

PROVIDER'S

FOCUS

January/February/March 2017

Magazine

a quarterly publication for early childhood care and education professionals

Cover photo by Brittany Burke

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EARLY LEARNING

COALITION OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

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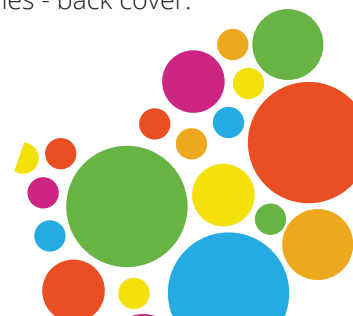
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INTRODUCTION

The Provider's Focus Magazine is a quarterly publication of the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County (ELCHC). The ELCHC is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization with its main offices located in Tampa, Florida. The Provider's Focus is printed in limited quantity and distributed across Hillsborough County, Florida. It is also available in digital format at www.elchc.org in the Publications area of the website.

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SUBMISSION INFO

If you would like to submit an article to be included in the Provider's Focus, listed below are the submission deadlines and requirements for the 2017 publication year.

Articles should include the author's name, affiliation and title and be typed, double spaced in 11 or 12 point Arial, Calibri or Times Roman font. Any accompanying photos or artwork should be in high resolution JPEG format (at least 300 dpi) and sent as a separate attachment along with the article (not inserted in the article). Photo releases should accompany any photo submissions. Submit all to twhite@elchc.org by noted deadlines. Please note that submission does not guarantee publication.

Submission Deadline	For Issue	Will Hit Mailboxes:
January 11, 2017	Spring 2017 (Jan/Feb/Mar)	Mid-February 2017
April 12, 2017	Summer 2017 (Apr/May/June)	Mid-May 2017
July 12, 2017	Fall 2017 (July/Aug/Sept)	Mid-August 2017
October 11, 2017	Winter 2017 (Oct/Nov/Dec)	Mid-November 2017



The CEO

in his own words



Top-goal: **Advocacy**
We're all advocates

Early childhood programs have the potential for producing positive and long-lasting effects on children. We know this and most of us in this field of early childhood learning and development have a grand vision of making that positive impact. But we also know that this potential will not be realized unless more attention is paid to ensuring that all programs meet the highest standards of quality. As the number and types of early learning programs increase in our community it becomes more and more important that entities like the Coalition join forces together and with early learning professionals to implement policies, both state and federal, that will lead to the excellence in early childhood that we all seek.

We are all advocates for this vision and must work together under an agreed upon standard of practice. As we quickly approach the start of the 2017-18 Florida Legislative session we will all be called upon to speak and act in support of an early learning agenda that supports that vision. In Hillsborough, and in other Coalitions around the state, we will continue to fight for the funds and mechanisms that:

- Offer all of our children access to a safe, high-quality early childhood education
- Support early learning professionals with ongoing professional development opportunities
- Support all of our families through initiatives and programs that increase positive family involvement and self sufficiency.
- Holds communities accountable to the quality of programs and services provided to its citizens

Coalitions from across the state have crafted a list of Legislative priorities which we feel will help move our mission forward and keep early learning as a topic of important conversation.

Later in this issue you will find those Legislative priorities. I encourage you to take a look at them and use your voice and position as a community influencer to advance our common vision of excellence for our early childhood community.

Providers are our partners in making our vision a reality and we truly cannot achieve our goals without your support and collaboration. I personally, thank you for your continued support as we work toward building an early childhood system of care and services that is rooted in the principles of excellence, equity, diversity and accountability.

The Coalition will continue to connect with you through personal visits to your programs, provider meetings, social media and an array of events and activities being developed specifically to support our providers.



