

Helping Children.  
Helping Families.  
Serving Florida.



ANNUAL REPORT  
2010 - 2011



# Introduction

## Letter from the Chair

The 2010-2011 fiscal year was one filled with challenges, hard work and exciting results. Though the economy continued to struggle, our Coalition continued its push for early learning child care quality as we continued to offer numerous provider trainings through our quarterly regional training schedule. In a time of economic upheaval, our forward-thinking ELC Board and staff and generous community partners have teamed up to achieve astounding outcomes to the goals we set for fiscal year 2010-2011. With all of these outcome accomplishments, it is understandable that I say happily that this past year has continued to be non-stop busy serving as Board Chair for the ELC of Putnam and St. Johns Counties.

As Board Chair, I have the privilege of leading an inspired local board and working with an incredibly committed staff. In addition to the strides we make for improving child services at the local level, we work in cooperation with state and regional entities. As local Board Chair, I also serve on the state Early Learning Advisory Council. This state-level council consists of 31 state board chairs as well as Governor appointed council leaders and Agency for Workforce (AWI) directors and staff.

Our commitment to building partnerships allows us to maximize expertise and resources within our community, eliminate duplication of services and work toward the common goal of educational success for our children. Our obligation to assure the highest quality early learning program is reflected in the goals we set. It almost goes without saying that children are our most precious resource. By investing in them, we invest in their individual futures and the future of our community as a whole.

Although we have had a fiscally challenging year, we have found ways to work with community partners to expand our community early literacy efforts. This has included countless Toddler Festivals in partnership with the St. Johns County and Putnam County libraries that has brought early literacy awareness to more than 2,000 families just this year. I continue to be both thrilled and honored to be serving as Chair of this organization.

Sincerely,



Nancy R. Pearson  
Board Chair



## HISTORY

The Early Learning Coalition of Putnam merged with the St. Johns Early Learning Coalition on July 1, 2005. The merger created The Early Learning Coalition of Putnam and St. Johns Counties with the following mission and vision:

## MISSION

To serve parents, caregivers and educators of children ages birth to pre-kindergarten by managing and evaluating early child care and early childhood education programs through a quality School Readiness delivery system in Putnam & St. Johns Counties.

## VISION



## The Coalition contracted with the following agencies during 2010-2011:

### Episcopal Children's Services, Inc.

Episcopal Children's Services (ECS) serves as the Coalition's Primary Services Provider and offers program support services for School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten providers in the entire service delivery area. This agency also provides Child Care Resource and Referral services, Inclusion services and Quality Initiatives.

### Putnam County School District

The school district provided School Based Education Programs, including Pre-K Early Intervention and Migrant services.

Each subcontractor submits monthly programmatic activity reports and quarterly monitoring reports are presented to the full Board.

## School Readiness

In 1999, the Florida Legislature established a statewide School Readiness program to target the at-risk birth to kindergarten population, to streamline the service delivery system for all publicly funded early education and child care. School Readiness programs include School Based Pre-K, Even Start, Head Start, Migrant Pre-K, and subsidized child care programs.

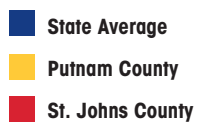
In June 2010, there were 302 children on the wait list for child care assistance in Putnam County and 644 were on the wait list for child care assistance in St. Johns County. These numbers, while less than last year, have more than doubled since the close of the 2009-2010 fiscal year. A sign that additional funds are needed in these challenging economic times to serve more children who are priority in accordance with F.S. Chapter 411.01. As of June 2010-2011, of all children ages birth through 12 receiving subsidized care in the Early Learning Coalition of Putnam and St. Johns Counties, over 65% were infants. This increase is due to the enrollment from the wait list late last year and in the first quarter of this year that reached the infant level of priority. There is still a shortage of providers that accept infants into care.

