



Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

**RDC Committee Meeting Minutes**

March 21, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

**Committee Members in Attendance**

Roger Thompson	Jessica Czuprynski	Cindy Kirk
Tammy Greet	Marcus McBride	Misi Birdsall
MaryAnn Bickerstaff	Angela Strumeyer	Brenda Hardy

**Staff in Attendance**

Bruce Watson	Dawn Engel	Vicki Pugh
Nina Daniels	Ella Brown	Christy Zukowski
Melissa Jennings	Darrell Merritt	Melanie Tarver
Linda Sewell-Otto		

**Providers and Partners in Attendance**

Roselyn Sukal	Shaunna Bailey	Juanita Williams
Misty Lambeth	Melinda Maiterth	Deborah Marley
Kimberly Krupa	Dominique Baroco	Tammy Hicks
Lawanda Hamilton	Theresa Hill	Ruthie Noel

**I. Welcome, Call to Order, and Approval of Agenda**

Notification of this meeting was posted to the Coalition Public Calendar Board and sent to the Pensacola New Journal on March 1, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Mr. Roger Thompson, Committee Chair.

**II. Public Comments**

None

**III. Approval of Agenda and Minutes for March 15, 2022**

Upon a motion made by Ms. Bickerstaff and seconded by Ms. Hardy, the Agenda and the Minutes of the January 17, 2023 meeting were approved without objection.

**IV. Community Partner Updates**

a. ARC Gateway

Ms. Bickerstaff stated that Amazing Kids Day will take place April 1, 2023, at Jean and Paul Amos Performance Studio at PSC from 9am – Noon. They are also in desperate need of speech occupational therapists.

b. CareerSource ESCAROSA

Ms. Maiterth provided a flyer pertaining to Florida Work Ready Assessments. This flyer covers what is offered and all the contact information needed for anyone needing this kind of help.



## Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

### c. DCF Regulation

Ms. Strumeyer stated that there is not a lot of new business going on with licensing. There are some changes that will be happening to background screenings. Providers who have a new hire who is coming from out of state within the last 5 years will no longer be required to obtain the background screening histories from previous states. Providers will still need to obtain child abuse and sexual abuse background checks.

### d. Early Steps

No representative was available to report.

### e. Escambia Children's Trust

Ms. Greer stated that the Trust has been very busy. They have funded 19 Out of School Time programs. The Trust is developing an ITB for the Help Me Grow program to be released soon. The Trust is looking to award the contract to one lead agency who in turn will work with other agencies as collaborators.

### f. Florida Association for Infant Mental Health (FAIMH)

Ms. Marley stated that the Emerald Coast Chapter of FAIMH is doing well and there has been new interest in memberships. FAIMH is keeping an eye out for behavioral health events that they can contribute to.

### g. Gulf Coast Kids House

No representative was available to report.

### h. Head Start

Ms. Birdsall stated that enrollment for Headstart will be opening up on April 3, 2023, for the upcoming school year.

### i. Pensacola State College

Ms. Kirk stated that the DCF Audit wrapped up and they were found to be in compliance in all areas. Ms. Kirk is still working on getting changes made to the Early Childhood Education Curriculum and course delivery methods.

### j. Ready Kids!

Ms. Noel stated that the Pensacola Mayor Proclaimed March 2<sup>nd</sup> as Read Across Pensacola Day. The Seratoma Hog Fest will be held at Harley Davidson of Pensacola on April 29, 2023. The cost will be \$100 per ticket and will benefit ReadyKids and Pathways for Change. Kindergarten Here We Come will happen again this Summer. There will be 4 workshops offered. 3 will be in English and 1 will be in Spanish. Reading Pals is still going strong, but they are looking for more mentors for next school year.



## Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

k. School District Education Career Academy  
No representative was available to report.

l. School District VPK

Ms. Czuprynski said that there were no new updates to report on. VPK registration starts April 3, 2023.