Tampa Bay Lightning Supports Early Childhood Educators

The Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County partnered with the Tampa Bay Lightning to raise funds for the Coalition's Quality Counts for Kids program. The special *ELCHC Teacher Recognition Night*, was made possible by the sale of special ticket packages, which raised over \$3,000, directed funds back to the Coalition, which will go to support mini grants for the Quality Counts for Kids program, and best of all, allowed over 100 early learning professionals to attend and be recognized at the Lightning vs. Ottawa game on February 2, 2017! **Go Bolts...**and thank you for your support! 🌈

FLORIDA HOSPITAL

THE TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING PRESENTS
ELCHC TEACHER APPRECIATION NIGHT

THUR, FEB. 2
 7:30 PM

<p>THE CAPTAIN \$500</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sponsor eight (8) teachers and their guest to the game - Includes \$100 donation to the ELCHC
<p>THE ALTERNATE \$375</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sponsor six (6) teachers and their guest to the game - Includes \$75 donation to the ELCHC
<p>THE STARTER \$250</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sponsor four (4) teachers and their guest to the game - Includes \$50 donation to the ELCHC

To show your support, contact Sam Reiner at 813.301.6814 or sreiner@amaliearena.com

The Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County (ELCHC) is a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization that specializes in the funding and delivery of quality, early learning, child care, and after school programs and services for the children and families of Hillsborough County. The ELCHC serves roughly 20,000 children per month via its programs and offers a menu of services for families designed to help them identify, access and afford quality early learning programs. The ELCHC is the trusted resource in Hillsborough County for early learning information, services and integrated approaches that goes beyond the basics so that Hillsborough County families can maximize their children's learning potential. For more information regarding the ELCHC, visit www.elchc.org



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EARLY LEARNING
 COALITION OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

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Quarterly Provider Meeting

by Tracie T. White

**305 Providers
braved the cold and
the rain to make
the first ELCHC
Quarterly Provider
meeting a huge
SUCCESS!**

Despite unseasonable cold, rain, and crazy traffic caused by a national college football game in town, over 300 of Hillsborough's early learning professionals turned out for the first ELCHC quarterly provider meeting on Saturday, January 7, 2017.

The Coalition has established these quarterly meetings as a way of connecting with the provider community on a regular basis. It allows Coalition staff and providers to connect in a way that is meaningful and productive in moving forward our common goals of early childhood quality and professionalism. It also offers everyone an opportunity to network and form powerful relationships which will ultimately translate into better early learning programs for the children and families of Hillsborough County.

We've gathered your questions and answers and your feedback on the first meeting and we are working to make each meeting better and better. We hope to see you at the next one on April 22, 2017. 



“ This meeting was an opportunity for staff and providers to connect and share information and concerns. ”



NEXT ELCHC PROVIDER MEETING

Saturday, April 22, 2017
9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Hillsborough Community College - Dale Mabry Campus
4001 W. Tampa Bay Boulevard
Student Services Center Auditorium
Tampa, FL 33614

Details about the meeting, the meeting agenda and directions on how to register will be provided. Be sure to sign up to receive *Provider Notes* email blast and always check the ELCHC website Provider page at: <https://www.elchc.org/providers/>



the importance of **GOOD NUTRITION**

By Lourdes Grace Chandler, Inspector , Hillsborough Child Care Licensing

Children learn and copy most of their behaviors from parents and caregivers. This is why it is vitally important for parents and caregivers to be the best role models for children, especially when it comes to eating healthy and balanced meals. As educators in Hillsborough County, we are instrumental in ensuring our next generation learns healthy eating habits that will stay with them the rest of their lives. According to Nutritionist Resource, "Encouraging children to eat a nutritious, balanced diet early on is important for a number of reasons. Ensuring they get the right vitamins and minerals in their diet will help them grow and develop optimally. They are also more likely to be energized

and motivated, supporting their ability to learn. Educating them on healthy eating during childhood will also help them make healthier choices as they become adults"

Experts note there are many factors that contribute to unhealthy nutritional habits of children. An obvious factor is that children can be picky eaters. Many children learn this habit from their parents and caregivers. In order to encourage children to eat better, parents and caregivers should also consider changing their eating habits and realize the role models they are. Experts recommend offering children a variety of foods during each meal. Another factor is that parents have become very busy which makes it difficult to make time to prepare food at home. Children end up eating too

much fast food, which is less time consuming but is usually deficient in nutritional value. Additionally, fresh, quality, nutritious food has become very expensive. The cost of food has gone up and families are less able to afford it. Parents end up purchasing foods that are less expensive and unfortunately less nutritious.

