



Dear Sarasota County Child Care Providers,

The members of the Quality Child Care Council (QCC) and the organizations they represent **commend your participation** in Year Two of the Look for the Stars Quality Improvement System.

Our community is dedicated to providing young children the strong foundation they need to succeed in school and in life. To achieve that goal local agencies and organizations chose to allocate significant resources to support child care providers through the Look for the Stars initiative.

The Early Learning Coalition has kept the Council informed of progress over the past year and on the results of the recent assessments, reporting that the total number of providers at the 3 star and above level – the level which indicates consistently good quality – increased from 65 last year to 99 in Year Two. That overall improvement in quality is a very positive development and Council members applaud providers for their achievement.

The fact that some sites were not able to maintain their star level shows that ensuring quality is an ongoing process which requires commitment to continuous improvement and may also require additional training, mentoring and support. It also indicates that annual assessments are needed to monitor and sustain quality.

The Council was impressed to hear that the assessment results clearly showed that attending trainings and receiving coaching led to program improvements. The Early Learning Coalition reported that they presented 123 trainings with 2900 teachers/directors participating this past year.

Judging by these results and the overall improvement in scores made by child care providers in Year Two, the decision the Council made to support children and families by supporting quality child care was the right one. We thank you for validating the investment that Council members are making in the Look for the Stars Quality Improvement System.

The Early Learning Coalition has also kept the Council informed of any concerns expressed by the participating providers. The Coalition is committed to responding to and addressing your concerns. Council members realize the uncertainty you must have experienced at opening your programs to scrutiny and we commend your willingness to do so, as it brings all of us closer to our community's goal of quality care for all children.

Council members recognize that you, as a provider, deserve continued support and assistance as you work to meet the challenges of improving this most important industry in our community. We look forward to supporting you in the next phase of the Look for the Stars initiative, as together we all strive to give our young children the bright futures they so richly deserve.

We appreciate the time and effort you are giving to improve your programs and we thank you for your participation and your commitment to quality care and education for young children.

Sincerely,

Bill Little
Quality Child Care Council Chair

