

THE EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF
PALM BEACH COUNTY

Annual Report

2009-2010



Mission:

**To ensure a comprehensive,
integrated system of early
education and care that prepares
children for success in school and
responds to the needs of children
and families in Palm Beach County.**

Shaping Tomorrow's Future

Message from the Chair of the Board



I am pleased to submit the 2009-2010 Annual Report from the Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County, Inc. This report is in compliance with the specifications given in the Program Guidance used by the Agency for Workforce Innovation, Office of Early Learning (OEL-PG-0053-09) dated September 4, 2009.

Our achievements this year are a testament to the continuing support of State agencies and the extensive community of early learning partners, particularly the vision and leadership of the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach County. It is these partnerships that allow our community to continue to strive towards excellence and quality education for our children through high-quality affordable child care.

We have had a productive year and I am proud of our accomplishments. The economic climate has been a challenge and our successes have come in spite of the obstacles we have faced. The positive direction of our efforts continues to be driven by the positive changes shown in the children in Palm Beach County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Adams".

Kathy Adams
Coalition Board Chair

Board of Directors (as of June 30, 2010)

- Ms. Kathy Adams**, Chairperson of the Board. President & CEO
MediaReach, Inc
- Ms. Gaetana Ebbole**, Chief Executive Officer, Children Services Council of
Palm Beach County.
- Mr. Perry Borman**, Southeast Regional Director, Department of Children
and Families
- Dr. Marsha Fishbane**, Medical Director of School Health, Palm Beach
County Health Department.
- Mr. John O'Malley**, Director Division of Environmental Health and
Engineering, PBC Health Dept.
- Mr. Patrick Cannan**, Director, Public Affairs PBC Workforce Alliance, Inc.,
- Dr. Carmen Nicholas**, Director PBC Head Start
- Ms. Laura Pincus**, Director, Department of Exceptional Student
Education, School District of PBC
- Ms. Shelley Vana**, PBC Commissioner District 3
- Dr. Roanne Moreno**, Director of Institute of excellence in Early Care and E
Education, Palm Beach State College
- Ms. Mary Dulkowski**, Preschool Coordinator, The Kings Academy
- Ms. Terri Ellis**, Director Little Dude Ranch
- Wanda Baldwin**, Early Steps Program Coordinator, Children's Medical
Services, Easter Seals Florida
- Dr. Barbara Weinstein**, President and CEO, Family Central, Inc.
- Mr. Kenneth Kahn**, President, LRP Publications
- Mr. Phillippe Jeck**, Partner, Jeck, Harris, Raynor and Jones, PA
- Ms. Kristy Pressly**, Director of Legal Services, The Breakers
- Ms. Helene Rosen**, Private Sector, So. Palm Beach County
- Ms. Christina Worley**, Managing Member Castle Wealth Management
- Mr. Howard Burnston**, General Counsel, DJSP Enterprises, Inc. .

COALITION STAFF

- Warren EldridgeExecutive Director
- Christie YoungChief Operating Officer
- Michael SothenChief Financial Officer
- Vivian Blackmon-TaylorDirector of Early Care and Education
- Jose AbreuData/Network Manager
- Barbara Amezquita.....Accountant
- Arlene Williams.....Program Specialist—Contracts
- Aruna Gilbert.....Program Specialist—Quality
- Ginger Gladden.....Executive Assistant
- Heather Sargent..... VPK Regional Facilitator (Southeast)

The Coalition:

- Works to determine the needs of young children in the community
- Develops plans and works in collaboration with community partners to ensure children are ready for school
- Evaluates the quality of early childhood services
- Oversees Florida's free Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program, which serves over 10,000 children in Palm Beach County
- Administers funding for the school readiness program which provides assistance for low-to-moderate income working families by paying a portion of the child care costs. Over 15,000 children receive services through the school readiness program in Palm Beach County
- Coordinates training for early learning providers.

