Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.
PRC Meeting Agenda
August 28, 2023, at 2:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 824 0534 8690 **Passcode: 125793**

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82405348690?pwd=blE0aE1Eak9TUUd5eXlueVRyMStadz09

Members are reminded of conflict-of-interest provisions. In declaring a conflict, please refrain from voting or discussing and declare the following information: 1) Your name and position on the Board, 2) The nature of the conflict, and 3) Who will gain or lose as a result of the conflict. Please also fill out form 8B prior to the meeting.

		PAGE	
1.	**Call to Order**		Monica King, PRC Chair
2.	**Roll Call**		Melody Martinez, Board Liaison
3.	**Consent Agenda** 1. Approve June 02, 2023, Committee meeting minutes	**3**	Monica King, PRC Chair
4.	**Regular Business** 1. PRC241RB1 - School Readiness Enrollment/Redetermination Update (Goal 1 of Strategic Plan~~)~~	**7**	Amy Moore, Sr. Director of Family Services; Howard Bakalar, CPO; Christine Klima, CAO
	2. PRC241RB2 - VPK Enrollment Update (Goal 2 of Strategic Plan)	**8**	
	3. PRC241RB3- Education/Quality (Goals 3 and 4 of Strategic Plan) a. ARPA Discretionary Funds Update • Increasing/Building Supply of Child Care • Training, Professional Learning Activities, Workforce Initiatives • Local Initiatives/Pilot Projects to Improve Kindergarten Readiness • Community Outreach and Family Engagement • Mental Health/Special Needs Supports • Equipment, Supplies, Classroom/Child Care Materials • Curriculum • School Readiness Learning Computer Software ***Approval of Procurement for qualified trainer/trainings***	**9**	Allison Metsch, Sr. Director of Education and Quality Initiatives; Howard Bakalar, CPO
	4. PRC241RB4- Advocacy/Communications/Outreach Update	**44**	Ancel Pratt, Sr. Director of Communications & Outreach
5.	**Unfinished Business** **New Business** **Matters from the Chair** **Matters from the Committee** **Public Comment**		
6.	**Next PRC Meeting: TBD**		
7.	**Adjourn**		

Please Note: *Agenda is subject to revisions and additions at the discretion of the Chair of the Coalition. Notification will be sent of any such revisions or additions.* ***Members of the Public:*** *Please sign up at the entry desk for public comments to be made on any particular agenda items no later than five minutes after the Coalition meeting has been called to order.*

"As per §286.0105, Fla. Stat. Any person who decides to appeal any decision of the Board with respect to any matter considered at this meeting will need a record of the proceedings and for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made which record includes testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based."

Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, Inc.
Program Review Committee Meeting Minutes
June 02, 2023, at 12:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

Members in Attendance	Chair, Monica King; Dawn Liberta; Cindy Arenberg-Seltzer; Melody McDonald; Renee Podolsky
Members Absent	Richard Campillo; Laurie Sallarulo; Ellie Schrot
Staff in Attendance	Renee Jaffe, CEO; Judith Merritt, COO; Christine Klima, CAO; Howard Bakalar, CPO; Melody Martinez, Board Liaison; Lizbeth Juan, Executive Assistant; Amy Moore, Sr. Director of Family Services and Provider Relations; Allison Metsch, Sr. Director of Education & Quality; Ancel Pratt, III, Sr. Director of Communications & Outreach; Ayme Hamoui, Director of Education Program Assessment;
Others in Attendance	

Item	Action/Discussion
Welcome & Call to Order	Chair Monica King called the meeting to order at 12:03 PM. The roll was called, and a quorum was established.
Consent Agenda 1. Approve April 11, 2023, Committee meeting minutes. 2. PRC234CA1- Approval Business and Leadership Institute (BLI) Program Continuation 3. PRC234CA2- Approval of Scholastic (Bookworm Program) Continuation	There was a **Motion** to move both Consent Agendas by Cindy Arenberg-Seltzer and **Seconded** by Dawn Liberta. **Unanimously approved**. **Motion Passes.**
Regular Committee 1. PRC234RB1 – School Readiness Enrollment/Redetermination Update (Goal 1 of Strategic Plan)	Amy Moore provided updates on School Readiness enrollment and redetermination. ELC Broward is continuing to enroll families in School Readiness services. Since July 1, 2022, we have enrolled over 4,900 children. The pace of enrollment has slowed due to budgetary guidance by DEL. Our average monthly attrition rate is about 25%. There are 4,476 children due for the redetermination process, so we expect to lose more than 1,000 children on that front. Because there are unknowns about the level, timing, and funding from DEL for childcare slots for FY 24, we would like to review the range of options from which we have to choose in setting enrollment strategies for FY 24. Howard Bakalar, CPO, shared that we are creating plans B & C while we wait for the budget. Pausing enrollments for a week or 2 will not have many implications, but any lengthier pauses will cause a waitlist to generate. Renee Jaffe, CEO, shared that we are creating contingency plans so that we are prepared to move forward, come what may. This year the legislature increased the SR

	budget by $100 million and included in the budget $77 million for expansion services on the SR front. We are in limbo as we wait to hear how that $77 million will be allocated. DEL has agreed to quickly go through the de-obligation/re-obligation process. Melody McDonald asked if the pause would affect every level, like provider match etc., or are certain fundings are still being approved. What about the families who have started the process? Renee Jaffe, CEO, assured us that we would not pause something that's already in motion, and wherever possible, we would use attrition.
2. Education/Quality (Goals 3 and 4 of Strategic Plan) a. PRC234RB2(a)- Beyond Above and Beyond • Broadening of model • Continuation of Stipends • Educator bootcamp • Apprenticeships	Allison began the Broward Above and Beyond update by sharing the success of the program. We launched our CDA academy, which has 25 students enrolled and we bring the program to the school itself to take away the barrier. We worked with 55-60 schools by running training programs for directors, stipends, etc. We brought a career guidance specialist position to Above & Beyond. We have never had hands-on support in Broward County to help with the TEACH scholarships applications, and those numbers have increased. CLASS Scored have also increased. • 5.52 Above & Beyond VPK Averages • 5.32 All Community VPK (Including Above and Beyond Classrooms) out of a 7 • 5.30 All Community VPK (NOT Including Above and Beyond Classrooms) During the next fiscal year, we also plan to begin a "Bootcamp" for potential new educators, an apprenticeship program for educators who want to move up the career ladder, and a mental health consultation component to childcare centers. The apprenticeship program will mentor early childhood educators to the next level. Renee shared that ELC is working with CareerSource for the apprenticeship program. We came up with the concept for this kind of program, and they think that they can fund a portion of the apprenticeship program which would be very helpful. Cindy Arenberg-Seltzer asked if Above and Beyond was the implementation of the ARPA building a world-class workforce? Allison responded that Above and Beyond was funded through CRSSA dollars. Above & Beyond was about recruiting, upscaling, and retaining the workforce. The last group of funds was the ARPA word class workforce money, where new staff got paid for the 3 weeks of employment, the 45 hours, and the series of training for both directors and staff.
b. PRC234RB2(b)- System of	

care status/ advances • Inclusion • Peer specialists • Mental health consultation • Help Me Grow	Allison shared that the ELC, along with Maria Juarez Stouffer has been meeting monthly to discuss systems of care. We have added 2 additional inclusion specialists and a coordinator. AD Henderson has now agreed to fund two Peer Support Specialists—parents/caregivers of children with special needs who "have been there." These Specialists have experience navigating the system and will provide necessary emotional and other support to families. The statewide Help Me Grow program promotes early identification of developmental, behavioral, and educational concerns, then links children and families to community-based services and support. ELC Broward wants to be the next Help Me Grow delegate in Broward County and we have initiated conversations with 211 to garner their support in this endeavor. Monica King shared that this item is contingent on the availability of funds, but we want to move forward if those funds become available. ELC Broward is hoping for the opportunity to add a small cadre of mental health consultation staff to the Early Care system with its anticipated stimulus funds. While these consultants would not provide direct clinical services, because it is out of the scope of services we provide, this would offer parents and educators opportunities and strategies to address specific behaviors. Howard shared that we anticipate this to fund under the stimulus dollars that we expect to get.
c. PRC234RB2(c)- Approve Continuation of the Children's Forum's INCENTIVE$ Wage Supplements, pending Availability of Funds	There was a **Motion** to approve the Continuation of the Children's Forum's INCENTIVE$ Wage Supplements, pending the Availability of Funds by Dawn Liberta and **Seconded** by Cindy Arenberg-Seltzer. **Unanimously approved**. **Motion Passes.**
d. PRC234RB(d)- Approval of Education technology supports procurement concept (Approval Item)	ELC Broward is continually implementing new innovative programs and services to serve our families and children. As early learning education has evolved and technology has become more prevalent in classrooms, the availability of web-based learning programs for children has increased. The Age of Learning Program has been in recent use in Palm Beach County. For FAST Assessments, VPK students have been able to go from an average of children scoring in the 50th percentile during the first assessment to the upper 70th percentile on the third assessment. The program staff at the ELC of Palm Beach attribute much of this progress to the technology supports being instituted. Monica King asked if this was a subscription to an online platform. Allison responded that it was and that we would give access to the schools and we would be paying for a subscription.