As educators, we can encourage parents and caregivers to provide nutritious and healthy meals to their children. We can provide training in proper nutrition and inform them of different programs that offer training assistance for parents to prepare food at home. Also, we can guide them to programs in our community that may offer assistance to offset the cost of foods. As we all know, the cost of eating right is very expensive for majority of the families. But the cost of not eating healthy can end





up costing more in the long run. Fortunately, here in Hillsborough County, a licensed Family Child Care Homes' providers and commercial daycare centers can participate in the food program run by Lutheran Services. This food program provides trainings to caregivers on proper nutrition and how to create a weekly menu of three nutritious well balance meals a day. In addition, The Children's Board Family Resource Center offers nutrition classes that we can recommend to all families in our county. It's a New Year, and new start, to encourage parents, caregivers and children new healthy eating habits to last a lifetime.



We can all agree that in the wealthiest nation on Earth, all children should have the basic nutrition they need to learn and grow and to pursue their dreams, because, in the end, nothing is more important than the health and well-being of our children.

--- President Barack and First Lady Michelle Obama from the Signing of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, 12/13/2010



Don't Block Their Curiosity

Learn to Turn No into Yes

By Kelly Trapeo, Director, First Discoveries Child Development Center

D

o you think you can make it through the day without saying "No"? How about an hour?

Many early childhood educators can become so distracted by teaching the "academic" portions of our day that we become too busy to teach children why they can't do things, or what things we can do instead.

"Toddlers are incredibly curious. It's how they learn, so you don't want to block that at every turn," says Rahil D. Briggs, Psy.D., an infant and toddler psychologist at The Children's Hospital at Montefiore, in New York City. I remember a particularly busy day many years ago when I was teaching a group of two-year olds. I caught myself talking to the same child over and over again. "Johnny no jumping off the chair...No climbing on the bookshelf....No pushing your friends...Johnny Please just listen to me!"

Tell them what they can do,
not what they can't do.



I went home that day frustrated and exhausted, but as I reflected on my day it occurred to me that Johnny WAS listening to me! Johnny did stop jumping off the chair, but then he began climbing on the bookshelf. He stopped climbing on the bookshelf then began pushing his friends. Johnny did not have a lot of words... but his actions were telling me a lot. He was bored and he lacked the knowledge of what he was allowed to do. The next day I went into work with a much different strategy.

Children need to know what they CAN do. The next day when Johnny began to pull himself up onto the table I walked over to Johnny and told him, "Climbing on the table is not safe, you can fall and get hurt. If you would like to climb you can climb on the jungle gym outside. Let's find something to play with while you are still inside....How about the trucks? Can you drive the trucks on the road carpet?" It took a little more of my time, but as time progressed Johnny, and his classmates, began to understand.



All photos courtesy of First Discoveries Child Development Center



Offer an alternative to the undesirable behavior and see the change.



Toddlers are incredibly curious. It's how they learn, so you don't want to block that at every turn.

Over the next few weeks we took pictures of our friends being safe; we used walking feet, we sat in our chairs, we spit in the sink, we pushed the riding toys outside, and so much more. Then we put those pictures up around our room. Not only did we have fun, but we learned what we CAN do! Of course, this doesn't mean you should avoid negative terms entirely. The key is simply to use them wisely. "Save them for those times when there's no other option or strategy, such as when your child lets go of your hand while you're crossing the street," says Dr. Briggs. That way, they'll learn that there are certain times when there's no room for negotiation. My challenge to you is to take 1 hour and be "No" free!



Instead of...	Try...
Throwing toys around the room	Tossing toys into the bucket
Pushing your friends	Push a shopping cart
Running in the classroom	Use walking feet
Coloring on the table	Color on your paper
Standing on our blocks	Build a castle with our blocks
Biting our friends	Bite an apple



ELCHC Photo Gallery

ELCHC is THE trusted early learning resource in Hillsborough County! Our Board and staff are in the community highlighting the benefits, importance and power of quality early learning!

