



## Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County

### July-August 2005 Newsletter

Information for all Early Childhood Educators

***DIRECTORS—PLEASE COPY THIS NEWSLETTER AND SHARE WITH YOUR TEACHERS!***

### VPK Programs Set to Begin in August!

It has been quite a whirlwind of activity to prepare for the start of VPK! We are fortunate to have **43 VPK providers** in Sarasota, many of whom have added additional classrooms in order to meet the demand. Well over 900 families have been determined eligible and were issued VPK certificates. Most of them have secured a spot in the program of their choice. A few are still looking and some have decided to wait for the summer program offered by the school district.

*The Coalition thanks all of the providers who are pioneers in the implementation of VPK! We will continue to work with you and support you in making your VPK programs successful!*

Please be aware that when school officially starts some parents may simply "show up" at child care sites to enroll their child in a VPK program. Despite a variety of communication about VPK, parents may not fully understand what they needed to do to enroll. Please make sure that you refer those parents to the **Child Care Connection** offices for assistance: 556-1600, ext 125 for VPK information.

### Early Learning Provider Agreements and Assessments *On the Way*

The new Provider Agreements and Self Assessments are being finalized and will be sent to all School Readiness Providers by the beginning of August. Remember, this is the process that we use in our local community to ensure that child care providers are meeting state mandates regarding appropriate program activities within their site. We ask that you sign a commitment to maintain quality programs and that you do an annual self assessment to determine your goals for improvement. **Then you are eligible to receive mini-grants, scholarships for trainings, additional program materials, on-site assistance and any other services offered by the Coalition during the year.** We thank all of you who fully cooperated with this process last year. We are looking at other ways that we can support your efforts to improve your sites and welcome suggestions on this topic!

### Yes! ECA Scholarships Available again this year!

Many of you have already contacted the Coalition to ask if we are providing ECA conference scholarships again this year and some have already submitted their applications. Yes! We are pleased to once again offer scholarships for teachers/ directors to attend the ECA conference. All you need to do is to complete the ECA conference registration form (available at the ECA website, [www.ecaoffl.org](http://www.ecaoffl.org)) and send it in to the Coalition's mailing address: 4727 Elder Berry Drive, Sarasota, FL 34241 and we will take care of it. Your conference registration will then be listed under the Coalition (new procedure -more details later).

Please note that this is for the conference registration only. You must make your own hotel reservations. We will begin sending out confirmation postcards at the end of August. The scholarships are first come, first served. You may send in registration forms to us up until September 1<sup>st</sup>. After that date, we cannot guarantee a full scholarship.

**Note:** If you have already registered on your own, just let us know. Your registration fee can be reimbursed after the conference by using the Coalition's continuing education scholarship form, available at our website:

[www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org](http://www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org).

Or we could sponsor you for a pre-conference workshop.

### Literacy Information

We found a website that has a variety of information on *Literacy Activities*. It is sponsored by the Early Literacy & Learning Model (ELLM) program that has been piloting several projects in Northern Florida. Visit this site for helpful tips on incorporating literacy into day-day to activities using fun and inexpensive materials. The site also contains lots of other information such as tips to share with parents and various lists of books.

[www.unf.edu/dept/fie/ellm](http://www.unf.edu/dept/fie/ellm)

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## Early Learning Coalition has a new administrative office!

The Coalition is getting settled in its new administrative offices at 1750 17<sup>th</sup> Street. This is in the Human Services Complex where a number of non-profit organizations are located. Our name came up on the waiting list and we were happy to accept an office there. Janet Kahn, our Executive Director, Mary Wolf, our Program Manager, and Dianne Rose (a new Program Manager who begins on August 10<sup>th</sup>) are now based at that office.

**After August 15<sup>th</sup> we will no longer be using the Elder Berry Drive address. The main official mailing address for the Coalition will be:**

**1750 17<sup>th</sup> Street, Unit K-1  
Sarasota, FL 34234  
(941) 954-4830  
Fax (941) 954-4831**

*The Child Care Connection office will remain at the Ringling Boulevard location.* Many of you already know that we have moved the lock box for dropping off items and the Child Care Connection reception down the hallway to our expansion office at 2886-C. We have also moved the main sign on the outside of the building to indicate that change.

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## Health Insurance Survey Update...

Many of you completed and returned the Health Insurance Survey the Coalition sent out in May and we thank you. We know that finding affordable health insurance is a real challenge for many in the early childhood profession and the Coalition and its partner organizations have resolved to research this important issue and work together to find possible solutions. It won't be an easy problem to solve, but teachers and directors who do the vital work of caring for our young children deserve to have this basic benefit. We will keep you posted!

Visit our website! Minutes of meetings and scholarship applications are posted. A calendar of meetings is also available, as well as a section for you to exchange information and ideas. Look us up and give us your feedback! If any director or teacher would like to receive a copy of this newsletter via email, please contact the Coalition at the general email address below.

Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County  
(listed below: official mailing address only)  
4727 Elder Berry Drive Sarasota, FL 34241  
phone 941.379.1479 fax 941.922.1359  
[mail@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org](mailto:mail@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org)

Child Care Connection of Sarasota  
(Resource & Referral, Scholarship Child Care Program, Provider Payments)  
2886-C Ringling Boulevard Sarasota, FL 34237  
phone 941.556.1600 fax 941.556.1606

<http://www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org>

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## Recruitment Issues and Finding Appropriate Substitutes

The Coalition is well aware that most of you find it very challenging to recruit teachers for your sites and to locate appropriate subs when needed. This is one of the issues that has been discussed in the Coalition's program committees and identified as a priority to be addressed. We are working on developing a program that works to recruit individuals, trains and orients them, and then arranges for them to be available for providers to hire them as substitutes or to fill an open teacher spot as appropriate. More details to come!

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**If we don't stand up for children,  
then we don't stand for much.**  
Marion Wright Edelman



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***Note: The Training Calendar is being updated. It will be available with next month's newsletter***

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