	In procuring technology aids, ELC Broward will advertise a product that: It is geared to progress at the pace of each individual child; involves childcare educators, involves parents/caregivers, addresses the literacy and math domains that should help children's FAST scores rise; and could potentially raise the CLASS scores of the classrooms using the technology. This technology procurement will be subject to the availability of stimulus funds. There was a **Motion** to Approve Concept of Procurement of Education Technology Aids by Cindy Arenberg-Seltzer and **Seconded** by Melody McDonald. **Unanimously approved**. **Motion Passes.**
Unfinished Business	None
New Business	Ancel announced that M-Network submitted one of the ad campaigns for Bookworms for a Tele Award, and the campaign won.
Matters from the Chair	None
Matters from the Committee	None
Public Comments	Renee Jaffe, CEO, mentioned that there are some really exciting components to the mental health consultant plan. This model has been done in other places and has proven to have a huge impact on the children, the families, and the classrooms. We are hoping we can pilot this on a small scale once we get clarification on the funding.
Next Meeting	**Tentative August 28, 2023**
Adjourn	The meeting adjourned at 1:07 PM.

These minutes contain the action items of the Board meeting of the Early Learning Coalition of Broward. They do not include all of the Committee's discussions or comments on each matter or issue raised during the meeting. A tape recording of the meeting is held in the Coalition office. Corrections from the Committee will be taken before approval at the next meeting.

ITEM #/MEETING:	PRC241RB1/Program Review Committee Meeting
MEETING DATE:	08/28/2023
SUBJECT:	School Readiness Enrollment/Redetermination Update
FOR ACTION:	No
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	None
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	None
AS RECOMMENDED BY:	N/A
ELC STAFF LEADS	Amy Moore, Howard Bakalar, Christine Klima

Background Information:

Beginning in FY 2019-20, the Office of Early Learning (OEL), gave ELC Broward additional funding to clear its waitlist for childcare for income-eligible families. At the time, there were thousands of children waiting for childcare. OEL and its successor, the Division of Early Learning (DEL), continued to fund the elimination of the waitlist. Last year FY 2021-2022, with some staffing additions and modifications, ELC was able to enroll a record 4,255 children. In FY 2022-2023, we enrolled 5,171 children.

In May of 2023, we were given notice from DEL that the base allocation for enrolling and maintaining children in care would not be raised to sustain the number of children in Broward's School Readiness system. On June 5th, we paused enrollments to bring our census of participants more in line with a decreased budget scenario. Christine Klima, CAO, gave a presentation at the June board indicating that it would take approximately $30 million to keep us at our current level of children enrolled (approximately $15,500 paid monthly), and she reviewed scenarios we would explore based on the level of funding we could anticipate receiving, and the timing of funding announcements.

Because there are still unknowns about the level of and the timing of funding we will receive from DEL for childcare slots for FY 2024, we reviewed the range of options from which we have to choose in setting enrollment strategies for FY 2024.

Current Status:

We've continued suspending enrollment of children from the School Readiness waitlist. This pause affects applications approved on or after June 5, 2023. Presently, we have approximately 1,300 children waiting for childcare assistance.

Because we are confident, we will be receiving approximately $15 million of the $77 million earmarked by the legislature for the prevention of waitlists at the end of the last session, our intended course of action involves commencing the enrollment of a limited number of children in the second half of September. The enrollment quantity will be contingent upon the number of children we have already discontinued serving within this fiscal year.

Since the start of this fiscal year on July 1st, our records show an attrition rate of approximately 25 percent, leading to the termination of services for 791 children. During the remainder of the first quarter of this fiscal year (August and September), we have a combined total of 3,435 children scheduled for redetermination. The outcomes of these redeterminations will be a key factor in shaping our approach to new waitlist enrollments for the fiscal year. Additionally, we will factor in any potential enrollment increases from our "side door" eligibility categories, which currently show no significant change in level of enrollment activity. The goal of our enrollment strategy to replace at least a portion of the children lost through attrition is to prevent a significant decline in our enrollment figures as the fiscal year unfolds.

ITEM #/MEETING:	PRC241RB2/Program Review Committee Meeting
MEETING DATE:	08/28/2023
SUBJECT:	VPK Enrollment Update
FOR ACTION:	No
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	None
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	None
AS RECOMMENDED BY:	N/A
ELC STAFF LEADS	Amy Moore, Ancel Pratt

Background Information:

Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Program is free for all 4-year-old children living in the State of Florida. During the school year, 540 instructional hours (usually 3 hours per school day) are allotted for VPK learning. While the vast majority of families who take advantage of VPK do so during the school year, Summer VPK is also available in a much smaller number of preschools and School District sites. During the summer, 300 hours are allotted for learning.

Before the pandemic began, Broward County had 15,022 children enrolled in school year VPK in FY 2018-19, and 15,928 children enrolled in FY 2019-20. During the pandemic, these numbers dropped to 11,813 children enrolled in school year VPK. During the 2021-2022 program year, schools began a new sense of normalcy, 14,018 children enrolled in school year VPK that year.

The 2022-2023 VPK school year had a challenging start statewide due to various reasons. Last year's increased funding for staff payment incentives caused confusion. Additionally, new requirements for VPK educators rolled out slowly with training availability issues. As a result, 13,959 children enrolled in the VPK program for that year.

Current Status:

As of August 24, 2023, we have approved almost 14,000 VPK school-year applications. We will give an updated number at the PRC meeting. This time of year, numbers climb, as families are focused on getting the certificates necessary to enroll their children at VPK sites to start the school year. To put this number in context, by the end of last year, we approved 15,866 VPK school year applications, and 13,959 students eventually completed their enrollment.

Every year, the Statewide Estimating Conference assembles to forecast the expected percentage and volume of VPK enrollments across Florida, both at the state level and within individual counties. These preliminary projections are typically released at the start of the school year. The Estimating Conference was held last week, and for the 2023-2024 program year, the Conference's projections for VPK School year participation in Broward County is 13,810 children (66% of eligible 4-year-olds), which remains below the levels seen pre-pandemic. We are optimistic that we will meet the enrollment benchmarks set by the Statewide Estimating Conference. Reaching the pre-pandemic enrollment levels in the VPK program is a challenge that extends beyond Broward County; it's a challenge shared across the entire state. While our dedicated outreach efforts have certainly had a positive impact, our enrollment numbers have not fully returned to pre-pandemic levels.

ITEM #/MEETING:	PRC241RB3/Program Review Committee Meeting
MEETING DATE:	08/28/2023
SUBJECT:	Education & Quality Programming Update, ARPA Discretionary Funds
FOR ACTION:	Yes
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	**Initial approval of procurement for trainers for professional learning activities related to improving teaching environments and children's learning experiences.**
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	None
AS RECOMMENDED BY:	N/A
ELC STAFF LEADS	Allison Metsch, Howard Bakalar

Background Information:

At the June 2023 PRC meeting, ELC staff reported on the conclusion and results of the Worldclass Workforce stimulus dollars (mainly, training stipends/bonuses prescribed by the Division of Early Learning) and CRSSA dollars (Broward Above and Beyond model). We also reported that we expected to get a portion of the approximately $350 million the State had remaining for ARPA Discretionary funds. This past week, DEL released instructions for the Coalitions to apply for their allocations for the $305 million ARPA Discretionary pool that DEL is expected to award in September. Broward will receive approximately $19.3 million of these funds. The list below represents many of the plans we have for these funds. The numbered categories are taken from the Legislative guidance for allowable use of the funds.

Current Status:

1. **Increasing/building the supply of childcare:**
   - **Special Needs Capacity:**
     ELC staff is deepening its work in the special needs area by recruiting child care facilities that will create settings that could translate to more placement stability/success for children with identified special needs that are in danger of repeat expulsions. These settings would have smaller ratios and well-trained staff who would be better equipped to work with children with behavioral, developmental, and other issues. Staff will utilize the Florida Special Needs Rate Matrix of Services tool (**please see attachment #1**) to determine levels of need/intervention/reimbursement for facilities serving these children.

     Additionally, staff was asked to help Rep. Robin Bartleman craft legislation to focus on placements for special needs children, and joined with Rep. Bartleman, Erin Smeltzer, CEO of the Florida Children's Forum, and Jennifer Shields, Executive Director of the Florida Association for Child Care Management (FACCM) to draft a bill. Rep. Bartleman intends to introduce legislation that would require coalitions attempt to recruit and appropriately compensate child care facilities that can better meet special needs children's needs.

2. **Training and Professional Learning Activities:**
   - **Continued Training Opportunities:** In addition to contracting with the Business and Leadership Institute and Incentive$ (both of these were approved by the Program Review Committee at their June meeting), we will be:
     - reimbursing new child care educators for successfully completing their health and safety standards training (45 hours of training)
     - Conducting free onsite and community wide CDA classes
     - Continuing to offer deeply discounted CPR classes for all educators
     - Resuming our live Early Childhood Educators Conference
     - Resuming trainings to prepare VPK and SR providers for CLASS Observations
     - Funding the local portion requirement for TEACH scholarships

- **New Training Opportunities:** ELC staff will also conduct a Request for Proposals or Request for Qualifications process for outside trainers to conduct trainings in multiple languages related to a number of topics that can improve/enhance/inform instruction in the classroom, including but not limited to:
    - STEAM-based instruction and activities
    - Trauma Informed Care
    - Managing challenging behaviors
    - Infant Mental Health
    - Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST)

Stipends will be made available to encourage/reward successful training completion.

