

Mission Statement

To identify and meet the needs of children and families to lay the foundation for lifetime success by: maximizing each child's potential, preparing children to enter school ready to learn, and helping families achieve economic self-sufficiency.

***“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning.
But for children, play is serious learning.
Play is really the work of childhood”
- Fred Rogers***



***Annual Report
2013-2014***

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A Message from our Executive Director

The past year has been another year of change and challenges. The most significant and impactful of which was the implementation of rules from the statutes governing both School Readiness (SR) and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) that were passed in 2013. The new statutes and rules have already changed our SR eligibility priorities, Coalition minimum and maximum spending categories and established a standardized list of approved curricula for SR programs. These statutory changes will ultimately result in new statewide contracts for both SR and VPK, new standardized monitoring tools for ensuring Providers are in compliance with state requirements, and a new Coalition Plan. I mention all this because the transition has been ongoing and it has wrought changes to our processes and will continue to do so in the coming year. The adaptability, forbearance and understanding of all parties, particularly our Providers, throughout this process have been greatly appreciated, and I hope it will continue into the coming year.

A major milestone we achieved this year was to move the Coalition into new office spaces. For the first time all the departments and divisions of the Coalition are housed under one roof. We have benefitted greatly from the improved communications and access we have with each other, as well as the improved camaraderie and morale from working in our new environment.

As always our funding this year was limited, but we continued working to find ways to reduce spending and work more efficiently in order to help more working families receive financial assistance for childcare. Again this year, over 85% of our School Readiness funding went directly to child care slots, which is well above the state required 78% minimum.

The Coalition understands the importance of providing quality early learning programs for our children. Our staff is committed to assisting the child care providers in our community by offering trainings, technical assistance and resources. We praise our providers for their dedication and hard work in meeting the needs of children and their parents, all the while striving to better prepare our children for school. We will all continue to help our children “learn how to learn”, so they enter Kindergarten as ready as they can possibly be.

I would like to close by thanking our Board Members, staff, community partners, child care providers and donors who have so supported us this past year. All of your support for this Coalition ensures our success in serving the children of Escambia County. This is a community effort that will not be nearly as successful as it has been without the support and contributions of each of you.

Thank you all for investing your time and resources into the futures of our children.



Bruce Watson
Executive Director

Quality Initiatives

ELC Escambia introduced a pilot assessment program during the 2013-2014 year. This voluntary project used Teaching Strategies Gold on line as the assessment tool. ELC Escambia purchased the subscription for 400 SR children used at 20 early education and care sites. While there is some raw data on some programs, more conclusive data will be available at the end of the 2014-2015 year.

With approximately 15% of SR infant/toddlers served by family child care homes, ELC Escambia has a Program Assessment & Training Specialist dedicated to family child care. She delivers quality reviews twice a year to all homes and provides training and TA specifically to family child care homes.

ELC Escambia offered scholarships for staff credentials at Pensacola State College and through the on-line coursework at Smart Horizons. Eight staff credentials (FCCPC) were earned through Smart Horizons. Verification of success was monitored by a quarterly phone call to Smart Horizons with the school confirming successful completion.

Mini-grants were offered in \$500 increments for infant, toddler and preschool early literacy and emerging math classroom materials. Four Preschool mini-grants were awarded at \$500 each and six Infant/Toddler mini-grants were awarded. Classroom visits were made by ELC Program Assessment & Training Specialists to document implementation/use of materials.

After the Flood of April 2014, the ELC Escambia coordinated mini-grants for early learning providers through a relief grant from United Way of Escambia County. Eight child care programs were awarded for a total of \$4,400 of United Way funding. In addition, ELC Escambia donated early literacy & emerging math materials valued at \$500 per program to four programs.



Program Integrity Unit

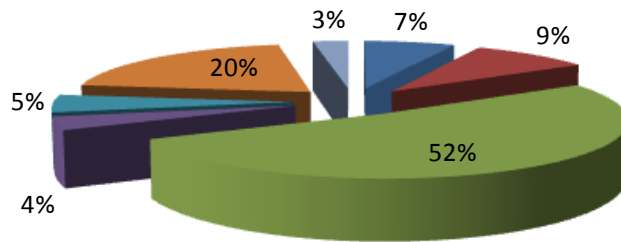
ELC Escambia created a Program Integrity Unit consisting of two staff just before Fiscal Year 2013/2014 began. This past year they concentrated on establishing operating procedures and processes, working with the Office of Early Learning (OEL) on fraud and re-employment assistance investigations, and preparing to take on full responsibility for all field monitoring in Fiscal Year 2014/2015.

This year the PIU submitted 29 fraud cases to OEL, 16 of which have been sent to Department of Financial Services (DFS) totaling a potential \$61,774.00 in restitution. Of these, 9 cases have been forwarded by DFS to the State's Attorney Office (SAO).

