Early Learning Coalition

OF PINELLAS COUNTY

2019-2020 Annual Report

www.elcpinellas.org | info@elcpinellas.org

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.

A Message From Our CEO

This year, the Early Learning Coalition celebrated 20 years of service to Pinellas County children, families and providers.

In this time, we have grown from an oversight agency, administering subsidized child care to working families, to a pillar in the early learning community. Pinellas County leads the state in kindergarten readiness with 69% of VPK program completers meeting or exceeding expectations.

While this year has not been without challenges, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to children. Our board members, extraordinary team, community partners, committed funders, dedicated providers have given new meaning to the term collaboration. Together, we've continued to engage families and inspire children through innovation and adaptation.

We are proud of how far we've come since the turn of the century, but there is still much more to be done to revolutionize early learning. Together, we can build pathways to a promising future for our children, families, and the network of providers that support them. This lasting impact has value beyond measure. I invite you to read through our annual report, share in our commitment to early education, and join us in our efforts.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Carson
CEO

Total Impact

14,662	11,648	556	1,245	226
Children	Families	Providers	Educators	Volunteers

Board of Directors

Craig Phillips, Chair
Elliott Stern, Vice Chair
Victor Lucas, Treasurer
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Eric Lynn
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Comm. Kathleen Peters
Trevor Pettiford
Susan Rolston
Anne Ryan
Cindy Seletos

The Board of Directors and staff of the Early Learning Coalition (ELC) of Pinellas County work tirelessly to provide the highest quality of educational opportunities to the youngest members of Pinellas community. I am proud to represent this organization and the people who dedicate their days to lending support to families and child care providers.

Even though we don't have children of our own, I have always felt passionate about making sure that the youth of our state has the best opportunity to develop learning skills at the age it makes the most impact for future success in life. The work the ELC's staff puts into bettering our community has continually made an impression, assuring me I am indeed at the right place, where every child's early education opportunities are handled meticulously and with utmost professionalism.

The information included in this year's report is only a small portion of the accomplishments we have made and continue to make to ensure our children have lifelong success. I look forward to assisting the ELC of Pinellas and serving you all in my term as Chair.

Sincerely,

Craig Phillips
Board Chair

Joining the Board of Directors

The ELC Board of Directors is comprised of private sector business leaders as well as community volunteers. We are always looking for interested, passionate, and talent individuals to join our board and help us not just carry out our mission but expand our goals. If you are interested in learn more or applying, visit **www.elcpinellas.org/about-us/board-of-directors .**

Early Learning Matters

The importance of early childhood education simply can't be overstated.

A child's earliest years are the foundation for their future development. What and how children learn in their first few years of life can have long-lasting effects on their success and health.

90% of brain development occurs by age 5 or before a child starts kindergarten.

Research continually shows that children who receive early childhood education are more successful on average as they continue in their educational and professional futures. Many of the social, academic and behavioral skills that children develop in their early years lay the foundation for how they view education throughout the remainder of their lives.

The Early Learning Coalition's diverse staff of highly trained early learning educators strive to support parents in helping their child achieve their highest level of social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs to build a solid foundation for learning and well-being.

Last year, we continued our mission to be a quality resource and support for parents in preparing their children for kindergarten by partnering with preschools, family child care homes, and school-age care providers to provide quality, affordable and accessible early learning programs. The expanded community partnership allowed us to deliver better education and enrichment programs to families in our community.