***Recommended Action: Initial approval of procurement for trainers to conduct professional learning activities related to improving teaching environments and children's learning experiences, including trainings related to children's mental health and special needs.**

Approval is initial because this item will also appear on both Finance and Executive Committee agendas for approval.

3. **Workforce Initiatives, local initiatives/pilot projects to improve kindergarten readiness:**
    - **Expand Above and Beyond Model:** The ARPA discretionary funds will allow the ELC to continue and expand much of its Above and Beyond model, allowing for education staff to be assigned to specific providers to conduct onsite coaching, training, and technical assistance activities. At the Program Review Committee's June meeting, we had discussed our plan to expand key aspects of the model across our provider community. As shown at the last meeting, VPK CLASS scores of Above and Beyond participants were higher than the general population of VPK providers.

    - **Museum of Discovery and Science (MODS) Partnership:** Staff is also excited to continue/expand its partnership with the Museum of Discovery and Science (MODS). Having previously sponsored its Stem Mobile to both "bring the museum" to SR classrooms, we plan to work with the museum to create more opportunities for our children and families to experience the Museum, especially as its new early childhood space is now open. We are also exploring the possibility of working with MODS to expand the current community Kindergarten readiness events to include a trip to the museum.

    - **New Educator Bootcamp:** Discussed at the June 2023 PRC meeting.

    - **Child Care Educator Apprenticeship Program:** Discussed at the June 2023 PRC meeting.

4. **Community Outreach and family engagement:**
    - **Bookworms:** As discussed at the PRC's June meeting, staff will be continuing its Bookworms program, partnering with Scholastic to send free books to Broward families.

    - **Baby Bookworms:** Baby Bookworms will promote parent bonding/reading to infants. Parents will be able to sign up for Baby Bookworms and receive their first set of books while still in the hospital following the delivery of their child. At the same time, parents will receive information about the ELC Broward and the services/resources we provide.

    - **Museum of Discovery and Science**: Also discussed in #3 above, we will also be working with MODS to promote family engagement. We envision at least one family day at MODS for our families to come and explore the museum for free.

    - **Parent Bootcamp**: Staff is excited to host informational and experiential trainings for new parents. These trainings will focus on child development, parent-child communication, and the common rewards/challenges of first-time parenting.

5. **Mental Health/Special Needs Supports**
   - **Mental Health Conference:** The ELC plans to partner with United Way of Broward County to co-host this year's Mental Health Conference in May. This year, we expect to create a special track focusing on young children's social, behavioral, emotional, and mental health needs. United Way has been hosting this very successful conference for eight years.

   - **Help Me Grow:** As discussed at the last Program Review Committee meeting, we anticipate responding to the Florida Children's Forum's procurement for expanding the State's Help Me Grow programming. In anticipation of the procurement, we plan to conduct outreach activities to local churches and community groups to educate them concerning children's developmental milestones.

   - **Behavior Baskets:** Staff will create Behavior Baskets to support teachers and students by providing educational materials to each contracted school that help with improving students' positive classroom behaviors, encourage students to self-regulate their emotions, communicate using visuals and relieve stress and anxiety. Items, such as puppets, feelings books, visual prompts/cards, and fidget/sensory toys, will be included in the "baskets."

   - **Mental Health Consultants:** ELC plans to contract with up to six Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant (ECMHC). ECMHC's has specialized training in early childhood development. They form collaborative relationships with teachers, families, and other professionals working with young children that are demonstrating behavioral issues due to early adverse events in their life. The Consultant's goal is to find out what a teacher's or family's high priority concerns are and collaboratively problem solve to build relationships and address immediate needs. With background in mental health, this role takes the lead in connecting the school and the family in a holistic and individualized approach. This support will supplement the on-site technical assistance that promotes classroom management and design/set-up and child screening support provided by our Inclusion Specialists to our educators and families.

6. **Equipment, supplies, classroom/childcare materials:**
   - **CLASS Incentives:**
     ELC staff will provide a one-time dollar incentive for childcare providers who have a 2024 - 2025 CLASS score of at least a 5.2 or higher and have increased their score by .2 or higher on their previous SR or VPK Composite score. Schools new to a CLASS observation will receive a one-time dollar incentive for scoring at a 5.0 or above. These funds will be used for equipment and/or classroom materials at recognized early childhood material vendors.

   - **ELC Training Room/Model Classroom (STEM Room):**
     Additionally, ELC Broward will be transforming its former call center space into a model classroom, which will be used as training space for early learning educators and directors. This will allow for a hands-on experience to practice and implement content. The space will also be utilized for parent engagement opportunities.

7. **Curriculum:**
   - **Curriculum Reimbursement:**
     Both the Division of Early Learning and the Florida Legislature through its designated ARPA discretionary spending categories have expressed the desire for School Readiness providers and VPK providers to receive curriculum and accompanying curriculum supports free of charge. ELC Broward will reimburse providers for any State-approved curriculum upon completion of an application form DEL has created, and receipts proving purchase of materials and accompanying supports. There are still a few questions ELC's are waiting for answers for at the State level. Once these are answered, we will be ready to communicate this opportunity to eligible providers. As usual, we will be using our fantastic CRM (thank you, Hubert and team) to administer this process.

8. **School Readiness Learning Computer Software:**
   At the June Program Review Committee meeting, the committee members approved the concept of ELC staff procuring learning software that could help children achieve proficiency in literacy/math skills, which would help indicate they were Kindergarten ready. We continue to filter our local data and are expecting DEL to allow us to soon compare it to statewide data to try and determine where this software can best be utilized.

   We are also waiting for DEL to answer some contracting questions, which will determine whether we can utilize the ARPA discretionary funds to enter into multi-year contracts with software vendors, as we do not want to begin a large technology project and have to end it just as providers are achieving proficiency with it.

Attachment(s)

- Special Needs Rate Matrix

Florida Special Needs Rate
A Matrix of Services Tool

Instructions for Initiating Special Needs Rate Discussions

BACKGROUND

Serving Florida's most vulnerable children is a critical goal for the School Readiness (SR) Program, which includes children with special needs and learning delays. To ensure they have access to quality programs, the Division of Early Learning (DEL) provides a rate differential, or a special needs rate, to offset additional costs providers may incur when serving children with special needs. Special needs rate funds are to supplement, not supplant, funding provided through the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), Parts C (ages birth to three) and B (ages 3-21). A child does not need an established Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Under *Rule 6M-4.500(7), Florida Administrative Code*, "a child care provider may be reimbursed by the coalition at a higher rate if caring for any SR child with special needs requiring additional care beyond services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)." To receive a special needs rate, the provider must submit a list of services it is providing to each child with special needs, in addition to the routine school readiness services. The rate may be negotiated up to twenty percent (20%) above the established coalition reimbursement rate for infant care. The rule further clarifies that the child's condition requiring a special needs rate must be validated by a licensed health, mental health, education, or social service professional other than the child's parent or person employed by the child care provider.

OVERVIEW

The *Florida Special Needs Rate: A Matrix of Services Tool* for the SR Program should be used to begin discussions and negotiations between providers and the early learning coalitions (coalition) to establish whether to apply a special needs rate in addition to basic reimbursement levels.

In the matrix, five domains are used to group the types of services and five levels are used to describe the nature and intensity of services within each domain. The total number of points, determined by adding together the scores of each domain and applicable special consideration points, results in a rating and a percentage of the applicable special needs rate. The coalition may reassess the rate as needed. However, annual developmental screenings, child assessments, changes in the child's medical or health status, and changes to individualized family support plans and education plans should be considered when determining special needs rates.

There are two main points to consider. First, the services checked on the matrix must be based on individual needs resulting from a child's disability or delay and may not simply reflect services offered to all children in a particular class or program. Second, each service provided to a student should be checked in only one domain. Raters need to focus on a particular domain and check the services directly related to that domain. For example, organizational strategies taught for the purpose of allowing a child to function independently in the classroom should be checked under Domain C, Independent Functioning, rather than under Domain A, Curriculum and Learning Environment. Consultation conducted for the purpose of ensuring the academic success of a student should be checked under Domain A, Curriculum and Learning Environment—not in other domains where the word "consultation" is listed in a service description.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accommodations – changes that can be made in the way child accesses information and demonstrates performance. Accommodations involve the use of various strategies, assistive technologies, flexibility in the schedule or environment, or support from a person to increase, maintain or improve the performance of a student with disabilities working through the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five standards. Determining the intensity of the accommodations will be critical to determining the appropriate level of ratings.

Accessible instructional materials – instructional materials that have been formatted or adapted to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities.

Alternative or augmentative communication systems – any and all types of communication approaches that assist, suggest, supplement or substitute for the student's language skills (speech). These systems may include manual communication (signing); electronic devices; or non-electronic devices, adaptations, and materials.

