Early Learning Coalition
OF PINELLAS COUNTY

TOGETHER WE STAND

Annual Report 2020-2021

A message from our CEO and Board Chairman

Lindsay Carson
CEO of Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County (ELC)

Elliott Stern
Board Chair

Regardless of the challenges we face, we continue to work to find solutions because we know the children we serve are counting on us.

The dedicated staff at ELC worked tirelessly, alongside child care providers, to stabilize our early learning workforce, rebuild capacity and support families.

For the last year, we met with providers, talked with families and collaborated with partners. **Most importantly, we listened.**

Your voices helped us adopt innovative programs to meet the changing needs of our clients and providers. We launched "Naptime News," an interactive livestream to connect with providers. We offered services both online and in-person for families and providers, expanded scholarship opportunities for struggling families, and granted funding to providers allowing them to continue to serve our children.

Not only did we keep children learning and families working through these unprecedented times, but we also prepared for the future. The ambitious, bold strategic plans we created for the next five years will help fulfill our mission to ensure every child confidently enters kindergarten ready for success in school and in life.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Carson
Chief Executive Officer

Elliott Stern
Chair of the Board of Directors

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About us

Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County is a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency that provides early education and school-age care to prepare children for academic success. We partner with 499 preschools, family child care homes, and school-age providers. As a leader in early learning in Pinellas County, we stay committed to listening to our community's needs and making decisive steps to foster goals and objectives and innovative programs to improve the education and care provided to our children.

Mission: Revolutionize early learning to inspire children, engage families and elevate educators.

Vision: All children will confidently enter kindergarten ready for success in school and in life.

Core Values:

- Accountability
- Inclusion
- Innovation
- Empathy
- Knowledge

Programs and Services

- Voluntary Prekindergarten
- School Readiness
- Developmental Screening & Intervention
- Inclusive Child Care
- Child Care Resource and Referral
- Family Engagement
- Professional Development
- Quality Initiatives
- Early Literacy Initiatives

Total Impact

16,228
Children

12,032
Families

499
Child Care Providers

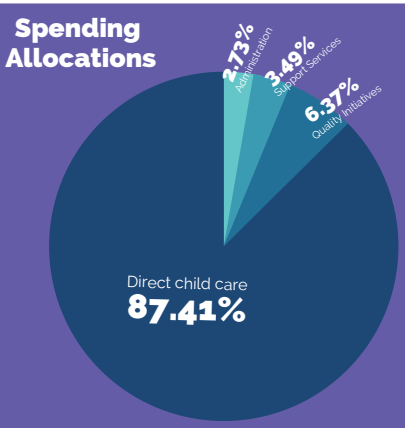
1,280
Early Learning Educators

2020-2021 Fiscal Year in Review

The Early Learning Coalition has another year of solid support from our funding partners who enable us to drive early education in Pinellas County. As a result, we were able to provide high-quality child care programs to our community while ensuring our administrative cost remain under 4% of operating funds. We look ahead toward growth and new relationships with individuals, foundations, companies, and other entities who are equally committed to the sustainability of our vision and mission.

$67,939,482

Our total budget for the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year.



DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING	**$65,630,184**
SCHOOL READINESS	$39,788,892
VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN	$11,600,115
SCHOOL READINESS MATCH	$980,936
CARES	$7,167,242
CRRSA	$6,093,000
JUVENILE WELFARE BOARD	**$1,995,079**
SCHOOL READINESS MATCH	$1,465,661
PRE-K ALL DAY	$529,418
COVID RELIEF GRANTS	**$44,769**
TAMPA BAY RESILIENCY FUND	$25,000
UNITED WAY OF SUNCOAST	$13,769
SUNCOAST FEDERAL CREDIT UNION	$5,000
CENTERSTATE BANK	$1,000
OTHER GRANTS	**$269,450**
PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS: TEEN PARENT	$110,406
FOUNDATION FOR A HEALTHY ST.PETERSBURG	$121,394
THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA LASTINGER CENTER	$37,650

Coping with COVID

COVID-19 had an immediate impact on many in the child care industry last year. Lynn Gibson, owner of Lynn's Tender Touch Daycare, couldn't believe the number of closures and staff reductions of her peers during the height of the pandemic. But, she was glad that was not her fate.

"Early Learning Coalition's impact grants were a game-changer. Without those funds, I would have been unable to keep my staff."

ELC provided comprehensive supports to stabilize the industry, protect children and teachers, and ensure access to care.

Provider Stability

The impact of COVID-19 has been detrimental to an industry that was already fragile. The pandemic led to decreased enrollment and increased expenses. By September 2021, **11% of providers reported they were at risk of insolvency**.