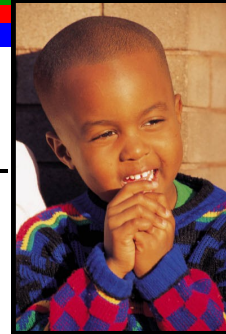


History of the Coalition

The Palm Beach County School Readiness Coalition (SRC) incorporated in 1999 and submitted its School Readiness Plan application in May 2000.

In January 2005 legislation changed the name of the SRC to the Early Learning Coalition and added the administration of the Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Program (VPK) as a function of the Coalition. The VPK program was implemented by the Coalition in the 2005-2006 fiscal year. During this time, the Coalition provided most VPK services with the exception of provider payments and enrollment into VPK for children in the School Readiness Program. These services were performed by Family Central, Inc., who began providing all VPK services in March of 2006 and continued to do so through fiscal year 2009 -2010.

**“Children are one third of our population
and all of our future”**

**Overview of
Program
Components****Service Delivery**

The Coalition contracted with Family Central, Inc., to provide the following services:

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R): CCR&R is the initial point of entry for families to access programs administered by the Coalition or other early care and education programs in Palm Beach County. Services are provided in accordance with the Standard Levels of Services.

Eligibility and Enrollment: Eligibility for School Readiness services are determined in accordance with the policies of the Agency for Workforce Innovation Office of Early Learning and the Coalition. Parents determined eligible for school readiness subsidy are given child care consumer information and referrals based on their individual needs. Parents are assessed a parent fee and enrolled with the provider of their choice. Enrollment information is entered into the Enhanced Field System (EFS), the State mandated software system.

Child Care Payment and Reimbursement: Child care provider reimbursements for subsidized child care and VPK are processed through the EFS system. The Client Information Services Department (CIS) within Family Central, Inc., is responsible for processing all provider payments. In addition, this department performed fiscal analysis, funding tracking and parent fee management.

Child Care Services: inclusive of Service Agreements, Monitoring and Compliance, Post Audit Attendance Monitoring and Technical Assistance.

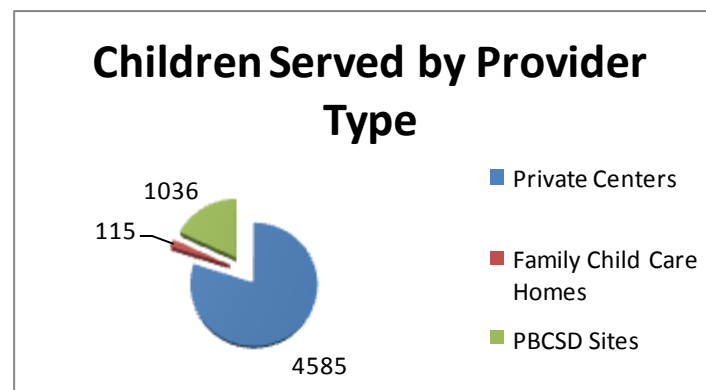
The Coalition's service delivery is driven by its mission and vision and is made possible by the numerous system partners in the Palm Beach early care and education system. The successes of the service delivery is a testament of this partnership. The Coalition in the past fiscal year has continued with the implementation of curriculum, enhanced success of child screening through partnership with the Healthy Beginnings System and ensured seamless delivery of trainings by use of the Palm Beach Registry.