### Number of Children Served in SR:

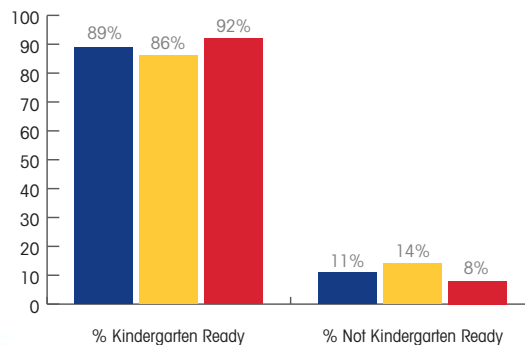
The Coalition served an average of 1,277 children throughout the year in Putnam County and 828 children in St. Johns County.

## FLKRS Results – 2010-2011:

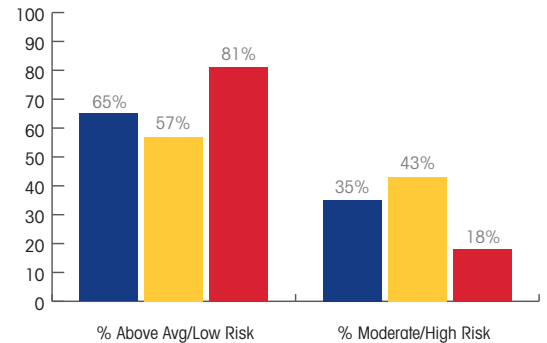
### School Readiness Scores for the children who participated in the previous year's VPK programs



### ECHOS Results – 2010-2011



### FAIR-K Results – 2010-2011



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## Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) programs were implemented by the Early Learning Coalition of Putnam and St. Johns Counties in August 2005. The Florida Voluntary Pre- Kindergarten Education Standards were formally adopted by the State Board of Education in March 2005. This early learning guide describes what 4-year-old children should know and be able to do by the end of their pre-kindergarten year and is designed to guide instructors in developing and implementing appropriate early learning environments. It is of utmost importance that all VPK providers receive training on these standards. Therefore, on-going training on the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten standards continues to be a Coalition priority. During 2010-2011, a total of 141 providers attended 7 VPK Standards Trainings. There were also 10 additional classes, including the VPK Assessment Training, held at ECS. Parents are also trained on the standards through workshops provided at VPK sites.

**Number of Children Served in VPK:** Putnam County: 585, St Johns County: 1,549

## Best Practices/Quality Initiatives

**Meetings** – Committee and Board meeting schedules are kept current on the Coalition website ([www.elcpsj.org](http://www.elcpsj.org)) for easy access by the community. The Annual meeting consists of a board lunch combined with an annual board workshop. Board membership includes representatives from Faith Based and Private Child Care Centers. These representatives attend both board and committee meetings to assure childcare businesses provide feedback, input and address their concerns to the entire Board, Coalition and Primary Service Provider(s). Providers are recognized annually for their dedication to the early childhood field and for their involvement with the Coalition during Provider Appreciation Week.

**Annual Kids Rally** – During Kids Week, providers are encouraged to participate in the annual hanging of the hands by sending in children's hand artwork to Tallahassee serving as a symbolic reminder to the legislators of the children in Florida. ECS has encouraged providers to participate in our annual local Children's Week events and by participating with the "Hanging of the Hands" ceremony that is an integral part of making the state legislators aware of the needs of our youngest citizens. ECS conducted two community-wide events on behalf of the Coalition relating to School Readiness and child care awareness. During these events, local 4 and 5 year old child care students were invited to enjoy story time with every child's favorite red head, Ronald McDonald. Children were also given the opportunity to decorate pre-cut paper hands to be hung in the Capitol Rotunda during the entire week of Children's Week as a reminder to legislators and advocates that we must take care of our children.

**Dolly Parton Imagination Library** – An ongoing program to promote early learning; a child's first library. This program is one of the best ways to improve educational opportunities for children in our community. Children enroll in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and receive one book a month until their 5th birthday. Our community children will have a library of 60 books by the time they start kindergarten. As of June 30, 2010, the Coalition had enrolled approximately 2,100 children since the onset of the program. For more information about the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, go to [www.dollypartonsimaginationlibrary.com](http://www.dollypartonsimaginationlibrary.com).

**Reading Pals** – A volunteer reading pal program was instituted in the fall of 2010 which started matching up reading volunteers with children in child care centers. A reading pal visits once a week for an hour to read one on one or in small groups to children who may desire additional reading attention. As of June 2011 there are 12 centers and 3 Head Start classrooms hosting a total of 16 Reading Pal volunteers.