"At first, I thought ELC was only helping me work again. Then one day I discovered my children were learning more than I could even imagine." – Tracy

2019-2020 Fiscal Year in Review

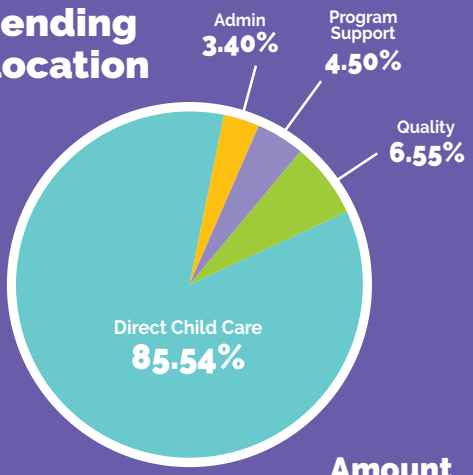
The Early Learning Coalition is proud to report another year of strong support from our amazing community partners who enable us to drive early education in Pinellas County. Our organizational spending and fund allocation is a direct reflection of our commitment to young learners. The ELC received federal and state funding totaling $57,324,799 during this fiscal year. 82% of School Readiness and 97% of Voluntary Prekindergarten funds were spent directly on child care services through our local child care providers and school district. The ELC was awarded an additional nearly $2.6M in local grant money.

The Early Learning Coalition was able to provide high-quality child care programs to its community while ensuring its 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.

Victor Lucas, Board Treasurer

$57,324,799
Our total budget for the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year

Spending Allocation



Funding Sources	Amount
Office of Early Learning	**$ 57,324,799**
School Readiness	$ 37,816,187
Voluntary PreKindergarten	$ 14,707,840
School Readiness Match	$ 952,393
CARES	$ 3,848,379
Juvenile Welfare Board	**$ 2,290,077**
School Readiness Local Match	$ 1,540,000
PreK All Day	$ 745,077
Other Local Funding Sources	$ 5,000
Other Revenue Sources	**$ 387,556**
Pinellas County Schools: Teen Parent	$ 129,866
ELF	$ 81,680
Thrive by Five	$ 176,010
Fundraising	**$ 42,250**
Unrestricted Giving	$ 19,000
Board Donations	$ 3,000
COVID-19 Donations	$ 15,250
In-Kind Donation Value	$ 5,000

Child Care is Essential

COVID-19 had a devastating impact on child care businesses in our community. Child care providers in Pinellas County were shaken by extended closures, low enrollment and increased costs for cleaning and social distancing. The absence of child care left many families, especially those of essential workers, in need of assistance.

Families and child care providers were faced with tough choices: protect the children or preserve education and careers.

Early Learning Coalition played a critical role in stabilizing our child care infrastructure. We were able to provide relief to working families as the widespread closures, due to the pandemic, highlighted the crucial need for early learning and school-age care in a safe environment.

Our efforts will continue into fiscal year 2020-2021, until the early child care sector is stabilized.

"There's no way I would have been able to work and take care of my children without ELC. It was a Godsend!" – Jessie

47.3%
of Pinellas child care providers were closed at height of COVID-19 (April).

28.7%
of Pinellas child care providers remained closed until June. ELC's support allowed many facilities to reopen.

ELC's COVID Response Goals

Our top priority has been to keep children safe.
The goals of our COVID19 response efforts:

1. Maintain sufficient capacity/access for emergency child care for essential workers
2. Ensure equitable access to high-quality early learning programming
3. Restore capacity at high-quality providers
4. Retain and develop highly skilled early educators
5. Mitigate learning loss due to reduced instructional time

Our Efforts to Support Families:

- Provided temporary School Readiness scholarships to first responders and health care workers needing child care
- Ensured continuity of care by waiving parent copays and extending program eligibility
- Waived attendance rules to allow families complete flexibility to make decisions about their child's safety
- Contributed supplemental learning resources for families educating children at home while quarantined

844
Emergency Care Scholarships for Essential Care Workers

4,640
Number of Care Calls

113
PPE Kits

Efforts to Sustain Child Care Providers

Provider Grants		Amount
Health & Safety Minigrants	212	$ 212,000
Infrastructure Minigrants	213	$ 213,000
Emergency Care Bonuses	166	$ 627,000
Emergency Care Relief Grants	567	$ 3,824,449
High-Quality Reopening Support Grants	529	$ 3,786,000
Back-to-School Training Stipends	50	$ 12,500
Professional Development Grants	260	$ 86,875
Early Childhood Workforce Development Initiative	10	$ 4,708

58%
of providers reported they would not have remained viable without the support of the ELC and grants distribution.