Programs provided through Partnerships

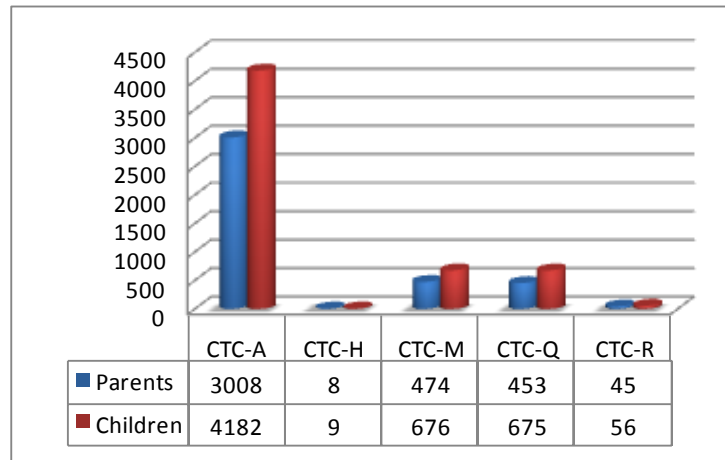
Continue To Care Scholarship Program:

The Coalition receives funding from the Children Services Council to administer the Continue to Care (CTC) Program. The CTC program was developed to fund child care services for the following specific groups or billing groups of children:

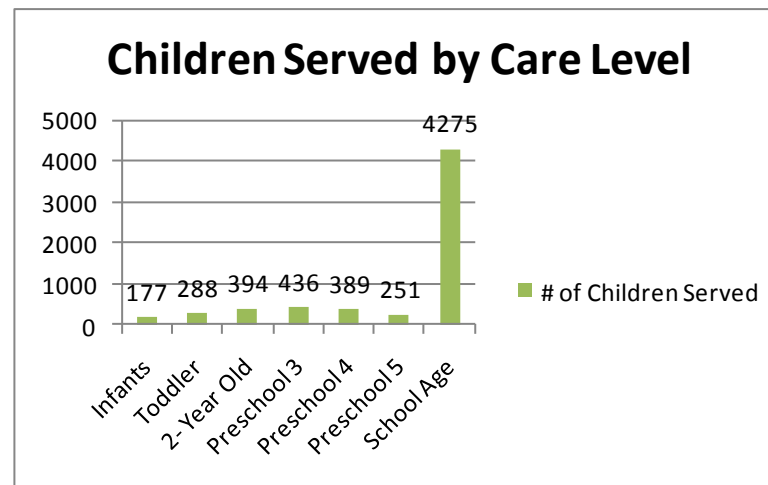
- ◆ Continue To Care Quality (CTC-Q): scholarships that provide continuity of child care services for children who are attending a participating Quality Counts site. Quality Counts is a voluntary quality improvement system for child care providers.
- ◆ Continue to Care Maternal (CTC-M): scholarships provide child care financial assistance to children in families referred by Healthy Beginnings System providers. The Scholarship may only be used at Quality Counts sites.
- ◆ Continue to Care Relative Caregiver (CTC-R): scholarships provide child care financial assistance to children whose caregiver is receiving legal services through Legal Aid Society with the goal of obtaining legal custody, guardianship, or adoption. The scholarship may only be used at Quality Counts sites or qualifying after-school programs.
- ◆ Continue to Care Afterschool (CTC-A): scholarships provide child care financial assistance for school age children. The scholarship may only be used at qualifying afterschool programs.
- ◆ Continue to Care Homeless (CTC-H)



The goal of the CTC program is to ensure that at-risk children have access to and continuity of quality child care. This chart represents the number of children served in each billing group of the CTC program.



In FY 2009-2010 the CTC program had 274 providers participating serving 3897 unduplicated parents and 5570 unduplicated children utilizing a total of \$10,228,274.91 in funding.



Teenage Parent Program:

The Coalition receives funding from the School District of Palm Beach County, and through a contract to Family Central, Inc. administers referrals from school district representatives for enrollment into the Department of Education Teenage Parent Program. This program offers young women, who become pregnant while still in school, the opportunity to continue their education through graduation



by ensuring child care is available to them at no charge, as long as they continue to attend school and enroll in a parenting class.

Emergency Child Care:

Through funding the Coalition receives from the Children's Service Council, temporary financial assistance for child care may be provided to families in need due to a short term crisis or situation. Family Central administers the emergency funds and accepts referrals directly from families, child care providers and community agencies.

