percentage of Enrollment Served													YTD Average
School Readiness	86%	87%	79%	86%	89%								86%
VPK - Fall Program		94%	98%	99%	101%								0%
VPK - Summer Program	96%	96%											96%
Compliance													YTD Total
Fraud Reports	2	1	5	1	3	1							13
Quality Initiative Services													YTD Total
Number of SR Child Care Providers	110	115	115	115	115	115							685
Number of VPK Child Care Providers	15	96	96	96	96	96							495
Trainings Provided/Attendees	1 / 35	1 / 58	3 / 79	4 / 123	2 / 17	2 / 95							13 / 407
Community Awareness													YTD Total
Number of Staff Attended Events	11	1	10	5	2	1							30
Children's Books, Parent Resources, Etc. distributed to the Community (Events/Agencies/Businesses)	297	651	308	418	339	701							2,714
ELCMC Website Statistics													YTD Total
Number of Visits	7,472	5,373	2,312	2,831	2,526	1,934							22,448
Average Visits Per Day	241	173	78	91	84	62							729
Facebook Total Likes		527	15	64	1	13							620
Parent Education													YTD Total
Read Aloud Partners	279	321	325	330	334	337							1,926
Bucket of Books	189	231	235	0	244	245							1,144
Pack N Plays distributed	21	8	9	11	15	16							80
Trainings Conducted	1	3	3	3	4	3							17
Staff Development													YTD Total
Presentations	1	4	2	0	0	1							8
Trainings Attended	14	22	15	20	1	2							74

For specific details on any of the above activities please contact Beatriz Montalvo at bmontalvo@elc-marion.org

Notice of Meetings

Fiscal Year 2017 – 2018

The Early Learning Coalition of Marion County will meet as shown below:

Program/VPK Committee 8:30 a.m. Wednesday	Success By 6 (SB6) Leadership Council 9:00 a.m. Friday	Executive Committee 8:30 a.m. Thursday	Board 8:30 a.m. Thursday	Finance Committee 8:30 a.m. Thursday
7-27-17	7-28-17			7-27-17
		8-10-17	8-24-17	
9-28-17	9-15-17	9-14-17		9-28-17
		10-12-17	10-26-17	
11-16-17 (Thurs)	11-17-17	11-9-17		11-30-17
		12-14-17	12-21-17	12-05-17
1-17-18	1-19-18	1-11-18		1-25-18
		2-8-18	2-22-18	
3-28-18	3-16-18	3-8-18		3-29-18
		4-12-18	4-26-18	
	5-25-18	5-10-18		5-24-18
6-20-18		6-14-18	6-28-18	

- **ALL meetings** will be held at Early Learning Coalition of Marion County, 2300 SW 17th Road, Ocala, FL 34471

PURPOSE: Coalition Business

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons needing a special accommodation to participate in these meetings should contact Beatriz Montalvo at (352) 369-2315 or 1-800-955-8770 (Voice) Florida Relay Service at least 48 hours proper to the meeting.

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by any of the Committees or Board noticed above with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Notice has been made of these meetings to cover the Government in the Sunshine Law through publication and distributions of same.

UPDATED AS OF 11/14/2017

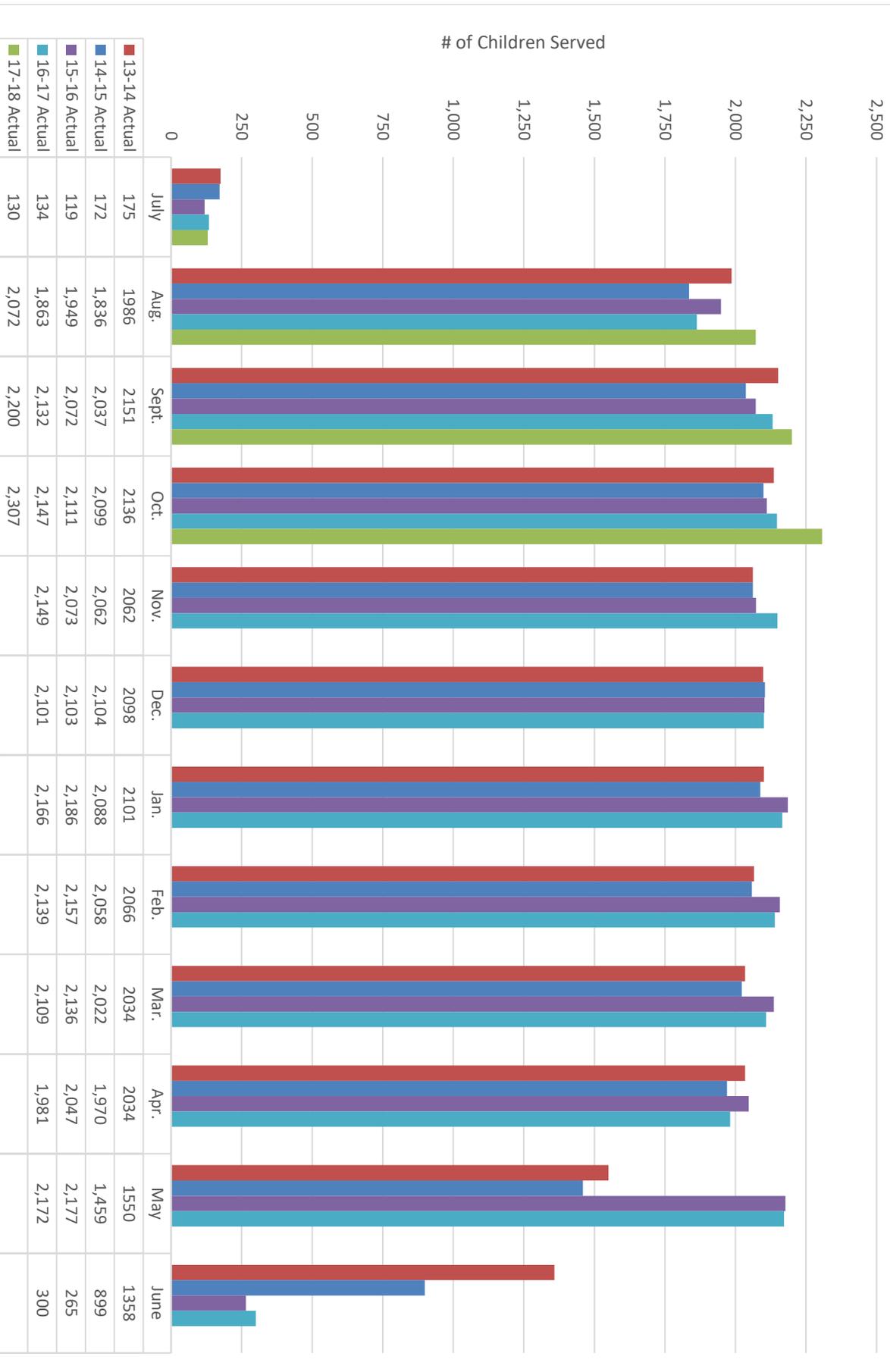


School Readiness Children Served per Month





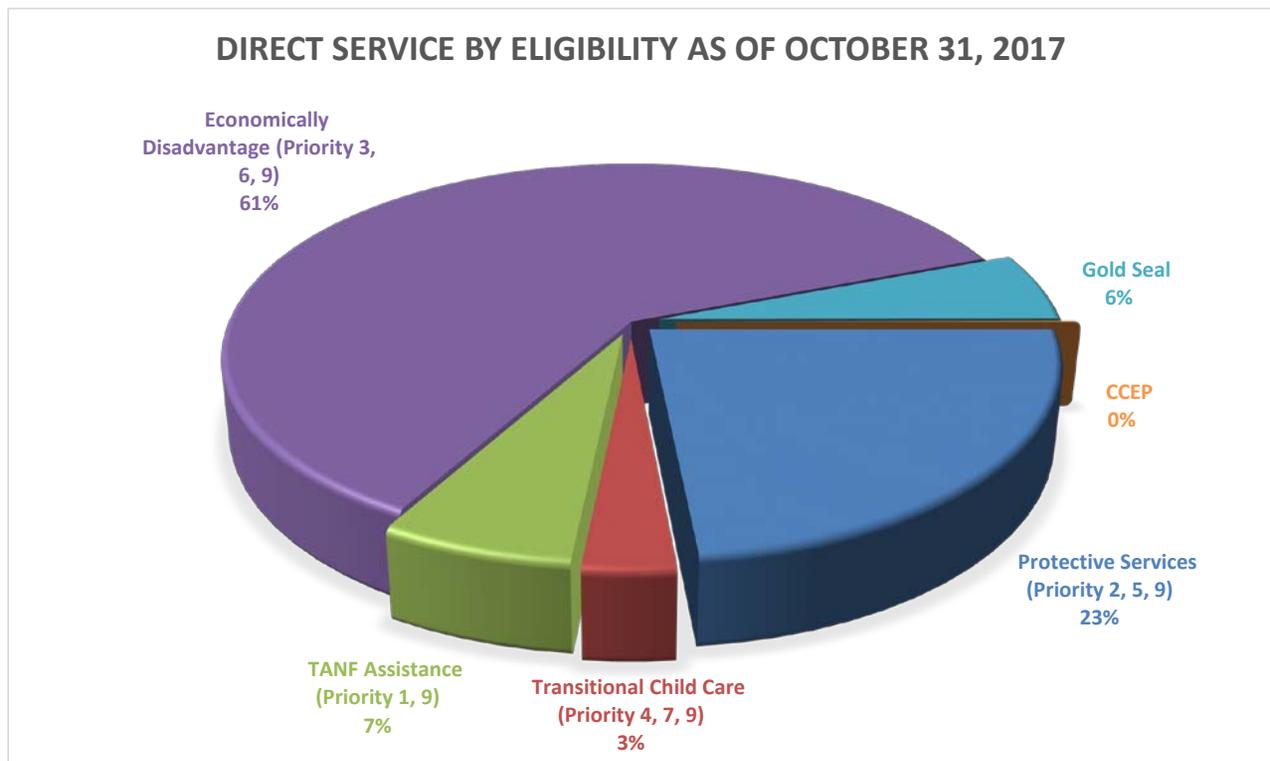
Voluntary Prekindergarten Children Served per Month





**ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL READINESS DIRECT SERVICES
For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2018**

CATEGORY	Actual as of 10/31/17
DIRECT SERVICES:	
Protective Services (Priority 2, 5, 9)	604,606
Transitional Child Care (Priority 4, 7, 9)	80,558
TANF Assistance (Priority 1, 9)	168,100
Economically Disadvantage (Priority 3, 6, 9)	1,568,331
Gold Seal	149,553
CCEP	1,677
TOTAL DIRECT SERVICES	\$ 1,968,219



Priority 1 - Children younger than age 13 whose parents receive temporary cash assistance and are subject to federal work requirements.

Priority 2 - At-risk children younger than age 9.

Priority 3 - Economically disadvantaged children until eligible to enter kindergarten. Their older siblings up to the age that eligible to enter 6th grade may also be served.

Priority 4 - Children from birth to kindergarten whose parents are transitioning from the temporary cash assistance work program to employment.

Priority 5 - At-risk children who are at least age 9 but younger than 13. Those with siblings in priority groups 1 - 3 are higher priority than other children ages 9-13 in this priority group.

Priority 6 - Economically disadvantaged children younger than 13. Priority in this category is given to children who have a younger sibling in the School Readiness Program under priority 3.

Priority 7 - Children younger than 13 whose parents are transitioning from the temporary cash assistance work program to employment.

Priority 8 - Children who have special needs and current individual educational places from age 3 until they are eligible to enter kindergarten.

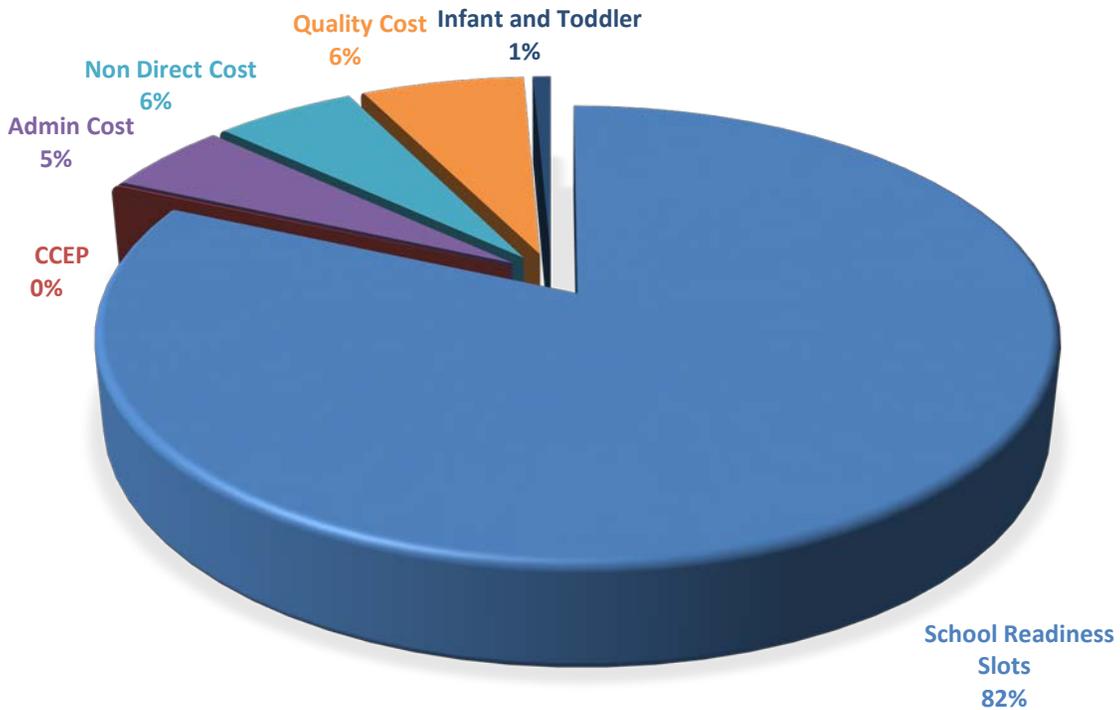
Priority 9 - Children concurrently enrolled in the federal Head Start Program and VPK, regardless of priorities 1-4.



ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL READINESS BUDGET
For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2018

CATEGORY OF SPENDING	2017-18 Notice of Award	Actual as of 10/31/17	Current Earmark	Earmarks/Restrictions
AWARD AMOUNT	\$ 9,792,633	\$ 3,148,049		
DIRECT SERVICES:				
School Readiness Slots	7,607,531	2,571,148	81.67%	Minimum 78%
CCEP	39,388	1,745	0.06%	Maximum \$39,388
TOTAL DIRECT SERVICE	\$ 7,646,919	\$ 2,572,893	81.73%	
NON DIRECT SERVICES:				
Admin Cost	487,662	162,331	5.16%	Maximum 5%
Non Direct Cost	1,146,233	180,710	5.74%	
Quality Cost	390,130	209,306	6.65%	Minimum 4%
Infant and Toddler	121,689	22,809	0.72%	Minimum \$121,689
TOTAL NON DIRECT SERVICES	\$ 2,145,714	\$ 575,156	18.27%	Maximum 22%

SCHOOL READINESS EARMARKS AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2017

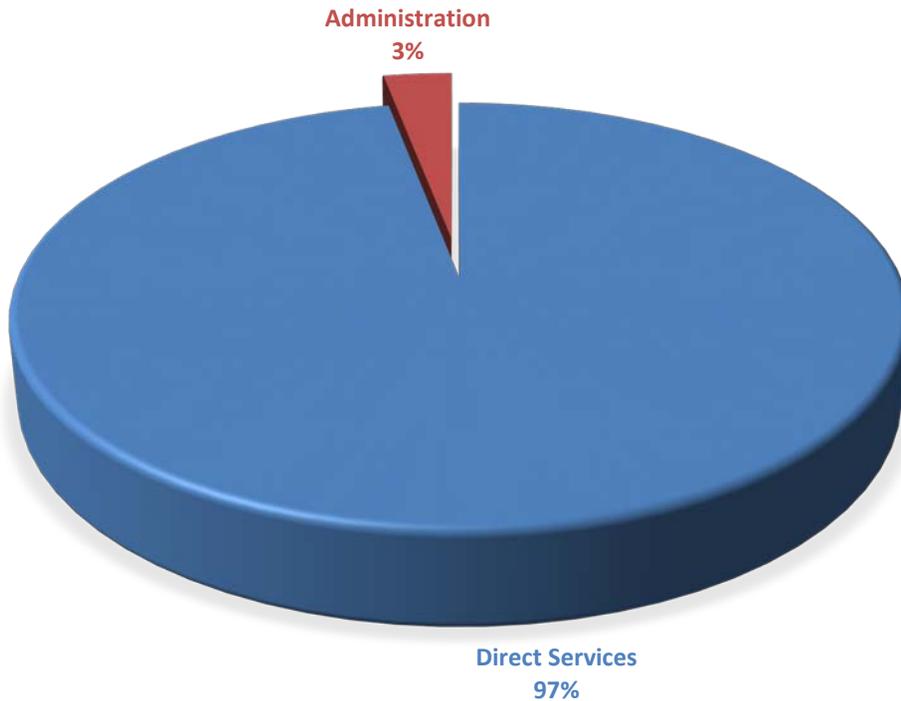




ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN BUDGET
For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2018

CATEGORY OF SPENDING	2017-18 Notice of Award	Actual as of 10/31/17	Current Earmark	Earmarks/Restrictions /Comments
Direct Services	\$ 5,368,473	\$ 1,707,140	90.91%	Not including provider pre-payments
Administration	\$ 214,739	\$ 52,769	3.09%	Maximum 4% of actual Direct Services
AWARD AMOUNT	\$ 5,583,212	\$ 1,877,755		

VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN EARMARKS
AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2017