**Toddler Fest** – The ELC and the St. Johns and Putnam County libraries kicked off a series of Toddler Festival literacy programs starting August 2010. The events include storytelling, puppets, music, crafts, games and visits by book characters. Each child was given a free book and every parent a literacy bag filled with information about the importance of reading to their child. A total of 1,015 parents and children attended these events.



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**Read To Me** – This program focuses on parents and shows the how-to by modeling the importance of reading to their child. The ELC partnered with Head Start and the St. Gerard’s house for young and pregnant teenage moms to host several of these workshops.

**Helping Hands** – A monthly newsletter is published and distributed to providers with articles and best practice information related to the environment, accreditation, transitions, inclusion, early literacy and infant/toddler development.

**Elder Options Grant** – Partnering with Elder Options funding is available for a limited number of grandparents caring for grandchildren to receive assistance with their child care costs even when they do not qualify for state School Readiness funds.

**Alert Now** – Using the Alert Now automated dialing/e-mailing technology the ELC is now able to communicate quickly, effectively and at a low cost with child care providers participating in VPK and the School Readiness programs. This initiative is now being considered by other ELC’s across the state.

**ELC Advocates** – (Also known as the Early Literacy Advisory Council) This group is comprised of a committed team of ELC volunteers whose mission it is to promote early literacy and spread the word about the importance of early learning in our community. These volunteers speak publicly on behalf of the Coalition to promote the importance of Early Literacy as well as conducting reading events and coordinating book programs as well as being part of the pal’s team to read to local young children.

## Program Changes:

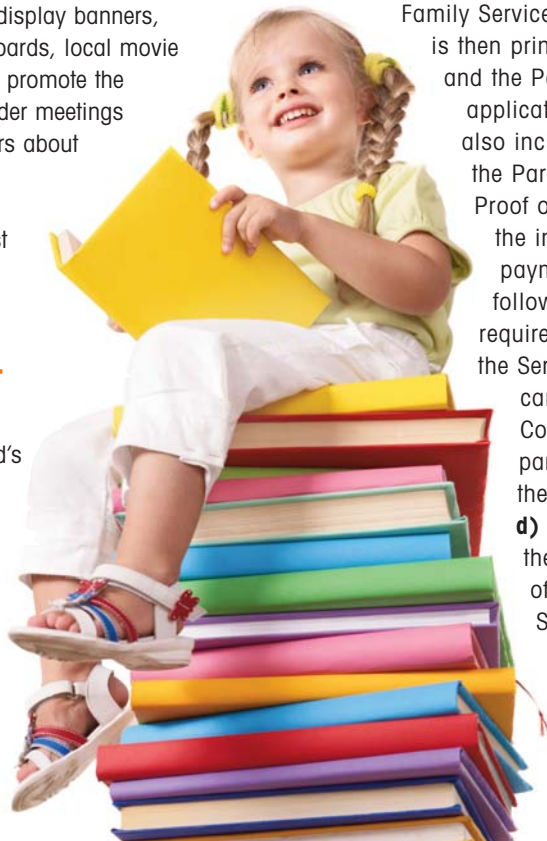
**VPK** – We utilized several venues to promote and implement the Voluntary Pre-kindergarten Program last year. Some of our promotional venues included post card mailings, flyers distributed throughout the community, display banners, yard signs at childcare providers, billboards, local movie theatre ads and print advertisements to promote the program’s availability. Many VPK provider meetings were held to recruit and inform providers about program requirements. VPK potential provider packets were created and distributed to providers showing interest in the program.