GATE:

Through funding the Coalition receives from Gulfstream Goodwill Industries in partnership with the Palm Beach County Department of Community Services Community Action Program, Family Central manages referrals for the Goodwill Achievement Through Employment (GATE) program to assist parents while in job training/coaching program. During the period of February 2009 to June 30, 2010 the GATE Program provided child care services to 34 children totaling \$46,041.56. This funding was for child care slots only. The administration of the program was provided in-kind through the Coalition.

Voluntary Prekindergarten Services: (VPK):

Family Central, Inc., is the contractor delivering VPK services. Family Central's VPK staff accepts parent application for qualifying VPK four year olds and issues certificates throughout the county.

- ◆ 83 VPK registration events were held at community locations
- ◆ 10,998 parent interviews resulted in issued certificates

Monthly Subsidized Child Care Waitlist

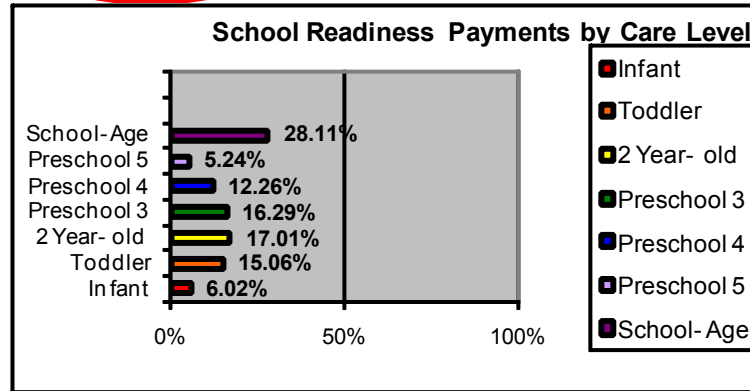
Month/Year	#Children
July 2009	4624
August 2009	5387
September 2009	5849
October 2009	5802
November 2009	5580
December 2009	5608
January 2010	5544
February 2010	5677
March 2010	5592
April 2010	5513
May 2010	5600
June 2010	5865

The Coalition served 18,965 unduplicated children in the School Readiness (SR) Program totaling \$51,673,157.98 and 10,466 children in the VPK program totaling \$25,367,214.87 in FY 2009-2010. Funding included local, state and federal dollars.

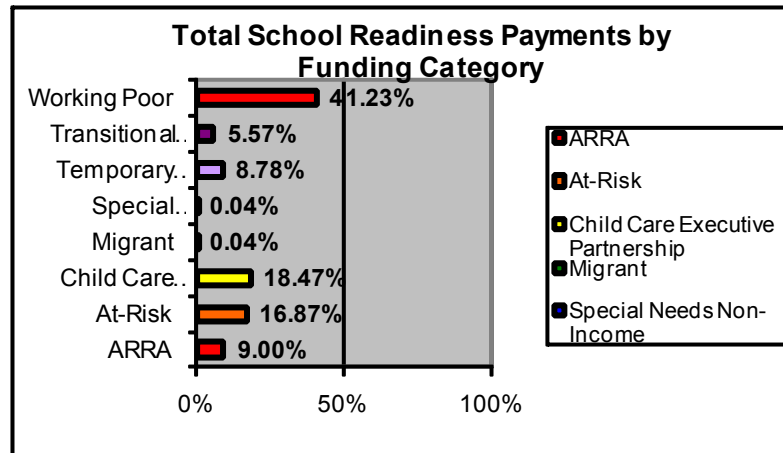
Monthly Enrollments

July 2009	10,780
August 2009	9,306
September 2009	9,183
October 2009	9,044
November 2009	8,998
December 2009	8,788
January 2010	8,632
February 2010	8,586
March 2010	9,617
April 2010	9,412
May 2010	9,217
June 2010	9,251

SR Payments by Care Level



SR Payments by Funding Category



Families and Children Served by State Funding Only:

The following is a breakdown of the number of families and children served through State funding categories during the past fiscal year ending June 30, 2010. The numbers are duplicated due to children changing funding groups within the same fiscal year. For the past fiscal year the unduplicated state funded children served is 13,798.