Section 2

FY 2017-2018 Quality Initiatives Strategic Plan

Developed: 7/26/2017 Updated: 9/26/2017, 11/14/2017, 1/13/18

Project	Details	Staff/ Committee Member Responsible	Implementation Plan/Due Date	STATUS
Measure ELCMC Programmatic Impact	Develop measurement component for all Programs associated with the Early Learning Coalition.	ELCMC Program Department with input from ELCMC CEO/Officers and Program/VPK Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop list of programs to be measured – August 2017 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Determine measurable component – Nov 2017 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implement measurement tools – Nov/Dec 2017 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Track/Report progress –January 2018, April 2018, July 2018 monthly/quarterly as appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Utilize results to drive future planning – April 2018	<p>Presented to Program/VPK Committee in September 2017. Currently working on development of measurement tools for each program.</p> <p>Would like to propose changing strategic plan and use measurement tool as strategic plan.</p>
Inclusion Services Program Implementation	Develop procedure to support families and children with special needs. Increase community awareness of inclusion services provided. Provide targeted technical assistance and professional development to child care providers.	ELCMC – OASN – Ocala Preparatory Academy – CARD – Program/VPK Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop/determine partnerships and interest in Inclusion Task Force – July 2017 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create a professional development series to support child care providers in effectively serving children with different needs. – July 2017 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create follow up action plan to provider targeted technical assistance to child care providers. – August/September 2017 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transition ASQ Screening to child care providers. August -November 2017 (Extended Into January 2018) <input type="checkbox"/> Research additional opportunities to continue expanding available services and opportunities for children with different needs. <input type="checkbox"/> Work with CARD and Program/VPK Committee (ELC Staff) to create Pilot Program based on tasks above. – June 2018	<p>First three trainings completed. Additional training scheduled for January and April 2018. ELC Staff to tour OASN and new contact made for specialty school, The Sonder Academy. Sonder Administrators are going to be guest speakers at Provider Meeting in December to discuss school and enrollment options. Providers are currently receiving individual training and additional opportunities are being researched for future implementation. Proposal received from OASN</p>

				<p>to assist with on-site TA for child care providers, under review.</p> <p>Opportunities currently being researched. (January 13, 2018)</p>
<p>NEW OPPORTUNITY: Infant/Toddler Mental Health Initiative</p>	<p>Increased need for Infant/Toddler Mental Health Services are being requested. Increased unwanted behaviors are being reported by child care providers with technical assistance needed to handle behaviors without dismissing children from classrooms.</p>	<p>ELCMC Staff</p>	<p>TBA</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finalize Benchmark 4 of Year 2 PFP – July/Aug 2017 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review and determine eligibility of providers applying for PFP – Year 3 program August 2017 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implement program based on OEL guidelines – November 2017 <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize Benchmark 1 of year 3 PFP – 1/31/2018 <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize Benchmark 2 of year 3 PFP – 3/31/2018 <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize Benchmark 3 of year 3 PFP – 6/30/2018</p>	<p>We have 8 providers interested in the PFP Program this year. Contracts are currently being entered into by eligible providers and ELCMC. Professional Development will begin in November 2017 for these providers. Providers are working through program. Payments are now made automatically monthly with SR reimbursement for those meeting benchmarks.</p>
<p>Early Learning Performance Funding Pilot Project – Year Three</p>	<p>Support and implement year three of the project including Provider eligibility determination, CLASS Observations, contract management, required professional development and technical assistance to providers participating in the program.</p>	<p>QI Dept Staff</p>		

<p>Early Learning with a Heart Award</p>	<p>Develop a program to encourage professional development and high quality early learning by supporting individual early learning teachers.</p>	<p>Program/VPK Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Finalize paperwork – July 2017 Sept 2017 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Introduce Program to Providers August 2017 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reserve Information Table at ECE Conference – Nov 2018 <input type="checkbox"/> Press Release to Providers – January 2018 <input type="checkbox"/> Order Marketing Material – January/Feb 2018 <input type="checkbox"/> Informational Session at ECE Conference – March 2018 <input type="checkbox"/> Release of Application Packet <input type="checkbox"/> Award Program Begins – July 2018 <input type="checkbox"/> Plan Award Gala – TBA <input type="checkbox"/> Execute Gala and Award Ceremony – TBA 	<p>Currently planning to expand to additional areas: Saddlewood (Year 3) Sunrise (Year 1) Evergreen (Year 1) Wyomina Park (Year 1)</p>
<p>Bridging the Gap – Year 3</p>	<p>Continue into year three of the program with an additional program site. The purpose of the program is to connect Kindergarten Teachers and Private VPK Providers/Teachers to allow open communication about the current trends in VPK between both sectors including opportunities and strengths.</p>	<p>Roseann Fricks, Elizabeth Deola & MCPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Contact potential MCPS Locations to determine interest in participation in year 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Contact potential VPK Providers in feeding VPK Private Sector locations to determine interest. <input type="checkbox"/> Set up and execute meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Follow Up and Report 	<p>Elizabeth met with Dr. DeWese and staff in August 2017. Elizabeth to reach out to Schools Jan 2018.</p>
<p>Summer Slide Support Initiative</p>	<p>Work with Bridging the Gap participants to develop a Summer Slide Kit to assist students transitioning from VPK into Kindergarten maintain knowledge level over the summer months.</p>	<p>Bridging the Gap participants /ELCMC Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Put kit components together – February 2018 <input type="checkbox"/> Distribute kits to VPK students during Kindergarten Orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Review FLKRS Screening Scores as compared to VPK Assessment Scores to determine level of knowledge retention. 	

<p>Progress Dunnellon: Educator Accelerator Program</p>	<p>To build an innovative and transformative early education program based on individual teacher success encompassing mentoring throughout the community, networking, problem-solving, marketing, and early learning education standards for children.</p>	<p>ELCMC Staff/mindSpark/ Childcare Providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop and submit program proposal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create Job Description for new hire to run program <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work with mindSpark staff to finalize program details <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interview/Hire new staff – Nov 2017 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Implement Program – February 2018 <input type="checkbox"/> On-going monitoring/measurement of success 	
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Community Events are now on a separate document.

Section 3



EDUCATION ACCELERATOR

JOIN US FOR A ONCE IN A LIFETIME
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THAT
MAY TURN INTO COLLEGE CREDIT!

TAKE PART IN TRAINING
SESSIONS THAT ARE DYNAMIC, FUN
AND ENGAGING!

WHEN:

Begins Saturday, February 3, 2018
9am-3pm

WHERE:

TBA



100% FREE

- TRAINING
- CLASSROOM MATERIALS
- TEACHER INCENTIVES
- 20 IN-SERVICE HOURS
- 2 CEU'S

TRAINING DATES:

Feb 3, - 9am-3pm

Feb 17 - 9am-3pm

March 3 - 9am-3pm

March 13 - 6:30pm-8:30pm

March 15 - 6:30pm-8:30pm

April 14 - 9am-3pm

April 28 - 9am-3pm

May 5 - 9am-3pm

May 19 - 9am-3pm

June 9 - 9am-3pm

June 23 - 9am-3pm

EDUCATION ACCELERATOR PROJECT SCOPE

September 15, 2017



OVERVIEW

1. Project Background and Description

The purpose of the Education Accelerator (EA) is to elevate the current paradigm of leadership programs, to truly be an innovation pathway. It is a stand-alone program and can be the perfect compliment to any existing leadership program as a revolution mechanism. School leadership matters and schools have an urgency for transformation. The EA was designed to answer the gap in school leadership, in middle leadership, to draw schools into a realm of entrepreneurial mindset and innovative action, and to bridge industry and education strategically. It is a space for school leaders to collaborate, redesign, disrupt, and focus on their greatest leverage points, their teachers and community.

Start-up energy, mindset, and structures are a perfect catalyst for school change and EA is built to synergize the two worlds, to give permission to school leaders to look at their system differently, to be creators of R&D, leverage their human capital in a robust way, and learn to fail fast and pivot.

The EA is designed to break down the silos that exist among schools, as well as bust through the “loneliness at the top” mantra for school leaders. It is a distributive leadership model with a quirky flair that creates that just right level of uncomfortableness, conducive to deeper learning and change.

EA is about sustainable forward motion, not a one and done event - it is built as cohorts with industry mentors giving real-time feedback to collaboratively solve our greatest educational problems.

All schools have problems of practice which vary in depth and complexity. EA is not about individually solving each problem of practice. It is about mindset, culture and climate, and creating a model for systems (schools) to solve their own problems, no matter how robust. EA is about distributive leadership, creating agency, and empowering people.

2. Project Scope

EA is a 9-month program designed to be side-by-side implementation with a cohort of school teams. The scope of the program includes:

- 3-day launch/kick-off with industry workshop and speaker

The first two cohorts will partner with Delivering Happiness (sister company to Zappos); they will be keynote and delivering intentional workshops

- Monthly sessions for professional engagement and feedback on blueprint progress with any needed resources sourced
- Site visits (as sister schools, cohort members will visit each other at least once and the mSL team will visit each site twice during nine months)
- Local “celebrity” school site visit - *Best of the Best* in a geographic area
- Capstone Project:

School teams must magnify their efforts by designing, implementing, and evaluating a meaningful and impactful project in their own district or community to

- 1) share their nine-month journey
- 2) create a professional learning opportunity to impact other educators
- 3) provide evidence of change in their schools and evaluation of blueprint
- 4) mentor new cohorts
- 5) become a “one to watch” school with commitments to filming, media, etc.

