

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF LAKE COUNTY



Ty, future Comedian



Hope and Hannah,
future Social Workers



Leah, future Dietician



Connor, future Philosopher



Annual Report 2007-2008

“My heart is grateful for your help and support. Without your help I could not have achieved my goal of getting my degree in early education.”

—Kathleen Belton, Provider, 2008

MISSION

To educate and support parents, early childhood professionals and the community as we collaborate to continue to provide the highest quality early learning programs for our children.

VISION

The children and families of Lake County are our future and our most vulnerable resource. Our children will enter school eager to learn and ready to succeed.

HISTORY

In 1999, the State of Florida passed legislation to create local school readiness coalitions for the purpose of enhancing children’s chances of achieving future educational success and becoming productive members of society. Florida statute 411.01 is also called the School Readiness Act. In January 2005, House Bill 1-A was signed into law by Governor Jeb Bush launching the creation of Early Learning Coalitions to establish a unified approach to the enhancement of school readiness.

Lake County has established a 23-member Board, which has the responsibility of coordinating a local system of programs that work together in providing services for children birth to five years of age. This Board is comprised of a chairman and two other private sector business members appointed by the Governor. Several board members bring together the primary agencies in Lake County working with children. This Board also includes a representative for the private providers and a representative for the faith-based providers, as well as a representative of programs for children with disabilities. One-third of the Board includes private sector business members with no financial interest in school readiness.

The Early Learning Coalition of Lake County has oversight of the School Readiness Program and the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Program in Lake County. Effective July 1, 2007 the Helping Hands program was transferred to LifeStream Behavioral Center to enhance programs for Lake County’s children, parents and providers.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

It is my pleasure to present the Early Learning Coalition of Lake County's Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Annual Report.

This past year has been a very exciting time for the Coalition as we continue our mission to support parents and early childhood professionals as well as the community by providing quality early learning services for the children of Lake County. The Coalition holds steadfast to its commitment to improve the quality of early care and education opportunities in Lake County to ensure children enter school eager to learn and ready to succeed. The daily operations of the Coalition are conducted by a team of eight dedicated staff working diligently to ensure that Lake County's school readiness and voluntary pre-kindergarten programs are of the highest quality.

While much has been accomplished, there is still more to be achieved. We are proud to announce that this year, the Lake County Sheriff's Department transferred ownership of their former Mobile Command Center to the Coalition to fulfill a promise from the late Sheriff Chris Daniels. The new bus has been refurbished through public and private donations throughout Lake County. The Coalition wishes to acknowledge a special group of college students from Lake-Sumter Community College in Clermont. As part of their studies, this group of students, the "Clermont Highlanders" selected the Early Learning Coalition to be their community service and fundraising project. The Clermont Highlanders, after months of planning and execution of several local events, raised nearly \$3,000 for the Coalition's Big Blue Bus Program. The new bus is used in community outreach events to serve children and parents to further school readiness efforts. We will continue to look for opportunities to support child care providers in recruiting and retaining staff, as well as enhancing quality through collaborative partnerships and training opportunities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our board members, community partners, child care providers, and various other organizations and stakeholders throughout the community who continue to support the Coalition by partnering with us to ensure success in serving the children of Lake County.

I am excited for our community and especially for our children and their parents. I am honored to take our vision into the future and I know that Lake County will be a better place for our families. I ask for your continued support of the Early Learning Coalition of Lake County and all of our efforts that champion the causes for children.

Will Pruitt, Chairman

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Max, future Board Member

PROGRAMS

In July 2007, Child Care Choice Services (CCCS) continued to serve the Lake County communities by offering services for the School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Programs. CCCS works directly with child care providers to oversee the reimbursement process for school readiness and VPK services, attendance monitoring, health reviews, developmental screenings and assessments, ongoing provider support and trainings, as well as technical assistance as needed. In addition to child care services, the staff of CCCS also provides case management and family support for their clients.

School Readiness

Child Care Choice Services, a division of LifeStream Behavioral Center, Inc., was contracted to administer direct services for the School Readiness Program. Through its CCCS Program, LifeStream delivers central/lead agency services in Lake County for parents, providers, children, community partners and early education advocates.

The service program departments of the central/lead agency include Eligibility, Resource & Referral, Early Education, Payment Reimbursement and Administrative support. These programs serve primarily children from birth to five, and also up to twelve years old, based upon program requirements.