Funding Category	#Families	#Children
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).....	769.....	1358
At Risk	2289.....	4021
Child Care Purchasing Pool (CCPP).....	4457.....	7988
Migrant.....	6.....	10
Transitional Child Care.....	548.....	1079
Temporary Cash Assistance.....	1105.....	1914
Special Needs.....	6.....	9
Working Poor.....	4643.....	8449

Eligibility and Payment Highlights

- ◆ Redeterminations resulted in 7,725 children being eligible to continue care.
- ◆ During this past fiscal year 10,998 VPK parent interviews were conducted resulting in issued certificates.
- ◆ 10,263 unduplicated children were served in the VPK program during the VPK school year and summer program.

Voluntary Prekindergarten Education

VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM (VPK):

The VPK program is a statewide program which was approved by the Florida Legislature in 2004 and signed into law on January 2005. The data reflected in the program year is different than the data provided previously for the fiscal year since the fiscal year includes data for the summer program for 08-09 and 09-10. The program year includes only children served from August 2009—2010.

10,998 certificates issued, 10026 children enrolled in the school year, 972 children enrolled in the summer.

Partnerships with Palm Beach County School District and Palm Beach County Head Start assist in reaching and registering as many four-year old children as possible in the VPK program. This partnership allows for on-site and VPK child eligibility determination.

VPK Agreement Monitoring

100% Compliance	Follow-up required	Referred to licensing	Referred to eligibility/ payment services
250	120	3	88

- ◆ 329 VPK monitoring was conducted.
- ◆ 86 Follow up contacts were conducted to ensure non-compliance issued noted during the monitoring was addressed.
- ◆ 41 random VPK Agreement monitoring was conducted.

VPK Percentage of Total Payments by Provider Type:

Faith –Based: 23.56%

Family Child Care Homes: .09%

Private Center: 68.87%

Public School: 7.47%

A total of \$25,367,214.87 is spent on payments to VPK providers.

VPK Payments by Program Type:

VPK School Year	\$24,541,378.83
VPK Summer	\$1,095,214.85

VPK Agreements Executed:

- ◆ 336 VPK Provider Agreements

Quality Enhancement Supports for VPK Providers:

The Coalition and Family Central, Inc., sponsored “VPK Week” the week of May 24—28, 2010. This was a week of activities for current and future VPK parents/guardians and VPK providers to learn more about VPK. Activities included The Great VPK Give-A-Way, provider training and technical assistance, VPK child registration, model VPK activities, story times, and an online Resource Fair. Special activities for parents and providers were also held in Belle Glade. A model VPK classroom was set up for parents and children to explore.

VPK providers had the opportunity, at no charge to them, to order educational supplies and materials for their VPK classroom. VPK provider trainings were also held during this week. One hundred and fifty-seven (157) VPK providers ordered supplies.

Quality Initiatives

In Palm Beach County, quality initiatives are provided and funded through the leadership and vision of the Children's Services Council (CSC) and assistance from The Coalition's system partner agencies: Palm Beach State College, Family Central, and the School District. The Coalition's contracted provider Family Central, Inc. participates along with the Coalition in numerous community collaborations formed to assist providers in implementing the highest quality programs. Collaborative quality improvement partners include:

- ◆ Personal Development, Professional Development (PD2)
- ◆ ECE System Partnership
- ◆ Integrated Professional Development Committee
- ◆ Quality Counts committees
- ◆ Various committees addressing curriculum development and child care center director support