The capstone project must be replicable and/or scalable in the school community or beyond. It must bridge the school’s current model with varying industry models and provide solutions to questions such as, “How can we create a model for innovation and identity in our school that intersects with successful models of agency and customer service in industry?” or “What can we learn about educational responsiveness from studying models of medical efficiency and their direct applications for education? How do we successfully implement the appropriate methods?” The school team will determine their greatest question/inquiry and develop their innovative transdisciplinary solution in partnership with industry mentors.

- At the conclusion of the nine-month program, school teams will present their blueprint outcomes, capstone project and share their journey at a full industry panel (similar to the program launch), receiving strategic feedback to continue their momentum.

The targeted consumers for EA are principals, assistant principals, deans, instructional coaches and teacher leaders. The cost of the program is \$2500 per person, covering all aspects of the program as offered currently. Schools, districts, corporate sponsors and grants are all possible revenue sources for the program.

3. High-Level Requirements

- Teams are required, and teams of 3-5 from each site are ideal.
- Commitment to the program in its entirety, including monthly sessions and capstone
- All participating schools must have some monetary “skin-in-the-game.” Even with corporate and foundation sponsors, all teams must contribute financially. mindSpark Learning (mSL) will work with each system to ensure funding is not a barrier
- Willingness to travel, belong to our network, and collaborate with partners
- Develop or resource tools and resources as catalysts for capacity building in partnership with mSL and cohort

4. Deliverables

School Cohort Deliverables:

- Each team will create a blueprint for their school change with a focus on professional learning and human capital.
- Engagement in monthly PL sessions and follow up
- Preparation and time for site visits
- Capstone

mindSpark Learning Deliverables:

- CEO, educational expert engagement and mentorship
 - mSL memberships
 - SPARK accounts
 - Coordinating travel and site visits
 - Media and narrative of each participating school
 - CEU's/credit program encompassing both educational AND executive leadership pathways in partnership with University of Denver-Morgridge College of Education and Daniels School of Business
- Basic re-certification (could be in partnership with CPD)
Certificate program-basic educational/business graduate certificate
Master's level for teacher leaders interested in pursuing leadership opportunities
Ph.D. level (EDD) for principals and AP's with an emphasis on Executive Leadership

**EA could be 5 credit course within MA or PhD level program

5. Implementation and Evaluation Plan

Facilitators from mSL and our network will provide facilitation during the launch, design and lead the monthly sessions, and attend site visits.

Industry and community partners will provide feedback during the launch, agree to mentor a team (with the principal as main contact), and possibly design and lead monthly sessions, and may attend site visits. Monthly sessions are designed to push the following mindsets with specific tools and tangible engagements:

We will use classical problems of practice, such as...

- Catastrophic Capital
- Educational Change Cycle
- Teacher Blame game
- Drive-by adult learning
- Geographic paralysis

To ask real world questions like...

- What is your marketing strategy?
- What is your R&D plan?
- How do you measure agency in your building?
- How do you celebrate and care for your people?
- How is the school a vehicle for workforce development?
- How is your school informing and influencing policy?
- What is your development plan?

And get schools to a problem solving culture that...

- Has porous boundaries
- Mentors everyone
- Is honest
- Embraces weirdness
- Is impact hungry

-Is able to tell their story

Each cohort will determine during the launch the best day/time to host the monthly sessions, which can also be done virtually.

KickUp, a third-party data analytics platform will provide the evaluation metrics and analysis of feedback for EA, and each cohort will evaluate the program.

6. High-Level Timeline/Schedule

Goal: 3-5 EA's per year across the nation, cohort specific, partner specific, cohort ideal size is 30-50

2017-2018:

November-Launch inaugural cohort with five NH schools and five CO schools-rural mountain focus

January-Florida (Dunnellon) ECE launch (21 participants)

EA Research Summary

Human creativity and ingenuity have never been more essential to the economic well-being of communities. (Creative Startups)

At mindSpark Learning we want to build what's next by embracing creativity, diversity, economic inclusion, and market-based approaches to educational challenges. We are a catalyst for social innovation and placing education at the forefront as an economic driver.

Despite educational reform efforts at scale, the education sector struggles to transform teaching and learning to move the needle on meaningful student experiences encompassing deep learning models that lead to liveable wage jobs, changing economic and academic trajectory.

The educational reform ecosystem is saturated with resources and tools and programs, mSL recognizes that there is no magic bullet, one size does not fit all-we believe to make a system stronger, we need to create stronger relationships and invest in human capital. We believe the system is capable of solving its own problems with strategic support and being value-driven.

Research consistently shows that teaching is the single most important school-based factor in a student's academic growth. Therefore, our focus and investment for change are educators and school systems, which will create exponential growth and value.

What matters is whether the container by which the school operates will allow it to implement a great school design. Just because you have a container doesn't make you great. If you were an entrepreneur, just because you can launch a C-Corp, LLC, or S-Corp doesn't make you successful. -Ted Fujimoto

According to Harvard School of Education, scholarly research is just beginning to discover why some teachers improve more than others and the importance of school organizational environments for systemic improvement. Practice and research have started to highlight promising avenues for promoting improvement among teachers, such as providing teachers with actionable feedback about their instruction, creating opportunities for productive and sustained peer collaboration, supporting teachers'

efforts to maintain an orderly and disciplined school environment, and investing in a school culture characterized by high expectations, trust, and mutual respect. Transforming schools into organizations that support the learning of both students and teachers will be central to any successful effort to increase the human capital of the U.S. teaching force.

Therefore, our actions as a non-profit are aligned to disrupt teaching and learning in a professional environment through:

1. Peer Collaboration
2. Principal leadership
3. Professional Development
4. School Culture

EA differs from other leadership programs in several important ways:

- We connect educators with mentors, market leaders, higher education, industry and community organizations to disrupt the status quo of school transformation (relationships matter)
- We provide robust professional learning that is job-embedded, relevant, and energizing-we don't sell a program (customize services)
- We are an incubator for educational innovation
- We scale better schools and communities

Our outcomes align to what Ted Fujimoto defines as success in school transformation and deeper learning: building (a) communities that manage to change the system and their environment to be aligned and supportive of implementing innovations and (b) the groups that bring a whole-school design that bundles cohesively a system of innovations.

EA is also calibrated to the following markers of an effective program (a) having a pedagogical center to deeper learning; (b) helping schools build a culture through strengthening relationships, communication, and collaboration; and (c) helping teachers and students calibrate and assess the quality and authenticity of their learning.

The Education Accelerator is founded on the need for meaningful work in schools, the desire for contribution and recognition of the contribution. It is founded on the necessity to trust one another in the innovation and design process and our need to participate in changes that affect us.

Bibliography available

Section 4

Early Learning Coalition of Marion County

Position Statement on Screen Time for Children Ages Birth to Five Years of Age

January 2018

Methodology: ELCMC Position Statements are developed by staff members based on current and relevant research of developmentally appropriate practices in the field of early childhood education. Input, recommendations, and feedback are sought and encouraged from field experts, stakeholders, board members and professionals within the early childhood education industry. Statements are approved by the ELCMC Board and set forth as the basis and foundation for decision making, program design and support of quality early education experiences for children.

Position Paper: Screen Time for Children Ages Birth Through Five Years of Age

Summary: ELCMC believes it is in the best interest of children ages birth through five years old to experience minimal screen time. Furthermore, ELCMC discourages the use of any type of screen media with children under 18 months old. Children ages 18 months through age two should have extremely limited access to screen media. Children ages two through five years old should only experience screen time of any kind (computer, television, game console, tablet, cellular smartphone) for a combined total of one hour or less per day. All screen time should be carefully chosen for content, language and age appropriateness and should be experienced in the company of an engaged and responsible adult.

ELCMC believes the parent is the child's first teacher and encourages face-to-face interactions, and immersed into engaging and interactive play experiences to support the vital developmental areas of physical development, approaches to learning, social and emotional, language and communication, and cognitive development.

Definitions:

Screen time is defined as "Time spent using a device such as a computer, television, or games console." – Oxford Dictionary

(https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/screen_time)

Screen Media is defined as any media displayed on an electronic or displayed screen either handheld or stationary.

Background:

There are numerous publications, policy statements, research articles and studies available that provide in-depth information on the impact exposure to screen time has on the development of young children (specifically ages birth to five years old).

The rise in usage of technology in daily settings including business, education and personal use provoked ELCMC to write this position statement. The purpose of this statement is to develop a recommendation for early childhood educators, consultants, professionals, parents, and stakeholders to utilize when considering technology-based educational options for use publicly and privately with children ages birth through five years old.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recognizes the rise in the use of technology and screen time, understanding that more families have free access to tools that may expose children to television shows, movies, video clips, ebooks and digital games. The summarized recommendation of AAP as of November 2016 is as follows, “multiple developmental and health concerns continue to exist for young children using all forms of digital media to excess. Evidence is sufficient to recommend time limitations on digital media use for children 2 to 5 years to no more than 1 hour per day to allow children ample time to engage in other activities important to their health and development and to establish media viewing habits associated with lower risk of obesity later in life. In addition,, encouraging parents to change to educational and prosocial content and engage with their children around technology will allow children to reap the most benefit from what they view.” The remainder of the policy statement can be found here: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162591>.