01 Over 300 providers braved cold and rain to attend the first ELCHC Provider meeting at HCC on Jan. 7, 2017

02 Some of our dedicated early learning professionals at the Jan. 7th Quarterly Provider Meeting.

03 ELCHC CEO Steve Knobl on talk radio's That Business Show to talk to the business community about early learning.

04 ELCHC's Bobbi Davis & Michelle Hamilton of FL Blue at the Boys & Girls Club Great Future's breakfast.

05 Early Learning supporter Joseline Ramirez posts an unselfie for our Giving Tuesday campaign!

06 ELCHC CEO Dr. Steve Knobl & Bd members Jennifer Kuhn & Aakash Patel visit DCF Secretary Mike Carroll.

07 Children's Movement Florida CEO Vance Aloupis address the ELCHC Board of Directors at their retreat.

08 CEO Knobl & Sandy Spreadbury with WFLA reporter Gayle Guyardo - a story on affordable child care.

9 CEO Knobl is joined by ELCHC Board member Dr. Shawn Robinson at a presentation to Tampa Kiwanis club.

10 CEO Steve Knobl met with Rep. Dana Young to advocate for support for Florida's early learning priorities.



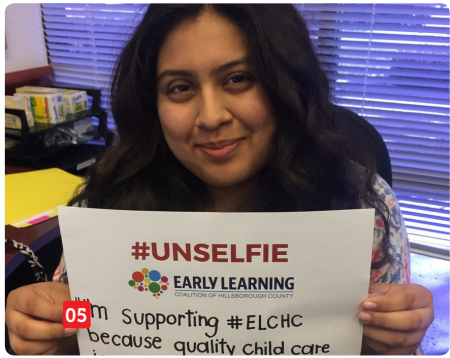
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elchcnews

latest ideas • what's up • deadlines • in the know



A Few Things You Really Need to Know

Things change quickly, make sure you're in the know

— by Tracie White —

As early learning professionals, there is much to do and much to know! This section of our magazine attempts to give you snippets of things that are happening in the early childhood arena! We're helping you keep your ear to the ground!

MARCH IS NATIONAL READ ALOUD MONTH!

Yep! March is National Read Aloud Month! It was started by an organization called Read Aloud 15 Minutes. As early learning pros we know the benefits of reading out loud to children at least 15 minutes a day. More is better right?! We need to make sure that parents do the same because only 48% of young children in the US are read aloud to each day!



That's way too many kids that are missing out on early literacy opportunities. March is a great time to increase awareness and improve that percentage! Have a read aloud challenge at your center to get your parents on board!

GARDINER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Gardiner Scholarship Program provides eligible students a scholarship that can be used to purchase approved services or products in order to design a customized educational

program for the student. Scholarships can be used for specialized services such as speech or occupational therapy, instructional materials, tuition at an eligible private school, contributions to a college prepaid account and more. The program is directly administered by state-approved nonprofit scholarship funding organizations. Eligibility includes 3 or 4-year-olds. For details go to the Florida Department of Education website and enter Gardiner Scholarship Program in the search feature.

It's time for parents to apply for next year so be sure to pass this valuable information along to the families that you serve!

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

The Earned Income Tax Credit, EITC is a benefit for working people with low to moderate income. To qualify, families must meet certain requirements and file a tax return, even if they do not owe any tax or are not required to file. EITC reduces the amount of tax they owe and may give them a refund. They should visit www.irs.gov.



2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Increase School Readiness funding to support the economic stability of working families, kindergarten readiness for children, and performance increases for providers

- There are over 37,000 children on the waiting list; performance funding has demonstrated increases in program quality

Increase Voluntary Prekindergarten Program per-child funding by \$50 for the school year and \$43 for the summer

- This change increases the school year base student allocation from \$2,437 (2015-16) to \$2,487; still below the \$2,677 allocated in 2007-08

Support local flexibility and decision-making to meet local needs and maximize the leveraging of local resources

- Allow greater flexibility in Coalition Board membership while maintaining that at least one-third of members are business representatives (e.g., Allow community members such as those representing law enforcement and higher education to serve)
- Restore greater flexibility in determining eligibility categories based on local needs, returning to eligibility categories in Florida Statutes prior to 2012 legislative changes
- Ensure local flexibility in reviewing School Readiness and Voluntary Prekindergarten contract violations and determining appropriate penalties and termination periods (e.g., Allow terminations 'up to five years' rather than requiring all terminations to be for 5 years)

Florida's economic growth strategy starts at birth by investments in early childhood; Lack of investment in the productivity of the next generation is a deficit strategy, not a growth strategy.



