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AGENCY FOR WORKFORCE INNOVATION'S OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING ANNUAL REPORT 2007–2008

Introduction

The Agency for Workforce Innovation (the Agency) is Florida's lead state workforce agency, charged with directly administering the state's Early Learning programs, Workforce Development services, and Unemployment Compensation programs. The Agency's Office of Early Learning provides oversight of Florida's School Readiness programs, and is the lead entity for implementing the state's successful Voluntary Prekindergarten education program. Led by our Governor, the Agency serves the people of Florida by working to support families and ensuring children have quality early learning opportunities. The Agency's vision for Florida is *Children ready to learn, families ready to earn*. This goal is realized through the three divisions—or business lines—that provide services to Florida's families and children:

Early Learning—The Agency's Office of Early Learning implements the state's Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) program, School Readiness (SR) program, and Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) education program. These programs support families by providing families with access to child care services as parents seek employment and educational opportunities. The Voluntary Prekindergarten education program is a constitutionally created program under which each four-year-old child residing in Florida may receive a free prekindergarten education. This high quality program prepares children for their kindergarten learning experience. The Agency works with 31 local early learning coalitions to ensure services to families and children are available, accessible, and affordable.

Workforce Services—The Governor has appointed the Agency to administer disbursement of federal workforce funds. Through our Workforce Services office, we administer many programs that help the employed, as well as the unemployed and the underemployed. This division is responsible for providing One-Stop Program Support services, including guidance and technical assistance to the Regional Workforce Boards, and for providing Labor Market Statistics information to our workforce partners and the general public. Additionally, the Agency is the administrative liaison to Workforce Florida, Inc., and works closely with Workforce Florida, Inc. to administer workforce programs across the state.

Unemployment Compensation—The unemployment insurance program is offered under grants issued through the US Department of Labor and allows the Agency to provide temporary wage replacement benefits to Floridians who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. In the Unemployment Compensation office, we resolve disputed unemployment compensation claims and tax liability protests. This division oversees Unemployment Compensation claims, benefit payments, and warrants and responds to calls from claimants, employers, and other Floridians. Additionally, this division bears responsibility for detecting and preventing unemployment fraud and overpayments.

Office of Early Learning Results in Brief

Florida's Agency for Workforce Innovation supports the state's children and families, promoting children's development as learners and increasing parents' ability to work by providing quality care for Florida's children. The Agency's Office of Early Learning has responded to fiscal year 2007–2008's challenges by renewing and strengthening our strategies for administration of quality early learning programs and engaging in meaningful collaborations with our stakeholders and partners. We established operating priorities based on our mission of ensuring accessibility, affordability, and quality of early learning services for Florida's children and families. Three major areas of operational focus were identified: strategic planning, strengthening partnerships, and streamlining service delivery.

Strategic Planning

The Agency has set the following short- and long-term goals to ensure the needs of our stakeholders are met:

- **Children.** Revise the SR eligibility determination process to promote continuity of care and provide quality educational settings for children's success.
- **Parents.** Promote economic self-sufficiency and awareness of parents' roles as their children's first teachers.
- **Providers.** Educate providers on how quality indicators support effective early learning programs. Raise market awareness for both VPK and SR.
- **Coalitions.** Streamline coalition monitoring to promote local review and issue resolution for early learning program providers.
- **The State of Florida.** Provide support and solutions for all of our stakeholders to increase visibility and public awareness of Florida's early learning programs, and to make administration and delivery of services more efficient.

Strengthening Partnerships

The Agency continues building meaningful relationships with program partners in order to reach our mutual goal of delivering comprehensive and seamless service to Florida's families. These efforts include working with the Early Learning Advisory Council to identify new funding opportunities, develop strategies and solutions for increased support and resources, and continue to expand and integrate Florida's early learning systems.

Streamlining Service Delivery

Our efforts to eliminate duplicated services and enhance accountability continue to increase the efficiency of service delivery requirements for the SR program. Improved linkages between SR and VPK promote an inclusive early learning system and ensure Florida's children are given excellent opportunities and access to preparation for future school success.

Guiding Principles

The Agency supports its mission of advancing the economic well-being and self-sufficiency of all Floridians through premier early learning and workforce services by following a set of core values: Service, Innovation, Excellence, Integrity, Accountability, and Collaboration. In keeping with the Agency's mission, the OEL ensures the accessibility, affordability, and quality of early learning services for Florida's children and families. To this end, the Agency's OEL developed a set of guiding principles which staff members practice on a daily basis:

1. We make every decision after careful consideration of its impact on children, families, child care providers, early learning coalitions and other partners.
2. We hold ourselves accountable for the resources entrusted to us.

3. We work actively to develop a seamless system of program services through internal and external collaboration.
4. We seek out, value, and respect partnerships that support families in achieving economic self-sufficiency and that prepare children to learn.
5. We are customer focused and communicate clearly, accurately, and respectfully.
6. We value and respect our colleagues and actively promote and support one another and celebrate successes.
7. We encourage, seek, and utilize a diversity of ideas.
8. We proactively develop the future leadership of our office.
9. We challenge ourselves daily to identify new and innovative ways of doing business and responding to the needs of all partners.
10. We speak with one voice and do not allow any action or inaction to diminish the integrity of our office or the Agency.

Accomplishments

Administering Florida’s Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) education program continues to be a source of pride for the Agency’s OEL. A total of 134,714 (59%) of eligible four-year-old children participated in the 2007–2008 VPK program year, representing an increase of 11,146 children over the 2006–2007 VPK education program.

School Readiness (SR) is the largest program administered by the Agency. In fiscal year 2007–2008, 247,758 SR children were served in private centers (89.8%), public schools (4.5%), family child care homes (12.0%), and informal care settings (1.0%).

Other fiscal year 2007–2008 Agency accomplishments include

- Partnering to deliver a combination of SR and VPK services with 31 early learning coalitions (local entities responsible for coordination and delivery of SR and VPK services), Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA, a statewide not-for-profit organization that serves migrant families), and almost 14,354 early learning providers throughout Florida;
- Providing Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) services to just over 402,400 parents across the state;
- Expanding service access to 18,507 low-income children through the Child Care Executive Partnership (CCEP);
- Improving guidance and communication with early learning coalitions;
- Delivering quality initiative training opportunities to more than 1,000 coalition and community partner staff members;
- Providing Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood® scholarships to more than 3,800 recipients;
- Serving more than 2,500 children from over 2,274 families in 17 counties with the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program through the HIPPY USA organization.

The Agency serves the great people of Florida by working to support families and to ensure children have quality care and early learning opportunities. Our accomplishments demonstrate the Agency’s strong leadership in maintaining quality early learning opportunities for all children, and effective, affordable, accessible support for Florida’s families. Legislatively charged with the development and implementation of the VPK education program and the oversight of federal and state funds for the SR program, we are proud of our successes for the past fiscal year, and committed to continued improvement for the future.

2007–2008 Year in Review: Programs and Services

The Agency, through the OEL, partners with early learning coalitions, the Department of Education, and the Department of Children and Families to coordinate a comprehensive early learning system and improve early learning programs and services for Florida's families and children.

The Agency administers the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) education program to ensure Florida's four-year-old children are prepared for success in school and in life. In addition, the Agency provides support services to low income working families through the School Readiness (SR) program and to all Florida families through the Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) program. Responsibility for administering the Child Care and Development Fund, a major source of funding for the SR and CCR&R programs, also rests with the Agency.

Responsible for the majority of the administrative activities associated with the VPK and SR programs, the Agency works with 31 early learning coalitions serving all 67 counties in Florida. Per state statute and federal regulations, the Agency and the early learning coalitions:

- Maintain the quality, accessibility and affordability of child care options in Florida,
- Improve the educational quality of both SR and VPK,
- Establish program standards and outcomes,
- Allocate and distribute funding,
- Enroll children,
- Recruit, pay, and support providers,
- Conduct fiscal and administrative oversight.

The Agency is responsible for supporting the workforce by providing child care options; for distributing federal and state funds for child care; for improving the quality of all early learning programs; and for coordinating a multi-level birth to five-year-old system to benefit children, families, communities, and the state through the administration of Florida's early learning system. The Agency is responsible for providing support services to children and families to ensure Florida has a capable and ready workforce now and in the future.

Educational success leads to workforce success. The Agency provides significant enhancement to the strength and development of our state and its workforce through the careful and efficient administration of quality early learning programs and through meaningful collaborations with our stakeholders and partners.

Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet Focuses on Strategy and Collaboration

The Agency is proud to serve on the state's first Children and Youth Cabinet (the Cabinet), which was created by Governor Charlie Christ in July 2007. The cabinet consists of 20 members tasked with coordinating the state agencies and programs that deliver children's services. The Cabinet's mission is to ensure the public policy of Florida relating to children and youth promotes interdepartmental collaboration so services designed for children and youth efficiently and thoroughly improve the self-sufficiency, safety, economic stability, health, and quality of life of all children and youth in Florida. The Agency director was an active Cabinet member, taking a key role in the formation and strategic planning during this groundbreaking year. The Agency's continued dedication to the work of the Children and Youth Cabinet will ensure the educational needs of children during their early years remain a policy and funding priority for Florida.