For Families

FloridaVPK

Striving to make sure each child is ready

Is your child ready for kindergarten?
This is a thought that has probably popped in the minds of many families as they determine how best to prepare your child before they reach school age.

Florida's free Voluntary Prekindergarten program has helped families feel more comfortable about that next step in the child's education.

VPK 's play-based learning model increases the development of early literacy, executive functioning and social emotional skills, preparing its participants for kindergarten. Early Learning Coalition strives to give early learners the best tools for success, so they are ready for the classroom.

How to participate in VPK:

All children who turn 4-years-old on or before September 1st and reside in Florida are eligible. Families do not have to meet income criteria to participate in this program.

Parents have the option of enrolling children in a school-year program – typically a half-day or a full-day summer program. Specialized instructional services, which takes place outside the traditional classroom setting, are available for 4-year-olds with special needs.

"It's funny how much I thought my child knew until I sent him to VPK. He was so excited to interact with others in a whole new way." – Tammy

Florida School Readiness

The School Readiness program assists eligible families in obtaining affordable, high-quality child care. School Readiness funds pay a portion of the child care costs based on a family's income. This program serves children, ages birth through 12 years, from low-income, working families and those with other risk factors that could impact healthy child development. Access to child care allows parents to focus on their career goals, while ensuring their children receive education and proper care.

Parents can choose the best setting that meet the needs of their family. School Readiness services are available at contracted private preschools, family child care homes, school-age care providers and faith-based schools. Participating providers are certified Gold Seal members.

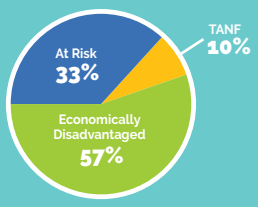
The School Readiness program is not just child care. Child care providers use age-appropriate curriculum, employ trained early childhood educators and work closely with parents to assess developmental achievements. Play-based learning environments and nurturing care support a child's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development.

9,701 families were served

408 child care providers

37% of children in Gold Seal Care

79 Gold Seal providers



PreK all day

While VPK is a great opportunity, many children and families need more than a half-day program. Some children need extended instructional time and enrichment experiences. Working families typically need a full day of care for their child. Unfortunately, the cost of "wrap care" can prevent some children from participating in VPK at all. PreK All Day (PKAD) is a supplement to the VPK program, providing extended learning opportunities and continuity of care.

PreK All Day is offered to families for children enrolled in VPK, but ineligible for ELC's School Readiness program. PKAD subsidizes 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. Parents pay a copay based on a sliding scale. PKAD is only available at select early learning centers.

137 children served

70 child care providers

CCR&R

Parents want to provide their child with a safe, consistent, loving environment and do everything possible to support their healthy development. They don't have to do it alone. Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) is a free service that assists families looking for child care, financial assistance, support services and developmental resources.

CCR&R offers personalized listings of child care providers based on their unique needs and preferences. Our team provides guidance on choosing quality child care so families are informed and confident in their decisions.

Our CCR&R services are available in-person, by phone and online. Our team also provides resources through Neighborhood Family Centers and at local events. In 2019, we launched a partnership with the Department of Health to offer CCR&R services for families at WIC offices.

2,892 children served

157 community events attended

521 social media posts & virtual read-alongs

TP Teen Parent Program

As a young parent, you may require a different support network. The Teenage Parent Program is a program designed just for you. It is a voluntary program, through the Pinellas County School Board Office of Educational Alternative Services, that connects young parents with needed resources to finish high school. A Teen Parent Social Worker, affordable child care, as well as a school nurse are available to assist parents with locating community and health services for everyday problems and concerns.

Early Childhood Educators

A cornerstone of Early Learning Coalition's mission is to retain and provide quality training to early childhood educators. The Professional Development Incentive **(PDI)** Program is designed to give early childhood educators access to specialized training to ensure high-level proficiency of the instructors who have the greatest impact on children.