## Single Point of Entry/Unified Wait List

The Primary Service Provider’s CCR&R specialists engage parents in their child’s education, making sure that parents understand the vital role they play. Information is provided to parents on childcare licensing, and how to contact their local licensing office. They are given assistance in understanding what school

readiness is and what it means regarding the education of their child. Parents using the web based Simplified Point of Entry are contacted for follow-up informational interviews. Each parent is also mailed a parent packet which is a model for the state that includes brochures describing how to choose child care, how to contact the Department of Children and Families Licensing Division, how to get help for special needs children, Kid Care insurance information, earned income credit information, and information pertaining to services available in the parents immediate area. Much of this information is available in both Spanish and English. Contact information is also included in a cover letter in the parent packet. The contact information for CCR&R is readily accessible to providers and employers by being advertised in the online yellow pages and in the Chamber of Commerce membership directory. Brochures and posters are circulated throughout the year and are posted in healthcare offices, school-based, faith-based and private provider offices, real estate offices, libraries, and local businesses.

**The Primary Service Provider** currently maintains and updates all school readiness providers through CMS/EFS. The Primary School Readiness Services Provider maintains a resource and referral specialist responsible for childcare provider database maintenance upon notification by DCF. The Primary Services Provider compares its EFS data to the list of DCF’s existing licensed school readiness providers on a monthly basis and compiles a report on a semi-annual basis. Parents are surveyed according to NACCRRRA standards to assure that parents are satisfied with the CCR&R process. For those children receiving childcare assistance, a parent may choose any provider complying with licensing requirements, registered and/or licensed exempt, and school readiness standards or an informal provider. Once a parent has chosen a provider, the parent informs the Family Service Specialist of their choice. A certificate/voucher is then printed and signed by the Specialist, the Provider and the Parent. The voucher packet includes the signed application, voucher certificate and fee agreement. It also includes a parent letter, the document checklist, the Parent Fee Notification, Immunization Record, Proof of Parental Identity, Terms and Conditions and the income worksheet. In order for the voucher payment for childcare services to be made the following is required: **a)** The voucher packet with all required forms has been completed and received by the Service Provider, **b)** The caregiver, if an informal caregiver, has completed the Family Day Care Course within 90 days of enrollment, **c)** The parent has called the Service Provider to notify them of the parent’s choice of childcare program, **d)** The attendance roster has been received by the second working day of the following month of service and has been approved by the Service Provider.



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## Child Care Resource and Referral Service

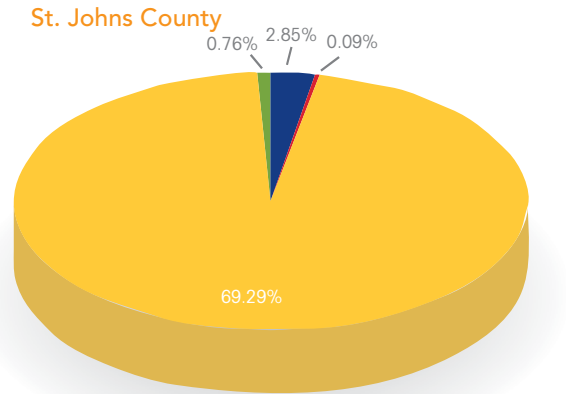
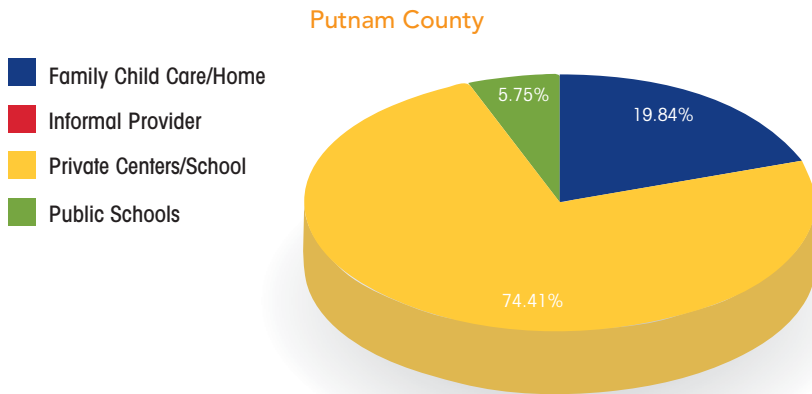
The Coalition's primary service provider provides Child Care Resource and Referral services and ensures that parents are offered information about a choice of settings in legally operating programs: licensed, registered, religious-exempt, school-based and informal programs, including access through certificate options, as identified in the Standard Levels of Service available in the community, regardless of the family's income. For those families who are income-eligible, health or behavioral assessment referrals, childcare tuition assistance, and childcare teacher assistance is provided. All children in publicly funded programs are screened for physical development, and for vision, hearing and speech problems as needed.