Agency Engages State and Local Leaders at Governor's Summit

The Agency, with the support of the National Governor's Association, planned and conducted a series of meetings designed to engage state and local leaders and provide information regarding the connection between early childhood experiences, education, workforce strength, and economic development. On January 23, 2008, state and local policymakers and business, media, communication, health, and early childhood leaders met for the Governor's Summit on Early Childhood Education. Early childhood and workforce professionals spent the

following day at the Early Learning Finance Forum, learning about early childhood finance and system options. The final day of the summit on January 25 brought together education, workforce, and economic development leaders to consider the connections across disciplines and to develop recommendations for Governor Charlie Crist regarding the best methods for supporting Florida's children and families in the coming years.

Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program's Third Year Sees Record Enrollment

In its third year of implementation in program year 2007–2008, Florida's VPK education program served 134,714 four-year-olds (59 percent of all four-year-olds in Florida) in the 540-hour school-year and the 300-hour summer VPK education programs. More than 5,100 early learning providers offered at least one of the VPK education program types at private centers and schools, family child care homes, and public schools.

The Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS), administered by the Florida Department of Education (DOE), measures each kindergartener's readiness for school in seven areas: language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, social and personal skills, physical health and fitness, and the creative arts. Kindergarteners are screened each fall. Data from the FLKRS administered in fall 2007 indicated once again that children who participated in the VPK education program are more ready for kindergarten than children who did not participate in the program. Even children who attended less than 70 percent of the VPK education program hours scored higher on the FLKRS measures than children who did not participate in the program.

Florida's VPK education program is jointly administered by the Agency, the DOE, and the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The Agency administers the day-to-day operations of the program including policy development, financial management, and oversight of the 31 early learning coalitions. The DOE oversees performance standards, curricula, and professional development. The DCF provides oversight of child care licensing and regulation, administers Florida's Gold Seal Quality Care program, and issues credentials for child care personnel. Many other collaborators at the local level contribute to this important work, including the individuals serving on coalition boards.

Voluntary Prekindergarten Improvement Process Helps Struggling Providers

Each VPK provider earns a kindergarten readiness rate, indicating the quality of its performance in offering the VPK education program. Florida law requires the State Board of Education to establish a minimum acceptable readiness rate score calculated so that no more than 15 percent of the providers offering the VPK education program fail to meet the minimum readiness rate. Providers who fail to meet the minimum rate are considered to be "low-performing providers."

The DOE calculates each provider's readiness rate using the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS). The Agency provides coalitions with guidance regarding the approval of providers' plans for improving performance. Because low-performing providers are tasked to submit satisfactory improvement plans, the Agency has also provided the coalitions with the business processes necessary for tracking low-performing VPK providers' progress and accurately monitoring payments.

Based on FLKRS results, 4,798 VPK providers for the 2006–2007 program year received readiness ratings. Of the providers receiving a rating, 3,906 scored above the minimum readiness rate established by the State Board of Education at 211 out of 300 possible points. All VPK education programs earning a readiness rate of 211 or higher are considered satisfactory providers of the VPK education program. A total of 689 VPK providers scored below the minimum rate for the 2006–2007 program year.

As of November 21, 2008, 613 of the 689 (89 percent) of low-performing providers (those who earned a rate of 210 or below) had submitted an improvement plan to their coalition or school district. Support for improving performance is available to low-performing providers through the Agency, coalitions, DOE, DCF, community colleges, and private provider networks. Providers identified as low-performing for four consecutive years will no longer be eligible to provide the VPK education program.

The 2007–2008 VPK Provider Readiness Rate, set by the State Board of Education in February 2008, marked the culmination of the third year of implementation of the VPK education program in Florida. Additional information about the improvement process and readiness rate calculation is available at www.ImproveVPK.org.

School Readiness Services Provide Support for Families in Need

The SR program has two primary purposes. One is to ensure children are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten thereby increasing their chances of future educational success and becoming productive members of society. The other is to help parents become economically self-sufficient by providing financial assistance for child care so parents can work or participate in educational and training activities. Services offered through the school readiness program include the following:

- Extended-day, extended-year, and school-age care for children
- Appropriate protection and child care for at-risk children
- Services based on the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of a child
- Involvement of parents as their child's first teacher
- Preparation for children to become ready for school
- Provision of family support and community resources for parents

Although the Agency administers these services from the state level, coalitions and providers act to implement the SR program at the local level. Early learning providers deliver the services that make the difference in the lives of children and families. At the same time, coalitions provide training, technical assistance, and resources to the providers in order to support and improve the quality of early childhood environments.

Coalitions partnered with about 12,700 providers to deliver SR services during the 2007–2008 program year. There are many other collaborators at the local level who make contributions to this important work, including the individuals serving on coalition boards. Another important contributor, Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA), provides early learning services to migrant families in 21 counties throughout Florida.

Early Learning Advisory Council Guides Program Efforts

Florida's Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) acts as an advisory board providing early learning oversight at the state level. The Governor-appointed chairs of the state's early learning coalition boards also serve as members of ELAC. The council supports the Governor's vision by creating state and local partnerships and establishing plans of action for Florida's early learning programs. The council submits recommendations to the Governor's office through the Agency. These recommendations address the administration of the VPK education program, the SR program, and the Child Care Resource and Referral Program (CCR&R).

Established by section 1002.77, Florida Statutes, ELAC's purpose includes enhancing the effective operation of the early learning coalitions, maximizing state funding for early learning programs, and ensuring our youngest children are prepared to enter school and eventually the workforce. The council stands as an excellent example of the best of Florida's programs; citizens and government working together to create a premier early education system with the highest quality services to children and families.

In March 2008 the Carvajal Consulting and Management Company facilitated a strategic planning session with the council. The group addressed three key questions:

- What works?
- What could be improved?
- What needs to stop happening?

At the end of the session the Agency's OEL and ELAC were able to agree on several goals and objectives: increasing focus on both short- and long-term funding issues, developing clear guidance for council committees, providing assistance and recommendations in the monitoring streamlining effort, and developing a resource

library of information and presentations to provide coalition board members with resources for advocating the importance of early learning programs to community business leaders.

Florida Child Care Resource and Referral Network Informs Families

Florida's CCR&R Network is dedicated to helping families identify and select quality early learning programs. CCR&R services are free to anyone that resides in or seeks early learning services in Florida. Trained staff provide consumer education on quality indicators for early learning and referrals to early learning programs that are customized to meet individual family's needs, as well as information and referrals to other services within local communities.

CCR&R serves two fundamental purposes: to help parents identify and select quality programs which best meet their children's needs and to provide technical assistance to providers in an effort to improve the quality, availability, and affordability of child care. These goals are accomplished by providing information and resources to families, child care professionals, government entities, and other individuals regarding state programs and services available through quality early learning options, and work/family solutions.

Coalitions provide CCR&R services in all 67 counties in the state. In fiscal year 2007–2008, 10 coalitions directly operated CCR&R in-house and the other 21 coalitions contracted for these services. More than 402,400 parents and families across the state accessed CCR&R services during the same time period.

Parental choice continues to be a very high priority for CCR&R. To ensure parents are aware of their child care options, each CCR&R office maintains a database of all legally operating providers in its service area. The CCR&R database contains providers that are licensed, license-exempt, faith-based, registered family child care homes, and non-traditional child care entities. The CCR&R Network Office develops written materials and brochures designed to assist families in choosing early childhood programs. These materials also operate as resources for CCR&R coordinators, specialists, and inclusion specialists in their work.

Warm Line Services Support Families with Special Needs

Section 402.3018, Florida Statutes, establishes the "Warm-Line" for the purpose of providing assistance and consultation to all early learning programs regarding health and developmental issues of the children they are serving, particularly children with disabilities and other special needs. Inclusion specialists are designated by coalitions to carry out the Warm-Line program. The work of inclusion specialists frequently involves addressing challenging behaviors, making accommodations for children with disabilities, identifying developmental "red flags" through screening and assessment, and educating communities about the benefits of including children with disabilities in classrooms with typically developing children. In 2007–2008, Inclusion Specialists provided 1,486 hours of training to early learning programs in topics such as social-emotional health, quality enhancement, disability awareness and referring families for additional intervention services.

Technical Assistance Streamlines Coalition Planning Process

In February 2006, the Agency significantly revised criteria for approving the school readiness plans coalitions are required to maintain under section 411.01(5)(d) 4., F.S. In accordance with these revisions, local early learning coalitions complete a community needs assessment and develop coalition performance standards to allow accurate self-measurement of the way coalition programs affect program participants. The Agency provides technical assistance to each coalition in developing its plan, to ensure each plan reflects local business and program concerns for the CCR&R, SR, and VPK education programs.

New Monitoring Team-Up Extends Accountability and Timely Response to Coalition Issues

From February through June 2007, the Agency's coalition analysts joined the Eligibility Support unit in conducting site visits of nine coalitions. The resulting review and change request support augmented all 31 coalition annual reports. The Agency subsequently provided these reports to the Auditor General to support the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) audit of the Agency's OEL. The cooperation allowed detailed maintenance of the Technical Assistance log, capturing the many instances of

technical assistance rendered to the coalitions. Provided to the Auditor General, this log reflects the three types of “during-the-award” monitoring (reporting, site visits, and regular contact) required by OMB Circular A-133.

