



elc **EARLY
LEARNING
COALITION**
of Broward County, Inc.
Education begins at birth



TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Coalition.....2

ELC Fact Sheet.....3

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Fact Sheet.....4

About the Coalition

Our Vision

That all children in Broward County will enter kindergarten socially, emotionally, physically, cognitively and behaviorally ready to learn and families will have comprehensive early care and education services readily available to them in order to be stable and strong.

Our Mission

To provide resources, advocacy, leadership, coordination and oversight for early care and education from birth to school-age and to support to access to school-age care to ensure children's success in school.

Our History

Since 2000, following the ratification of Florida Statute 411.01 implementing School Readiness programs, the Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc. (formerly Broward County School Readiness Coalition, Inc.) has been dedicated to the implementation of an integrated, high-quality, seamless early care and education services delivery system for children. The Coalition is accountable for assessing early care and educational resources in Broward County, as well as developing local plans to address identified needs.



Contact Information:

6301 NW 5th Way, Suite 3400

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

Tel: (954) 377-2188

Fax: (954) 377-2192

Website: www.elcbroward.org



Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc. Fact Sheet

- The Florida Legislature passed the School Readiness Act in 1999, creating the Florida Partnership for School Readiness (FPSR) and called for the formation of local school readiness coalitions to improve the readiness of children when they enter school. The Broward County School Readiness Coalition, Inc. was formed in June of 2000.

Since that time:

- *The Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.* (formerly the *Broward County School Readiness Coalition, Inc.*) has been dedicated to the implementation of an integrated, high-quality, seamless early care and education service delivery system for children.
- *The Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc. (ELC)* has been accountable for assessing the early care and educational resources available in Broward County, as well as developing local plans to address identified needs. The Coalition itself is made up of 25 diverse board members from the private sector, as well as various community/human service organizations in Broward County. Additionally, 13 staff members work for the Coalition.
- *ELC* has funded and overseen a system of services designed to help ensure that Broward County children are ready for school upon entry into kindergarten, while also ensuring that parents have access to the necessary support services for strength and stability. The Coalition has partnered with Family Central, Inc., Broward County Public Schools, Nova Southeastern University, University of Miami, United Way of Broward County, Broward County Health Department, Children's Services Council, and Broward County, Human Service Department, Children's Services Administration Division, Child Care Licensing and Enforcement Division to more effectively work toward these goals.

The Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc. now administers the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Education (VPK) program:

- Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) implementing legislation was passed in January 2005, which placed responsibility for this program with local school readiness coalitions. Moreover, all school readiness coalitions were renamed "Early Learning Coalitions" to reflect their enhanced roles in meeting the early care and education needs of children and their families.
- *The Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.* now falls under the direction and funding of the Office of Early Learning, a division of the Agency for Workforce Innovation.
- *ELC* will organize VPK to give all Broward County parents access to the program which is designed to prepare four-year-olds for kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success. This new program will be an addition to all of the existing school readiness programs that *ELC* currently oversees.
- Presently, *ELC* has a combined School Readiness and VPK projected budget of \$90 million, which is comprised of federal, state, local, and private funding. Although funding does not cover all of the identified unmet needs in Broward County, *ELC* strives to use all of its resources in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

For more information contact:

Penny Westberry
Executive Director

Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.
(954) 377-2187; pwestberry@elcbroward.org

For more information contact:

Penny Westberry

Executive Director

Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.

(954) 377-2187; pwestberry@elcbroward.org

VPK Registrar: (954) 724-7577

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)

FACT SHEET

Who Established Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten: Florida voters who passed a constitutional amendment in 2002 that requires a voluntary pre-kindergarten program in our state for all four-year-old children by fall, 2005. VPK is being administered by the government-mandated, not-for-profit Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.

What VPK is: VPK is designed to help prepare children for kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success. The program allows a parent to enroll his or her eligible child (four years old by September 1 and residing in Florida) in a free VPK program. The program is voluntary for children and providers.

When VPK will be offered: Beginning in the 2005 school year, parents have the option of enrolling their children in a school-year VPK program consisting of 540 instructional hours, or in a summer program beginning in the summer of 2006, consisting of 300 instructional hours.

Why was VPK established: To encourage school readiness, nurture a love of learning and create a brighter future for Florida's children. VPK enhances existing school readiness programs that had been established in 1999 with the Florida Legislature's passing of the School Readiness Act. This Act created the Florida Partnership for School Readiness and called for the creation of local school readiness coalitions. In Broward, the original coalition was called the Broward School Readiness Coalition. With the additional responsibilities of administering VPK, the coalition has become The Early Learning Coalition of Broward County.

What is the difference between VPK and School Readiness: VPK is a voluntary program available to all Florida residents, regardless of income. School readiness services mainly target lower income families, and focus on helping families find affordable, quality childcare.

Where VPK will be offered: Private childcare providers, parochial schools and public schools throughout Florida that meet the state's requirements for eligibility to offer VPK.

Where can I find out who will offer VPK: You can visit the Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc. website (www.elcbroward.org) to get a complete list of providers. Keep in mind that this is a living document and will be updated throughout the year.

Who is eligible for VPK: VPK is offered free to Florida residents who have children who are age four by September 1 of each school year beginning in 2005. We are projecting approximately 16,000 4 year-olds in Broward County will participate in the program.

###