The Early Learning Coalition has been leading the way in offering education and training options to early childhood educators who want to advance their career while working. Nearly $55,000 of higher-education scholarships were awarded to child care professionals in Pinellas County last year.

Our incentive and training program rewards early childhood educators with financial incentives based on their education and continuity of employment, offering wage supplements based on the individual's educational level. We are committed to making sure our educators receive the best training to provide children with more stable and quality early learning experiences.

217 number of PDI program participants

$139,317 given in incentives

35 retention bonuses received

$40,350 given in retention bonuses

69 quality completion stipends

$9,325 given in stipends

Higher-Education Tuition Scholarships

Many early childhood educators can't afford to stop working in order to continue their own education or certification. The Early Learning Coalition offers scholarships for continuing education and annual bonuses for staff that maintain uninterrupted employment with their sponsoring center or family childcare home, as funding allows.

77 number of scholarships given

$46,744.82 total amount of formal education scholarships

+

19 number of conference scholarships given

$8,540 total amount of conference scholarships

=

$55,284.82 total

Types Of Degrees Achieved Due To This Support

Staff Credentials – 2 completed (12 in progress) · Infant/Toddler Certificates – 1 completed
National Child Development Associates -1 (24 In progress) · Associate's Degree -3 (33 in progress)
Bachelor's Degree -2 (17 in progress) · Master's Degree -0 (5 in progress)

PDi Professional Development Institute

Child care providers are the life support to the children we support. Each day providers ensure the children in their care receive well-rounded and appropriate tools to help them develop into successful learners. The Early Learning Coalition supports providers by offering programs and incentives that allow them to continue working while advancing their own professional goals and education.

The Professional Development Institute is an extension of ELC's Professional Development Department, set to improve the quality of services, support and education for young children. Programs are designed to enhance the knowledge, skills and professional advancement of early childhood professionals through various classes, courses, and conferences offered in face-to-face or web-based formats.

The Early Learning's Professional Development Department has recently received the CDA Gold Standard from the Council of Professional Recognition. We have also been approved as an International Association for Continuing Education and Training Accredited Provider. 95% of Early Learning Coalition's providers received high program assessment scores last year.

The trainings offered through the Professional Development Institute at the Early Learning Coalition provide high-quality content and support to ensure implementation of the best concepts into the classroom. All trainings connect with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards, The Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS), Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners and Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Directors.

Elevating Child Care Providers

Program Assessment

Early childhood educators serving School Readiness children participate in the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS®). CLASS uses research-driven insights to improve how educators communicate with children to cultivate supportive, structured and engaging classroon experiences,

95% of providers reeceived high assessment scores and quality differentials

241 child care providers participated in CLASS assessments

Accreditation Assistance

Technical and financial assistance were available for providers striving to achieve accreditation. Incentives were offered to help early learning providers increase professional development opportunities to encourage high-quality care.

13 received assistance

$10,380 in financial assistance

Fostering Early Literacy

Nemours® BrightStart!

This literacy intervention program promotes reading success by supporting students struggling with early literacy skills. The Nemours Reading BrightStart! Complete Program for Literacy Success puts teachers on the cutting edge of early literacy best practices with an exciting new approach to building reading readiness skills for struggling learners. This uniqueA program is specifically designed for teaching early literacy skills to small groups (no more than 4 children per lesson activity) of diverse, at-risk 4-and 5-year-old children, but is an effective teaching tool for all children in that age range.

81 children who received instruction

Officer Friendly and Friends

The Early Coalition of Pinellas pairs local law enforcement officers, deputies, paramedics, and firefighters with early learning childcare centers to promote a love of reading and foster positive relationships between our youngest and public health and safety workers. Each month, these community helpers visit a center and read a selected book to children, including conversations relating to safety and character development.