Throughout the year, the Agency’s fast-react teams assisted five coalitions in critical situations. This intensive, targeted support ranged from assistance with fiscal matters to help with coalition board and governance issues. Any of these issues could have seriously affected the delivery of early learning programs and services to children and families.

The Agency’s team improved the timeliness of reporting by regularly updating the newly created Weekly Issue Report electronic template, an integral part of the Agency’s OEL dashboard. This document provides a succinct, at-a-glance overview of coalition issues with accompanying narrative detail. This reporting tool provides a mechanism for rapidly conveying a broad range of field-level information, thereby enabling leaders to quickly make fully-informed decisions regarding sensitive issues.

Early Learning Symposium Enhances Programs, Partnerships, Communication

The Agency initiated improved collaboration with our contractor for quality services, Western Kentucky University’s Training & Technical Assistance Services (TTAS), and with Florida’s DOE. The Agency participated in monthly partnership conference calls with TTAS liaisons and the DOE’s VPK specialists to plan for a three-day training event. This event, the early learning symposium, was jointly presented by the Agency’s OEL, the Florida DOE’s Office of Early Learning, and the TTAS Research Foundation.

The symposium drew participants from across the state and included staff from state agencies, early learning coalitions, and early learning providers. Presentations were made from state and national early learning experts. The purpose was to provide information to the field that was research-based and relevant to early learning. The symposium provided all participants with informative general sessions and workshops designed to enhance delivery of early learning services and enrich children’s early experiences.

Building Florida’s Early Learning Information System

During 2007–2008, the Agency continued efforts to implement a new Early Learning Information System (ELIS). The completed ELIS will be a web-based data system that accesses, manages, stores, and shares programmatic, administrative, financial, and outcome data. ELIS will replace the seventeen-year-old decentralized information system that currently supports the work of thousands of child care professionals throughout the state. Over 400,000 children and their families access the information and resources of Florida’s early learning programs each year. The implementation of ELIS means ensuring accountability for an annual budget of approximately \$1.02 billion, strengthening the early learning programs, and increasing access to these resources.

In FY 07-08 the ELIS project team completed visits with the 31 coalitions and the RCMA to better understand and document the current and future core business processes that the system must support. Visits included facilitated sessions with nearly 400 staff members from coalitions and service providers as well as representatives from licensing, education, workforce, protective services, law enforcement, and training programs. The team also met with a wide range of child care providers to learn their specific resource and technology requirements for the future. The ELIS system requirements, business case and cost-benefit analysis were also completed.

Following this review, the feasibility study completed in March 2008 recommended that Agency proceed with the development of ELIS based on anticipated cost savings, enhanced services, and improved efficiencies. The study estimated a cost savings of over \$28 million a year due to enhanced efficiencies in program operations. The \$28 million a year in cost savings could potentially be used to serve some of the more than 60,000 children on the subsidized child care waiting list and fund 7,000 more children every year in the school readiness program.

The same study produced a Business Process Improvement (BPI) document as one of the principal results required by the ELIS contract. This document describes business process improvement opportunities based on current process documentation as well as the problems and needs identified by the Agency’s OEL, the early

learning coalitions, and other stakeholders during Joint Application Development (JAD) sessions. Treating the Agency's administration of Florida's early learning system as a business, the business process improvement opportunities address potential advances in the areas of policy, procedure, training, and technology. The Agency continues to apply the BPI findings in order to enhance the efficiency and strength of Florida's early learning system.

Improved Processes Save Costs and Speed Payments to Coalitions

The Agency's OEL, in collaboration with the early learning coalitions, served 17,939 providers and 382,473 children in FY 2007–2008 with an allocated budget of \$1.02 billion. During fiscal year 2007–2008 Agency staff designed and implemented a system centralizing and automating the processing of coalition invoices. Implementation on July 1, 2007 of this centralized process and automation of the transmission of the invoices from the coalitions resulted in actual costs savings of at least \$28,500 in FY 2007–2008, with recurring savings thereafter. In addition, this process has reduced the actual average processing time by 9.8 days, or a 50 percent improvement (reduction) in the time between invoice preparation and payment to the coalition by the Department of Financial Services.

Also Agency staff has implemented a recurring process for reconciling data reported on program payments made by the early learning coalitions with the actual payment data contained in the state's accounting system. By automating and streamlining this process, information on coalition program payments is made available in a more timely manner, reconciliation of the data on coalition program payments now occurs on a set schedule, and discrepancies in the data are discovered and resolved within a significantly accelerated timeframe. This improvement has led to more accurate financial data on coalition operations and decreased the possibility of future audit findings concerning the expenditure of state and federal funds.

Agency Improves Program Guidance and Communication

The Agency uses several mechanisms to provide guidance and communication with coalitions regarding program and fiscal requirements and expectations. Agency staff provides local support and technical assistance to other state agencies on the programmatic and fiscal operations of Florida's early learning programs using the following organizational units:

The Consumer Affairs unit supports communication with early learning coalitions, state partners, families, providers and other interested stakeholders, with information related to the OEL's programs. The Consumer Affairs team coordinates statewide training, guides product development, and coordinates the ELAC meetings. Coalition and service provider staff members receive training and technical assistance through this unit's eight Coalition Analysts. This business section works closely with Agency partners including the DCF, the DOE, the Department of Health, the Florida State University Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy, and early learning coalitions.

The Financial Administration and Budget Services unit provides oversight to coalitions for the early learning program budget and procurements processes. This business section provides technical assistance to coalitions, statewide contractors, and Agency staff on fiscal operations, as well as day-to-day management of statewide contracts. Working closely with the Program Services and the Accountability units, this team oversees each coalition's financial status, processes payments for services provided, monitors expenditures, and conducts determinations of improper payments.

The Accountability unit conducts performance reviews of coalition operations, conducts eligibility monitoring, provides coalition support, analyzes coalition business processes, and provides ongoing feedback and assistance to coalitions.

The Accountability unit's Eligibility Support and Fraud Prevention (ESFP) team is assigned to conduct annual SR and VPK child eligibility reviews and VPK provider assessments of the 31 early learning coalitions and two statewide contracted entities (RCMA and HIPPPY) for compliance with the law. During this period, the ESFP unit completed 31 reviews, 24 reports, and submitted two parts of the statewide contract reports for RCMA and

HIPPY. In addition, employees conducted two statewide conference workshops on eligibility and eight regional SR eligibility trainings.

The Accountability unit's Coalition Performance Review (CPR) team is responsible for measuring the extent to which the coalitions meet their performance expectations as established in the coalitions' plans. Every three years each coalition receives a comprehensive review. The performance review expectations cover specific areas including educational service delivery, child care resource and referral, governance procedures, coalition operations and program management, families' access to programs, contract management, collaboration with other agencies, and customer service. During the last fiscal year, the CPR unit completed 10 reviews, published 4 monitoring reports, and provided technical assistance while conducting the on-site reviews for all 10 coalitions visited.

The Program Services unit is responsible for program guidance, policy services, and research analysis and data. The Program team provides technical support and assistance with implementing the School Readiness, Voluntary Prekindergarten education, and Child Care Resource and Referral programs. The Program Service unit's Policy team develops and answers questions related to policy and rule. This department also reviews and approves early learning coalition plans. The Data team responds to data requests and provides guidance and technical assistance with implementing School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten as they relate to the use of the Enhanced Field System (EFS). The Research team conducts short- and long-term analyses to provide program evaluation and to help disseminate knowledge about the field of early learning.

The Project Management unit is responsible for administration of key early learning projects, including the Early Learning Information System (ELIS), the Child Care Executive Partnership (CCEP), Even Start, and the Single Point of Entry/Unified Wait List. Using sound project management principles, processes, and standards, this business section facilitates and coordinates Agency and coalition business process and quality improvement recommendations and related projects. The Project Management unit works closely with the Program Services unit in developing and implementing statewide early learning performance measures.

The Redlands Christian Migrant Association Supports Rural and Migrant Communities

The Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization that works in partnership with a variety of public and private entities to serve the families of migrant farm workers and other low-income, rural families. The RCMA provides child care and early education services for children of low-income rural families including migrant, seasonal, and former farm workers throughout Florida, serving approximately 8,258 children during fiscal year 2007–2008. RCMA's partners include federal and state agencies, Florida growers, community foundations, social service agencies, and concerned individuals.

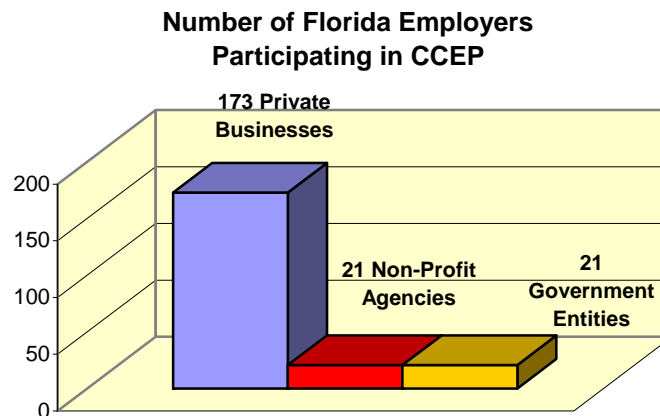
By working with these diverse partners, RCMA:

- Creates and fosters opportunities for children of migrant farm workers and other low-income, rural families;
- Maximizes the choices in the lives of migrant and low income rural families by providing quality child care, support services, and educational opportunities;
- Improves the health and general welfare of children and their families;
- Involves parents in the educational process and in public policy decisions that affect their children and families;
- Increases public awareness of the lifestyle of migrant and seasonal farm workers;
- Provides opportunities for and encourages the professional development of RCMA staff hired from the communities served.