Assistance for activities of daily living and self-care – includes occasional reminders, cueing, direct instruction, and personal assistance. (Domain C: Independent Functioning)

Assistive technology – any item, piece of equipment or product system—whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customized—that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with a disability. It does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted or the replacement of that device. Examples of assistive technology devices include remote-controlled switches, expanded keyboards, and speech output devices.

Behavioral interventions – strategies, procedures, protocols and supports implemented to modify or maintain a student's behavior.

Behavior management – includes services provided to meet identified social and emotional needs of children with exceptionalities. Services may include positive behavioral supports, behavioral interventions, social skills development, socialization, and counseling. (Domain B: Social or Emotional Behavior)

Classroom setting – general factors related to the educational setting, such as a student-to-staff ratio and degree of structure provided, as well as specialized environmental considerations such as acoustics.

Collaboration – a joint effort among teachers, families, agencies, and others. Collaboration involves cooperative, proactive work on the part of all participants, with all parties actively planning and carrying out interventions designed to meet a student's needs. To be checked on the matrix, collaboration must be regularly scheduled and conducted face-to-face. At Level 3, written exchange among professionals or families does not constitute collaboration.

Communication systems – alternative and augmentative communication devices, electronic and non-electronic tools, and individual amplification systems. (Domain E: Communication)

Consultation – sharing of information between teachers, families, agencies, and others to address the student's needs. To be checked on the matrix, consultation must be regularly scheduled and conducted face-to-face or virtually, as defined in each domain. Written exchange among professionals does not constitute a virtual meeting; however, written exchange with families is allowable for consultation at Level 2.

Continuous – uninterrupted, constant. (Generally used in Level 5)

Counseling – refers to individual or group activities provided by trained and credentialed or certified professionals to address the social and emotional needs of students or families.

Curriculum – includes materials and instructional plans that support the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five and developmentally appropriate practice.

Different – curriculum and needed instructional approaches, materials, or equipment that are generally or considerably different from the regular program; requires a great deal of customization for individual students. (Generally used in Levels 4 and 5)

Differential percentage rate – the percentage of rate differential, based on negotiated rate up to twenty percent (20%) above the infant care rate established by the early learning coalition.

Differentiated instruction – differentiated curriculum consists of flexibility in instructional methods, delivery, and materials to meet the learning needs of a highly diverse group; tailoring instruction to meet individual needs, focusing on differentiating content, process, and products for the learning environment.

Domain – one of five areas on the Matrix of Services intended to cover the special services and supports provided in an educational setting. The five domains are A: Curriculum and Learning Environment; B: Social or Emotional Behavior; C: Independent Functioning; D: Health Care; and E: Communication.

Electronic tools – a generic term for any type of powered device, such as computers, switches, and audio devices.

Extensive – broad and comprehensive changes are required. (Generally used in Level 4)

Frequency – the number of times a service occurs.

Functional behavioral assessment – a process for developing a useful understanding of how behavior relates to the environment. A functional behavioral assessment typically includes observations of the student and his behavior in one or more settings and at various times, interviews with individuals familiar with the student, review of records, and formal and informal measurement procedures.

Instruction – facilitates the student's acquisition of knowledge or skills; commonly described as teaching, guiding, and scaffolding.

Instructional strategies – guidelines supporting the development of instructional activities, which for some students includes increasingly individualized approaches and methods for delivering instruction and learning activities, e.g., lesson planning and presentation routines, practice opportunities, monitoring procedures, group and individual work, and hands-on activities and projects. (Domain A: Curriculum and Learning Environment)

Interpreting services – visual presentation of oral language to students who are deaf or hard of hearing through communication modes, such as sign language, finger spelling or oral interpretation of the spoken message. Interpreters also voice the communication of students who are deaf or hard of hearing to individuals who are hearing.

Learning environment – includes assessment procedures, materials and equipment, and classroom setting.

Level – used to indicate the frequency and intensity of services and the qualifications of personnel required to provide the services. There are five levels in each domain. Level 1 represents the lowest level of service and Level 5 represents the highest level of service.

Majority – more than 50 percent.

Materials and equipment – regular, alternative, or modified textbooks, workbooks, media materials, references and resources, software, tools, supplies, and equipment required for learning and performing in the educational program. (Domain A: Curriculum and Learning Environment)

Modifications – alterations, transformations and variations provided to curriculum, instruction, materials, or equipment.

Monitoring health conditions – periodic checking of the status of the student's health condition by a professional medical provider to keep track of, manage, or control the condition. (Domain D: Health Care)
Monthly – every month, e.g., one to three times a month. (Generally used in Level 2)
Orientation and mobility training – teaching concepts, skills, and techniques necessary for a student who has a visual impairment to travel safely and efficiently through any environment.
Personal assistance – direct help or aid to the student.
Related health care services – management of or specialized administration of medication, suctioning or tube feeding, or the provision of other types of needed school health services. Collaboration with agencies and families may be part of the required service. (Domain D: Health Care)
Services – work or duties performed for the assistance or benefit of students with exceptionalities. May be provided to students. Services include instruction, personal assistance, supervision, and monitoring.
Social skills development – includes individual or group instruction or counseling on relevant social and self-regulatory skills. (Domain B: Social or Emotional Behavior)
Socialization – includes social skills that may be acquired through specific training or the provision of opportunities for socialization that require substantial planning.
Special Considerations – the section of the matrix consisting of a checklist that is used to determine if additional points should be added to the total of the domain ratings before determining the special needs rate.
Substantial – considerable and sizable changes. (Generally used in Level 5)
Supervision or monitoring – a direct service used to oversee, maintain, regulate, or control a particular behavior or condition. In Domain C, this includes observing and reporting independent behavior, as well as the provision of direct supervision and assistance to ensure the student can benefit from the educational experience as well as to maintain personal safety and compliance.
Very small group – a student-to-staff ratio of 3-to-1 or less.

INSTRUCTIONS

Users of the *Matrix of Services Tool* should follow the steps below to complete the tool.

Step 1. Begin by completing the child's information section on the first page and by writing the child's name on all subsequent pages.

Step 2. The rater should then check all the services that will be provided to the student in the first domain, Curriculum and Learning Environment (Domain A).

Step 3. Once all Domain A services have been checked, the rater should check the box indicating the highest level at which services have been indicated. This is the domain rating and should also be recorded at the bottom of the Domain A checklist.

Step 4. Steps 1-3 should be followed for Domains B through E.

Step 5. Once the information for Domains A through E has been completed, the rater should determine if any additional points will be added to the domain ratings by checking all the Special Considerations statements that apply.

Step 6. The next step is to sum the five domain ratings and the Special Considerations rating and indicate the total of the ratings on the final page of the matrix.

Step 7. Using the Differential Percentage Scale below, the rater should then note the percentage that corresponds to the total rating.

Total of Domain Ratings: _____ Special Consideration Ratings: _____ Total of Ratings: _____	**Reimbursement Rate Scale** Total Rating — Percent Rate Increase 6 – 11 — 10% 12 – 17 — 15% 18+ — 20%

Step 8. Finally, both the total of ratings and the percentage should be recorded on the top of the first page of the matrix.

Examples of Differential Percentage rates

Domain A – 1	Domain A – 3	Domain A – 4
Domain B – 1	Domain B – 1	Domain B – 2
Domain C – 1	Domain C – 3	Domain C – 4
Domain D – 1	Domain D – 1	Domain D – 4
Domain E – 1	Domain E – 3	Domain E – 4
No additional points for Special Consideration	One additional point for Special Consideration	One additional point for Special Consideration
Total Rating = 5	**Total Rating = 12**	**Total Rating = 19**
Differential Percentage = N/A	**Differential Percentage = 15%**	**Differential Percentage = 20%**

Example Calculations of Total Amount Paid for the Daily Infant Rate:

Child's age: (same calculation regardless of age)
Coalition's infant base rate: $55.00
Differential percentage: 15%
(55.00 x .15) + $55.00 = $63.25
Total: $63.25

LEVELS

The matrix is designed with five levels in each of the five domain areas. Level 1 represents the lowest level of services and Level 5 represents the highest level of service. Critical factors that impact decision making on the appropriate level of service include the frequency and intensity of the service and the qualifications of personnel required to provide the service.