Screenings are available to children ineligible for school readiness services or on the wait list, but only by parent request. Locally, the majority of our CCR&R calls fall under parent education. The second most frequent call comes from parents looking for help, other than childcare. To aid in this second request, our contractor has compiled a comprehensive community resource guide. Our staff utilizes United Way's online Resource Directories as well as an ECS produced resource guide that is available for both counties online and has a printed booklet. In an effort to assure our Coalition board members understand the Early Childhood community first-hand, they are asked to participate in early care and education provider site visits which are coordinated by coalition staff.

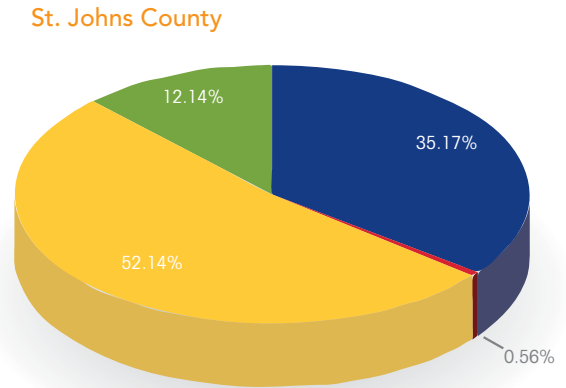
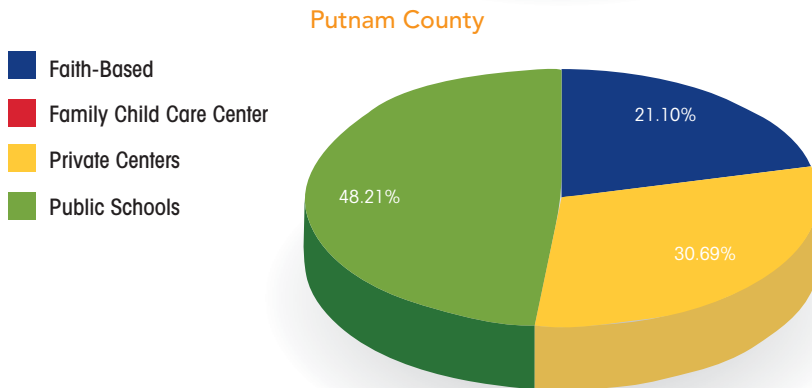


## Early Learning and Child Care Providers

### School Readiness Provider Types



### VPK Provider Types



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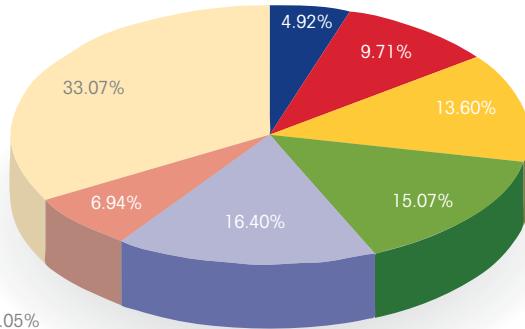
## School Readiness Children Served

### - By Care Level

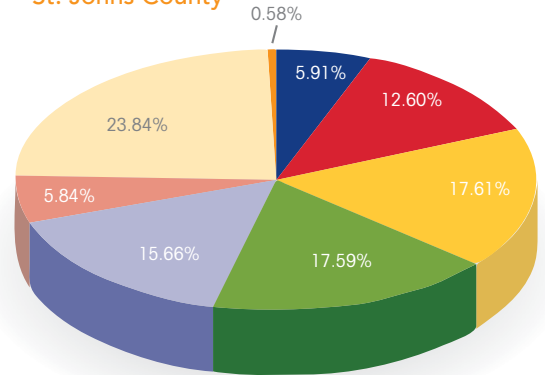
- Infants
- Toddlers
- 2-year-olds
- 3-year-olds
- 4-year-olds
- 5-year-olds
- 6-12 years (school age)
- Special Needs Children
- Special Needs Teens\*