Cares and CRRSA Grants

We awarded **$13,260,242 in grants to 688 child care providers, along with $3,786,000 from Pinellas County.** Providers used funds to cover revenue and fixed costs such as rent, utilities, and staffing. Without the assistance, 58% of providers reported they would have closed their doors.

Personal Protection Items Distributed

Young children depend on faces to understand emotions and develop language skills. We partnered with the Florida Association of Infant Mental Health for the "Faces are Essential" campaign to purchase and distribute **10,000 clear masks to over 600 child care providers in Pinellas County**.

500 gallons of hand sanitizing gel

7,000 cloth masks donated by JWB Pinellas

113 personal cleaning kits

Community Assistance

First Responders & Healthcare Workers

To ensure children had a safe environment during the COVID pandemic, we waived child care fees and income qualifications for first responders and healthcare workers. **Since April 2020, we have provided child care scholarships to 3,506 first responders and healthcare workers.**

Florida VPK

Preparing for Kindergarten

The impact of COVID-19 was felt throughout the early learning industry last year. The VPK program was no exception. The free program that prepares four-year-olds for kindergarten through play-based, developmentally appropriate activities experienced steep enrollment declines due to the pandemic.

When Britt Blume enrolled her son Pierce into Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program last year, she hoped he would meet new people and the classes would reinforce what she was already teaching him at home. But his experience in VPK became so much more, even during a pandemic.

"Pierce's VPK teacher gave him a great gift – the love of learning," Blume said.

Parents had the option to enroll children in a school-year program. Pinellas County Schools also offered a virtual opportunity for parents last year. Due to hardship, parents were able to reenroll their child into summer VPK program if their child completed less than 70% of the 2020-2021 school year. In addition, specialized instructional services outside the traditional classroom setting were an option for 4-year-olds with special needs.

PreK All Day (PKAD) program, funded by the Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County, helped 109 families fund the cost of additional hours of wrap-around care needed before and after the VPK day during the school year and full-time care during the summer before kindergarten.

5,853
Children

5,736
Families

307
Child Care Providers

90%
of brain development
occurs before
a child starts
kindergarten

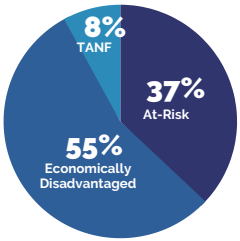
Florida School Readiness

Equitable Access Matters

For many families throughout Pinellas County, the question is not how to find the best child care options, but how to afford the best child care options.

As a single mom, Quennaih was thankful she had a safe, high-quality learning environment for her 3-year-old son Prosper to learn while she worked on the frontlines assisting patients as a nurse assistant.

"Prosper is excited to show me what he learns each day. My job as a mother has become easier because I can take what he learned under their care and practice it at home," Quennaih said.



The School Readiness program provided 7,439 partial scholarships to families wanting access to affordable, high-quality child care for children aged birth to 12 years old last year. School Readiness funds pay a portion of child care costs based on the family's income and risk factors.

It is not just child care. Early learning educators used age-appropriate curriculum by trained early childhood educators. They worked closely with parents to assess developmental programs to ensure children were on track for kindergarten. School Readiness services were available at contracted private preschools, family child care homes, school-age care providers and faith-based schools.

11,254
Children

7,439
Families

367
Child Care Providers

Developmental Services

Early detection of a child's unique early learning needs is essential to their future success. The School Readiness program provides routine screening for children from birth to 5 years to identify development concerns. These results are shared with families and used to determine necessary interventions or evaluations. The Screening and Intervention team utilized innovative techniques to provide consultation and support resources to families and early learning providers.

Challenging behaviors are a natural part of early childhood development. ELC offered individualized behavioral support services to parents and providers. Early educators saw an increase in challenging behaviors among young children since the pandemic hit. To better support children and caregivers, **71 child care providers and ELC staff members completed a professional certification in trauma and resilience.**

Technical Assistance

Developmental Specialists continued the "**Tucker Tuesday"** program that provided on-site intensive coaching and technical assistance to help improve children's developmental, social-emotional and behavioral health needs. **Thirty-nine classroom participated in "Tucker Tuesday" last year.**

Behavior Specialists also started new weekly coaching initiatives called **"Super Stars"** and **"The Pyramid Model"** to educate providers in trauma-informed care, reaching developmental milestones, and increasing staff retention. **Seventy-five classrooms participated in "Super Stars" and Pyramid Model programs last year.**

Inclusion services were also available to ensure children could maximize their potential in the least restrictive environment. Inclusion Warmline is a free resource that provides referral services and information for children with special needs and disabilities in Pinellas County.