“ There are a myriad of concepts you can discuss with children while planting and tending a garden.



GARDENING WITH CHILDREN

4 THINGS PROVIDERS CAN DO

Spring is the time most people think of planning a garden, but we live in Florida where gardening can take place all year long. Child care providers who encourage children to garden or grow plants inside or outside are providing opportunities for children to learn skills essential for school readiness and life.

There are a myriad of scientific concepts you can discuss with children when planting or tending a garden. The wonder of seeing a garden grow will spark children's curiosity and prompt them to ask questions like: "Why do plants need sun?" or "How does a plant drink water?" You will even find yourself throwing in a little math if you have the children measure how much plants are growing from week to week. Also, these days our children could benefit from a little more physical activity and sunshine they'll get while gardening. Activities like moving soil, carrying water cans and digging are all good for young bodies!

Time in the garden also allows for team building and promotes communication skills. Planning the garden, planting the seeds and watching them grow can give children a sense of purpose and responsibility. Here's what you can do in your classroom:

1

Start a school/class garden and have the children assist in selecting seeds to plant, planting the seeds and take care of the garden.

2

Let each child plant a seed or seedling for an indoor or window garden. Have the children check on the seed/plant each day and water it or move it to get more sun or shade as needed.

3

Build a terrarium with your class. Let each child add a plant, pebble or other object to the terrarium. Ask the children to observe the terrarium weekly and look for changes. Talk to the children about the water cycle and the source of water that help plants live and grow.

4

Invite families to help plant a class or school garden. Teach the families how to select plants for the garden, prepare the soil, plant the seeds or seedlings and how to care for the garden. Encourage families to plant a family garden at home.

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LEGISLATION TO KEEP AN EYE ON

The 2017 60-day legislative session opened on Tuesday, March 7, 2017, with continued committee work and a number of House leadership priority bills already heading to the floor. The six committee weeks leading up to session set the tone, with a clear focus on the budget and associated outcomes for state spending.

In his opening day remarks, House Speaker Richard Corcoran (R-Pasco County) commented that "... everything we have done so far --- we have done to keep faith with the voters who sent us here. We adopted the toughest ethics and transparency rules of any chamber of any legislature in the United States. We shined the biggest and brightest spotlight on the appropriations process and brought an end to the shadowy pork barrel budgets that wasted millions in taxpayer money." Among his priorities are no increases in property taxes, judicial reform, and education.

Senate President Joe Negron (R-St. Lucie), expressed his desire to create "national elite destination universities" and to expand the opportunity for more Florida students to attend by reducing financial "impediments." (NSF, 03-07-17). In addition, his priorities include water and environmental issues, as well as juvenile justice reform.

Governor Rick Scott in his State of the State Address outlined priorities included in his "Fighting for Florida's Future" 2017 legislative package: public safety, jobs, promoting Florida as a destination for businesses and tourism, tax cuts, veterans affairs, the environment, and education.

Early Learning Bills

A bill relating to reading instruction HB 79 was filed by the Rep. Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) with a Senate companion, SB 656 filed by Sen. Aaron Bean (R-Jacksonville). The bill revises duties of the Just Read, Florida! Office relating to reading instruction, training, and research; revises data and monitoring requirements for school improvement plans and early warning systems; revises parent notification requirements relating to students with reading deficiencies; revises requirements and standards for teacher training and professional certificates and endorsements; requires the Office of Early Learning (OEL) to identify guidelines for reading instruction strategies; revises requirements and criteria for remediation and identification of students with reading deficiencies; and revises reporting requirements relating to school improvement and accountability.

HB 79 has been referred to three committees, and is awaiting action in the PreK-12 Quality Subcommittee. SB 656 also received three committees of reference and is awaiting its first hearing in the Education Committee.