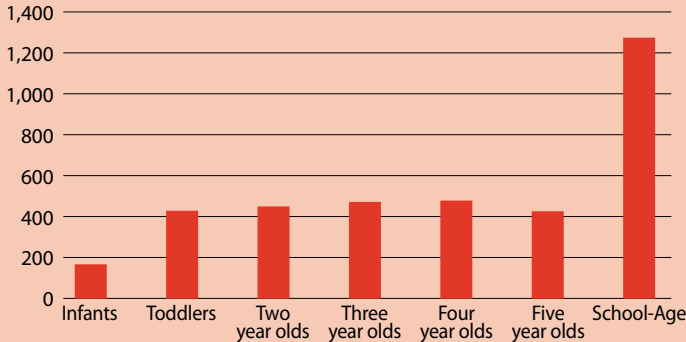
As of June 2008, Lake County had 164 school readiness providers. This includes 71 licensed child care centers, eighteen

18 licensed family homes, one large family home, and 24 registered family homes. Lake County also had 31 school based, 16 faith-based and three informal school readiness providers.

Number of Unduplicated Children Served:

During FY 2007-2008 a total of 3,450 unduplicated children were served. The following charts identify the percent of children served in School Readiness Programs for FY 2007-2008 by age (care level) and eligibility category. On average, 2,158 children were served each month during 2007-2008.

Children Served (FY 2007-2008)



Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK)

Child Care Choice Services, a division of LifeStream Behavioral Center, Inc., was also contracted to administer child eligibility

“I love my children’s child care center; my children are learning so much. As a single parent, I know that I would not have been able to afford this quality care for my children without the help of the VPK program and Child Care Choice Services.”

**—Natividad Segura, Parent 2008
(Master’s Kids Academy)**

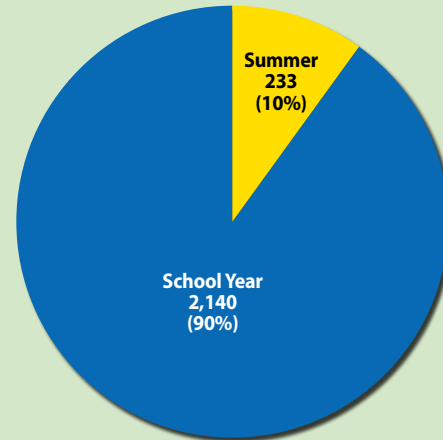
and provider payment services for the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program. The 2007-2008 VPK school year was a huge success in Lake County. We had 88 private and public schools participate across the county. Enrollment in school year and summer programs resulted in a total of 2,373 children participating in the second year.

Five VPK Standards trainings were offered and attended by 75 VPK staff; and two Phonemic Awareness trainings were offered and attended by 112 VPK staff. These trainings included age-appropriate

development and how to get children ready for kindergarten.

The Lake County VPK school year ran from August 2007 through June 2008. Most VPK providers followed the public school

Children Served FY 2007-2008



calendar, with 3-hour days for 180 days. This schedule helped children become familiar with a routine that will help them adjust to kindergarten. Their day was enriched by emergent literacy and writing, music, art and gross motor activities.

Children who were unable to enter VPK during the normal school term were eligible for the summer program which ran from late June through August 2008. The VPK summer program consisted of eight and a half hour days, five days a week, in order to meet the required 300 hours. Summer classes were held in four public schools throughout Lake County.

Resource and Referral

Child Care Choice Services, Inc. provides Resource and Referral (R&R) services to the entire community. Although a large number of the client requests are for child care related information, there are many more inquiries covering a wide array of needs for adults, teens, seniors and families alike. The staff continuously maintains and updates information on service providers and human service organizations throughout Lake County in an effort to expand their information database. Provider recruitment and assistance has greatly increased as Lake County experiences a large growth trend, especially in the southern part of the county. The CCCS staff worked diligently with established providers to expand infant/toddler care slots, assisting registered providers to become licensed and provide special needs care.

CCCS identifies eligible children and maintains a unified waiting list for school readiness eligible children. CCCS continues to assist families in services that include a single point of entry, assistance with child care resource and referral, and eligibility determination for a variety of programs.

Early Education Provider Support and Technical Assistance

The early education team of Child Care Choice Services has developed working relationships with owners, directors and teachers supporting quality child care program development. The direct impact of this service highlighted significant increases in the quality, accuracy and turnaround time of developmental assessments. Child Care Choice Services technical assistance and curriculum support programs received high provider and parental approval.



Wil, future Playground Engineer

QUALITY INITIATIVES

Child Development Services

For several years, the Early Learning Coalition of Lake County offered the Helping Hands program for children birth to five. This program provided, at no cost, prevention and intervention services to children that are in a private child care center, informal care, or in a family-home based center. In July 2007, this program was transferred to LifeStream Behavioral Centers and was incorporated into their Child Development Services. This program provided a full complement of professionals, with expertise in mental health and early childhood issues, to deliver services including: screening and assessment; therapeutic behavioral on-site services including therapy; behavioral management and therapeutic support services; parent and classroom teacher education; classroom interventions and community in-services. These services were accessible to young children and their families, grandparents, extended families, child care providers, and early childhood teachers in Lake County.