### **V. Program Reports**

a. Medical Support Services Report

Ms. Brown stated that from August 2022 through February 2023 there have been 58 vision referrals. This is 14 more referrals than last year. Out of this number, 22 children received glasses for the first time, 9 children received new glasses and 7 children have eye exam appointments scheduled for the months of March and April.

For the same time period there have been 88 hearing referrals. This is 30 more referrals than this time last year. Out of this number, 9 children received tubes, 7 children were seen by audiologists, 6 children had common ear infections and 5 children have upcoming appointments.

b. CCR&R Update

Ms. Jennings stated that since coming off the holiday season, the number of requests has come down. The Coalition is continuing with book distribution. 1,500 books were distributed in February. The Coalition has been hosting VITA, which is a free tax service, with United Way. This program has been successful.

c. Program Support Summary

Ms. Engel stated that there is a lot of training going on, particularly courses that meet ARPA incentive requirements. There are two new staff members in the Operations Department, Training Division. School Readiness monitoring are coming along and are scheduled to be complete in April. VPK monitoring is complete for the year.

d. SR/VPK Status Report and Contract Activity Summary

There are 2,745 children enrolled in the School Readiness Program. No children have been pulled from the wait list in the last two weeks. There are 676 children on the wait list. To date, there are 638 children approved for VPK for 2023/2024 school year. More are expected to apply in the coming months, especially this summer. 1,644 children are currently enrolled in VPK.

There are 85 School Readiness providers and 77 VPK providers.

### **VI. Old Business**

a. DEL CRRSA Workforce Initiative



## Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

The local initiatives are complete for this fiscal year. The Coalition has spent all the money allocated to workforce initiatives and has put in a request for an additional \$20,000 for a few more retention requests that the Coalition has already paid for. The Coalition will be reimbursed the \$20,000 that was spent on these additional requests.

### b. ARPA Grants

All payments for ARPA Round 1 Third Installments and Round 2 have been completed. The DEL intends to recoup all unexpended direct providers payments and redistribute the funding to Coalitions in time for ARPA Round 2 Final Payments to be made this Fiscal Year. These payments have to be made no later than June 30, 2023. The Coalition expects to return approximately \$6 million in unexpended funds but will receive back \$4.75 million for Round 2 Final Payments. Some ARPA retention funding will be reallocated to next fiscal year, but all ARPA funding originally connected with this current fiscal year must be expended by September 30, 2023.

### c. Program Assessment Scheduling

VPK program assessments and child progress monitoring's are going well. VPK assessments are 100% completed and SR assessments are 75% completed. The Coalition did have one home center that scored 6.4, the highest score to date.

### d. Ideas to Improve Child Care Employment Levels

The Resource Development Committee discussed what can be done to assist providers in identifying, hiring, and retaining staff to work in their early learning and care facilities. Although much has been done to financially support providers and help them pay incentives for retention and recruitment, the childcare industry here is suffering from a lack of people willing to work. The Coalition is seeking ideas for how to assist providers in finding more staff. Efforts are being made to improve education opportunities and raise the level of professionalism amongst early learning teachers.

### e. Letter to PSC Concerning Early Learning Courses

The letter the Coalition board sent to PSC is provided. No response has been received from the college regarding this letter. However, the program director for the courses in question has discussed possible changes to when the courses will be taught and how they might be taught, such as virtual options. Hopefully the letter is having the desired effect.

## **VII. New Business**

### a. 2023-2024 Sliding Fee Scale

The new 2023-2024 fee scale is provided. The reference point is for a family of four at 150% of FPL to be eligible for SR services is \$45,000, and income out at just under \$71,000.

### b. Escambia Children's Trust Help Me Grow ITB



## Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County

The Escambia Children's Trust is trying to implement a Help Me Grow program in Escambia County. This service will help parents receive information and help with children regarding all types of developmental and mental issues. The Trust is looking for a lead agency to take on this program.

**Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 11:22 a.m.**

Next Meeting: May 16, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at the Early Learning Coalition Office, 1720 West Fairfield Dr. Suite 100/400, Pensacola, Florida 32501