Florida Child Care Executive Partnership Leverages Private Sector Support

The Florida Child Care Executive Partnership (CCEP) program is a public/private partnership program that helps employers meet the needs of a growing segment of their workforce, working parents. Through this program, federal and state funding is “matched” with contributions from local governments, charitable foundations and private businesses on a dollar-for-dollar basis to provide child care services to participating families. The CCEP program empowers coalitions and employers to work together to increase child care funding for lower-income working families, provide access to School Readiness services to more children, and increase business productivity and profits by providing valuable benefits for employees.

Through efforts of the CCEP board members, staff and the early learning coalitions, CCEP business participation increased 41.8 percent this year. The members of the CCEP board are named in *Appendix B—CCEP Highlights and Membership*. Fifty-two new business partners participated in the CCEP program during the 2007–2008 fiscal year. The following chart represents the number of employers, by employer type (i.e., private business, non-profit agency, and government entity) participating in the CCEP program fiscal year 2007–2008.



Even Start Promotes Family Literacy

The William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program is a federally-funded program designed to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and illiteracy by integrating the areas of adult literacy and education, parent education, early childhood education, and interactive literacy between parents and their children into one program. Florida Even Start programs utilize a family-centered education model that improves the academic achievement of young children and the literacy skills of their parents in order to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and illiteracy. Florida Even Start programs seek out and serve the families that are the most economically disadvantaged and have the lowest levels of adult literacy in the state.

Florida Even Start trains parents to be the primary teachers for their children and full partners in the education of their children. The program promotes interactive literacy activities between parents and their children that transfer educational values and concepts into the family home. Even Start supports adult education and English as Second Language (ESL) courses that lead to high school diplomas or GEDs, helping parents prepare for better jobs and economic self-sufficiency. Children are assisted with age-appropriate early childhood and preschool education to prepare for school success and life long learning.

In 2007–2008, there were 12 Even Start programs throughout Florida serving a total of 425 families (or an average of 35.41 families per local program) with 690 children aged from birth through 8 years. The largest group (about 48%) of newly enrolled parents participating had less than a ninth-grade education. Florida Even Start programs are focused on ensuring that Even Start families are provided with all of the services required to achieve their goals. 91 percent of Florida Even Start programs met all applicable Performance Indicators. Even

Start is committed to continuing its purpose of impacting generations of Florida's citizens by providing families with the tools needed to become self-sufficient.

Head Start State Collaboration Office Builds Multi-Agency Partnerships

The Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSSCO) in Florida is a collaborative project of the Agency, the Office of the Governor, the Florida Head Start Association, and the Florida Institute of Education at the University of North Florida. This partnership provides a framework for advancing the development of system-building initiatives and multi-agency agreements.

The project's goals and objectives are focused on building a seamless system of comprehensive early care and education services for young children and their families. The Agency provides support to the Florida Head Start State Collaboration Office by furnishing part-time personnel, office space, technology services, and general office support.

Highlights of the HSSCO's activities for 2007–2008 include a new memorandum of understanding between the Agency, the HSSCO, the Early Learning Coalition Executive Directors Association, the Florida Head Start Association, and the Region IV Office of Head Start. The memorandum defines Head Start's role in the Voluntary Prekindergarten education program, its participation in the National Governors' Association Early Childhood Summit, and the development of a Head Start State Collaboration Office Advisory Committee.

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters Supports At-Risk Families

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI USA, HIPPI) is a home-based program for at-risk families with children ages three through five. Funded through the Agency, the program provides educational enrichment activities for children, and links to community resources and organizations for families. During 2007–2008, HIPPI programs operated in 17 Florida counties and delivered services to more than 2,500 children from approximately 2,274 families.

A longitudinal study is underway to demonstrate the program's influence on children's academic performance. This study investigates the influence of the program on children's school performance from kindergarten through the third grade. There are 623 children from 17 HIPPI program sites currently enrolled and grouped into four cohorts. Each cohort includes children from a school grade year, beginning with children entering school in September of 2004 through the class of children beginning school in September of 2007. Programs are currently recruiting and enrolling a fifth cohort of children who entered kindergarten in September of 2008.

Academic outcomes are based on kindergarten readiness scores, classroom grades in reading and math, third-grade FCAT scores for reading and math, grade promotion status, attendance, and whether the child received disciplinary or referral actions. Preliminary results for 136 children from 5 of the 11 school districts show approximately 50 percent of children in kindergarten passed the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) letter recognition and sound fluency measures; 76 percent of children in the first grade received either an "A" or "B" in reading; 78 percent received a grade of either an "A" or "B" in math; and 70 percent of children in the second grade received either an "A" or "B" in reading and math.

Florida's Quality Initiative Assists Coalitions and Providers

The Agency provides training and technical assistance to coalitions and providers through a contract with Training and Technical Assistance Services (TTAS) at Western Kentucky University. These services include strategic planning facilitation, board development, and presentations at numerous workshops and conferences.

The Florida State University Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy (the Center) has worked as a subcontractor to establish a statewide infant/toddler network through the Florida Association for Infant Mental Health. The Center provides training and ongoing communications with infant/toddler specialists around the state.

Scholarship Program Supports Professional Development

The Agency-funded Teacher Education and Compensation Helps project (T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program, the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® project), was first implemented in Florida in 1998 and is currently administered by The Children’s Forum. The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® project provides scholarships, cash incentives, and paid time off to encourage early learning practitioners to return to school for additional coursework in early learning. The average national annual turnover rate of early learning employees is 30 percent. In contrast, the average annual turnover rate of Florida’s TEACH recipients is 7% percent, which contributes to creating a more stable, familiar environment for children.

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® project received \$3 million of it’s approximately \$3.1 million in funding from the Agency. The project combines financial support for education with a commitment for increased compensation from the sponsoring organization and a pledge by the participant to work at the sponsoring agency for an additional year after his or her contract year ends.

The VPK education program has sparked the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® project’s rate of growth; over the past three years the project has grown significantly, with 14,726 recipients signing 22,134 contracts since the program’s inception in Florida. With additional funding from other local partners, 3369 participants took part in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® project in 2007–2008. Forty-three percent of recipients were working toward their associate’s degree, and 39 percent were working toward their staff credential.

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Recipients by Degree Goal 2007–2008

Degree/Credential	Number	(%)
Associates Degree (AS)	1,457	43
Bachelor of Science (BS)	28	1
Child Development Associate Director Credential Renewal (CDAR)	172	5
Child Development Associate National (CDAN)	249	8
Child Development Associate (CDA)	1324	39
Director’s Credential (DC)	139	4
Total	3,369	100

Financial Review

Funding

In fiscal year 2007–2008, the Agency received \$1.02 billion in funding, 66 percent of which was allocated for the SR program and 34 percent for the VPK education program. Four budgeted funds contribute to Florida’s early learning programs—the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), the Welfare Transition Trust Fund (TANF), Florida’s State General Revenue Fund, and the Employment Security Administration Trust Funds. Approximately 50 percent of all funds were federal grants. Funds from the federal CCDF provided over 37 percent of the Agency’s total budget.

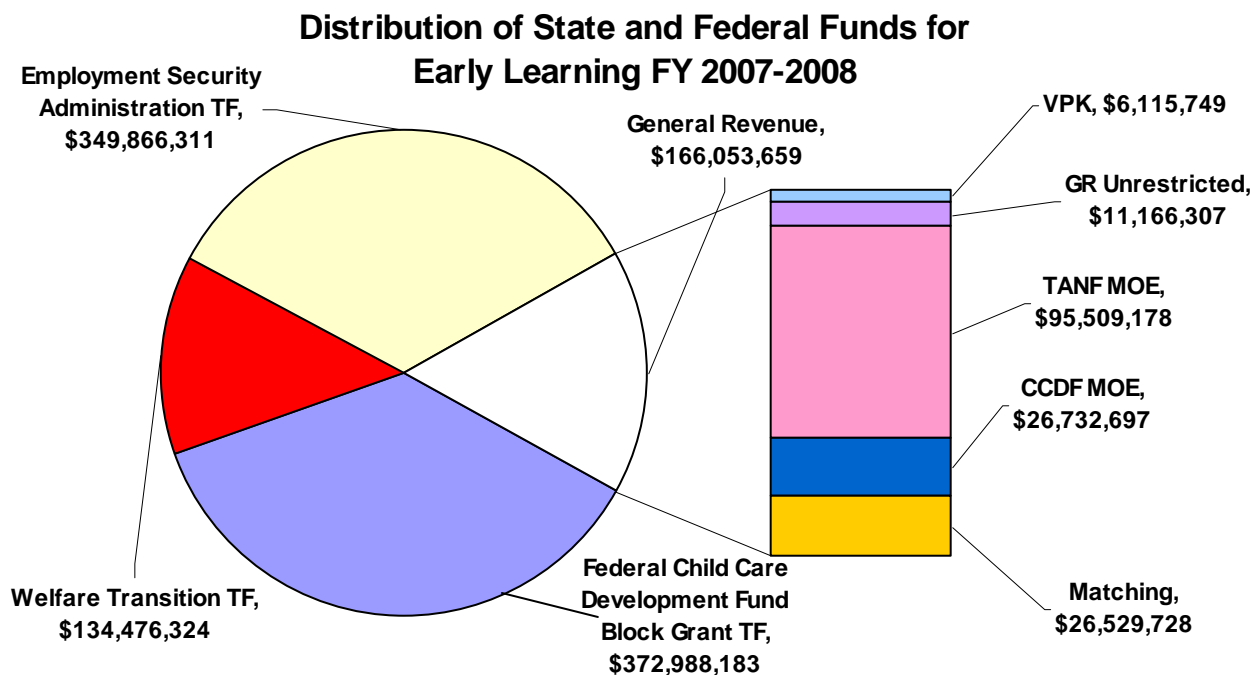
The State also uses funds from the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families block grant (TANF) to support early learning initiatives and receives \$1 million in federal dollars to provide the Even Start Family Literacy program. As a condition of federal funding, Florida must provide a specific amount of “match” and “maintenance of effort” (MOE) for the program. During 2007–2008, the State provided about \$166 million from general revenue. Federal funds and some state funds are used for SR services. All VPK services are financed with state general revenue.