The specialists provided 403 visits to child care centers and homes and provided 2,518 hours of services to children in those settings; 2,311 children were served. Additional services provided during this year were parent trainings, technical assistance, classroom observations, professional development, classroom interventions, marketing and public relations.

The Big Blue Bus Program

The Big Blue Bus is a specifically designed bus that acts as a mobile resource for early childhood providers in Lake County. The Bus travels throughout the community to reach children in private, public, faith-based or family home child care care. The bus provides materials for parents and providers on topics ranging from kindergarten readiness to positive parenting. In 2007, the Lake County Children's Services Council renewed the \$25,000 grant award to the Coalition to continue funding for the Big Blue Bus. This year, we were able to enhance the educational experiences of approximately 1,120 children, parents and providers during 276 visits to centers and 22 community events.

In late 2007, the Coalition received the title to a large Eagle Bus previously owned by the Lake County Sheriff's Department. With assistance from the Sheriff's Department, the exterior and interior were refurbished and the Eagle Bus was welcomed as the second addition to the Big Blue Bus Program. The new bus has space for all the activities as the original bus, plus through partnership with other agencies, the bus has the capability of housing a nurse, a counselor and, in the near future, a representative from D.A.R.E. to provide information for providers, children and parents.

Inclusion in Lake County

LifeStream offered Inclusion Services for Lake County providers, parents and teachers. Staff provided technical assistance which included creating materials for hands-on classroom instruction curriculum modification and instruction on how to use adaptive tools. Trainings, technical assistance and materials included, but were not limited to, the following topics: curriculum, strategies, child development, health, environmental adaptations, laws/regulations, and accessing inclusion resources.

Staff conducted on-site visits, inclusive of observations, to assist providers with identifying concerns and developing strategies to better accommodate children with disabilities/special needs in the classroom. Services provided by the inclusion staff included a local toll-free inclusion “warm line” that offered information for child care providers regarding children with special needs.

Accreditation Incentive Program

The Coalition understands the need for quality early education opportunities for the children of Lake County. Accreditation by a Gold Seal approved accrediting agency is a positive step toward increased quality in the county. Currently

there are 52 early education providers in Lake County that hold a Gold Seal Accreditation. In an effort to help early education providers achieve this goal, the Coalition has implemented the Accreditation Incentive Program which will pay 50% of the application fee and 50% of the validation fee.

“Thank you so much for the financial support toward my college tuition. I appreciate the opportunity you have created for me to continue my education.”

–Kelly Jenkins (2008)

Professional Development Reimbursement Program

The Coalition continued offering the Professional Development Reimbursement Program for the Fall of 2007 and Spring 2008. This program provides funds that have been set aside in the budget specifically to help teachers working in child care facilities with children between birth to five years of age and seeking a degree in early childhood. Teachers who meet the specific requirements will have an opportunity to request reimbursement for expenses relating to tuition and books upon completion of the semester with a 2.5 GPA. The program is available for students attending Lake-Sumter Community College in Leesburg, University of Central Florida campus in Clermont and surrounding local

colleges. This year, the Coalition provided reimbursement for ten students attending the fall semester and eight students for the spring semester.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Uniting for Children Conference 2008

The Uniting for Children Conference was held on April 21, 2008 at the Lake-Sumter Community College in Leesburg, Florida. This annual event is a collaboration between representatives from the Coalition, Child Care Choice Services, Lake County School Board, University of Central Florida, Lake-Sumter Community College and Lake Tech. This year's event was attended by 275 directors and teachers throughout Lake County.

The providers had an opportunity to choose from twenty-one different workshops covering topics such as autism, literacy, science, math, phonemic awareness, power of blocks, getting little hands ready for school, using puppets to learn, and "Start with the Arts," just to name a few, as well as nationally known keynote speakers.

Children's Week

For the past 12 years Florida has promoted Children's week to share knowledge and information on children's issues across the state and in Tallahassee. The Early Learning Coalition of Lake County continued its annual tradition of participating in the State's "Hanging of the Hands." The Coalition invited providers throughout Lake County to have their children paint on posters and submit them for this special event. Approximately 20 providers delivered their wonderful pieces of artwork and we carefully boxed them up for shipment to Tallahassee to be displayed in the Capital rotunda on March 30, 2008, to represent the children of Lake County. This year, the Coalition made

arrangements with Commissioner Linda Stewart's office to allow the Coalition to display the artwork that was too large to mail, in the lobby of the County Administration Building for the County Commissioners, employees and visitors to enjoy.