Zero to Three, a highly recognized and respected authority on child mental health and child development since 1977 has published a white paper on this subject that directly reflects the Coalitions position. The paper states, “A robust body of research shows that the most important factor in a child’s healthy development is a positive parent–child relationship, characterized by warm, loving interactions in which parents and other caregivers sensitively respond to their child’s cues and provide age-appropriate activities that nurture curiosity, exploration, and learning. The research is also clear about what constitutes quality early learning experiences: ones that build skills, character, and the ability to be successful in school, relationships, and life. These experiences engage children’s minds and bodies; encourage exploration, experimentation, problem-solving, and creative thinking; and build “academic” skills such as cognitive, language, executive functioning, and social–emotional skills. Language-promoting experiences including storytelling, reading, and pretend play are three such activities that take place with parents, other caregivers, and peers that have been extensively studied and have demonstrated these positive impacts. These rich, multidimensional experiences typically take place in the real, three-dimensional (3-D) world through hands-on exploration and interactions with peers and adults.” The paper goes on the say “Two-dimensional (2-D) screen experiences—whether via TV, tablets, smartphones, or computers—do not inherently provide these rich opportunities for whole mind–body learning or the type of

social interaction and shared exploration that real-world experiences offer so seamlessly.” The entire white paper can be found at <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1200-screen-sense-full-white-paper>.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children’s Media at Saint Vincent released a joint position statement in January 2012 discussing the positives and negatives of screen time usage for children. This paper encourages the following:

1. Select, use, integrate, and evaluate technology and interactive media tools in intentional and developmentally appropriate ways, giving careful attention to the appropriateness and the quality of the content, the child’s experience, and the opportunities for co-engagement.
2. Provide a balance of activities in programs for young children, recognizing that technology and interactive media can be valuable tools when used intentionally with children to extend and support active, hands-on, creative, and authentic engagement with those around them and with their world.
3. Prohibit the passive use of television, videos, DVDs, and other non-interactive technologies and media in early childhood programs for children younger than two, and discourage passive and non-interactive uses with children ages two through five.
4. Limit any use of technology and interactive media in programs for children younger than two to those that appropriately support responsive interactions between caregivers and children and that strengthen adult-child relationships.
5. Carefully consider the screen time recommendations from public health organizations for children from birth through age five when determining appropriate limits on technology and media use in early childhood settings. Screen time estimates should include time spent in front of a screen at the early childhood program and, with input from parents and families, at home and elsewhere.
6. Provide leadership in ensuring equitable access to technology and interactive media experiences for the children in their care and for parents and families.

These statements directly support the views of the Coalition by acknowledging the expansive presence of technology in the everyday lives of our children and providing positive and developmentally appropriate guidance on making purposeful and informed decisions on how to integrate technology appropriately into classroom environments.

The entire position statement can be found here:

https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/topics/PS_technology_WEB.pdf

The Science Daily Article, *“Handheld Screen Time linked with speech delays in young children”* 5/4/17, highlights and reinforces the AAP’s position on limiting “screen time” for young children by sharing additional research linking speech delays with excessive

exposure to handheld screen time. The article quotes the following, “The study included 894 children between ages 6 months and 2 years participating in TARGet Kids!, a practice-based research network in Toronto between 2011 and 2015.

By their 18-month check-ups, 20 percent of the children had daily average handheld device use of 28 minutes, according to their parents. Based on a screening tool for language delay, researchers found that the more handheld screen time a child's parent reported, the more likely the child was to have delays in expressive speech. For each 30-minute increase in handheld screen time, researchers found a 49 percent increased risk of expressive speech delay. There was no apparent link between handheld device screen time and other communications delays, such as social interactions, body language or gestures.” This article provided additional support for ELCMC’s decision to encourage the limitation of screen time usage in classrooms. The full article may be found here: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/05/170504083141.htm>

Conclusion: The Early Learning Coalition of Marion County fully supports high-quality early education for all children. Our philosophy is that every parent is their child’s first teacher. Balancing academic and social/emotional developmental needs, while keeping pace with environmental exposures and current culture is challenging at times. Thus, the need to provide engaging and purposeful face-to-face interactions with our children. Limiting screen time will allow children to develop a healthy foundation of supportive relationships with peers and adults alike while physical play allows them to understand their environment, gain confidence and develop a love of learning. If children are engaging in screen time, it is encouraged to do so together with a nurturing adult who can guide the experience and make it relevant to the child’s physical world.

Sources:

1. **Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards Birth to Kindergarten Standards**, <http://flbt5.floridaearlylearning.com/>
2. **American Academy of Pediatrics** – Policy Statement, Pediatrics Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Media and Young Minds, Council on Communications and Media, *Pediatrics* 2016;138; DOI: 10.1542/peds.2016-2591, <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162591>
3. **Screen Sense: Setting the Record Straight, Research-based Guidelines for Screen Use for Children Under 3 Years Old**, Claire Lerner, LCSW, ZERO TO THREE and Rachel Barr, Ph.D., Department of Psychology and Director of Georgetown Early Learning Project, Georgetown University, <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1200-screen-sense-full-white-paper>
4. **Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8**, Joint Position Statement, National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children’s Media at Saint Vincent College,

https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/topics/PS_technology_WEB.pdf

5. **Science Daily**, American Academy of Pediatrics. "Handheld screen time linked with speech delays in young children: New research being presented at the 2017 Pediatric Academic Societies Meeting suggests the more time children under 2 years old spend playing with smartphones, tablets and other handheld screens, the more likely they are to begin talking later." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 4 May 2017. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/05/170504083141.html

To provide feedback or suggestions, send written submission including your full name and contact information to Elizabeth Deola at edeola@elc-marion.org.

Section 5

2018



Tallahassee Trip

Join the Early Learning Coalition of Marion County in Celebrating Children's Week!

We will be taking a chartered bus up to the Capital to join in the Children's Week events and we invite you to come along to proudly represent **HIGH QUALITY EARLY LEARNING** in Marion County!

WHAT: Educational Trip to Tallahassee Florida for Children's Week

WHEN: Tuesday, January 23, 2018

TIMES: Departure: 6:15am Return time: 5:30pm

RSVP: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/childrens-week-educational-trip-to-tallahassee-tickets-40106741343>

RSVP no later than Friday, January 12, 2018 to reserve your seats!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- There is no cost for this trip, we do ask for a small donation to tip our bus driver. (\$1-\$5 per person)
- The purpose of this trip is to tour the halls of the Capital Building educating those in Office about High Quality Early Learning!
- Lunch is available **FREE, catered by Newk's Eatery in Tallahassee**, or you may elect to purchase lunch at the Capital or bring lunch with you – Note: you will need to carry your lunch if you choose to bring it with you as you will not have access to the bus after it is parked.
- Seating is limited and available on a first come, first serve basis.
- Childcare Professionals will earn 6 in-service training hours for this trip. **CEUS ARE NOT AVAILABLE.**
- Each attendee is required to complete a liability waiver form prior to boarding the bus. Minor's must be accompanied by responsible adult.
- ELCMC is proud to offer Substitute Teacher Reimbursement to allow providers to hire a substitute to allow their staff the opportunity to attend this educational trip. Substitute reimbursement will depend on number of requests received and available funding. Contact Ruby Phillips at rphillips@elc-marion.org for more info on this option.



2018



Children's
WEEK

Tallahassee Trip

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What is the Purpose of this trip?

A. The purpose of this trip is to tour the halls of the Capital Building educating those in Office about High Quality Early Learning!

Q. Can I bring my children?

A. Yes – although we do not recommend this trip for children under 5 due to the long trip on the bus.

Q. What should I expect on the bus?

A. A nice, smooth and comfortable ride using Annett Bus Lines (<http://www.annettbuslines.com>). WiFi is available on the bus as well as a restroom.

Q. Can I drive myself and meet you there?

A. Yes – You can follow behind the bus if you like or meet us on the Capitol the morning of the trip. The anticipated arrival time of the bus on the Capitol is 9:30am. Here is a map of the capitol and parking information:
<https://www.floridacapitol.myflorida.com/visitors/parking>

Q. What should I expect at the Capitol?

A. Once we get to the Capitol, there will be a lot of walking (wear comfy shoes!) as well as multiple stairs and numerous opportunities to take photographs. We will also have to go through security checks, ensure any items such as scissors, nail clippers, pocket knives, sharp objects, anything that could be used as a weapon (pepper spray, Taser) is either left at home or on the bus.

Q. Can I eat/drink on the bus?

A. Yes – ELCMC Staff provide a small snack on the way up and on the way back. Annett Bus Lines has a “Clean Coach” Program which prohibits the following items on the bus:

- Ice Cream
- Pizza
- Soda in cups (only bottles with screw top lids allowed)
- Nuts that need shelling (pistachios, sunflower seeds, boiled peanuts)
- Gum

Q. How long will it take to get there?

A. It takes approximately 3 hours to drive to Tallahassee and 3 hours to drive back to Ocala. We will also stop mid-way for a restroom break on both trips.