The following table details the Agency's funding for fiscal year 2007–2008:

Early Learning Funding 2007–2008	
General Revenue includes:	166,053,660
TANF MOE	95,509,178
CCDF MOE	26,732,698
CCDF Matching	26,529,728
GR not Match or MOE	11,166,307
VPK	6,115,749
Federal Includes:	508,964,507
CCDF	372,988,183
TANF	134,476,324
Even Start	1,000,000
Social Services TF	500,000
Other Includes:	343,750,562
VPK Direct Services	343,750,562
Total Funds	1,018,768,729

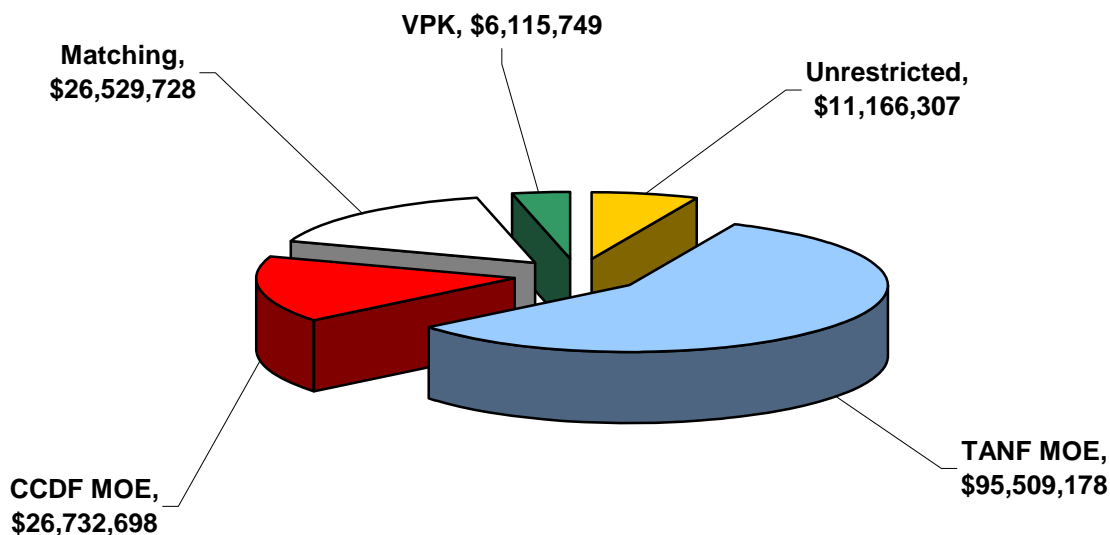
Budget

Designated as the lead agency for oversight of the federal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) by the Governor and as the administrator of operational requirements for the Florida VPK education program, the Agency is responsible for safeguarding and maximizing the returns on these federal and state investments. The following charts show the distribution of funds from these sources.



+All early learning revenues (with exception of Even Start and VPK funds) are used to make payments to local early learning coalitions. This is accomplished with a “payment matrix” where each line item on the coalition invoice is paid by a proportionate share of the appropriate revenues. Each line item is tied directly to one or more “billing groups” or eligibility groups. These groups are made up of those children or families who fall into the situation category that the set of revenues is intended to support. An example category might be “family with income at 150 percent of the federal poverty level” or “child at risk of neglect or abuse.”

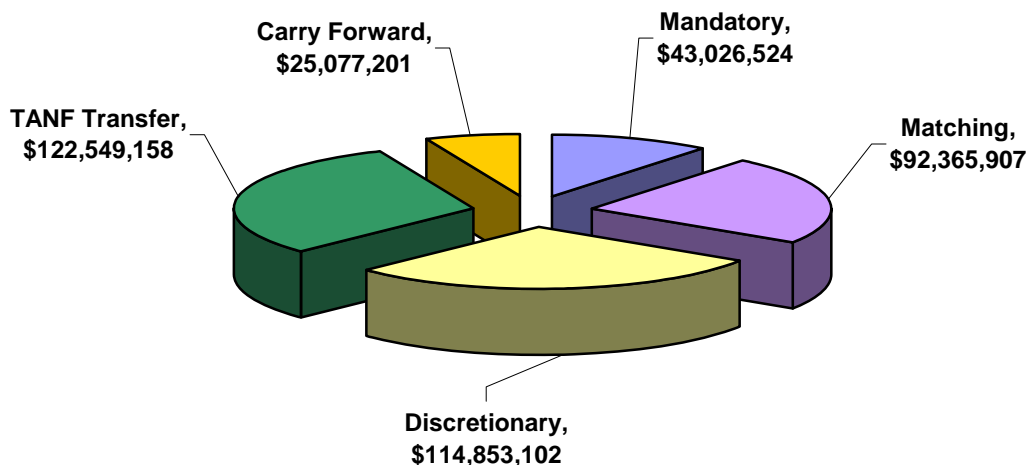
Distribution of General Revenue Funds for Early Learning FY 2007-2008



In fiscal year 2007–2008, \$122.2 million of the general revenue was used as maintenance of effort for the state’s CCDF and TANF funds. An additional \$26.5 million (with local match and Teenage Parent Program (TAPP) expenditures) was used as matching funds to draw down \$92 million of a Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) grant. The available unrestricted general revenue was approximately \$11.2 million (\$3.7 million allocated for ELIS) with VPK funds for administrative costs accounting for another \$6.1 million of the total \$166 million general revenue funds for early learning.

Distribution of Child Care Development Funds for Early Learning FY 2007-2008

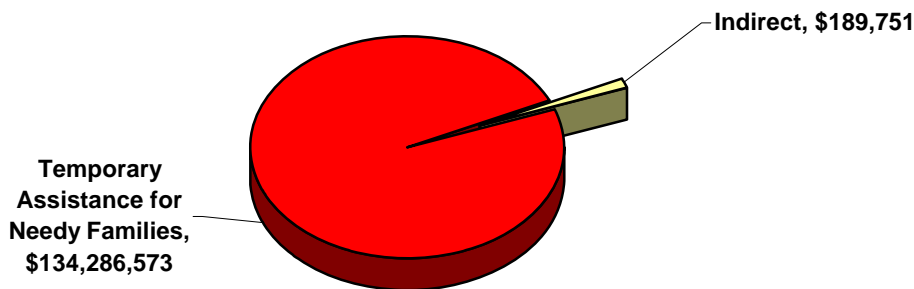
(Total Revenue \$397,871,989 vs. Total Budget \$372,988,183)



The Child Care Development Fund is the principal source of federal funding for subsidized child care for low income families and programs to improve the quality of subsidized child care. There are actually three separate funding streams contained within the CCDF, with a fourth contingency funding stream based on the state's decision whether to transfer a portion of its Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to the CCDF:

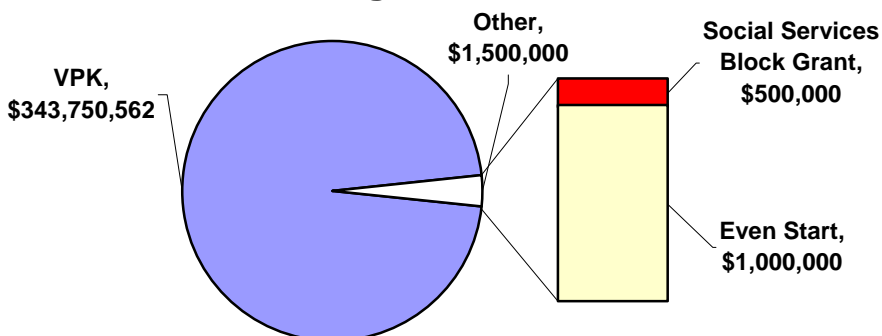
- **Discretionary**— each state qualifies to receive a share of an amount subject to annual congressional appropriations
- **Mandatory**— each state qualifies to receive an amount based on the funds the state has previously received from federal child care programs over a certain period of time
- **Matching**—each state elects to receive federal funds *if* the state meets its “maintenance of effort” requirement (continuous level of funding over a certain period of time) and *if* the state commits additional state funds to draw down the matching funds. In Florida, the ratio of matching is approximately 45 percent state funds and 55 percent federal funds.
- **TANF Transfer to CCDF**—additional separate funds are available if a state transfers up to 30% of its TANF funds to the CCDF. Florida elects to transfer 20 percent of its TANF grant to CCDF and 10 percent of its TANF to Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). Some of the SSBG funds come back to early learning through the Employment Security Administration Trust Fund.