Celebrate the Arts in Learning—A Day in the Park

This annual event was open to Lake County teachers who have been trained in the Start with the Arts curriculum, and their four year old students. Both teachers and children had an opportunity to participate and experience arts through hands on activities. Children visited approximately 20 art stops where they made projects to take back to the classroom and to mom and dad. The 2007 "Day in the Park" was attended by nearly 1,100 children. There were 140 volunteers from local businesses, i.e. the Kiwanis club, Women's Club and the Girl Scouts.

World Greatest Baby Showers

The Coalition joined the Lake County Health Department's Women's Health Issues Committee to be an exhibitor at the four World's Greatest Baby Showers held in Lake County. Free resource materials were distributed to participants from many local agencies. The Coalition was represented at all the events and distributed nearly 400 books and brochures entitled *How To Choose A Quality Child Care Center* and booklets on a child's developmental stages, as well as additional infant & toddler resources.

FISCAL

School Readiness Investments

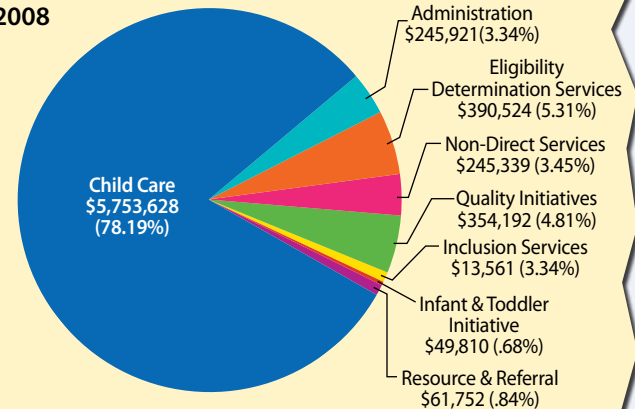
In July 2007, the Early Learning Coalition of Lake County signed a funding agreement in the amount of \$7,358,494 with the Office of Early Learning for School Readiness Services for Fiscal Year 2007-2008. Matching funds were provided through a variety of sources to the Coalition's contracted agency for child care enrollment including, but not limited to, the United Way Lake/Sumter County, Orlando Magic Youth Foundation, Orlando Sentinel Family Fund, Kids Central Inc., Lake County Children Services Council, as well as local cities and businesses.

- 96% of the total grant award was expended during the Fiscal Year 2007-2008
- Coalition administration expenditures totaled 3.3% of the funding received for School Readiness (*note: 5% is allowed by the grant award*)
- 78.19% of the grant award was spent on subsidized child care services (slots). This includes the \$302,843.00 in Gold Seal funding to accredited providers.

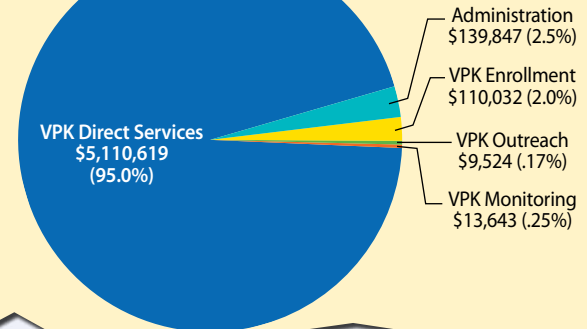
Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK) Investments

In July 2007, the Coalition of Lake County signed a funding agreement in the amount of \$5,385,707 with the Office of Early Learning for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Services for FY 2007-2008. Additional funding in the amount of \$166,477 was awarded in April 2008 due to increased enrollment for a total award of \$5,552,184.

School Readiness Expenditures FY 2007-2008



Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Expenditures FY 2007-2008



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Child Care Choice Services
- Department of Children and Families
- Early Childhood Association of Florida
- Lake County Even Start and Early Steps / FDLRS / Child Find
- Lake Community Action Agency / Head Start/ Early Head Start
- Lake County Children's Services Council
- Lake County Health Department
- Lake County School Board
- Lake-Sumter Community College
- Lake County Sheriff's Department
- Lake-Sumter EMS / Public Safety Education Group of Orange County
- LifeStream Behavioral Center / Kids Central, Inc.
- Lake Technical Center
- University of Central Florida
- Chambers of Commerce Leesburg, Eustis, Tavares, Mt. Dora, Lady Lake, and South Lake
- Mt. Dora Community Trust
- Lake County Library System
- Sign Crafters in Leesburg
- Community Foundation of South Lake

- Kaplan Education Company
- Wright Group
- Childcraft Education & ABC School Supply
- United Way of Lake and Sumter Counties
- Town of Lady Lake
- Cities of Leesburg, Mt. Dora, Tavares
- Cities of Groveland and Mascotte
- Orlando Sentinel Family Fund
- Orlando Magic Youth Foundation
- Mathews & Hanna Construction
- Publix Stores
- Wal-Mart Stores



Allysya, future Philanthropist



EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF LAKE COUNTY
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