Q. Are service animals allowed on the bus? At the Capitol?

A. Yes – please let Elizabeth Deola know if you need to bring a service animal on the bus. We will have to alert the rest of the passengers in case of allergies.

Q. What if I have more questions?

A. Contact Elizabeth Deola at edeola@elc-marion.org or by calling 352-369-2315 Ext. 234

2018



Children's
WEEK

Tallahassee Trip

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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Section 6

Wild Reading Safari - Partnership with the ECS

Volunteer Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Date:	Saturday, March 10, 2018
Times:	10am – 1pm
Location:	Silver Springs State Park, 5656 E Silver Springs Blvd, Silver Springs, FL 34488
Duties:	Assist ELCMC staff in setting up booth, assist with distributing materials, assist with children's activities and book distribution, assist ELCMC staff in cleaning up activities at end. Set up and take down tent.
Dress:	Red ELC Polo Shirt and jeans/capris, No shorts please. Comfortable shoes, no flips flops please.
Coordinating Staff:	Elizabeth Deola, edeola@elc-marion.org 352-369-2315 Ext. 234
ELC Staff Scheduled to work event:	(3 Staff needed) #1 Michele Stone #2 Debbie Haynes #3 Mary Dimitroff

Seuss-a-Palooza – Celebration of Dr. Seuss’s Birthday – Partnership with the MCPL (DUNNELLO)

Volunteer Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Date:	Friday, March 16, 2018
Times:	11am – 12 noon
Location:	Dunnellon Public Library – 20351 Robinson Rd, Dunnellon, FL 34431
Duties:	Assist ELCMC staff in setting up booth, assist with distributing materials, assist with children’s activities and book distribution, assist ELCMC staff in cleaning up activities at end.
Dress:	Red ELC Polo Shirt and jeans/capris, No shorts please. Comfortable shoes, no flips flops please.
Coordinating Staff:	Jolynne Knoll, jknoll@elc-marion.org 352-369-2315 Ext. 201
ELC Staff Scheduled to work event:	(1 Staff needed) #1 Tonya Cox

Seuss-a-Palooza – Celebration of Dr. Seuss’s Birthday – Partnership with the MCPL (REDDICK)

Volunteer Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Date:	Tuesday, March 6, 2018
Times:	2:30pm – 4:00pm
Location:	Reddick Public Library – 15150 NW Gainesville Road, Reddick, FL 32686
Duties:	Assist ELCMC staff in setting up booth, assist with distributing materials, assist with children’s activities and book distribution, assist ELCMC staff in cleaning up activities at end.
Dress:	Red ELC Polo Shirt and jeans/capris, No shorts please. Comfortable shoes, no flips flops please.
Coordinating Staff:	Jolynne Knoll, jknoll@elc-marion.org 352-369-2315 Ext. 201
ELC Staff Scheduled to work event:	(1 Staff needed) #1 NEW HIRE PROGRESS DUNNELLO Volunteer: Susan Dewey

30th Annual Early Childhood Conference – Partnership with the CF – Theme: An Adventure Under the Sea

Volunteer Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Date:	Saturday, March 24, 2018
Times:	7am – 4pm
Location:	College of Central Florida – Ewer’s Century Center 3001 S.W. College Road, Ocala, FL 34474
Duties:	Assist ELCMC staff in setting up booth, assist with distributing materials, assist with directing participants to desired areas, assist ELCMC staff in cleaning up at the end. Various jobs available.
Dress:	Red ELC Polo Shirt and khakis/black business appropriate bottoms, No shorts please. Comfortable shoes, no flips flops please.
Coordinating Staff:	Ruby Phillips. Rphillips@elc-marion.org 352-369-2315 Ext. 238
ELC Staff Scheduled to work event:	Quality Initiatives Department cover this event. Inquire with Ruby if you are interested in participating.

Section 7

Sponsored by U.S. & Public Education Foundation of Marion County

Presents

WINTER WONDERLAND CHILDREN'S COAT DRIVE

Sponsored by: Faith Central International

Give the gift of warmth by helping us make sure the children of Marion County stay warm this winter by donating new and gently used coats for children in need in our community.

DROP OFF LOCATIONS (12/1/2017 - 1/10/2018):

Early Learning Coalition of Marion County 1209 SW 17th St. Ste. 11, 31717

Public Education Foundation of Marion County 1225 SW 8th St. Ste. 11, 31717

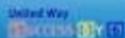
Marion County Public Health Network 10407 75th St SW 3485 Ave Ste. 10, 31718

Coats For Kids



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: CHRISTY WETTER, 844-626-6336

OR VISIT: WWW.COATS4KIDS.ORG



United Way

SUCCESS

BY

6™



Article

THE QUESTION

POVERTY

How does parents' marital status figure in child poverty?

By Katie Pohlman Staff writer

Samyra Figueroa sometimes has to decide between putting gas in her car to take her two boys, ages 9 and 10, to school and back, or paying for their after-school activities. **The** single mom allots money for food, medicine, gas and clothes, but sometimes has to choose one over **the** other. On some weekends, she and her boys, Jeremy and Yeshua, have to stay home because there's not enough money to put gas in **the** car. Or **the** gas already in **the** tank has to be reserved.

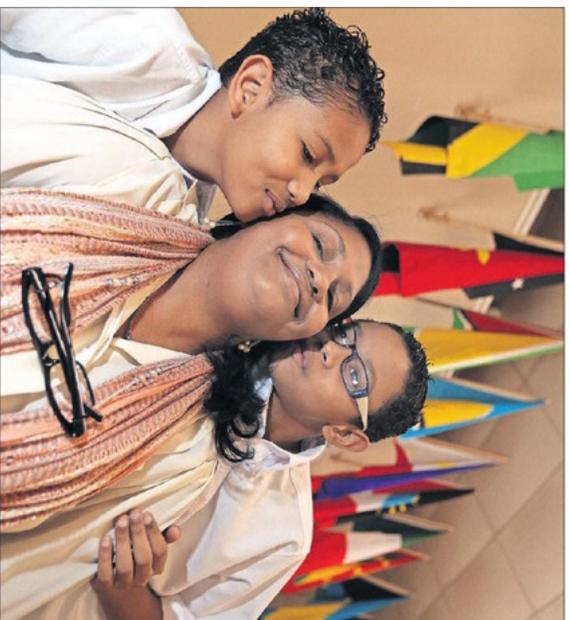
"I always try to give them **the** good experiences," Figueroa said, "provide for them even though I myself struggle."

Figueroa wants her boys to have a bit more than she did growing up, even if that means putting aside her own needs.

This story is an installment in **the** Star-Banner's series about children in poverty. It looks at **the** effects a parent's marital status has on children. Most studies conclude that having married

See POVERTY, A6

THE QUESTION



Samyra Figueroa, a single mother, gets hugs and kisses from her sons, Yeshua Rodriguez-Figueroa, 9, left, and Jeremy Rodriguez-Figueroa, 10, right, as they pose together in the Sanctuary of the Grace Fellowship Church on Southeast Maricamp Road in Silver Springs Shores. [BRUCE ACKERMAN/OCALA STAR-BANNER]



Samyra Figueroa looks at a computer with her sons, Jeremy Rodriguez-Figueroa, 10, left, and Yeshua Rodriguez-Figueroa, 9, right, at the Grace Fellowship Church and Silver Springs Shores Resource Center on Southeast Maricamp Road in Silver Springs Shores. Yeshua has been diagnosed with dyslexia, and Jeremy has been diagnosed with autism.

[BRUCE ACKERMAN/OCALA STAR-BANNER]

POVERTY

From Page [A1](#)

parents — especially married biological parents — greatly increases a child’s wellbeing. But some need-based programs penalize marriage, encouraging single mothers to stay single.

Thirty-one percent of Marion County children live in poverty, according to **the** most recent U.S. Census Bureau report. Only 22.5 percent did in **the** 2005-09 period. **The** poverty threshold for a family of four that includes two kids is a \$24,046 annual income.

About 11.7 percent of Marion County children live with single mothers, according to **the** Census Bureau. Those who do are 50 percent more likely to experience poverty than their two-parent counterparts.

Nationwide, in 2016, 37 percent of single-parent, female-led households with children younger than 18 were living in poverty, while only 7.1 percent of two-parent households were, according to Census data.

Single- vs. two-parent households

One logical reason is that two parents equals two incomes, usually. But children with married parents also have access to more engaged parents, better resources, and larger networks to draw from when looking for jobs, said W. Bradford Wilcox, director of **the** National Marriage Project at **the** University of Virginia.

Two-parent households provide children with more stability both geographically and financially, which they need to thrive, and which they often can’t get in single-parent

a rough patch where they lost their house and took on medical bills when Ricky Hartsfield had a heart attack. At one point **the** family was living in their car. They would park in a Walmart parking lot and Hartsfield would keep watch as his wife and children slept.

He said he wouldn’t have made it through without his wife. “I think I would be on **the** streets; **the** kids would have been taken away from me.”

Crystal Hartsfield continued to push her husband and helped him see **the** better side of situations.