Program Funding Levels

School Readiness Percentage of Total Payments by Funding Category

- Temporary Cash Assistance
- At Risk Below Age 9
- Economically Disadvantaged Birth Through Five
- Transitional Child Care Birth Through Five
- At Risk Ages 9-12
- Economically Disadvantaged School Age
- Transitional Child Care School Age

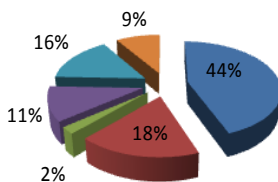


Number of School Readiness Children Served
5543

Number of Voluntary Pre-K Children Served
2843

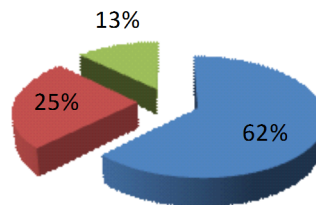
Participating School Readiness Providers

- Licensed Private Centers
- Licensed Exempt Centers
- Large Family Child Care Home
- Licensed Family Child Care Home
- Registered Family Child Care Home
- Public School



Participating VPK Providers

- Licensed Private Centers
- Licensed Exempt Centers
- Public School

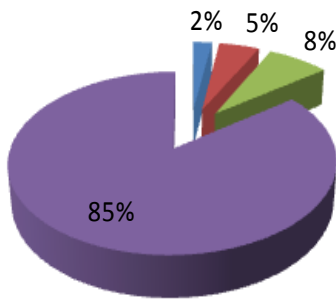


Financials

During the 2013- 2014 fiscal year the ELCEC's total School Readiness Program operating budget was \$13,147,814.00. The ELCEC's total Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program operating budget was \$5,370,006.25. Below is a breakout of expenditures by category.

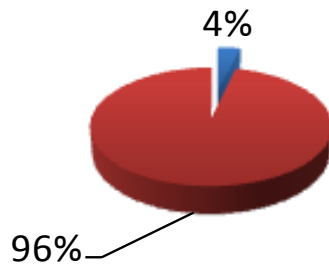
School Readiness Expenditures by Category

- Administrative Activities
- Quality Services
- Non-direct Services
- Direct Services for Children



VPK Expenditures by Category

- Administrative Activities
- Direct Services for Children



Programs and Services

School Readiness Eligibility Services

The ELCEC operates under the direction of the Florida Office of Early Learning (OEL). In turn we work with private, faith-based and public school programs, in addition to licensed and registered family child care homes to serve children from birth to five years of age. The ELCEC offers eligibility determination services in several ways: appointments, walk-ins, and drop off/pick up for paperwork. We have partnered with the local workforce board to make available specific times for their clients to visit our location without appointments to alleviate duplicate travel and paperwork issues. This process has proven to be beneficial to both agencies and our mutual clients. Follow-ups of client issues have diminished and workflow has been aligned to more closely match client needs. Within the eligibility appointment, we offer child care resource and referral services, community needs information, family guidance, and general family well-being services. At the end of appointment we promote early literacy by inviting every child to pick an age appropriate book from our "Word Garden". The Word Garden is also centrally located and has been furnished and decorated to appeal to adults and children alike, which helps it to serve several purposes as both a waiting area, a children's play area, as well as serving as a small library.



Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

The ELCEC offers a program designed to prepare four-year-olds for kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success. The program allows a parent to enroll his or her eligible child (four years old by September 1 and residing in Florida) in a free VPK program. The program is voluntary for children and providers. In addition to ELCEC offering enrollment in the office, the Coalition was part of a VPK Online Registration Pilot Program with OEL in which parents are now able to register their child for VPK online without having to visit the Coalition office. This program offers them the features to upload their documents online without having to submit copies. This approach has been very successful in expediting the enrollment process, and made it much easier for parents to get their children enrolled.

Programs and Services



Health Screenings and Education

The ELCEC continued partnership with the Escambia County Health Department (ECHD), to administer and assist providers with height, weight, hearing, vision and BMI screenings. There were 221 health and nutrition classes offered to children, parents and staff of early childhood education providers. With these services, we were able to identify and meet the needs of several children in the community by providing referrals for eye glasses and ENT services. There were 2295 children screened for vision and 2557 children screened for hearing with a total of 411 referrals for additional services from these screenings. This service continues to provide early dissemination of information, such as health and food safety alerts by local, state, and federal agencies. The ECHD delivered their services at both Provider sites and at the Coalition office site. This helped us deliver our services in a more economical manner, while still maintaining the high level of service we feel our community deserves.



Child Care Food Program

The ELCEC continued partnership with the Department of Health (DOH) to be their service provider to promote, monitor, reimburse, and train local licensed child care homes that are participating in the DOH Child Care Food Program. This program helps to meet the nutritional needs of the children they care for. Our staff provides these services to a three (3) county area to ensure the children in our community have healthy, nutritious meals and snacks. We reimburse providers approximately \$20,000 monthly for their meal preparations and ingredients. In some cases, these are the most, if not only, nutritious meals these children receive.