\*Putnam - 0.10%, St. Johns - 0.05%

Putnam County



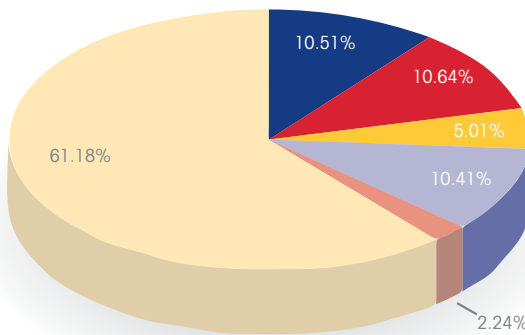
St. Johns County



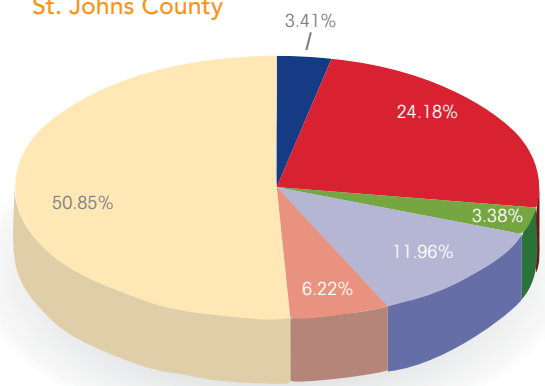
### - By Funding Category

- ARRA
- At Risk of Neglect or Abuse
- Migrant
- Child Care Executive Partnership
- Temporary Cash Assistance
- Transitional Child Care
- Working Poor

Putnam County



St. Johns County



## Staff Development/Provider Training and Community Coordination

**Family Child Care Home Association Scholarships** – We awarded 1 Family Home Care providers scholarship to attend their State Conference.

## Community Coordination

The Coalition's Primary Service Provider, Episcopal Children's Services, held two accreditation retreats this year, and continues to hold quarterly provider meetings that are accessible to all providers.

In addition, the Coalition held its second annual Open Registration Provider Meetings,

to inform providers of their responsibilities associated with School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten contracts, to offer providers technical assistance by setting up individual "stations" of different program information, and to assist providers in the contract renewal process.

**Community Events** – The Coalition participates in at least one community event per quarter. The quarterly events include the Annual Kids Rally and Reading Events, Ancient City Kids Day and Tribute to Kids.

**Books for Bravery** – At the Putnam County Health Department, donated books are given to the immunization nurse to give each child receiving immunizations.

**Florida Transition Project** – A TRACK Team (Transitional Advisory Council for Kids) to ensure that a comprehensive, community-based, community-driven system is in place to transition pregnant women, children and their families from one service provider to another.

The major goals of the project are to address transition issues on a community-wide basis through the formalization of transition policies and procedures, to increase awareness of issues, policies, procedures, laws and regulations that impact infant and early child transitions, to provide technical assistance and support to the community, and to develop an interagency agreement for sharing of information.

## Annual Kid's Rally and Reading Events

– These events are the model for community collaboration. The Coalition and Episcopal Children's Services work with other local groups to promote literacy in a fun-filled, learning environment. presenting a story time show.

This year's Reading Events were the "Reading on the River" event held at the the Seminole Pavilion in Putnam County, and the "Reading with Ronald" event at



Turning Point Christian Academy in St. Johns County. Several stations were available with hands on literacy activities for all children to participate. Ronald McDonald was the highlight of both events by presenting a story time show.

**UWADA (United Way Agency Directors Association)** – A group of community service and United Way funded agencies sharing information and resources, and developing community goals to improve systems. Currently, the St. Johns County UWADA is working on a collaborative economic impact study to demonstrate the level of impact the not-for-profit sector has on the community.

**Putnam County Shared Services Meeting** – A group of community service and United Way funded agencies sharing information and resources, and developing community goals to improve systems. Additionally, ECS updated the St. Johns Community and the Putnam County Resource Guides which are distributed to parents throughout the region.

Many other local agencies request copies as well. These resource guides help families locate other needed services such as food pantries, health services and even finding out where to register to vote.