As he tells his kids: “We’re not as fortunate as many, but we’re not as bad off as a lot.”

Two-parent households also help **the** children emotionally, Vickers said: Some children listen more to a male authority figure than a female one; and fathers act as positive role models for their sons.

“There are only things that mothers can teach a daughter, like fathers can teach a son,” she said.

Although marriage is proven to generally improve a child’s wellbeing, Wilcox said **the** quality of **the** marriage matters, as well. He suggests children whose parents are in abusive relationships may be better off living with a single parent.

One local woman, who asked that her name not be included in this story, said that while she is financially worse off after separating from her abusive husband, her children are emotionally better off. Her children had attitude problems

Temporary Assistant for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can be harmful to lower-income couples, but not **the** poorest, a 2016 study by Wilcox states.

The poorest families can marry, combine incomes and still fall below **the** eligibility threshold. But for families a little better off, combining incomes could push them over **the** threshold and leave them without benefits.

“For some it seems to be better to be a single mom because they get more benefits,” Vickers said.

For example, if a woman working a minimum wage job and supporting two kids marries a man with a minimum wage job, their combined income would make them eligible for SNAP, as long as they received no other benefits, like Medicaid. With added benefits, **the** couples’ net income may be pushed over **the** threshold for their house size and make them ineligible, according to SNAP eligibility tables.

Job instability of lesseducated men reduces **the** marriage rate, as well. Women don’t want to marry a man who will not have a steady job and will not be able to provide for **the** family.

The share of men aged 25-60 who have been unemployed at some point in **the** past 10 years has increased for those with less than a high school degree or who didn’t complete college compared to **the** rates in **the** 1970s. In **the** 1970s, 33 percent of men with less than a high school degree experienced unemployment. In **the** 2000s, it was 44 percent, according to a 2017 study.

households, Wilcox said. Married couples are more likely to stay in **the** same house or apartment; single parents move around often.

Children of single mothers are also more likely to be exposed to unrelated adult males who are bad role models, uncaring or abusive.

“Most kids who are raised in a single-parent family turn out fine and we can’t lose sight of that,” Wilcox said. They are, though, two to three times more likely to experience delinquency, depression and drop out of high school.

Chrissy Vickers, Success by 6 Coordinator for **the** Early Learning Coalition of Marion County, said **the** two-parent families she works with seem to be doing a lot better than single-parent ones. She believes **the** parents’ ability to relieve one another helps children thrive.

“Someone is always there,” she said. They don’t have to worry as much about setting up childcare arrangements, a financial burden that lowers **the** family’s income. And there’s a built-in support system for **the** parents.

Ricky Hartsfield and his wife, Crystal, meet in **the** middle when it comes to raising their five children, who range in age from 1 to 17.

“What one misses, **the** other one catches,” he said.

Hartsfield works three jobs, and is working on securing a fourth, to support **the** family as his wife finishes college.

The family recently went through

and wouldn’t listen when she was still living with her husband. Now, they’ve made positive changes.

She regrets that her daughter, 6, and two sons, 4 and 1, will miss out on having a father figure around them, but she believes they’ll be alright.

“I think in a way it’s going to affect them,” she said. “I don’t know if it’s going to be a positive way or a negative way.”

A similar caveat applies to co-habiting parents. “They’re more likely to break up because they don’t have a clear legal, moral or cultural commitment to marriage,” Wilcox said.

The fact that a child’s parents are married isn’t **the** only factor that matters in **the** child’s wellbeing. When **the** parents get married also matters.

Millennials who grew up in low-income families are more likely to thrive financially if they follow **the** “success sequence,” according to a 2017 paper written by Wilcox. **The** sequence involves getting a high school education, finding full-time work, marrying, and then having children. Seventy-one percent of millennials who followed **the** sequence made it into **the** middle or higher income groups. Only 41 percent who had children before marriage made it to **the** same level.

To marry or not to marry

Reasons against marrying run **the** gamut from just not meeting **the** right person yet to staying eligible for aid programs. Income cutoffs on means-tested programs like Medicaid,

More technical training and employment development is needed to help these men, Wilcox said. There also needs to be more job opportunities for young adults not on **the** college track.

United Way of Marion County’s Strong Family Initiative is working toward that. A 16-week program teaches parents how to budget and repair their credit. It informs them of educational opportunities and helps place them in jobs, program manager Bessie Morley said.

The program, which began in July 2016, serves 30 families at a time and works with multiple county partners to find families homes and jobs or put them back in school. **The** program’s graduation rate is 82 percent, Morley said.

“It’s always a plus when you educate young families and young adults on different life skills and what’s more important in life,” she said.

Figueroa is learning life skills along with her sons. She has taught them how to cook and do laundry and about savings, which she is still mastering herself.

“My goal is to let them know they can make it,” she said. “Maybe when (they) finish high school, (they’ll) have money in an account that will take (them) places.”

Contact Katie Pohlman at 867-4065,
katie.pohlman@starbanner.com or
@katie_pohlman

REACH Across The Table Event to Facilitate Community Conversations

BY KAREN M. JENSEN

Ever noticed how something magical occurs when people sit down to share a meal? Friends, families, neighbors and even strangers begin to talk, share ideas, stories or maybe just the occurrences of the day. An easy camaraderie develops, and hidden or real barriers are typically removed by the simple act of breaking bread.

On Thursday, Jan. 25, the Racial Harmony and Cultural Awareness (REACH) Task Force will host a REACH Across the Table event from 5:30- 8 p.m. at the Silver Springs State Park banquet room. The purpose is to help generate meaningful conversations among people of different ethnic, religious and political backgrounds using the dinner table as a medium.

When we can talk about the things that divide us in a safe and respectful environment, we are more likely to develop solutions that work. — Kathy Crile CPRP, City of Ocala Recreation and Parks Director

According to committee chair Gerry Brent, “REACH Across the Table is an unprecedented event in Marion County. It will bring a diverse group of people together to discuss issues, obstacles and opportunities and start a dialogue in Marion County to foster racial equity and cultural harmony.”

This free event will begin at 5:30 p.m. with a light mixer. A buffet dinner, compliments of Mojo Grill & Catering, will be provided and all guests will receive a question to discuss while enjoying their meal. The results of the table discussions will be reported at the end of the evening and captured for future reference by the REACH Task Force.

“This event is intended to start a conversation about issues we face as a community as pertaining to racial equity and cultural harmony. We expect that this will be an annual event and that the topic of conversation will change from year to year. When we can talk about the things that divide us in a safe and respectful environment, we are more likely to develop solutions that work,” said Kathy Crile, CPRP, City of Ocala Recreation and Parks Director. **W**

The free event is open to the public. For more information or reservations, call the City of Ocala Recreation and Parks Department at 352-368-5550 or visit reachocalamarion.org. Deadline for reservations is Thursday, Jan. 18.

2017 create Winners!

Fine Arts Show

1st Place: **Hannah Smith,**

Forest High School

2nd Place: **Quinnan Piestrop,**

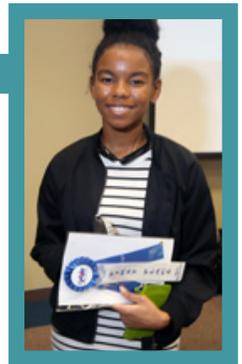
Dunnellon High School

3rd Place: **Brandon Champagne,**

Vanguard High School

People's Choice: **Quinnan**

Piestrop, Dunnellon High School



Writer's Conference

1st Place: **Sarah Tomlinson,**

Forest High School

2nd Place: **Xyonn Solomon,**

Westport High School

3rd Place: **Leah Rose,** Marion

Technical Institute

Judges' Choice: **Taylor Robinson,**

Vanguard High School



Filmmaker's Festival

1st Place: *Safe Haven,*

Max McCammon
and **Skyler Pittman,**

Forest High School

2nd Place: *Storm Surge,*

Logan Carhart,

Lake Weir High School

3rd Place: *Remainder,* **Nich Rardin,**

Vanguard High School

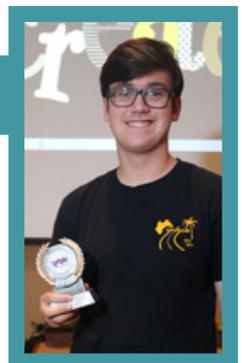
People's Choice: *WCAT Behind the*

Scenes, **Ella Brookins,**

Maggie Crowe and

Paige Ramsey,

Forest High School



A Synopsis of Slavery: U.S. and Florida

Sunday, Feb. 11, 2 p.m.
 Headquarters-Ocala Public Library
 Local African American studies scholar Emmett Coyne presents an overview of one of the defining issues of American history and its effects on America today.

MEET TOM AND DEBBIE O'CARROLL!



The Irish Fairy Grandmother's Magic Show

Thursday, Feb. 22, 10:30 a.m.
 Belleview Public Library
 Irish folklore comes to life in this very special story time given by magician and actress Debbie O'Carroll. Songs, stories and music are sure to enchant and delight all!

Dublin in Song and Story

Irish folk singer Tom O'Carroll tells the tales and sings the songs of his native city, located on Ireland's River Liffey. Immerse yourself in the rich folk music and colorful stories of this land!