During the onset and height of COVID-19, our Officer Friendly partners took it upon themselves to create videos of personnel reading various children's books. We want to thank them for their dedication to our program and early literacy! We are grateful for the participation and support of the:

Belleair Police Department · Clearwater Police Department · Largo Police Department
Pinellas County Sheriff's Office · St. Petersburg Police Department · Sunstar Paramedics

68 participating centers

Screening and Intervention

Kim was scared when her son, Trevon, was having problems at school. She couldn't figure out what was wrong with her lively son who seemed to be struggling more and more in his classroom setting.

Kim's constant searching for answers led her to the Early Learning Coalition, where kind words and great resources to assist Trevon's development growth gave her son the tools he needed to succeed in a classroom.

Many children with developmental delays or behavioral concerns are not identified as early. As a result, these children must wait to get the help they need to do well in social and educational settings.

Our Screening and Intervention staff help parents identify any developmental needs their child may have. The tools used for developmental and behavioral screening include formal research-based questionnaires or checklists focused on questions about a child's development, including language, movement, thinking, behavior, and emotions. The screenings can determine what developmental milestones are improving or need more fostering. Children are screened upon entry and on their birthday.

"You don't know how much it meant to me to have some of my concerns and feelings validated about my son." – Kim

5,489
School Readiness children screened

483
referrals to early intervention agencies

Community Screenings

The Early Learning Coalition conducts developmental screenings through the School Readiness program for children ages 0-5 years in Pinellas County, using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. We collaborate with local partners to host a monthly Community Screening that includes vision, hearing, speech/language, cognitive, fine/gross motor skills, and social-emotional development.

7 screening events

113 children screened

140 referrals made to partnering agencies

Supportive Interventions

Supportive Intervention Services offers providers intense support for children struggling developmentally or behaviorally. The ELC provides technical assistance and classroom coaching to build the skills and confidence teachers need to provide high-quality care to children.

2,453 families supported

Inclusion Services

Inclusion services are offered to ensure children are able to maximize their potential in the least restrictive environment, including Inclusion Warmline. Free to the community, Warmline provides information and referral services for children with special needs/disabilities in Pinellas County,

456 families served

Developmental Initiatives

Purposeful Play with Parents is a family initiative, created to help parents' guide their child(ren) in identifying and labeling the many emotions through play! It opens the door to conversations about how a child feels and what makes him/her feel different emotions.

117 families participated

STAR Monday is a 6-month on-site, weekly training created to improve safety, connection, problem solving, behavior, and social emotional skills.

31 classrooms participated

Tucker Tuesday is a 6-month on-site, weekly training created to promote age appropriate child development and social emotional skills for all children in care.

83 classrooms participated

Thrive by Five PINELLAS

Mission

Mobilize all parts of our community to create equitable opportunities for young children.

What is TB5?

Why are some children unable to achieve at their highest potential in school?

Thrive by Five, a subsidiary of Early Learning Coalition, is helping families overcome those hurdles. Funded by the Foundation for a Healthy St. Pete, Thrive by Five seeks to build a community coalition to support children from birth to five, ensuring families have proper building blocks for their child's future. The Thrive by Five initiative is a multi-faceted, community-based program to create an equitable, accessible, responsive, and accountable early childhood system.

Reseach finds children are more likely to succeed in school when those with specific needs – developmental, physical, social and emotional – are identified early and proper preventative measures are established to ensure a child's peak acheivement.

Our initative focuses on vital core areas to ensure school readiness: early learning accessibility, family support, developmental disabilities and nutrition. **Understanding it takes a village to raise a child, Thrive by Five invites all community members to participate in our initiative to help a child succeed for a lifetime.**

"I felt so alone watching Christian struggle in school. Thrive by Five gave me hope for my son's future." – Maria

Current Active Projects

Family Friendly Workplace

Pinellas business leaders understand the importance of a well-educated, happy, healthy workforce to support a strong local economy to keep Pinellas County competitive and vibrant. Family Friendly Workplace is committed to increasing the number of Pinellas County businesses that provide family-friendly policies to their employees. Family-friendly policies are shown to increase value for employees, increasing their rate of completion of postsecondary education, raising labor force participation, and increasing productivity. Employers certified as a Family Friendly Workplace will receive benefits and publicity, access to opportunities, and a package of materials to promote their certification.