Level Descriptions

- ***Level 1*** indicates that the child requires no services or assistance beyond those that are normally available to all children. "Services or assistance normally available to all students" refers to the education, health, and other services and assistance made available to all students in the educational setting. These include routine administration of medication, school-wide curricula, and an appropriate learning environment with qualified instructional personnel and standard materials and equipment.
- ***Level 2*** indicates the student is receiving assistance on a periodic basis or receives minor supports, assistance, or services. For example, in Domain A, Curriculum and Learning Environment, the child may require presentation, response, scheduling or setting accommodations; the use of electronic devices; or need enrichment activities. Terms used to describe Level 2 services include supports, minimal accommodations to assist in accessing curriculum or learning environment, monthly services, and consultation. An example of consultation is when a teacher gathers information from a child's family on a regular basis to better meet the needs of the child. In this case, the parent is a source of information while the teacher takes the responsibility for planning and carrying out the interventions determined to be necessary because of the information gathering
- ***Level 3*** indicates the child is receiving accommodations to the learning environment that are more complex or is receiving services on a more frequent schedule. For example, in Domain B, Social or Emotional Behavior, the child may require weekly assessment of behavior as part of a behavior intervention plan. The term ***collaboration,*** used consistently at Level 3, refers to a joint effort among teachers, family, agencies, and other providers, and involves cooperative, proactive work on the part of all participants.
- ***Level 4*** indicates that for most learning activities, the child is receiving specialized approaches, assistance, or equipment, or is receiving more extensive modification to the learning environment. Services received daily are generally included at this level. For example, in Domain C, Independent Functioning, the child may require supervision during most activities for physical safety or assistance with activities of daily living that require frequent assistance from a staff member. Terms used to describe Level 4 services and supports include very specialized or different programs or approaches, daily or very frequent services and assistance needed for most learning activities.
- ***Level 5*** indicates that the child is receiving continuous and intense (one-on-one or very small group) assistance, multiple services, or substantial modifications for most learning activities. For example, in Domain D, Health Care, the child may receive a combination of services, such as suctioning and the delivery of medications that necessitates continuous monitoring and assistance. Terms used to describe Level 5 services and supports include continuous or constant intervention of assistance, intensive or individualized approaches and services for most of the school day and multiple services.

DOMAINS

The matrix includes five domains that are intended to cover the special services and supports provided in an educational setting. Each child is scored in all five domains. For domains in which the child does not have a need for special education and related services, the student is scored at a Level 1.

Check all special services that will be provided to the child, except services that are funded by agencies or others outside the early learning coalition and provider.

Domain A: Curriculum and Learning Environment addresses services provided to the child in the areas of curriculum, instructional strategies, and learning environment.

- *Curriculum* includes materials and instructional plans that support the *Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Birth to Five* content and developmentally appropriate practice
- *Instructional strategies* include specialized approaches and methods for delivering and differentiating instruction, specifically designed learning activities and the incorporation of universal design for learning.
- *Learning environment* includes assessment procedures, materials and equipment including assistive technology and accessible instructional materials and classroom settings and schedules.

The nature and intensity of accommodations or modifications and the divergence from the typical curriculum, instructional strategies and learning environment are the guiding factors in determining the level of service in this domain. When most of the child's instructional materials require extensive modification or the use of a modified curriculum, the services checked typically fall in higher levels of the matrix.

Domain B: Social or Emotional Behavior includes services provided to meet identified social and emotional needs of children with exceptionalities. Services included in this domain address positive behavioral supports, behavioral interventions, social skills development, socialization, and counseling as a related service.

- *Behavioral interventions* include the use of behavior analytic techniques, such as reinforcement or consequence procedures, teaching missing behavioral skills to promote self-regulation and increased opportunities for teacher-child connections.
- *Social skills development* includes instruction on relevant social and self-regulatory skills, as well as individual or group interactions.
- *Socialization* includes social skills that must be acquired through specific training or the provision of opportunities for socialization that require substantial planning.

The factors determining the level of service in the Social or Emotional Behavior domain are frequency, nature and intensity of the intervention or collaboration.

Services in Domain B, Social or Emotional Behavior, may not be needed by children other than those identified as lacking normed emotional or behavioral abilities. For example, some students identified as having an intellectual disability may need training in social skill, and some students with a significant cognitive disability or autism spectrum disorder may require considerable assistance to ensure they participate in social activities. Another example may be a child who is

developmentally advanced and is performing significantly below ability and requires special guidance and counseling to address the causes of the underachievement or a child who has a visual impairment who must be taught social skills normally acquired through incidental observation.

Domain C: Independent Functioning includes services that are necessary for the independent functioning of children with exceptionalities, which may be noted in other domains. These services include instruction in organizational strategies, assistance for activities on daily living and self-care, physical therapy, occupational therapy, orientation and mobility training, and supervision of students to ensure physical safety. It is important to remember that while some professional therapies are included in independent functioning interventions, the SR Program provides teacher and classroom supports for the children. Physical, occupational, and speech therapies are provided through other agencies and providers. Teachers and providers may collaborate with therapists to promote strategies and behaviors recommended by other providers.

- *Instruction in organizational strategies* refers to specific instruction or materials determined necessary for a student to be able to function independently in the classroom or have access to educational programming. These strategies may include instruction in organizational skills such as time management and the use of visual cues for schedule reminders.
- *Assistance for activities of daily living and self-care* includes reminders, cueing, direct instruction, or personal assistance in toileting, eating and personal hygiene.
- *Physical therapy* refers to a specially prescribed program directed toward the development, improvement, or restoration of neuromuscular or sensorimotor function, relief of pain, or control of postural deviations to attain functional performance in the educational setting.
- *Occupational therapy* refers to a specifically designed program directed toward improvement of a significant dysfunction in daily living skills, academic learning skills, or adaptive social or emotional behavior because of physical, motor, or neurological deficits.
- *Orientation and mobility training* refers to the teaching of concepts, skills, and techniques necessary for a student who has a visual impairment to travel safely and efficiently through any environment.
- *Supervision or monitoring of students* includes the observation and reporting of independent behavior, as well as the provision of direct supervision and assistance to ensure the physical safety of the student and compliance with school regulations.

The levels of service are based on the frequency or need for assistance or supervision and the nature and intensity of the interventions.

Services in Domain C, Independent Functioning, may be needed by students other than those identified as having an orthopedic or visual impairment or those receiving either physical or occupational therapy. For example, some students identified as having a specific learning disability may require specific instruction in organizational strategies and some students identified as having an emotional or behavioral disability will require supervision to ensure physical safety. Other students may require supervision because of their lack of awareness of dangerous situations, unlike their same-age peers. When rating a child in Domain C, Independent Functioning, it is particularly important to consider the needs of the child in relation to same-age peers. For example, all students require supervision to ensure their physical safety. Services related to supervision should only be checked when they go beyond what is normally offered to students of the same age without disabilities.

Domain D: Health Care addresses services provided to children with exceptionalities who have health care needs. Included in this domain are services related to monitoring and assessment of health conditions, provision of related health care services, and interagency collaboration. However, funding for many professional medical services is not available through the SR Program so such services are provided through other resources.

- *Monitoring and assessment of health conditions* refers to periodic observation and review by a nurse or regular monitoring of the status of a student's health condition by appropriate staff.
- *Related health care services* include the management or student-specific administration of medication, suctioning and tube feeding, or the provision of other types of needed health care services.
- *Interagency collaboration* includes work with professionals and agencies such as Children's Medical Services, Medicaid, county health units and public-private entities to ensure a cohesive and unified approach to supporting special health care needs for individual students.

Domain D, Health Care, levels are based on the frequency, nature and intensity of the services provided and the qualifications of personnel required for services and collaboration. Teachers and instructional aides are not typically qualified to monitor or address health care needs; however, they may receive training in providing student-specific health care services.

Domain E: Communication includes services provided to support the communication needs of children with exceptionalities. Services included in this domain are personal assistance, instructional interventions, speech or language therapy, and the use of alternative and augmentative communication systems. As with the other domains, it is important to remember that funding for many professional services is not available through the SR Program so such services are provided through other agencies and providers.

At lower levels, personal assistance for communication may be provided by an interpreter, teacher, speech-language pathologist, note taker, speech-language assistant, or teacher aide.

- *Instruction interventions* include consultation and collaboration with teachers and speech-language pathologists, as well as direct instruction. Such intervention may be related to developing appropriate communication skills and competencies for learning, vocational training, social adjustment and functional or appropriate communication. Interventions may also include instructing the child in the use of alternative and augmentative communication systems, sign language, and speech reading.
- *Speech or language therapy* involves the treatment of disorders of language, speech sounds, fluency or voice that interfere with communication, learning, or social adjustment.
- *Alternative and augmentative communication systems* include the use of signing, electronic and non-electronic tools, and individual and classroom amplification systems.

The levels are based on the frequency, nature and intensity of the services provided and on the qualifications of personnel required to provide services and collaboration.

Services under Domain E, Communication, may be required by students other than those identified as having speech impairment, language impairment, hearing impairment, or dual sensory impairment. For example, some children identified as having an emotional or behavioral disability may require assistance in pragmatic or appropriate communication incorporated into their instructional program.

Special Considerations consists of a checklist at the back of the matrix form that is used to determine if additional points should be added to the total of the domain ratings before determining the differential. Raters should check any of the applicable special consideration items and add the number of points indicated to the total of the domain ratings before determining the differential.

Florida Department of Education, Division of Early Learning
Special Needs Rate Guidance for Funding under the Florida School Readiness Program[1]

TOTAL RATINGS: _____

RATE LEVEL: _____

SPECIAL NEEDS RATE: A MATRIX OF SERVICES TOOL

ELC: _____

Date Completed: _____

Student Name: _____

Student ID: _____

Date of Birth: _____ **Age:** _____

School: _____

Names of Person Completing the Matrix: _____

The parent must provide documentation of diagnosis to the early learning coalition to justify this rate. Diagnosis must be validated by a licensed health, mental health, education or social service professional other than the child's parent or person employed by the child care provider.