Distribution of Welfare Transition Trust Fund for Early Learning FY 2007-2008



The Welfare Transition Trust Fund receives funds from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) federal grant, which allows states the flexibility to develop their own welfare independence programs. The Department of Children and Families is the state agency charged with administering this grant. Funds for specific programs are appropriated by our state legislature. Early learning receives support from this fund, which is intended to be used to help families achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Distribution of Employment Security Administration Trust Fund for Early Learning FY 2007-2008



Florida’s legislature appropriates funds for the VPK education program based on the supporting agencies’ projections for the coming program year. These funds are paid directly to early learning providers. The Employment Security Administration Trust Fund contains the bulk of this appropriation, and includes funds from other sources. The Department of Children and Families receives the SSBG and channels a portion of this grant to early learning programs. Services paid for by this fund include services associated with at-risk children and support services for children who are physically, mentally or emotionally disabled. The Department of Education receives Even Start funds from the federal government and channels a portion of this money to OEL early learning programs for administrative and technical assistance expenditures.

Coalitions

The 31 local early learning coalitions' many accomplishments throughout 2007–2008 positively impacted the children and families of Florida. *Appendix C—Coalitions at a Glance* contains additional information regarding the coalitions' median income and population data.

The Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County moved to a new space in January 2007, enabling all services and staff to be located in one building. The home visitation program doubled the number of families served through the United Way's *Success by Six* funding. The coalition developed a pilot program that promotes compliance with licensing; regulatory requirements; professional development; activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development; as well as activities for supporting inclusive child care and consumer education. The coalition gave special recognition to Gold Seal providers and awards to exemplary programs at the annual Provider Appreciation banquet.

The Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend consists of Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, and Wakulla counties. The coalition supports activities that promote consumer education; compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements; professional development; and activities that support early language, literacy, math, and pre-reading development. The coalition offered 496 hours of Professional Development courses this fiscal year, providing in-service hours as well as continuing education units. The Early Learning Voluntary Instruction and Support (ELVIS) project continues to bring community volunteers and early learning programs together to assist young children in becoming avid readers and creative writers.

The Early Learning Coalition of Brevard County worked with Brevard Community College to offer scholarships allowing teachers to complete their Florida Child Care Professional certificates and renew director's credentials. Devereux Florida provided over fifty free comprehensive School Readiness education and training opportunities for child care providers, teachers, and families. Online training became available as another avenue for teachers to obtain continuing education units. All courses were available in English and Spanish. Additionally, providers received technical assistance and mentoring support, classroom needs assessments, training, access to a resource library, and materials to improve quality within their program.

The Early Learning Coalition of Broward County provided technical assistance to 178 child care centers and 41 family child care homes. Specialists tailored the technical assistance services such as observations, coaching and mentoring to meet the specific needs of each facility. On-site group professional development activities drew participation from 62 providers. Local providers visited the coalition's resource library 9,970 times during the fiscal year, borrowing over 15,000 professional resource items and using other services such as laminating, internet access, story time, and weekly arts and crafts sessions.

The Early Learning Coalition of Clay, Nassau, Baker, and Bradford Counties (CNBB) sponsored 163 training sessions for parents and providers and nearly 200 other teacher training and technical assistance activities during the 2007–2008 fiscal year. With the support of CNBB's accreditation and enrichment program, 39 early learning centers and family child care homes worked towards quality standards substantially above those required by licensing, with four centers completing their accreditation this year. CNBB created and distributed a community resource guide related to early child care and education for each of the four counties served. The coalition addressed US Senator Bill Nelson at a town hall meeting to advocate for public policy supporting early learning.

The Early Learning Coalition of Duval County supports activities that promote compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements; development of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts; inclusive child care; and social and emotional development of children. Quality Connections supported school readiness providers in offering quality early learning experiences based on a system of environment assessments, sustained support, and professional guidance. The coalition hosts the Early Learning Director's Network, which met monthly with an average of 45 directors attending. Members of the network attended legislative training and traveled to Tallahassee to meet with legislators to advocate for children.

The Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County continues using the Quality Initiatives funds for two major programs in Escambia County—nursing services and Wee Read, a staff development program. Both initiatives combine community resources and ingenuity to expand quality services to children, their families, and child care providers in the community. Quality funds were also used to provide start-up administration for the coalition’s Imagination Library, which provided mini-grants to 38 centers and 12 family child care homes for literacy enhancements and school age program materials. The coalition also used the funds to enhance teacher education opportunities such as regional conferences and community college, online classes, and Department of Children and Family Services training classes.

The Early Learning Coalition of Flagler and Volusia Counties continues helping early child care programs achieve the highest professional standard of quality possible through the Quality Enhancement Mentoring Program. 85 percent of participating providers showed improvement after receiving mentor role-modeling and interaction strategies, participating in individual and small group meetings, viewing instructional videos, utilizing teacher and director self-reflection, and observing model centers. Community outreach training included 47 parent education events which were available to the entire community. The All Aboard inclusion pilot, established to increase the number and quality of child care programs serving children of varying needs, offered peer mentors, technical assistance, and workshops.

The Early Learning Coalition of Florida’s Gateway serves Columbia, Hamilton, Lafayette, Suwannee, and Union counties. The coalition assisted providers and teachers in furthering their education and provided salary supplements to staff with high credentials through a mini-grant to nine School Readiness program providers. The coalition also provided scholarships for 60 teachers to be certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and for 90 teachers to be certified in first aid. The coalition partnered with 85 businesses and community members to hold its Second Annual Children’s Day community event attended by approximately 700 parents, children, and child care providers. In 2007–2008, the coalition assessed over 500 three- and four-year-olds using the Learning Accomplishment Profile-Third Edition (LAP-3).

The Early Learning Coalition of Florida’s Heartland serves Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, and Highlands counties. The coalition’s Quality Initiatives department developed a comprehensive training calendar tailored to the professional development needs of providers. The coalition facilitated an average of 39 workshops per month in FY 2007–2008. Family child care home start-up mini-grants assisted nine new providers in meeting the costs of opening new businesses. Several providers participated in the accreditation program, and by the end of the fiscal year four programs awaited validation, four began self-study, and two programs achieved accreditation. The coalition launched its website, an information hub for providers, parents and community partners.

The Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County began work on a new program methodology and process, named “Quality Counts for Kids,” to be implemented in the beginning of the 2008–2009 fiscal year. This methodology promotes compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements; professional development; early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development; inclusive child care; and the social and emotional development of children. Staff also worked for a year with a number of community partners to put on the Hillsborough Week of the Young Child and a Family Fun Day, which celebrated increased community involvement and turnout.

The Early Learning Coalition of Indian River, Martin and Okeechobee Counties focused on training to improve the quality of child care. Seventy training sessions were held on a wide variety of topics during the fiscal year and were attended by over 900 participants. Additionally, the coalition’s Infant/Toddler Specialist gave 29 training sessions attended by 334 participants. Diversity mini-grants were distributed to 67 child care providers. Recipients received multicultural training materials for the classroom as well as professional development training. The 2007–2008 screening and assessment process resulted in 1,622 children screened and 1,744 children assessed using the Ages and Stages questionnaire and the Learning Accomplishment Profile screening and assessment products.

The Early Learning Coalition of Lake County offered a variety of quality improvement opportunities for the child care providers. The Quality Improvement Campaign kicked off its second year in July 2007 with a variety

of training topics offered to providers. The coalition collaborated with the Orange County Public Safety Education Group to offer cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid classes on a monthly basis at a reduced cost to Lake County child care providers. The coalition's board of directors formed the Provider Growth and Development Committee to focus on supporting child care providers in expanding their businesses.

The Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County continues partnering with Manatee Community College to offer a scholarship and education program for school readiness providers, as well as for program assessment, technical assistance, and training. The brown-bag training series for providers presented curriculum training and an annual conference. Providers received technical assistance through on-site visits, quarterly newsletters, and telephone calls. The coalition also collaborated with local contractors to provide three parenting initiatives serving the families of Manatee County. Building on strong community collaboration, the coalition expanded their Imagination Library, enrolling over 1,200 children.

The Early Learning Coalition of Marion County completed the third and final year of the Partners in Education and Research for Kindergarten Success (PERKS) project. The PERKS Technical Assistance specialist provided instructional assistance and quality materials to train teachers in providing advanced early literacy and cognitive skills to four-year-old children. Six early education providers participated as the teachers worked on enhancing the classroom environment, improving instructional methods, and increasing children's vocabulary. Thirteen early education teachers continued their education using Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood® scholarships.

