



## COMMUNICATIONS & OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, May 23, 2017 3:00 p.m.  
6800 N. Dale Mabry, Suite 134  
Tampa, Florida 33614  
**Call-in: 866-866-2244**  
**Access Code: 5194796**

### I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Quorum Verification

D. Jacob

### II. NEW STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

- A. Chadwick Leonard, Communications & Outreach Liaison

T. White Cardwell

### III. ACTION ITEMS

### IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. 2017-18 ELCHC DRAFT Communications & Outreach Plan
- B. Sponsorships
- C. Lighting Community Hero Nominations
- D. Committee Meeting Calendar

### V. ADJOURNMENT

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### UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Board of Directors Meeting – Monday, June 12, 2017 @3:30 pm



# 2017-18 Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County Communications Plan

The Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County (ELCHC) is positioning itself to serve as the hub and primary influencer of early learning and early childhood development services, programs, and information in Hillsborough County. The ELCHC, as it grows and changes over the next several years will seek to offer a complement of programs, services, tools and resources designed to educate and empower families, early childhood professionals, advocates and businesses in understanding and promoting the value and importance of high quality early childhood care and education.

The ELCHC Administration has identified the following organizational strategic priorities:

## Strategic Priority #1: High Quality Early Learning

Goal: Children in Hillsborough County early learning environments will receive equitable and developmentally appropriate learning experiences.

Strategies:

## Strategic Priority #2: Organizational Excellence

Goal: The Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County exemplifies excellence in all aspects of the organization.

Strategies:

## Strategic Priority #3: Leadership & Innovation

Goal: The Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County develops and cultivates leaders and capitalizes on business and community partnerships that propel the profession and system.

The following communications and outreach plan takes the above referenced organizational strategic priorities into account and outlines specific marketing recommendations for Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County (ELCHC). The tactics are categorized within four different strategies:

- I. Create an Image
- II. Establish Credible Authority
- III. Share the Image
- IV. Tell the Story

The Coalition's staff and board will be able to implement the tactics of the plan.

***I. Create an Image: Rebuild the image of the ELCHC by showcasing tangible assets in target area and early learning life opportunities.***

BRANDING

In 2016, ELCHC invested funds in rebranding the organization. The new brand includes a logo and tagline. The logo highlights one of the key aspects of the organization: the importance of early learning as the starting place for every child's potential. The combination of the graphics and the name of the organization allows ELCHC a credible image as a central access point to all early childhood care and education information.

When new branding elements are established, it is sometimes challenging to implement the transition and maintain consistency of the new brand elements. The following items provide simple branding guidelines for logo usage.

- The new official colors for ELCHC are Dark blue, light blue, and a blue-gray. These primary colors are supplemented by 5 vibrant 'secondary' colors. These colors provide a brighter, more assertive representation of the ELCHC.
- When working with vendors and partners, the Coalition will provide its official colors and brand usage requirements when visual elements are needed. Vendors and partners will always need to know the PMS colors or the CMYK breakdown of those colors.

The Coalition includes a large number of partners. In order to maintain a cohesive messaging strategy, the Coalition will provide its Brand Usage Requirements to all partners.

In addition to the graphic treatment, the branding also includes a new positioning statement. The statement, "Potential Starts Here," identifies the ELCHC as a hub and primary influencer of early learning and early childhood development services, programs, and information in Hillsborough County.

While the organizational title's use of the words early learning provides a powerful brand statement, the ELCHC will need facts and success stories that validate this statement. There are many negative perceptions associated with 'child care' and the use of the words early learning in the logo is meant to break through the clutter of those preconceived notions. In order to gain credibility, the statement would need supporting information highlighting innovation in Hillsborough County lead by the ELCHC. Many associate innovation with complex activities. However, innovation for the ELCHC can be defined by other success measurements including an entrepreneurial spirit, innovation in classrooms, or improvements on day-to-day business models that improve the lives of the families we serve.

The color palette used in the new branding will be incorporated organically through all communication efforts. The new brand colors are already part of the branding identity for all coalition programs and initiatives such as the Institute for Early Childhood Providers and the soon

to be revised Quality Counts for Kids Program and will be implemented in any other newly developed ELCHC initiatives.

Moving forward, the coalition will focus on a messaging strategy driven by targeted topic areas. This strategy will help ELCHC become a thought leader in specific areas. By doing this, targeted audiences will think of the ELCHC when seeking early childhood care and education information.

ELCHC should also focus on fact-driven messaging. Ideally, these facts would be from reputable industry publications, research and development organizations, ECE associations, or statewide and national entities such as NAEYC. Statements from these organizations provide a higher level of credibility to support local activities. Many times, that credible message is the first barrier before audiences/stakeholders consider an organization as valid.