7,112
SR children who were screened with our ASQ program

2,452
SR Children who received SIS Developmental Services

121
Behavioral Services requests received for SR children

381
Referrals made to partnering agencies

271
Inclusion Warmline Calls Received

CCR&R
Child Care Resource and Referral

Parents Choose. We Assist.

Families' needs come first for the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) representatives who help parents with services to ensure children have the best resources each day.

The free service that assists families looking for child care, financial assistance, support services, and developmental resources offered families personalized child care referrals and community resources based on their family's unique needs and preferences.

Our CCR&R services provided 2,429 child care referrals and resources in-person, by phone, and online last year. We also offered resources at Neighborhood Family Centers and local events.

Building Bridges Family Engagement Initiative
Families had to find more creative ways to interact last year. With the help of PNC Bank, we were able to offer training and useful kits for child care providers to share with families. The kits included age-appropriate activities for families to practice at home with their children.
300 kits were distributed to four child care centers that attended the 3Ts family engagement training.

2,429
Requested child care referrals and community resources

10
Community events attended (lower participation due to COVID-19)

673
Social media posts and virtual read-alongs

Rebuilding the Child Care Workforce

Early learning industry faced high turnover and workforce shortages last year. The child care workforce has a staff vacancy rate of 14%. The Early Learning Coalition is committed to helping child care providers recruit, train, and retain the most qualified workforce to ensure a high-level proficiency of the instructors who have the most significant impact on children.

Recruit

ELC launched the **ENGAGE program** that helps child care providers with the cost of hiring to encourage qualified instructors to start a career in early learning.

30%
of the participants of the program who completed at least 90 days after hire date

$8,100
in recruitment incentives paid directly to early childhood educators

$3,005
in financial assistance to rebuild workforce and strengthen quality

Scholarships

The Early Learning Coalition eliminates the financial barriers of obtaining higher education in early learning. The Professional Development Assistance Program provides scholarships and incentives in partnership with **Florida's T.E.A.C.H. program** that allows teachers to advance their credentials and further their formal education.

13
number of scholarships given

$3,933
total amount of education scholarships

+

28
number of educational conference scholarships given to participants

$8,499
total amount of conference scholarships

= **$12,432**

Retain

ELC launched **Elevate** to reward early childhood educators who pursue higher education and remain committed to the field of early childhood education. Bonuses amounts ranged from $200 – $3,000 per year based on a participant's education level.

ELEVATE Early Educators

295
number of participants who received annual supplements

$135,412
total amount of annual supplements

Enhancing Early Education

Learning challenges persisted for many child care providers in Pinellas County. Trainings helped child care providers connect. learn and offer solutions to classroom problems during the pandemic.

Program Assessment

Providers serving School Readiness children are required to participate in the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®). CLASS uses research-driven insights to ensure that School Readiness providers adhere to best practices in early education and child development.

248
child care providers participated in CLASS assessments last year

PDi Professional Development Institute

The Professional Development Institute (PDI) is a professional development system designed to assist educators and child care providers in applying best practices to maximize effectives and classroom outcomes, which include individualized coaching, specialized training , courses and conferences.

Training and Technical Assistance Programs

- **Connecting the Dots:** A coaching program to support the implementation of child assessment throughout child care centers.
- **Leadership for Early Educators in Pinellas (LEEP):** An early learning professional development program offering one-to-one coaching, online coursework, and in-person professional development.
- **QUEST/CDA:** Gold standard training program to support teachers in obtaining a National CDA with an Infant/Toddler or Preschool endorsement through the Council for Professional Recognition.
- **Infant Toddler Support Line:** A helpline to provide support to child care providers who have questions about an infant or toddler in their care.

The Gold Seal Quality Care Program recognizes child care facilities and family day care homes that have gone above the required minimum licensing standards to become accredited. Almost one-third of child care providers have achieved the Gold Seal designation.

The Early Learning Coalition's Accreditation Assistance Program (ELCAAP) assists SRPA Providers as they work toward Gold Seal accreditation (NAEYC, Apple, or NAFCC) by aligning the many pieces of early care and education, such as childcare licensing, accreditation, program assessment, technical assistance, coaching, and professional development.

94
Gold Seal Providers

8
Participating Providers

Increasing Literacy Success

Trainings offered through the Professional Development Institute at the Early Learning Coalition provides high-quality content and support to ensure the implementation of concepts into the classroom. Reading is one of the most important skills for long-term success for an early learner. We offered various programs and projects to equip child care providers with the tools to help cultivate the love of reading among children in their care.

Help Me Learn!