## Enrollment

New enrollment from the waitlist continued throughout most of of 2010-2011.

The ELC continued to see increased enrollments from children at risk of abuse and neglect. This is probably due to the continued poor economic climate which has caused additional strain on families.







## Wait List Issues/ Specialized Policy/ Program at local level to reduce waiting lists

On June 30, there were 644 children on the wait list in St. Johns County and 302 in Putnam County.

### Other

Placed ads in the Putnam Chamber Directory and St. Johns County Relocation Guide to notify the community and newcomers that we have quality child care resource and referral services and preparatory programs for children entering into the educational system. These publications also help to inform the community that there is an active group of citizens who are serving as liaisons to the community through their direct relationship or partnership with the Coalition and ECS to bring resources together to help increase both the professionalism and quality of child care in their community.



## Program Issues

- The Coalition's monitoring staff and Primary Services staff collaborate with the local licensing agents to ensure that local providers offer quality services in a healthy and safe environment.
- Issues of providers not in compliance with the provider agreement are reviewed by the Board of Directors/Executive Director and/or given technical assistance or placed on probation.
- The Coalition is experiencing shortages of care in certain care levels (infants) and in certain locations. Provider rates paid by the Coalition have not increased in several years and this is adding to the provider shortage. Even in areas where providers are plentiful, many require parents to pay the difference in the Coalition rate and their private pay rate, making care unaffordable to School Readiness families. However, with flat funding for the past several years, we can not give the providers a rate increase without serving fewer children than our mandate requires.
- The Coalition's plan includes coaching and one-on-one technical assistance with providers to increase positive outcomes for children. We have found this approach very successful where teacher stability is maintained. However, teacher turnover due to low pay continues to be a challenge.



# Financial Report



The Coalition receives funding through the Agency for Workforce Innovation's Office of Early Learning, which includes state and federal funds. Local governments and the United Way of St. Johns County also contribute match funding exclusively for slots in the working poor category and the Child Care Purchasing Pool. A summary of budget and actual expenditures for fiscal year 2010-2011, is below and on the next page:

**Program Administration** expenses capture the costs related to administering the School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten programs in the Coalition's service area. These included, but were not limited to, costs associated with contracted administrative services vendors, fiscal agent services, CPA audit fees, insurance, operating supplies, equipment costs, and similar items.

**Non-Direct Services** captures the costs related to services necessary to implement the early learning programs such as eligibility determination and monitoring. These include child care subsidy enrollment eligibility determination and re-determination.

**Quality Initiatives** budget captures expenses related to providing curriculum support, provider staff development coordination, community outreach, natal bags for both Putnam and St. Johns Counties, and enhancement materials for the resource lab/lending library and direct enhancements for classrooms.

**Inclusion Services** captures the costs related to services to include children with special needs into the traditional classroom with mainstream children.

**Infant and Toddler Services** captures expenses related to quality initiatives directed to children who are infants through two years of age.

**Child Care Slots** captures the expenses associated with providing tuition assistance for every child enrolled in the School Readiness program. These expenses were paid to providers in the form of monthly reimbursements once proper documentation was submitted to verify attendance of School Readiness children in their care.



# Financial Report



## Administrative

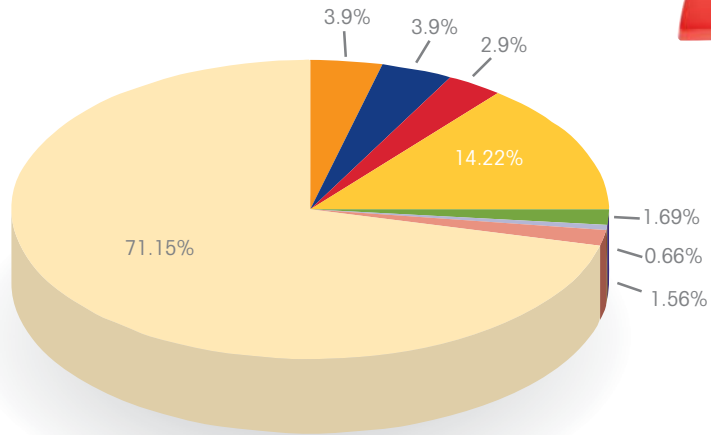
- Approved revisions/updates to policies and procedures in place
- Updated the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)
- Adopted Sliding Fee Scales based on current federal poverty guidelines