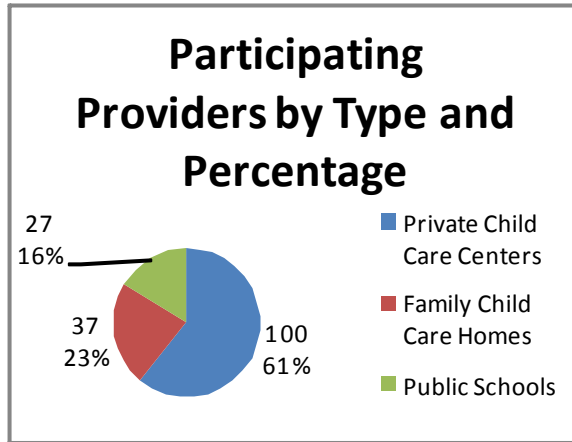
This past fiscal year marked the beginning of several new projects for Quality Supports Services:

- ◆ Web-based meetings and training
 - ◆ Series Trainings
 - ◆ Development of implementation plans for training participants
 - ◆ Joint conference with Council of Jewish Educators
 - ◆ Joint conference with Literacy Coalition of PBC and Head Start
 - ◆ Collaboration with City of WPB to host the first web based Early Childhood Conference in PBC
 - ◆ Curriculum Counts Conference
 - ◆ Online meetings and trainings
 - ◆ Online access to the resource library



Quality Counts (QC) is a voluntary rating system for early care and education providers that uses a clearly defined, five-star method to ensure quality standards so children enter school eager

and ready to learn. The Quality Counts system is administered by the Children’s Services Council of Palm Beach County.



Six Standards:

- Learning Environment
- Staff-to-Child Ratio/Group Sizes
- Family Engagement
- Curriculum
- Administration
- Staff Qualifications/Professional Development

The Benefits:

Participating in Quality Counts means providers – whether based in centers, at schools or in family child care homes – receive professional support and financial incentives.

- Grants for materials and equipment
- Educational scholarships for staff
- Wage supplements for staff
- Early learning coaching/networking
- Technical assistance
- Financial awards

Personal and Professional Development (PD2): is a community collaborative that has been working on developing an early care and education professional development system focused on the informal path, but should provide a bridge to the formal system. Through representation from many community stakeholders the work on professional development includes the connection of all the components of professional development. For the past year this work has included the development of a career ladder that will anchor the system. In addition strides have been made to work together to plan conferences that provide the training and education to move the workforce toward improving the quality of their sites. Strides are being made to work more closely with directors in order to provide them with additional opportunities to enhance their skills and learn from each other. Through the work of Palm Beach County, the state has recognized the need to build a state professional development system, using much of the work developed in our community. To this end Palm Beach State has been tasked to roll out the state early care and education professional development system.

Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS)

The purpose of the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) is to gather information on a child's overall development and to specifically address the readiness of each student for kindergarten based on Florida's VPK Education Standards. The FLKRS is also used to calculate the VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate, which measures how well a VPK provider prepares four-year-olds to be ready for kindergarten based upon Florida's VPK Education Standards. Florida's VPK Education Standards address the areas of physical health, approaches to learning, social and emotional development, language and communication, emergent literacy, mathematical and scientific thinking, social studies and the arts, and motor development.

The FLKRS screening instrument includes selected measures from the Early Childhood Observation System™ (ECHOS™) and beginning with the 2009-10 school year, the new Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) replaced the DIBELS™ measures portion of the kindergarten screening. This Broad Screening includes measures of Letter Naming and Phonemic Awareness, which are included in the VPK Education Standards. These data are used to calculate a student's Probability of Success in Reading score.

ECHOS™: 12,662 children in Palm Beach County were screened. 11,076 (87.50%) were ready, compared to 1,583 (12.50%) were not ready.

FAIR: 12,410 children in Palm Beach County were screened. 8,078 (65.09%) were ready, compared to 4,332 (34.91%) were not ready.