TB5 Connects

Launched during the summer of 2020 amidst the upheaval caused by COVID-19, TB5 Connects is a timely resource that helps Pinellas families with young children access various programs and resources to ensure their children thrive! Families can complete a short, online questionnaire and quickly receive a customized list of available services to meet their unique needs.

Spotlight: In the Works

Thrive by Five, in partnership with Cultured Books, will host monthly virtual Read Out Louds, featuring prominent members within the community reading culturally responsive children's book. Each session will include age-appropriate questions and activities that parents can use at home to begin having brave, honest conversations with their little ones about race.

Feature workgroups and invite volunteers: System Alignment, Business Engagement, Children & Caregiver Success

Thank You to All Our Partners!

Equity and Early Learning

The education achievement gap is a stark reality among many households.

The Early Learning Coalition is working hard to improve long-term barriers that have caused early learning inequities in many communities. While VPK has proven to be an effective early learning intervention, research has shown developmental gaps can begin much earlier– even prenatally. **Achievement gaps begin with an opportunity gap.**

To do this, we must recognize the impact of generational systematic inequalities in education due to race and economic status.

Of the **60% of Pinellas County children** who entered kindergarten "ready" in 2018, only **44% of black children** and **52% of Hispanic children** were considered "ready". Comparatively, only **49% of children** on free and reduced lunch were "ready."

The Early Learning Coalition's strives to ensure all children will confidently enter kindergarten ready for success in school and in life.

Our work on diversity, equity and inclusion includes staff development, data analysis dialogue, and listening. We are exploring the advocacy landscape on equity issues to find opportunities where we can meaningfully engage our staff, child care providers and families.

The ELC hopes that our intentional practice will allow for equitable opportunities for both children and child care providers. Consider joining us in that work by contributing to our organization to help us further develop and implement more robust strategies.

"Educational equity means that each child receives what he or she needs to develop to his or her full academic and social potential."

Donors

The Early Learning Coalition has remained committed to providing children with access to high-quality early education and care. 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.

For that, we say thank you!