SB 468 by Sen. Kelli Stargel (R-Lakeland) and its companion, HB 757 by Rep. Byron Donalds (R-Naples) relating to Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK), requires the Just Read, Florida! office to provide teachers, reading coaches, and principals in prekindergarten through grade 3 with specified training; and requires VPK providers to provide parents with pre- and post-assessment results within a specified timeframe. SB 468 has been referred to four committees, and is awaiting a hearing in the Education Committee. HB 757 has been referred to three committees and is awaiting action in the PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee.

SB 806 by Sen. Kelli Stargel (R-Lakeland) creates the Committee on Early Grade Success within the Department of



Education to develop a proposal for establishing and implementing a coordinated child assessment system for the School Readiness Program, the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, and the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. The bill provides for membership of the committee; provides committee meeting requirements; requires the University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning to provide necessary staff for the committee; and requires the committee to submit a report by a specified date. The bill has been referred to four committees and is awaiting action in the Education Committee. The House companion, HB 1229 by Rep. Erin Grall (R-Vero Beach) has not yet been assigned to committees.

Sen. Randolph Bracy (D-Ocoee) filed **SB 1214** relating to the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program. The bill revises the educational credentials and training required after a specified date for prekindergarten instructors in school-year prekindergarten programs delivered by private prekindergarten providers; and provides for the future revision of alternate educational credentials that such instructors may hold. The bill has been referred to 3 committees and is awaiting action by the Education Committee. There is no House companion to the bill.

Rep. Loranne Ausley (D-Tallahassee) filed **HB 1431** which has not yet been referred to committees. The bill requires child care personnel to submit proof of compliance with certain training and credentialing requirements to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) for publishing in the Early Learning Workforce Registry; requires each child care facility to submit its personnel roster to DCF for publishing in the registry; and revises minimum requirements for prekindergarten instructors employed by private prekindergarten provider. The bill does not have a Senate companion.

SB 1714 by Sen. Darryl Rouson (D-St. Petersburg) and its companion, HB 1359 by Rep. Ben Diamond (D-St. Petersburg) relates to Early Learning. The bill revises provisions relating to removal of a provider from eligibility to deliver the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program or receive funding under certain circumstances; requires each early learning coalition to establish child eligibility criteria based on local community needs for participation in the school readiness program; and revises a provision relating to revocation of a provider's eligibility to deliver the School Readiness program or receive certain funding under certain circumstances. Neither of the House and Senate bills have yet been referred to committees.

CHILD CARE FACILITIES

HB 917 by Rep. Kamia Brown (D-Ocoee) and SB 946 by Sen. Linda Stewart (R-Orlando) revises the definition of "child care facilities" to exclude facilities offering programs for children which are owned and operated by county or municipal government. HB 917 has been referred to 3 committees and is awaiting action in the Children, Families and Seniors Subcommittee. SB 946 is awaiting action in the Children, Families and Elder Affairs Committee.

HB 1155 by Rep. Patrick Henry (D-Daytona Beach) and SB 1364 by Sen. Darryl Rouson (D-St. Petersburg) requires a person to present picture identification before retrieving specified students from a public school under certain circumstances; requires policies to be provided to the Department of Education; requires a person to present picture identification before retrieving specified students from a nonpublic school or specified child care facility under certain circumstances; and requires policies to be maintained and available for inspection on the premises of each entity. HB 1155 has been referred to 3 committees and is awaiting action in the PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee. The Senate companion, SB 1364, has not yet been referenced to committees



This summary is reprinted from the Florida Children's Council digital publication Capitol Connection, March 10, 2017.



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CONTRACT DEADLINES

All School Readiness and VPK providers contracting with the Coalition for FY17-18 **MUST** have their contracts completed in their entirety and submitted to the Coalition by **Monday, May 15, 2017** via the ELCHC Provider Portal.

The Coalition **WILL NOT** be accepting paper contracts.

Providers with questions should contact their assigned Provider Specialist. Providers may call (813) 280-0800 or email providerservices@elchc.org if they do not know the name of their Provider specialist.