Provider Information

Providers by Provider Type:

Child Care Centers with Service Agreements: 421

Family Child Care Homes with Service Agreements: 280

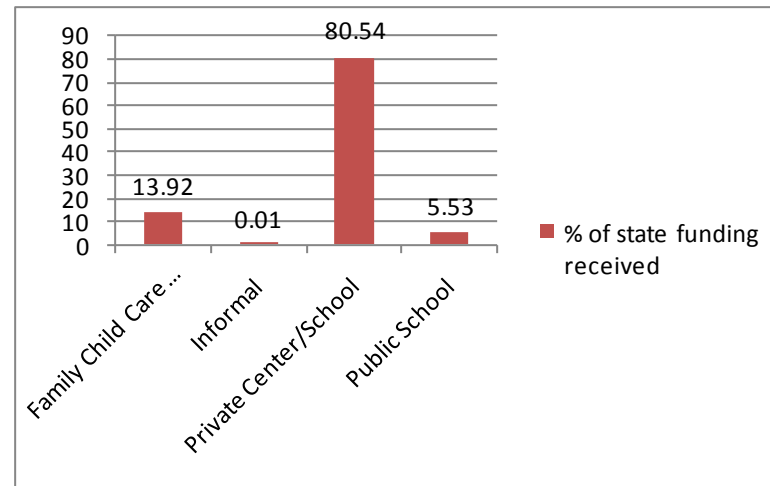
School-based Programs with Service Agreements: 127

Informal Providers with Service Agreements: 3

Afterschool Programs with Continue to Care Scholarship Service Agreement: 109

A total of 940 providers received a school readiness agreement. In addition 336 VPK Provider Agreements were executed

Percentage of Total Payments by State Funding:



A total of \$40,421,469.09 of funding is spent on payments to providers for School Readiness services

FISCAL SUMMARY

The Coalition was able to utilize 98% of School Readiness funds to serve children in Palm Beach County. The Coalition worked with Family Central, Inc., to efficiently manage slot utilization in order to expend CCEP dollars to serve the maximum number of children. In addition, the Coalition met all of its School Readiness earmarks and restrictions for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010. The Coalition was able to utilize 100% of VPK funds to serve children in Palm Beach County, As of June 30, 2010, VPK administration , enrollment and monitoring expenditures totaled \$1,189,972 which was 4.53% of total VPK slot expenditures. The Coalition also spent \$59,848 on VPK outreach and monitoring services through the VPK Outreach and Awareness grant.

SR Expenditures Category	Budget	Actual	Percent Utilization
Administrative	1,242,000	1,242,000	100%
Direct Services	2,836,620	2,836,620	100%
Child Care Slots	29,587,560	28,691,259	97%*
Infant & Toddler	717,297	717,248	100%
Quality Initiative	1,649,247	1,576,812	96%
Gold Seal	3,520,000	3,520,000	100%
CCEP	3,738,698	3,736,959	99%
Total	43,291,422	42,320,898	98%*

* Remainder of ARRA (federal stimulus) funds that Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) encouraged to carry over for fiscal year 2010-2011

VPK Expenditures Category	Budget	Actual	Percent Utilization
Administration	272,473	272,473	100%
Enrollment	833,695	833,695	100%
Monitoring	83,804	83,804	100%
VPK Slots	26,288,846	26,388,846	100%
Total	27,478,818	27,478,818	100%

Quality Supports for School Readiness

SEEK Scholarship Program: Seeking Excellence in Education and Knowledge (SEEK) is a grant scholarship program funded by the Children’s Services Council and administered by Palm Beach State College (PBSC). Family Central Inc., processes scholarships for conferences, workshops and non-PBSC courses.

Number of Scholarships Granted	Amount of Scholarships Granted
1745	\$91,046.95

Inclusion/Behavioral Services: Technical assistance was provided through model teaching, environmental adaptations, behavioral management and in-service trainings to child care centers and family child care homes addressing the following concerns: general inclusion, social emotional health, developmental speech or language delays, special health care needs, autism spectrum disorders, general quality improvement, Americans with Disabilities Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Resource Library: Had patronage of over 2,178 children, 1,290 parents, 1,276 child care providers and 180 patrons representing the community early education partnership. The resource library transitioned to a web-based catalog management system with access to over 13,000 items on the web.