Examples of diagnoses that may justify a Special Needs Rate include but are not limited to Autism Spectrum Disorder, Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Developmental Delay, Dual Sensory Impairment, Emotional or Behavioral Disability, Developmentally Advanced, Intellectual Disability, Language Impairment, Orthopedic Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Speech Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, Visual Impairment

Instructions

1. Check services or supports to be provided by a School Readiness early learning program to student in Domain A through E.
2. Mark appropriate level (1 through 5) for each domain and record level at bottom of each domain.
3. Check applicable special consideration, if any, and record total special considerations rating.
4. Total the five domain ratings, sum the total of domain ratings and special considerations and record total in box at the top of this page.
5. Determine the reimbursement rate using the scale on the final page and record it at the top of this page.

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE ARE INCLUDED IN THE MATRIX OF SERVICES HANDBOOK.

Note: Each indicator is assuming that services supplied are above and beyond ADA requirements. Each indicator would be fundamentally altering the learning environment or services typically provided to children.

[1] Adapted from the Florida Department of Education Matrix of Services for funding under the Florida Education Finance Program. Available from http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/2017MatrixServices.pdf.

Domain A – Curriculum and Learning Environment	
Level	**Examples of services and assistance that may be required and provided**
Level 1	☐ Requires no services or assistance beyond that which is normally available to all students
Level 2 Inclusion requires minimal accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Electronic tools to use independently ☐ Materials to assist with accessibility ☐ Accommodations on assessment or accessible assessment materials ☐ Consultation monthly with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers
Level 3 Inclusion requires moderate accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Electronic tools and assistive technology used with assistance ☐ Alternative materials, assessments, activities, or equipment ☐ Special assistance needed in learning environments ☐ Direct, specialized instruction for some learning activities, which requires additional staff time[2] ☐ Weekly consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers
Level 4 Inclusion requires substantial accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment including but not limited to specialized instruction, modified curriculum or assistive technology used with supervision	☐ Extensive creation or purchase of special materials ☐ Direct, specialized instruction or curriculum for most learning activities which requires additional staff time ☐ Assistance for most learning activities, which requires additional staff time ☐ Assistive technology used with supervision for most learning activities ☐ Consultation and collaboration more than once per week with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers
Level 5 Inclusion requires extensive individualized modified curriculum and substantial modifications to the learning environment to meet the child's individual needs	☐ Specialized instruction for literacy, which requires additional staff time, such as braille or sign language ☐ Intensive curriculum or instructional approach for most learning activities, which requires an additional staff member ☐ Ongoing, continuous assistance for participation in learning activities, which requires an additional staff member ☐ Daily consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers

Below, include any additional supports currently provided, which are not included in the lists above. This may include services, fundamental alterations to the environment and/or instructional plans for the child.

DOMAIN A RATING: _____

[2] Requiring additional staff time is defined as any additional time needed outside of the normal educational services to provide the child's needed services and supports.

Domain B – Social or Emotional Behavior	
Level	**Examples of services and assistance that may be required and provided**
Level 1	☐ Requires no services or assistance beyond that which is normally available to all students
Level 2 Inclusion requires minimal accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Consultation monthly with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers ☐ Specialized instruction or activities in self-advocacy and understanding of exceptionality ☐ Behavior management system implemented specifically addressing the child's needs ☐ Monthly counseling or guidance ☐ Monthly assessment of behavior or social skills
Level 3 Inclusion requires moderate accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Small-group instruction in social skills, self-regulatory behavior, self-advocacy, conflict resolution, dealing with authority and socialization, which requires additional staff time. ☐ Weekly family counseling, assessment, or interventions ☐ Referral and follow-up for transitions to and from community-based programs, which requires additional staff time ☐ Weekly assessment of behavior as part of behavioral intervention plan ☐ Weekly consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers
Level 4 Inclusion requires substantial accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment including but not limited to specialized instruction, modified curriculum or assistive technology used with supervision	☐ Highly structured, individualized behavioral intervention plan infused throughout the educational day ☐ Daily coaching for support behavioral intervention plan ☐ Consultation and collaboration more than once per week with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers specifically on growth and progress
Level 5 Inclusion requires extensive individualized modified curriculum and substantial modifications to the learning environment to meet the child's individual needs	☐ Intensive, individualized behavior management plan that requires very small-group or one-on-one intervention ☐ Consistent daily coaching for support behavioral intervention plan ☐ Daily consultation and collaboration with teachers, family agencies or other providers specifically on growth and progress
Below, include any additional supports currently provided, which are not included in the lists above. This may include services, fundamental alterations to the environment and/or instructional plans for the child.	

DOMAIN B RATING: _____

Domain C – Independent Functioning	
Level	**Examples of services and assistance that may be required and provided**
Level 1	☐ Requires no services or assistance beyond that which is normally available to all students
Level 2 Inclusion requires minimal accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Monthly personal assistance with materials or equipment, which requires additional staff time ☐ Consultation monthly with teachers, family, agencies, and other providers ☐ Organizational strategies or supports for independent functioning, which requires additional staff time or additional funding ☐ Special equipment, furniture, strategies or supports for motor control in the classroom
Level 3 Inclusion requires moderate accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Specially designed organizational strategies or supports for independent functioning, which requires weekly planning ☐ Weekly coaching in self-monitoring of independent living skills ☐ Weekly coaching or assistance with independent living skills, materials, or equipment ☐ Weekly consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers
Level 4 Inclusion requires substantial accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment including but not limited to specialized instruction, modified curriculum or assistive technology used with supervision	☐ Supervision to ensure physical safety during most activities, which requires additional staff time ☐ Individual assistance or supervision in activities of daily living, self-care, and self-management for part of the day, which requires additional staff time ☐ Special equipment or assistive technology for personal care with frequent assistance ☐ Consultation and collaboration more than once per week with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers
Level 5 Inclusion requires extensive individualized modified curriculum and substantial modifications to the learning environment to meet the child's individual needs	☐ Continuous supervision to ensure physical safety, which requires additional staff time ☐ Individual assistance or supervision in activities of daily living, self-care, and self-management for most of the day ☐ Implementation of strategies guided by the occupational, physical, speech or other therapies, which require additional staff time and go beyond ADA compliance ☐ Daily consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers

Below, include any additional supports currently provided, which are not included in the lists above. This may include services, fundamental alterations to the environment and/or instructional plans for the child.

DOMAIN C RATING: _____

Domain D – Health Care	
Level	**Examples of services and assistance that may be required and provided**
Level 1	☐ Requires no services or assistance beyond that which is normally available to all students
Level 2 Inclusion requires minimal accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Monthly personal health care assistance ☐ Consultation monthly with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers ☐ Monthly monitoring of health status, procedures, or medication ☐ Monthly specialized administration of medication, which requires additional staff time ☐ Monthly assistance with agency referrals or coordination, which requires additional staff time
Level 3 Inclusion requires moderate accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Weekly monitoring or assessment of health status, procedures, or medication ☐ Weekly counseling with student or family for related health care needs ☐ Weekly specialized administration of medication ☐ Weekly consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, physicians, agencies, or other providers
Level 4 Inclusion requires substantial accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment including but not limited to specialized instruction, modified curriculum or assistive technology used with supervision	☐ Daily assistance with or monitoring and assessment of health status, procedures, or medication ☐ Daily assistance with or monitoring of equipment related to health care needs ☐ Specialized administration of medication multiple times a day, which requires additional staff time ☐ Daily consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, physician, agencies, or other health-related personnel
Level 5 Inclusion requires extensive individualized modified curriculum and substantial modifications to the learning environment to meet the child's individual needs	☐ Continuous monitoring and assistance related to health care needs ☐ Specialized administration of medication multiple times daily, which requires additional staff time ☐ Extensive communication with teacher, family, physician/health-related personnel, agencies, or other health-related personnel

Below, include any additional supports currently provided, which are not included in the lists above. This may include services, fundamental alterations to the environment and/or instructional plans for the child.

DOMAIN D RATING: ____

Domain E – Communication	
Level	**Examples of services and assistance that may be required and provided**
Level 1	☐ Requires no services or assistance beyond that which is normally available to all students
Level 2 Inclusion requires minimal accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Monthly assistance with communication ☐ Occasional assistance with personal amplification or communication system which requires additional staff time ☐ Monthly consultation with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers
Level 3 Inclusion requires moderate accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Weekly intervention or assistance with language or communication ☐ Weekly classroom implementation of strategies from speech or language therapy or instruction ☐ Weekly assistance with personal amplification or communication system, which requires additional staff time ☐ Weekly supervision of alternative or augmentative communication systems, which requires additional staff time ☐ Weekly consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers
Level 4 Inclusion requires substantial accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment including but not limited to specialized instruction, modified curriculum or assistive technology used with supervision	☐ Daily assistance or instruction with communication equipment, which requires additional staff time ☐ Daily integrated intervention and assistance related to communication needs, which requires additional staff time ☐ Instruction in sign language for use as the primary method of communication ☐ Interpreting services for part of the educational day ☐ Daily consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers
Level 5 Inclusion requires extensive individualized modified curriculum and substantial modifications to the learning environment to meet the child's individual needs	☐ Continuous assistance or instruction with communication equipment ☐ Interpreting services for most or all the school day ☐ Multiple, continuous interventions to replace ineffective communication and establish appropriate communication ☐ Extensive consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers

Below, include any additional supports currently provided, which are not included in the lists above. This may include services, fundamental alterations to the environment and/or instructional plans for the child.