## School Readiness Budget (SR)

### Actual – % of Budget

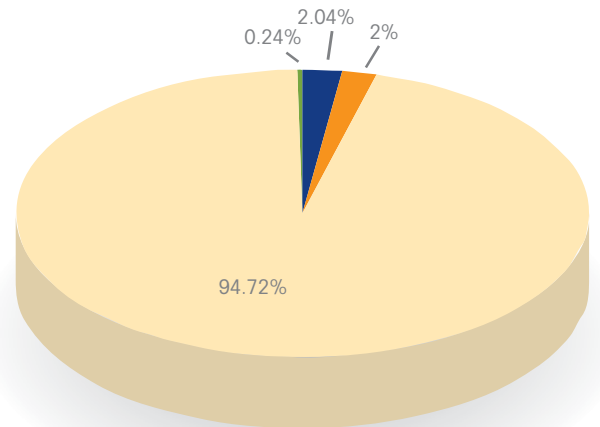
- Program Administration – \$314,822
- Non-Direct Services – \$314,700
- Eligibility – \$233,757
- Quality Initiatives – \$1,146,858
- Infant & Toddler Services – \$136,024
- Inclusion Services – \$53,362
- Resource and Referral – \$125,600
- SR Child Care Slots – \$5,736,959



## Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Budget (VPK)

### Actual – % of Budget

- Program Administration – \$100,312
- Non-Direct Services – \$102,518
- VPK Slots – \$4,757,886
- Outreach and Awareness – \$11,831





# Summary

The Early Learning Coalition of Putnam and St. Johns Counties has made great strides in improving outcomes for children. We have made many quality improvements for children, providers, and programs over the past years through quality/program enhancements, professional development training, community outreach and public relations. There is strong and cohesive collaboration among contractors, board members, and community-based organizations in our community. Many civic organizations and local businesses collaborate well with the community and school district to provide needed services, educational award programs, and additional funding to support and enhance current programs. ELC of Putnam and St. Johns Counties has made substantial gains in quality child care throughout the community with the continued use of the School Readiness provider agreement. Even if a provider only serves one School Readiness child, the quality improvements benefit all the children in the setting, not just those receiving subsidies; therefore, raising the bar of quality care in our community for all children. The Coalition receives many thank you notes and calls throughout the year from providers directly impacted by professional development training, scholarships, and quality initiatives, as well as its community partners. They are thankful for enhancement materials provided by the Coalition. Community partners are thankful for the information and collaboration received, as well as participation in local events and training.

## Putnam

In 2010-2011 there were 88 Contracted School Readiness Providers in Putnam County; 47 Centers, 17 of which were Gold Seal; 21 Family Child Care Homes, 1 of which was Gold Seal. There are 7 providers in the process of enrichment.

In 2010-2011, there were 27 approved VPK providers serving 545 eligible children. 12 VPK providers were Gold Seal; 0 providers were Family Child Care Homes; and 2 were faith-based exempt.

## St. Johns

In 2010-2011, there were 97 Contracted School Readiness Providers in St. Johns County; 67 Centers, 19 of which were Gold Seal; 14 Family Child Care Homes, 0 of which was Gold Seal. There are 7 providers in the process of enrichment.

In 2010-2011, there were 50 approved VPK providers serving 1525 eligible children. 17 VPK providers were Gold Seal; 2 providers were family childcare homes; and 3 were faith-based exempt.



## Thank You to Our 2010-2011 Board of Directors

Nancy R. Pearson

Jeff Kamm

John Birney

Commissioner Mark Miner

Kenneth Forrester

Bridget Van Landingham

Vickie Trauger

Mary Ellen Webb

Greg Walker

Patricia Hubbard

Lucy Brosky

Janet Dixon

Mary Ann Holanchock

Mike Siragusa

Jan McLain

Sherry Russell

Connie Stophel

Janet Westling

Carole Felton

Bruce Ferguson, Jr.

Jared Dollar

Adam Deputy

Melanie Brown

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