Trainings provided:

The Coalition through its contractor Family Central, Inc. offers an extensive provider training program, which includes provider meetings, training on a wide variety of topics and technical assistance to teachers as needed. In addition the Coalition works closely with Palm Beach State College to ensure the needs and gaps in training needs are filled.

# of Trainings	# of Participants	# of CEU's	# of In-service hours
77	2526	33	72.5

Health Activities: The coalition requires providers to offer a character development program designed to assist children in acquiring social and emotional skills. In addition Palm Beach County Licensing department requires providers to have immunization records and physicals for all children on file.

Early Childhood Conference: Family Central Inc., designed, developed and facilitated in collaboration with system partners an Early Childhood conference held April 2010 addressing both curriculum and the dual language learner. Over 400 practitioners, directors and community leaders attended. It celebrated the “Week of the Young Child” with proclamations from Palm Beach County and the City of West Palm Beach. Over 22 sessions addressed all aspects of curriculum and unique strategies used with language learners.

Service Agreement Monitoring: Monitoring occurs to ensure providers are in compliance with Florida Statutes 411.01 ensuring a healthy and safe environment for children within a quality learning program. Monitoring is unannounced and occurs a minimum of once annually.

Centers Monitored	Homes Monitored	After School Monitored	Follow ups Conducted	Random monitoring conducted
260	213	160	266	122

100% compliance	Follow-up required	Referred to Licensing	Referred to Eligibility and Payment Services

Post Audit Attendance Monitoring (PAAM): A PAAM is completed on a minimum of 50% of the Service Agreement and VPK providers. Sign in/out sheets are picked up at the provider’s site for a previous month’s reimbursement and are compared to the children’s daily attendance as recorded on the enrollment/attendance verification submitted by the provider for payment.

Number of PAAM audits completed	Number of providers requiring a reimbursement adjustment
416	125

Quality Assurance Compliance Plan: This plan focuses on increased provider accountability, specifically in regard to provider responsibilities identified in the Service Agreement. An important component of the Quality Assurance compliance plan is training and technical assistance to assist the provider in understanding and complying with requirements of the service agreement. During the past fiscal year 23 providers were in a compliance plan. The most common reasons being for child screening and sign in/out sheets.

Summary



Our Challenges:

In FY 09-10 the most difficult challenge for the Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County was the ability to meet the needs of a local community with an economic infrastructure severely impacted by a depressed economy. The Coalition struggled with ensuring that families' needs were being met for child care and at the same time that the child care being offered was of quality and substance to achieve school readiness.

Our Successes

The Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County Inc., regards its collaboration with system partners as the greatest success. These partnerships enable the Coalition to work collaboratively to ensure that the child care needs of families are met. These partnerships raised the bar for providing quality in child care environments and ensuring that a family's needs are met as an integrated system.

As an ongoing performance and quality improvement strategy provider and parent groups are conducted to gather information and guide decisions for quality, programming, service delivery, marketing and customer relation improvements. From those focus groups the Coalition and its contractor Family Central Inc., gathers information that will continue to improve successes of our operations and increase the quality of care provided.

Provider Success Story:

A curriculum Warm Line repeat caller called the line to get information on many different curricula she wanted to purchase and implement. The Resource Coordinator encouraged her during each phone call to keep it simple and focus on her teachers and children when making a selection. The Coordinator reiterated that it is more important to implement one strong curriculum and have the teachers become proficient and knowledgeable in one curriculum instead of having teachers who know a little about many curricula. The provider ended up selecting a single curriculum and called the Warm Line to inform the Coordinator that she had seen the light and wanted her teachers to feel confident when implementing the curriculum.



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