DOMAIN E RATING: ____

Special Considerations:

_____ Add 3 points for students identified as having a visual impairment or a dual sensory impairment.

_____ Add 1 point for students who have a score of exactly 11 total domain rating points and who are rated Level 3 in at least three of the five domains.

_____ Add 1 point for students who have a score of exactly 17 total domain rating points and who are rated Level 4 in four of the five domains.

Special Considerations Rating: _____

Total of Domain Ratings: ___	
Special Consideration Ratings: ___	
Total of Ratings: ___	

Reimbursement Rate Scale	
Total Rating	Percent Rate Increase
6 – 11	10%
12 – 17	15%
18+	20%

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APPENDIX A

SPECIAL NEEDS RATE MATRIX ALIGNED WITH THE BEST PRACTICES IN INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (BPIECE)[3]

Domain A – Curriculum and Learning Environment		
Level	**Examples of services and assistance that may be required and provided**	**Aligned BPIECE[4] Indicators**
Level 1	☐ Requires no services or assistance beyond that which is normally available to all students	1. Arrange learning environments to support all children's needs for all daily interactions and increase active participation **(environment)**. 2. Identify barriers to participation and develop adaptations to support children's needs **(environment)**. 3. Provide predictable routines in daily/weekly schedule but remain flexible to meet the needs of individual children **(environment)**. 4. Design a flexible learning environment to promote interactive activities and to support the learning of all children **(environment)**. 5. Use adaptations which are most similar to what other same-age children are using while meeting individual needs **(environment)**. 6. Change adaptations as needed **(environment)**.
Level 2 Inclusion requires minimal accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Electronic tools to use independently ☐ Materials to assist with accessibility ☐ Accommodations on assessment or accessible assessment materials ☐ Consultation monthly with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers	
Level 3 Inclusion requires moderate accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Electronic tools and assistive technology used with assistance ☐ Alternative materials, assessments, activities, or equipment ☐ Special assistance needed in learning environments ☐ Direct, specialized instruction for some learning activities, which requires additional staff time[5] ☐ Weekly consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers	

[3] The BPIECE tool can be accessed in the Quality Performance system at this link: https://portal-qps.floridaearlylearning.com/

[4] Best Practices in Inclusive Early Childhood Education (BPIECE). The BPIECE includes 40 indicators of best practice. Where appropriate, they have been aligned with the examples of services and assistance that may be required or provided within the Matrix Services Tool. The numbers next to the BPIECE indicators are not necessarily in order, but rather the order by which they are included in the BPIECE. The "area" in which the indicator is located is also included in parentheses and in bold.

[5] Requiring additional staff time is defined as any additional time needed outside of the normal educational services to provide the child's needed services and supports.

Level 4 Inclusion requires substantial accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment including but not limited to specialized instruction, modified curriculum or assistive technology used with supervision	☐ Extensive creation or purchase of special materials ☐ Direct, specialized instruction or curriculum for most learning activities which requires additional staff time ☐ Assistance for most learning activities, which requires additional staff time ☐ Assistive technology used with supervision for most learning activities ☐ Consultation and collaboration more than once per week with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers	7. Change environment according to children's sensory needs **(environment)**. 8. Ensure all planned supports (scheduling, materials, and visual supports) are available and used across daily activities and environments **(environment)**. 27. Use a variety of instructional strategies to support participation and engagement of all children **(instruction)**. 28. Provide children with multiple ways of demonstrating knowledge and skills **(instruction)**. 29. Build and plan individual learning objectives into classroom concepts and reinforce them throughout the day **(instruction)**. 30. Provide individual adaptations to support children's engagement and participation in all daily activities **(instruction)**. 31. Adapt communication with individual children **(instruction)**. 32. Model appropriate language and alternate forms of communication as needed **(instruction)**. 33. Clearly display and use visual supports to clarify environmental expectations **(instruction)**. 34. Use specific feedback to increase child engagement, play and skills **(instruction)**.
Level 5 Inclusion requires extensive individualized modified curriculum and substantial modifications to the learning environment to meet the child's individual needs	☐ Specialized instruction for literacy, which requires additional staff time, such as braille or sign language ☐ Intensive curriculum or instructional approach for most learning activities, which requires an additional staff member ☐ Ongoing, continuous assistance for participation in learning activities, which requires an additional staff member ☐ Daily consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers	

Below, include any additional supports currently provided, which are not included in the lists above. This may include services, fundamental alterations to the environment and/or instructional plans for the child.

DOMAIN A RATING: _____

Domain B – Social or Emotional Behavior		
Level	**Examples of services and assistance that may be required and provided**	**Aligned BPIECE Indicators**
Level 1	☐ Requires no services or assistance beyond that which is normally available to all students	22. Foster a sense of classroom community by promoting acceptance, safety, and membership **(interaction)**. 23. Use information about children's interests and behaviors to guide and inform meaningful interaction with other children **(interaction)**. 24. Promote, sustain, and extend positive social interactions between peers **(interaction)**. 25. Promote positive self-expression **(interaction)**. 26. Facilitate collaborative problem solving among peers **(interaction)**.
Level 2 Inclusion requires minimal accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Consultation monthly with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers ☐ Specialized instruction or activities in self-advocacy and understanding of exceptionality ☐ Behavior management system implemented specifically addressing the child's needs ☐ Monthly counseling or guidance ☐ Monthly assessment of behavior or social skills	
Level 3 Inclusion requires moderate accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Small-group instruction in social skills, self-regulatory behavior, self-advocacy, conflict resolution, dealing with authority and socialization, which requires additional staff time ☐ Weekly family counseling, assessment, or interventions ☐ Referral and follow-up for transitions to and from community-based programs, which requires additional staff time ☐ Weekly assessment of behavior as part of behavioral intervention plan ☐ Weekly consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers	
Level 4 Inclusion requires substantial accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment including but not limited to specialized instruction, modified curriculum or assistive technology used with supervision	☐ Highly structured, individualized behavioral intervention plan infused throughout the educational day ☐ Daily coaching for support behavioral intervention plan ☐ Consultation and collaboration more than once per week with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers specifically on growth and progress	
Level 5 Inclusion requires extensive individualized modified curriculum and substantial	☐ Intensive, individualized behavior management plan that requires very small-group or one-on-one intervention	

modifications to the learning environment to meet the child's individual needs	☐ Consistent daily coaching for support behavioral intervention plan ☐ Daily consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers specifically on growth and progress	

Below, include any additional supports currently provided, which are not included in the lists above. This may include services, fundamental alterations to the environment and/or instructional plans for the child.

DOMAIN B RATING: _____

Domain C – Independent Functioning		
Level	**Examples of services and assistance that may be required and provided**	**Aligned BPIECE Indicators**
Level 1	☐ Requires no services or assistance beyond that which is normally available to all students	38. Exchange information about strategies to support the child's successful adjustment with programs/classrooms a child is transitioning to/from **(transition)**. 39. Provide activities and resources for parents to learn about and/or visit the next program **(transition)**. 40. Provide children with opportunities to develop and practice skills they need to be successful in the next program/classroom **(transition)**.
Level 2 Inclusion requires minimal accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Monthly personal assistance with materials or equipment, which requires additional staff time ☐ Consultation monthly with teachers, family, agencies, and other providers ☐ Organizational strategies or supports for independent functioning, which requires additional staff time or additional funding ☐ Special equipment, furniture, strategies or supports for motor control in the classroom	
Level 3 Inclusion requires moderate accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Specially designed organizational strategies or supports for independent functioning, which requires weekly planning ☐ Weekly coaching in self-monitoring of independent living skills ☐ Weekly coaching or assistance with independent living skills, materials, or equipment ☐ Weekly consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers	
Level 4 Inclusion requires substantial accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment including but not limited to specialized instruction, modified curriculum or assistive technology used with supervision	☐ Supervision to ensure physical safety during most activities, which requires additional staff time ☐ Individual assistance or supervision in activities of daily living, self-care, and self-management for part of the day, which requires additional staff time ☐ Special equipment or assistive technology for personal care with frequent assistance ☐ Consultation and collaboration more than once per week with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers	
Level 5 Inclusion requires extensive individualized modified curriculum and substantial	☐ Continuous supervision to ensure physical safety, which requires additional staff time	

modifications to the learning environment to meet the child's individual needs	☐ Individual assistance or supervision in activities of daily living, self-care, and self-management for most of the day ☐ Implementation of strategies guided by the occupational, physical, speech or other therapies, which require additional staff time and go beyond ADA compliance ☐ Daily consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers	

Below, include any additional supports currently provided, which are not included in the lists above. This may include services, fundamental alterations to the environment and/or instructional plans for the child.