The Early Learning Coalition of Miami Dade and Monroe Counties continues several initiatives that strengthened community awareness, organizational controls, and program quality. The coalition held successful "Materials and Curriculum" fairs that provided training, curricula, and materials to local providers. Through the coalition's branding strategy, all internal and external communications use the new logo to generate awareness and recognition of the coalition in the community. The coalition developed the Quality Counts program to create universal standards of quality throughout early childhood and educational centers by bringing together various community organizations to provide support, mentoring, quality materials, and professional development grants.

The Early Learning Coalition of Nature Coast serves Dixie, Levy, Gilchrist, Sumter, and Citrus counties. The Literacy Outreach program expanded this year to include all five counties in the coalition's service area. Coalition staff attended a variety of community events throughout the year, distributing over 1,500 age-appropriate books to young children. The coalition distributed Literacy Bags including a variety of pamphlets for parents: information about the coalition and Childhood Development Services, brochures about the importance of reading with children, and other information assisting parents in providing educational experiences for their children.

The Early Learning Coalition of Northwest Florida includes the counties of Holmes, Jackson, Washington, Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, and Franklin. The coalition's Programs of Excellence initiative recognized quality programs and developed strategies for helping program providers with writing grants for quality enhancements. The School Readiness Enhancement Coach and Literacy Initiative targeted on-site mentoring in the preschool classroom. This mentoring support included classroom evaluations, child assessment, teacher evaluations, and material support through Coalition Cash. An infant/toddler specialist (certified through Western Kentucky University) assisted providers in understanding infant and toddler mental health issues, creating appropriate environments, implementing practices that support attachment, and improving continuity of care.

The Early Learning Coalition of Okaloosa and Walton Counties pursued quality initiatives that helped many providers, children, and families in the service area; one such initiative included providing a nurse for the service area's school readiness children. The coalition continues support for development of the Coalitions' Technical Assistance Ladder, the purchase of curricula, and extensive training support for providers during the 2007–2008 fiscal year. The coalition hosted a number of annual receptions honoring the advancement of local early childhood professionals in the field of early education. The coalition's resources for providers included a resource van, professional resource library, toy library, and curriculum library.

The Early Learning Coalition of Orange County provided 148 scholarship grants for teachers moving towards an Associate of Arts (AA) degree, Associate of Science (AS) degree, or a Child Development Associate (CDA) certification. The coalition assisted registered family child care homes seeking licensure by providing mentor support and financial assistance. The coalition and the City of Orlando partnered to create Parramore Tots, a project to improve the quality of child care centers in and around the Parramore neighborhood. The coalition hosted a Curriculum Conference attended by 204 providers as well as an Emergency Preparedness Conference attended by more than 130 providers.

The Early Learning Coalition of Osceola County actively held new provider orientations, resulting in a 22 percent increase in the total number of early learning programs in Osceola County. The coalition's early learning team conducted parent workshops in conjunction with parent meetings held by early education and care providers at four child care facilities and two family child care homes. The coalition continues outreach to all families in the service area by sponsoring a monthly newsletter mailed directly to the homes of all families enrolled in the School Readiness program, all families currently on the waitlist with children ages birth to five and all School Readiness providers.

The Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County offered quality activities to providers that included technical assistance, mini-grants, scholarships, and careers coaching for staff. Seeking Excellence in Education and Knowledge (SEEK) scholarships were given to providers in the coalition's service area to assist them in achieving higher education goals and to support continued program quality improvements. Over 1,100 of these scholarships were awarded to child care center and school district teachers, aides, and directors, as well as to family child care home providers.

The Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties initiated professional development courses, scholarships, and provider improvement incentives for caregivers during the 2008–2009 fiscal year. Provider specialists worked with nearly 400 Pasco and Hernando providers, offering information and expertise as well as program review and recommendations. Coalition inclusion specialists offered on-site technical assistance and professional development activities for staff. The Coalition's Mobile Outreach Specialist visited programs daily, loaning thousands of high-quality educational materials, and attended community events and provider meetings. These meetings, which focused primarily on professional and business development, served as an additional support to local providers.

The Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County continues the Partners in Education and Research for Kindergarten Success (PERKS) program for the second year. Twenty-seven VPK teachers received scholarships toward classes at St. Petersburg College and received technical assistance and coaching. The VPK students in these classrooms received a pre- and post- assessment and the classroom received an Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) evaluation. In addition to PERKS scholarships, the coalition continues its partnership with the St. Petersburg College Foundation, paying for 111 scholarships for degree-seeking early childhood educators. Through a partnership with Pinellas County Health Department and the Screening Eyes and Ears of Kids (SEEK) program, 5,166 children were provided vision and hearing screenings.

The Early Learning Coalition of Polk County created a single provider agreement signed by all service area providers that replaced the existing mix of voucher or contract agreements. The coalition's Quality Specialists made 4,338 visits to assist providers with program improvement goals and provide technical assistance on a variety of topics. The coalition funded training and scholarships for both family child care homes and child care centers and awarded 32 T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® scholarships. Additionally, the coalition implemented health and safety standards and inspections for informal, exempt faith-based and unlicensed private schools that provide child care services funded through the coalition.

The Early Learning Coalition of Putnam and St. Johns Counties increased professional development opportunities for local providers by creating a professional development plan. The plan includes academic scholarships for teachers working toward an associate or bachelor's degree, grants for providers seeking accreditation or re-accreditation, and various scholarships for conferences and workshops. The coalition published a monthly providers' newsletter with articles and best practice information related to the environment,

accreditation, transitions, inclusion, early literacy, and infant/toddler development. During Provider Appreciation Week, the coalition recognized providers for their dedication to the early childhood field and for their involvement in coalition initiatives.

The Early Learning Coalition of Santa Rosa County continues to train providers in the Creative Curriculum, holding eight workshops with 42 providers attending in the 2007-2008 fiscal year. The coalition presented parents and providers with training conducted by a nurse on current health issues and a health-planning checklist from the Centers for Disease Control and Health and Human Services. Providers and parents requested sixty-eight nursing assessments and consultations; 444 children received health screenings for vision, hearing, weight, and height. Several programs received quality-enhancement mini-grants enabling them to make improvements to program settings. The coalition honored providers with a Provider Appreciation Day in May 2008, with twenty-seven providers attending.

The Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County used quality funds to provide a comprehensive system of provider support and enhance the overall quality of local providers. The coalition sponsored provider training, access to program materials, mentoring for early learning programs, and responded to requests for on-site mental health consultations. The early learning coalition continued its substitute pool program, STRDE: Substitute & Teacher Recruitment, Development and Education program. In this program, individuals from the community are recruited, screened, and trained to be classroom-ready substitutes for local child care programs. The coalition continued to provide developmental screening, inclusion services, and mental health consultation for children. The process begins with screening of all children using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), and leads to referrals, services, and follow-up as appropriate.

The Early Learning Coalition of Seminole County provided training for over 300 teachers on topics including curriculum implementation, the Environment Rating Scales, lesson planning, and inclusion techniques. The coalition awarded 78 scholarships toward higher education for early learning educators. Sixty-four students elected to pursue the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential with 24 continuing toward the National CDA; 14 pursued an associate's degree in early childhood education. The "Let's Read Together" family literacy initiative created a lending library of age appropriate books and activity suggestions for families. Family workshops attended by over 75 parents improved family interaction pertaining to literacy.

The Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County awarded 42 mini-grants for quality enhancements of providers' sites. Grant recipients received materials such as children's books, teacher resource books, furniture, or playground equipment. The coalition continues investment in staff development and training activities offered weekly to early childhood directors and teaching staff. Training topics focus on implementing curriculum, with a concentration on pre-literacy and inclusion. The coalition also maintains a lending library for teaching staff to use as a resource for improving their skills and their programs. The coalition markets this service to new providers by way of information included in new-provider start-up packets.

The Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida serves Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties. Together with several other agencies, the coalition helped provide teachers and parents with social and emotional skills training established by Lise Fox and Rochelle Lentini. The Inclusion Specialist and the Technical Assistance Specialists worked together to educate providers on the importance of early detection of any physical, mental health, or emotional barriers that keep children from developing at optimal levels.

Looking Forward

Florida welcomes nearly 600 newborns every day and is currently home to more than one million children younger than five. Of these, approximately 600,000 attend some type of early learning program. With so many of our children in child care, quality early learning options are a top priority because children are counting on us to make sure they have every advantage and opportunity available for success in school and in life.

Communities are also counting on us because Florida's economic success, productivity, public health, social welfare, and workforce development are dependent on high-quality early learning and care options for families. The Agency works to strengthen early learning structures for the benefit of children, families, local communities, and the state of Florida.

The Agency is legislatively charged with the development and implementation of the VPK education program and the oversight of federal and state funds for the SR program. The Agency serves the great people of Florida by working to support families and to ensure children have quality care and early learning opportunities. The Agency leads the state in prioritizing quality early learning opportunities for all children. Our focus for the coming year includes the following:

Development of Multidisciplinary Partnerships. The quality and accessibility of early care and education affects the prosperity and development of individuals, families and communities. The Agency is focusing on sharing information and strengthening connections across business, governmental, medical, social, and community lines in order to improve child and community outcomes. In 2008, the Agency hosted the multidisciplinary Governor's Summit on Education, Workforce, and Economic Development and will continue to be active on the state's Children and Youth Cabinet.