3 Daughter's Brewing
Anne Marie Ryan
Anona UMC
Big Storm Brewing
Burger King
CenterState
Cindy Seletos
Client 1st Advisors
Costco
Craig Phillips
David H Dalton
Echelon, LLC
Eric Lynn
Faith N Bornoff
Harry Fogle
Image Suite PR
Jackie Lang
Jeffrey Kostiha
Jennifer Brackney
Jessica Hooper
Jim Sullivan
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Commissioner Kathleen Peters
Marguerite Thomer
Patricia Ann Perzel-Geller
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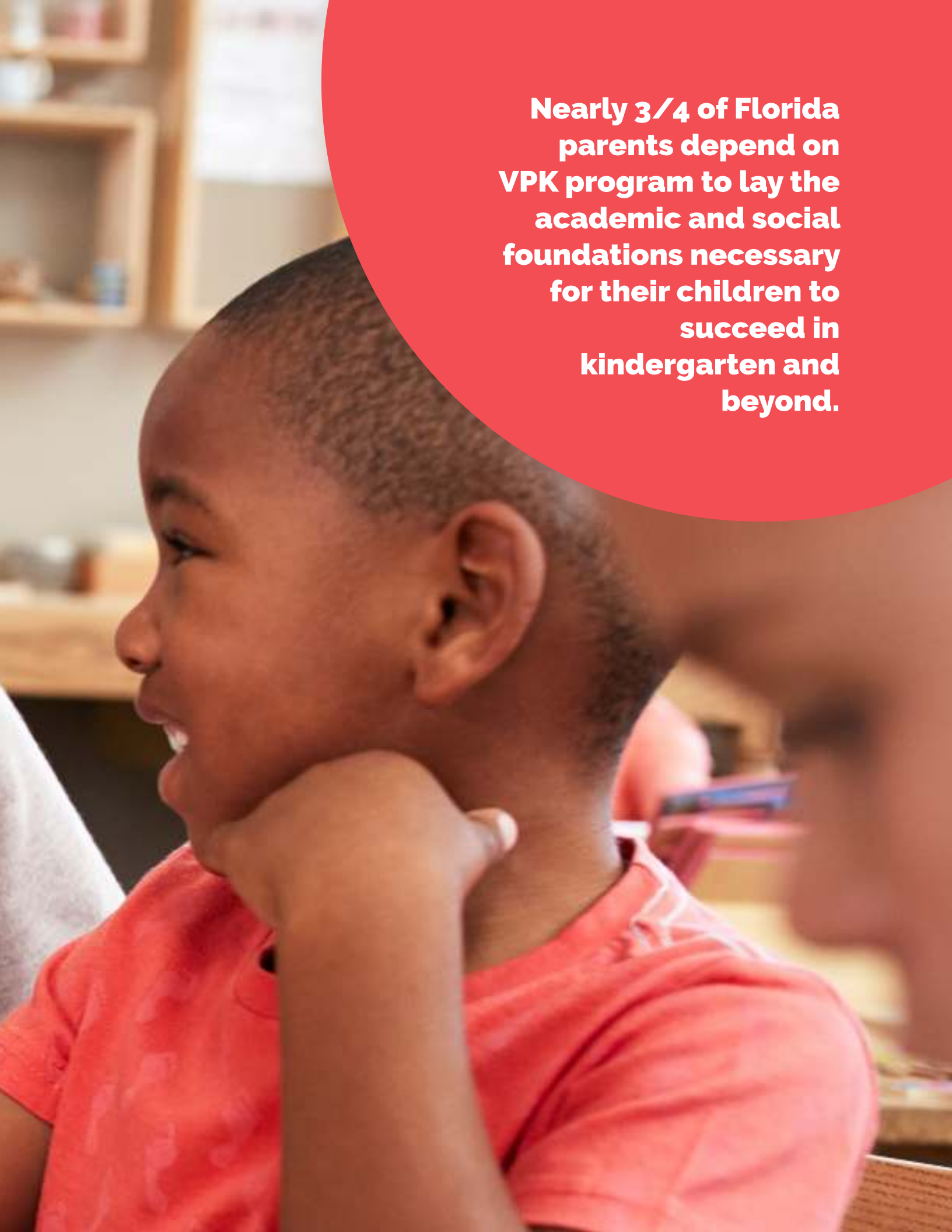
Dr. Ricardo Davis
Rob Bowen Design Group
Schwerin Family Endowment
Susan Johnson
Susan Rolston
Target
Ultimate Medical Academy
Victor Lucas
WalMart
Yvonne Malague



Nearly 3/4 of Florida parents depend on VPK program to lay the academic and social foundations necessary for their children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

Engage

Early Learning Coalition
OF PINELLAS COUNTY

ENGAGE The Early Learning Coalition (ELC) reinforces the foundations of our community by seeking to improve the lives of those in it, starting with the youngest and most vulnerable. We are proud of the accomplishments we have made so far, but there is still much more to be done. We need your help and support to ensure that every child confidently enters kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life.

DONATE Your gift will support young children during crucial formative years, as well as the families and providers who help mold them. Visit **https://elcpinellas.org/how-to-help/donate/** to support your early childhood community.

PARTICIPATE Join our team of corporate and community partners to make an impact through various volunteer opportunities. **Email info@elcpinellas.org to join our team!**

ADVOCATE Join ELC in taking a stand for early education through our local, state, and national legislators. Make your voice heard by accessing legislators at **https://elcpinellas.org/how-to-help/advocate/**.

For more information, please visit www.elcpinellas.org .

Funded By:

Office of Early Learning
Learn Early. Learn for Life.

jwb Juvenile Welfare Board

Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg

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