Help Me Learn! promotes early literacy success by beginning with a child's first teacher – the parent. The Early Learning Coalition partners with School Readiness Family Child Care Home (FCCH) providers to provide age-appropriate play materials and storybooks to FCCH providers.

$6,722 in literacy expenditures allocated to FCCH providers

13 FCCH providers participated in Help Me Learn! program

Nemours BrightStart! Literacy Program

The Nemours Reading BrightStart! (NBS!) Complete Program for Literacy Success puts teachers on the cutting edge of early literacy. Despite the challenges of last year, nearly 80% of children who completed NBS! no longer scored in "at-risk" range.

$37,828 in literacy expenditures were allocated to FCCH providers

68 classrooms received curriculum kits, assessment materials, and training materials at no cost

Officer Friendly and Friends

Officer Friendly and Friends Book Club promotes the importance of early literacy and build positive relationships between our young citizens and community agencies.

Local officers and civic leaders visited an early learning center to read a selected book to young children each month. The books include conversations relating to safety and character development. In addition, we provide book extensions and activities for classroom instructors to expand the literacy experience.

63 Participating schools and readers

756 Total number of readings.

Our Partners

This commitment to our mission inspires support from passionate donors, enthusiastic partners, long-standing supporters, and loyal advocates — a community that believes, as we do, that early education has the potential to change everything for a child.

Compassionate Donors

- Centerstate
- Suncoast FCU
- Tampa Bay Resiliency Fund
- United Way
- Jennifer Brackney
- Faith Bornoff
- Josh Drechsel
- Jessica Hooper
- Victor Lucas
- Susan Rolston
- Anne Ryan
- Cindy Seletos
- Elliott Stern
- Marguerite Thomer

Faithful Partners

- 211 Tampa Bay Cares
- West Central Early Steps
- Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg
- PCLB
- City of St. Petersburg
- St. Petersburg Free Clinic
- Community Foundation of Tampa Bay
- Pinellas Community Foundation
- Pinellas Education Foundation
- Florida Association for Infant Mental Health
- The Children's Movement
- Healthy Start Coalition
- Pinellas County Schools
- SPC
- R'Club
- United Way Suncoast
- Pinellas County Government
- PNC
- Children's Forum
- FLAEYC
- CareerSource Pinellas
- Eckerd Connects
- UF Lastinger Center
- USF
- LSF
- Pinellas County Department of Health
- COQEBS
- Thrive by Five Pinellas
- St. Petersburg NAACP
- Community Health Centers of Pinellas
- Association of Early Learning Coalitions
- RCS
- Salvation Army
- Florida Association of Child Care Managers
- Florida Family
- Child Care Home Association

Continue...

Continue...

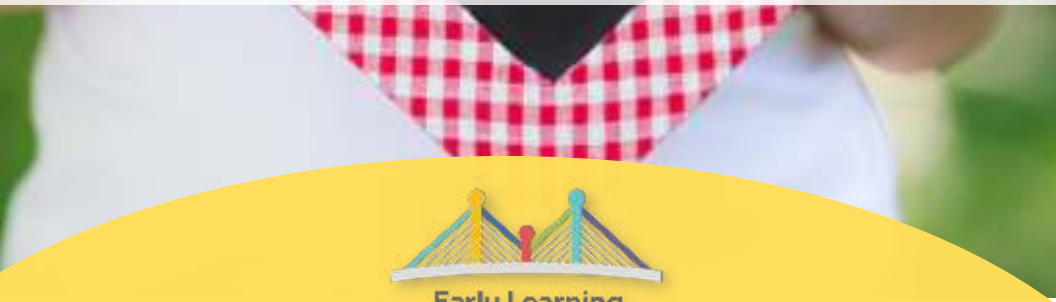
Our Funders

DIVISION OF Early Learning
LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.

JWB Juvenile Welfare Board

ENGAGE: Help with your support to ensure that every child confidently enters kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life.
DONATE: Your gift will assist young children during their crucial formative years, as well as the families and providers who help mold them.
PARTICIPATE: Be a part of our team of corporate and community partners to make an impact through various volunteer opportunities.
ADVOCATE: Join ELC in taking a stand for early education through our local, state, and national legislators.

For more information, please visit www.elcpinellas.org or email info@elcpinellas.org.



Early Learning Coalition
OF PINELLAS COUNTY

2536 Countryside Blvd., Suite 500 | Clearwater, FL 33763
(727) 548-1439 | www.elcpinellas.org | info@elcpinellas.org

THE EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF PINELLAS COUNTY IS SPONSORED BY THE STATE OF FLORIDA, DIVISION OF EARLY LEARNING.