Collaboration and Service Integration. Several agencies including DCF, DOE, the Department of Health (DOH), and the Agency, along with county government in seven counties, are working together to develop a comprehensive approach for streamlining processes in early care and education. This will result in a seamless system of services for families, increased accessibility to state programs, and improved family support services.

Early Learning Workforce Development. More than half of the professionals in Florida's early learning system have a high school diploma or less as their highest educational achievement. The challenges to educate and develop the workforce, and provide sufficient compensation to retain them once trained, are significant issues. As such, the Agency will continue to work towards a comprehensive professional development system. The system will address career development pathways, core competencies for instructors, funding for education, and accessibility to higher education programs.

Data Systems and Technology. The Agency is making tremendous headway in a three-year process to develop and deploy a new comprehensive statewide information system (ELIS) that will enhance services, data collection, financial management, and performance tracking. The project has already greatly enhanced understanding of the complex service delivery system in our state, which will lead to process improvement. Critical features will include the expanded use of electronic background and fingerprinting systems for child care staff and utilization of automated tracking for child attendance in early learning programs.

Agency for Workforce Innovation's Office of Early Learning
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Appendix A—ELAC Members 2007–2008**Name (Coalition)**

Wenda Lewis (Alachua)	Chris Jensen, Jr. (Big Bend)
Shannon Smithwick (Brevard)	Harry Duncanson (Broward)
Vacant (Clay, Nassau, Baker, Bradford)	Antonia Crawford (Duval)
Meri Asmar (Escambia)	Deborah Denys (Flagler/Volusia)
Andrew Bible (Florida’s Heartland)	John Wheeler (Florida’s Gateway)
Melody Jurado (Hillsborough)	Filiberto Valero (Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee)
William Pruitt (Lake)	Howard Veltz (Manatee)
Carroll Lewis (Marion)	Octavio Verdeja (Miami-Dade/Monroe)
Robert Wardlow III (Nature Coast)	Steve Southerland (Northwest)
Sandra Sims (Okaloosa/Walton)	Richard Morrison (Orange)
Charles Rogers (Osceola)	Traver Gruen-Kennedy (Palm Beach)
Lisa M. Hammond (Pasco/Hernando)	Kenneth Peluso (Pinellas)
Artemas “Judge” Holmes (Polk)	Nancy Pearson (Putnam/St. Johns)
Jill Sport (Santa Rosa)	Laura Benson (Sarasota)
Bob O’Malley (Seminole)	Sabra Cecil (Southwest)
Anthony Loupe (St. Lucie)	Terry Curry (Senate)
Robert Fernandez (House of Representatives)	

Appendix B—CCEP Highlights and Membership

CCEP’s budget, totaling \$15 million for fiscal year 2007–2008, served 18,507 low-income children. Participants included 46 counties represented by 38 coalitions, 173 businesses, 21 non-profit agencies, and 21 government agencies.

CCEP Board of Directors

Name	Affiliation
Joel L. Rosen, Chair	A.J. Enterprises
Linda L. Bolton, Vice Chair	Bolton Associates, Inc.
Willie Johnson	Willcher Consulting, Inc.
Gloria J. Koach	Community Activist
Dr. Wendi F. Siegel	Early Childhood Education Professional

Appendix C—Coalitions at a Glance

The following charts include data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007 American Community Survey (ACS)¹ (median household income, population) for selected geographic areas, the U.S. Census Bureau's 2007 Population Estimates, Detailed Tables² (population), the Florida Demographic Estimating Conference, October 23, 2008 (number of children from birth to five as of January 2008), and the Agency for Workforce Innovation's Early Learning Fact Book for October 2008³ (number of children served in SR for the fiscal year and number of children served in VPK for the program year).

Single County Coalitions

County/Coalition	Median Household Income	Population	Children younger than 5	Children in SR	Children in VPK
Alachua	\$37,286	240,082	15,884	4,334	1,609
Brevard	\$50,354	536,161	31,885	6,473	3,992
Broward	\$52,670	1,759,591	132,975	19,400	13,481
Duval	\$49,230	849,159	76,218	12,956	8,545
Escambia	\$41,894	306,407	23,711	5,149	2,319
Hillsborough	\$50,572	1,174,727	97,045	18,618	9,312
Lake	\$46,797	301,059	17,879	3,434	2,187
Manatee	\$48,980	315,108	21,444	3,495	2,189
Marion	\$39,294	324,857	20,348	5,459	2,164
Orange	\$51,101	1,066,113	96,125	15,250	9,060
Osceola	\$48,332	255,815	21,182	2,499	2,506
Palm Beach	\$53,453	1,266,451	87,099	14,168	8,320
Pinellas	\$44,292	917,437	56,727	13,175	5,783
Polk	\$44,348	574,746	45,900	9,919	2,993
Santa Rosa	\$50,341	147,044	10,128	1,646	759
Sarasota	\$49,735	372,073	17,979	1,950	1,877
Seminole	\$46,411	409,509	30,283	3,414	2,158
St. Lucie	\$56,011	260,939	18,128	4,404	3,673

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey, 2007 Population Estimates; Agency for Workforce Innovation's Early Learning Fact Book, November 2008.

1 <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPGeoSearchByListServlet?>

2 http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLESServlet?_

3 <http://www.floridajobs.org/earlylearning/factbook/>

Multiple County Coalitions

The coalition name is in bold letters, followed by a shaded area including the names of the constituent counties. Median income information for the period of the report was not available for all counties at the time of publication.

Coalition	Median Household Income	Population	Children younger than 5	Children in SR	Children in VPK
Big Bend		398,898	28,704	7,374	3,087
Gadsden	\$41,603	47,197	4,106	1,376	478
Jefferson		14,451	933	299	37
Leon	\$49,234	260,945	18,319	4,247	2,083
Liberty		7,851	502	159	94
Madison		18,957	1,352	471	99
Taylor		19,771	1,578	347	132
Wakulla	\$52,366	29,726	1,914	475	164
Florida's Heartland		315,668	18,092	3,053	1,795
Charlotte	\$46,707	152,814	6,991	900	808
Desoto	\$36,825	34,675	2,548	461	214
Highlands	\$33,047	99,349	5,921	1,106	592
Hardee	\$39,497	28,830	2,632	586	181
CNBB		304,987	22,308	3,746	2,613
Clay	\$58,555	182,023	13,410	1,847	1,703
Nassau	\$55,978	68,450	4,771	624	421
Baker	\$43,458	25,745	2,170	650	247
Bradford	\$41,061	28,769	1,957	625	242
Flagler, Volusia		588,810	34,140	6,977	3,831
Flagler	\$41,830	88,397	4,411	779	593
Volusia	\$42,276	500,413	29,729	6,198	3,238
Florida's Gateway		153,367	9,954	3,304	1,140
Columbia	\$41,321	76,552	4,802	2,039	524
Hamilton		14,301	999	315	107
Lafayette		7,998	481	29	67
Union		14,991	905	251	119
Suwannee	\$36,254	39,525	2,767	670	323
IRMO		311,330	18,245	3,593	2,074
Indian River	\$46,081	131,837	7,854	1,320	939
Martin	\$55,472	139,182	7,321	1,575	866
Okeechobee		40,311	3,070	698	269

Coalition	Median Household Income	Population	Children younger than 5	Children in SR	Children in VPK
Miami-Dade, Monroe		2,460,393	202,189	43,589	19,061
Miami-Dade	\$43,650	2,387,170	197,675	42,378	18,681
Monroe	\$60,642	73,223	4,514	1,211	380
Nature Coast		283,439	15,018	3,453	1,691
Dixie		14,942	1,025	189	111
Gilchrist		17,017	1,160	236	159
Levy	\$33,889	39,065	2,705	870	276
Citrus	\$35,810	140,169	5,953	1,470	722
Sumter	\$39,387	72,246	4,175	688	423
Northwest Florida		293,085	20,705	5,503	1,949
Bay	\$48,985	163,984	12,110	3,140	1,200
Calhoun		13,594	955	250	68
Franklin		10,030	717	83	75
Gulf		14,059	821	146	75
Holmes		19,245	1,340	412	154
Jackson	\$35,015	49,287	3,331	953	246
Washington	\$34,814	22,886	1,431	519	131
Okaloosa, Walton		234,380	18,811	3,350	1,753
Okaloosa	\$55,543	181,499	15,216	2,692	1,587
Walton	\$47,906	52,881	3,595	658	166
Pasco, Hernando		631,785	35,170	7,438	4,540
Pasco	\$44,526	462,715	26,738	5,411	3,346
Hernando	\$44,172	169,070	8,432	2,027	1,194
Putnam, St. Johns		249,267	15,545	3,274	1,620
Putnam	\$32,621	73,821	5,488	1,882	534
St. Johns	\$62,677	175,446	10,057	1,392	1,086
Southwest Florida		957,123	68,664	7,170†	6,300†
Collier	\$57,653	315,839	22,574	1,853	1,889
Glades	\$35,235	11,109	651	56	20
Hendry	\$38,116	39,611	4,081	567	224
Lee	\$50,699	590,564	41,358	4,694	4,167

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007 American Community Survey, 2007 Population Estimates; Florida Demographic Estimating Conference, October 23, 2008; Agency for Workforce Innovation's Early Learning Fact Book, November 2008.

† Total includes approximately 8,258 children served by Redlands Christian Migrant Association.