Programs and Services



Childcare Resource & Referral (CCR&R)

The ELCEC was successful in taking CCR&R in-house for the last six months of the fiscal year. The Coalition have two staff that handle calls specific to our Coalition, and those concerning child care in the Escambia County service area. Families requested referrals to local child care sites for care and assistance for their children. Once the client is assisted with CCRR they are questioned further to ensure all their needs are met as a family, not just their child care needs. Should a client ask, our subsidy eligibility department offers assistance to clients with parenting information and community solutions when they are in the office for child care assistance. Additionally, Child Care Resource and Referral information for local providers was updated at 100%. This is valuable to our success throughout the community to ensure accurate, up-to-date information.



Child Screenings and Assessments

The Inclusion Specialist successfully implemented 100% online participation using the ASQ Online developmental screening tool by the end of the fiscal year. The Inclusion/Behavioral coordinator responded to 143 warm-line calls; made 126 referrals to agencies; created 154 behavior plans and provided 1310 technical assists to early education and care providers and parents. There were a total of 2784 developmental screenings performed with 294 referrals made over the course of the year.



Outreach & Services

The Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County maintained two Facebook accounts: one for the agency in general and another for the Car Seat Safety Program. The Coalition uses this resource as an outlet to provide information and resources about issues pertaining to early childhood.

ELCEC worked with the Office of Early Learning to participate in the Pilot Project for VPK online registration for Fall 2014. Over 500 parents used this convenient tool effectively. The Coalition looks forward to implementing the online registration in the future.

ELCEC's Outreach Specialist coordinates and/or participates in an average of 4 local special events per quarter in the service delivery area. During 2013-2014 year, she worked 16 events such as Farm Share in Century Florida where over 2000 families received donated fresh produce and 80 families received a bag with age appropriate early literacy and pre-math materials. Approximately 5000 of the public were served at these events. CCRR information was distributed at each event.

ELCEC partnered with the Escambia School District's Workforce Development division to present a program overview at the local Chamber of Commerce's monthly breakfast program in May of 2014 and a Breakfast Summit hosted at Gulf Power Company, with over 100 early learning advocates attending each event. The two events resulted in two new Board members from the private sector.

The Executive Director makes an average of 3 presentations per month to various civic and altruistic organizations. Coalition Board members and staff continued to represent the Coalition in many agencies, clubs, organizations, and other venues in our community. Through Board member involvement in bi-monthly Board meetings, committee meetings, workgroup meetings and special activities, our Coalition Board's vision continued to help shape our community. Coalition staff represented the agency throughout the year in many events, fairs, workshops and meetings. The Coalition remains a United Way partner agency. ELCEC has been awarded a three-year level monetary commitment from United Way. Our collaborating community partners include: Department of Children and Families, Baptist Health Care, Sacred Heart Hospital, the Rotary Club, Healthy Kids, Escarosa Coalition Of the Homeless, Healthy Start of Escambia County, ECARE, Workforce Escarosa, Families First Network, United Way, Barnes & Nobles, Wal-Mart, International Paper, YMCA, Perdido Key Kiwanis and the Pensacola Lions Club.

Through a DOT grant, the ELCEC inspected 338 car seats and provided 311 new seats to families during the 2013-2014 year. CCRR information was distributed at each car seat inspection.

ELCEC early literacy program distributed over 6,800 books. The Eligibility department Word Garden daily distributes developmentally appropriate books to parents for reading to their children.

What's Been Happening



The Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County moved out of two separate locations into one office space. The Coalition was joined by Mayor Ashton Hayward, Sheriff Morgan and several other business men and women of Escambia County for their Open House and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.

The new office provides a much more open and brighter space for children, parents and providers to enjoy.



Community Outreach

Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County staff helping with United Way of Escambia County's Day of Caring.



Left - Mayor Hayward participated in the Dr. Seuss Read Across America by reading to children in our local child care programs.



Below - Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County staff participated in the Halloween at the Y event at the Crowne Royal Plaza Hotel by handing books out the children participating in the event.



Board Members - Fiscal Year 2013 - 2014

Leona Bailey *	Governor Appointed
Julia Benford *	Family Child Care Home Provider Representative
Mary Ann Bickerstaff	Children with Disability Representative
Alexis Bolin *	Vice-Chair/Governor Appointed
Charlotte Boling *	Private Sector
Gerald Boone	School Board
Julie Booth Moran *	Private Sector
Jewel Cannada-Wynn *	Private Sector
Judy Dickinson	Head Start Representative
Richard Dodd *	Private Sector
Patricia Franklin	Department of Children and Families Designee
Pam Hagan	Health Department Representative
Drew Hardgrave	Private Sector
Brenda Hardy *	Private Child Care Representative
Kermit "Skip" Housh	Chair/Governor Appointed
Susan Morgan	Community College Representative
Susan Nelms	Regional Workforce Representative
Roger Thompson	Department of Children and Families Licensing
Edna Williams	Private Sector

Board members with an asterisk () beside their names are no longer current members as of March 1, 2015*