Thursday, Feb. 22, 5 p.m.
 Freedom Public Library

Sunday, Feb. 25, 2 p.m.
 Headquarters-Ocala Public Library

Music and Magic of Ireland

Tom and Debbie blend enchanting stage magic with lively physical comedy to introduce the audience to a clan of classical characters from Irish children's literature. Music and merriment to warm the cockles of your heart. Fun for all!

Saturday, Feb. 24, 10:30 a.m.
 Fort McCoy Public Library

Saturday, Feb. 24, 2 p.m.
 Forest Public Library

MEET THE AUTHORS



C. Daniel Madison
 "Beyond Eden's Gate"
 Thursday, Jan. 11, 2 p.m.
 Dunnellon Public Library

Take a humorous and slightly irreverent look at some of the Old Testament's ancient mysteries.

Elizabeth Letchworth

"The Little Blue Book of Grieving"
 Thursday, Jan. 25, 2 p.m.
 Dunnellon Public Library

Experience the many stories of life and death, filling our lives with laughter and tears.



Photo by Marc Rice

Bob Kealing
 "Elvis Ignited: The Rise of an Icon in Florida"

In 1956, Elvis Presley played more live shows in Florida than any other state. In the 15 months following, Presley visited four more times rising from a little-known musician to the King. Kealing, an Edward R. Murrow and four-time Emmy award winning broadcast journalist, unfolds the story of Florida's role in Presley's rise to fame.

Saturday, Jan. 27, 3 p.m.
 Freedom Public Library

Saturday, Feb. 3, 11 a.m.
 Forest Public Library

Saturday, Feb. 3, 2 p.m.
 Dunnellon Public Library

Brown Bag Luncheon With Dr. Kevin McCarthy

"Images of America Ocala"
 Thursday, Feb. 8, noon
 Reddick Public Library

Bring your bag lunch and discover Ocala's rich and historical legacy presented by world-renowned lecturer and scholar, Dr. Kevin McCarthy, professor emeritus from the University of Florida and former executive director of the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Society. He co-authored this book in the "Images of America" series with local author and educator, the late Ernest Jernigan. Beverage and dessert provided. Contact the library to reserve a piece of pie!

HEADQUARTERS-OCALA

2720 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, FL. 34470
 352-671-8551
 Programs are sponsored by the Friends of the Ocala Public Library.

HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

See Program Spotlight.

Polar Express

Wednesday, Dec. 6, 6 p.m.
 All ages welcome.
 All aboard! Co-sponsored by Heart of Florida Health Center.

Happy Magical Holidays With Brian LaPalme

Saturday, Dec. 30, 2 p.m.
 For ages 12 and younger with caregivers.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS & EVENTS

See Program Spotlight.

Preschool Expo

Saturday, Jan. 20, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

A Synopsis of Slavery: U.S. and Florida

Sunday, Feb. 11, 2 p.m.

African American Read-In

Sunday, Feb. 18, 2 p.m.

Dublin in Story and Song With Tom O'Carroll

Sunday, Feb. 25, 2 p.m.

ADULTS

Technology Help Center

Wednesdays, 2-3:30 p.m., Dec. 6-Feb. 21
 Bring your device and drop in!

Wired Wednesdays

Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m.
 Learn about computers and databases. Space is limited.

Computers for Beginners

- Jan. 3 I Turned on My Computer, Now What?
- Jan. 10 Basic Keyboarding
- Jan. 17 Basic Internet
- Jan. 24 Basic Internet Safety

Online Potpourri

- Jan. 31 Getting to Know the Library Webpage
- Feb. 7 The ABCs of Finding Addresses & Businesses
- Feb. 14 Love to Learn Languages
- Feb. 21 Transition to a Better Job

Genealogy Help Center

Wednesdays, 12:30-3:30 p.m.
 Jan. 3, Jan. 17, Feb. 7, Feb. 21
 Genealogy gurus from the Marion County Genealogical Society assist with your search.

Friends of the Ocala Public Library *Birdies for Books* event Is a Big Success

BY BRIANNE INMAN

The Friends of the Ocala Public Library's second annual Night at the Library, "Birdies for Books," was an amazing night of fun for all. The event, a mix of "fund" and "friend" raiser, transformed the Headquarters-Ocala Public Library into a unique, mini golf course. Among the course offerings was a windmill hole, a large print scrabble hole with tiles trailing along the library stacks, and even a ghoulish hole featuring Edgar Allen Poe.

Event committee chair Brianne Inman said, "We were thrilled to be able to offer guests an opportunity to see the library after hours and join in supporting this amazing facility. We raised over \$10,000 from the event via ticket sales, sponsors, donations and a silent auction."



Laura Byrnes

Everyone should consider becoming a "friend" and a library supporter!" The Ocala Friends thank all who contributed to the evening's success, including the generous corporate sponsors,

talented library staff and Friends committee members. Many thanks also to Tom James and local celebrity golfer Brent Dorman. James was the event's emcee and Dorman provided putting lessons to guests who

wanted to improve their competitive edge.

An array of delicious food provided by Damon Vitale and his students from the culinary school at Marion Technical College was enjoyed by all.

We hope to see you at our event next year! [W](#)



(L to R) Nany Young, Dave Schlenker and Mary Britt



Bookmarks

Friends of the Ocala Public Library's News and Notes

MEET THE AUTHOR:

Man Martin

Join us on Sunday, March 4, at 2 p.m., as we welcome Man Martin, author of "The Lemon Jell-O Syndrome," about a man who sometimes finds it difficult to go through doors. This is not because of a physical malady, but because his mind and body cannot remember how to accomplish the task. He ends up going to a renowned neurologist, Arthur Limongello, who gives him a very strange diagnosis and an even more peculiar cure. As Sheri Joseph says, this novel is a "perfect mix of whimsical and smart." It received excellent reviews from Booklist and Kirkus Reviews.

Our Meet the Author events are free, and light refreshments are provided. Also, the author's books may be purchased and will be personally signed by the author.



Cover and photo courtesy of publisher(s) and/or author(s).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



Quarterly Book Sale

Saturday, Feb. 3
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Meeting Rooms A, B and C,
HQ-Ocala Public Library
(FRIENDS members only:
Friday, Feb. 2 - 4 p.m.)

MEET THE AUTHOR:

Man Martin

Author of "The Lemon
Jell-O Syndrome"
Sunday, March 4
2 p.m.

Meeting Room C,
HQ-Ocala Public Library



(L-R): Bridget Kiefer, Suzy Heinbockel, Dan Andrews, Diane Trexler



Cheryl Fante



Joe Kays



Derek Ponder



Lawrence Sutton

WELCOME!

In October, the Friends of the Ocala Library inducted new officers and board members. This year's officers are Suzy Heinbockel, president; Bridget Kiefer, vice president; Diane Trexler, secretary; and Dan Andrews, treasurer. Our new board members are Cheryl Fante, Joe Kays, Derek Ponder, and Lawrence Sutton.

Cheryl Fante is a retired Vice President and Dean of the College of Central Florida, and is active with the United Way and the Senior Learners.

Joe Kays is the UF Director of Research Communications and the founding editor of UF's award-winning research magazine, "Explore."

Derek Ponder has been a youth leader and pastor, as well as a missionary to Nigeria and is the owner of Urban Styles Beauty & Barber Shop and Ponder's Christian Learning Center.

Lawrence Sutton is a retired professor at College of Central Florida, where he taught computer science and was an assistant coach for men's basketball.

FEBRUARY BOOK SALE

Saturday, Feb. 3
10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Want to come early?
Become a Friend!

FRIENDS members may
attend Friday, Feb. 2
2-4 p.m.

For more information,
visit the Book Market, or visit our
website, friendsoftheocalalibrary.org

profiles

BY JENNY RANSONE

As the parent of three children with autism, Karen Vega found herself working non-stop to find services that would meet their needs. A self-proclaimed “bulldog for my kids,” Karen would not accept anything less than what she felt was the best possible match for her children. Over the years, she began sharing what she had learned with other parents and families and, as a result, the Ocala Autism Support Network was born. In 2011 the organization became the Outreach Autism Services Network (OASN), which today supports families across five counties. OASN provides a wide range of services to families such as survival swimming classes, respite care and special events.

Karen describes what OASN does as “wrapping our arms around the whole family. We are taking what I’ve learned and helping other parents.”

Vega discovered that her children were most successful when attending schools that were examples of the Montessori style of education. Her boys were finally doing really well in school. But what does a bulldog-mom do when her child ages out of the Montessori environment where he was so successful? Why, she starts a school, of course. The Ocala Preparatory Academy opened in 2016 and offers small classes where children with special learning



OASN Executive Director
Karen Vega (L) with Educational
Specialist AnnMarie Sossong

needs, such as autism, learn and grow side by side with typically developing and academically gifted students. The school currently has 50 students, half of whom need learning support.

Vega believes that every child should achieve his or her own personal best outcome in life, and she is determined to support as many families as possible toward that end result. In the future she hopes to serve 200 children through the Ocala Preparatory Academy and support at least 750 families through OASN. When asked why she does what she does, Vega responds, “The inspiration for this is my children.” **W**