DOMAIN C RATING: _____

Domain D – Health Care		
Level	**Examples of services and assistance that may be required and provided**	**Aligned BPIECE Indicators**
Level 1	☐ Requires no services or assistance beyond that which is normally available to all students	35. Use a variety of methods to gather assessment information from multiple sources to determine child's strengths and needs in all areas of development **(screening and assessment)**. 36. Communicate results of assessment with parents/caregivers **(screening and assessment)**. 37. Continuously observe and document the child's progress to begin working on next learning goal **(screening and assessment)**.
Level 2 Inclusion requires minimal accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Monthly personal health care assistance ☐ Consultation monthly with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers ☐ Monthly monitoring of health status, procedures, or medication ☐ Monthly specialized administration of medication, which requires additional staff time ☐ Monthly assistance with agency referrals or coordination, which requires additional staff time	
Level 3 Inclusion requires moderate accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Weekly monitoring or assessment of health status, procedures, or medication ☐ Weekly counseling with student or family for related health care needs ☐ Weekly specialized administration of medication, ☐ Weekly consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, physicians, agencies, or other providers	
Level 4 Inclusion requires substantial accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment including but not limited to specialized instruction, modified curriculum or assistive technology used with supervision	☐ Daily assistance with or monitoring and assessment of health status, procedures, or medication ☐ Daily assistance with or monitoring of equipment related to health care needs ☐ Specialized administration of medication multiple times a day, which requires additional staff time ☐ Daily consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, physician, agencies, or other health-related personnel	
Level 5 Inclusion requires extensive individualized modified curriculum and substantial modifications to the learning environment to meet the child's individual needs	☐ Continuous monitoring and assistance related to health care needs ☐ Specialized administration of medication multiple times daily, which requires additional staff time ☐ Extensive communication with teacher, family, physician/health-related personnel, agencies, or other health-related personnel	

Below, include any additional supports currently provided, which are not included in the lists above. This may include services, fundamental alterations to the environment and/or instructional plans for the child.

DOMAIN D RATING: _____

Domain E – Communication		
Level	**Examples of services and assistance that may be required and provided**	**Aligned BPIECE Indicators**
Level 1	☐ Requires no services or assistance beyond that which is normally available to all students	9. Design effective two-way communication with families to share successful supports and revise plans as needed **(family)**. 10. Engage families in conversations about child's strengths and needs **(family)**. 11. Support and encourage family participation and decision making while providing complete and unbiased information **(family)**. 12. Present child progress, reports, and information in understandable language **(family)**. 13. Promptly problem solve with parents and administration, as concerns are identified, to develop strategies which address current priorities **(family)**. 14. Identify and use families' current strengths, needs, resources and priorities as the foundation for developing strategies and plans for the child **(family).** 15. Identify multiple resources and services to provide information to parents to support and strengthen their knowledge and skills **(family).** 16. Share and demonstrate how to implement effective strategies in everyday family activities **(family).** 17. Identify all members of a specialized care team and actively engage with members to review and modify plan **(collaboration)**. 18. Communicate environmental changes in plans/supports to all team members **(collaboration)**.
Level 2 Inclusion requires minimal accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Monthly assistance with communication ☐ Occasional assistance with personal amplification or communication system which requires additional staff time ☐ Monthly consultation with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers	
Level 3 Inclusion requires moderate accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment	☐ Weekly intervention or assistance with language or communication ☐ Weekly classroom implementation of strategies from speech or language therapy or instruction ☐ Weekly assistance with personal amplification or communication system, which requires additional staff time ☐ Weekly supervision of alternative or augmentative communication systems, which requires additional staff time ☐ Weekly consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers	
Level 4 Inclusion requires substantial accommodations or supports to the curriculum or the learning environment including but not limited to specialized instruction, modified curriculum or assistive technology used with supervision	☐ Daily assistance or instruction with communication equipment, which requires additional staff time ☐ Daily integrated intervention and assistance related to communication needs, which requires additional staff time ☐ Instruction in sign language for use as the primary method of communication ☐ Interpreting services for part of the educational day ☐ Daily consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers	

Level 5 Inclusion requires extensive individualized modified curriculum and substantial modifications to the learning environment to meet the child's individual needs	□ Continuous assistance or instruction with communication equipment □ Interpreting services for the majority or all the school day □ Multiple, continuous interventions to replace ineffective communication and establish appropriate communication □ Extensive consultation and collaboration with teachers, family, agencies, or other providers	19. Use suggestions developed by specialized care team in the early learning setting **(collaboration)**. 20. Invite service providers into the classroom for therapy sessions **(collaboration)**. 21. Seek further knowledge of topics discussed by the specialized care team to enhance problem solving **(collaboration)**.

Below, include any additional supports currently provided, which are not included in the lists above. This may include services, fundamental alterations to the environment and/or instructional plans for the child.

DOMAIN E RATING: ____

Special Considerations:

_____ Add 3 points for students identified as having a visual impairment or a dual sensory impairment.

_____ Add 1 point for students who have a score of exactly 11 total domain rating points and who are rated Level 3 in at least three of the five domains.

_____ Add 1 point for students who have a score of exactly 17 total domain rating points and who are rated Level 4 in four of the five domains.

Special Considerations Rating: _____

Total of Domain Ratings:	_____
Special Consideration Ratings:	_____
Total of Ratings:	_____

Reimbursement Rate Scale

Total Rating	Percent Rate Increase
6 – 11	10%
12 – 17	15%
18+	20%

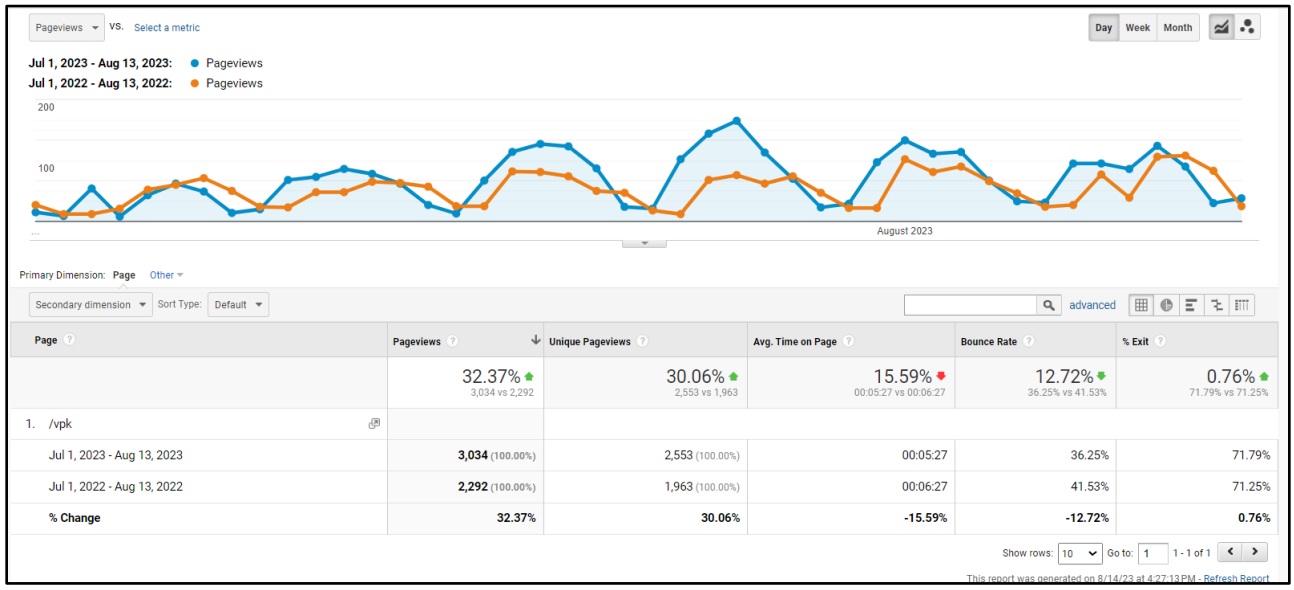
ITEM #/MEETING:	PRC241RB4/Program Review Committee Meeting
MEETING DATE:	08/28/2023
SUBJECT:	**Outreach + Communications + Advocacy Update**
FOR ACTION:	No
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	None
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	None
AS RECOMMENDED BY:	N/A
ELC STAFF LEADS	Ancel Pratt III, Howard Bakalar, Renee Jaffe

Current Status:

Outreach:
During the 2023 summer, ELC has participated in over 12 community events, from resource fairs to back-to-school events, including events at the City of Lauderhill, the City of Sunrise, and the City of Pompano Beach. We distributed books, fliers detailing our services, and giveaways promoting our programs. We also actively engaged families who came to our table about the SR, VPK, Child Care Resource and Referral, and other services we provide.

Communications:
Our primary messaging points now are promoting VPK enrollment to the community via community events, email, and online marketing. We ran a targeted campaign to SR families whose children are now age eligible for VPK. In two weeks of running the social media ad campaign for VPK, we have facilitated over 800 VPK landing page views, which we are confident will translate to higher VPK registrations by the end of the campaign.

From 07/01/23 – 08/14/23, our VPK page saw 2,553 unique pageviews, a 30% increase from the previous year (1,963 unique page views).



Advocacy:
We have begun crafting our advocacy agenda based on issues identified locally and through the Association of Early Learning Coalitions (AELC). The agenda will include right-sizing our funding to truly meet the actual need we identified through our enrollment push. We will host a Lunch and Learn for the Board in October, as the legislative session starts in January this year.