***II. Establish Credible Authority: Gather support, insight, and testimonials from partners, advocates, parents, businesses and other prospects***

PERCEPTION SURVEY

The ELCHC has perception issues known to most staff and ELCHC board members. However, these issues might not be the same ones as parents, businesses, and potential advocates. The coalition should benchmark what parents, businesses, politicians and other change makers currently know about the Coalition, and what type of messaging is needed for materials in order to address those issues.

The Coalition should also assess the key benefits these audiences want to read about in any literature provided or hear about in media pieces. In order to manage the cost of this type of research study, the ELCHC could establish a partnership with local higher education institutions focused on research. The study could include interviews with audience segments, in order to understand and capture their firsthand experience. The survey should measure more than purely early learning related issues. The survey could target the impact of the accessibility and affordability of high quality early childhood care options on the lives of families that ELCHC should address in the future.

A viable option for this partnership could be determined under further consideration and discussion with leadership and the Board of Directors. The study would help the ELCHC gain access to necessary information to move forward with research-based communication strategies. At the same time, students from local learning institution would gain insight into the challenges of early childhood care and education in Hillsborough County.

***III. Share the Image: Implement highly targeted outreach in strategic media channels to raise awareness of the ELCHC and drive target audience members to ELCHC as a premiere source of information.***

PAID MEDIA

Once research studies are completed, the Coalition should develop a comprehensive advertising campaign. The core messaging strategy for this initiative should include the branding elements established as the main assets for the ELCHC and feedback from perception surveys. The success of this campaign would rely heavily on the communication channels used to propagate the message. The following provides a suggested paid media strategy outline for ELCHC.

ELCHC should maximize exposure of the advertising message promoting ELCHC programs and services by implementing a multi-tiered media mix consisting of the following media.

- 1) Industry magazines
- 2) Industry websites and blogs
- 3) Local business publications

The tactic of paid media for the ELCHC is highly impacted by budgetary constraints.

***IV. Tell the Story: Improve the image of the ELCHC by securing partners, parents, and businesses willing to tell their ELCHC success story.***

**EARNED MEDIA**

The success of the tactical execution of an earned media strategy will rely heavily on a topic targeted approach. ELCHC will facilitate efforts with the media. The Coalition's earned media program will include the following activities:

- Create a steady stream of news to increase the visibility for the ELCHC, its programs and initiatives that highlight entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Pursue placements in planned editorial opportunities related to identified targeted topics.
- Leverage exclusives, advances and day-of news pitching and bundling of announcements together to maximize results.
- Develop a calendar of announcements around news, events and topics of importance.
- Continually manage and update a comprehensive database of targeted reporters and editors at regional, local, and industry levels.
- Facilitate media interviews.
- Using the themes developed for outreach to traditional media, the Coalition could identify key bloggers important in relevant sectors. The ELCHC communications team will cultivate that list.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

The Coalition is currently active in social media, but much more could be done. The official ELCHC Facebook page has 1,323 followers and the official Twitter feed has 838 followers (as of May 20, 2017). Both social network feeds are regularly updated and the content is appropriately

relevant to current ELCHC activities and goals. There are also official organization pages for ELCHC on LinkedIn and YouTube.

ELCHC will implement strategies and tactics designed to accomplish specific program goals and build a larger, more engaged community. In order to grow the coalition's footprint on social media platforms, the Coalition should will follow these steps:

- 1) Content Audit and Strategy – Conduct a full audit and analysis of all existing and potential social media and interactive content in order to determine what content is engaging and what is not. This process will be critical in developing a content strategy that aligns with coalition goals and the expectations of target audiences.
- 2) Content Development for Social and Web – ELCHC will develop a social media editorial calendar outlining production of specific content, from designated social network posts to general topics and web posts.
- 3) Visual Content Support – Develop attention-grabbing visual elements – infographics, promotional photos, informative videos, etc. – that can be delivered to target audiences via social media and other digital platforms.
- 4) Propagation Plan Creation – Create a calendar of social media posts (including goals and objectives for each) that will provide guidance for posting on various platforms. This plan can be updated easily moving forward.
- 5) Strategic Sponsored Posts – Develop particular Facebook posts that will serve as affordable paid advertisements to very targeted audiences. These will help to build a stronger following.

## WEBSITE

It is important that the ELCHC takes full advantage of its newly branded online presence. The new website is built on the flexible Wordpress platform, allowing for quick and consistent content management. ELCHC needs to continue to add new and engaging content, with a focus on the most important information for its visitors. To efficiently update content, the ELCHC will keep the most dynamic sections of the site constantly updated. These sections include the news articles, events, and Why Early Education pages. Having these sections updated keeps continuous new content present on the site, and keeps the new site climbing in search rankings due to the consistently fresh content.

To continue growing the helpfulness and effectiveness of the new website, staff will need to continue building content throughout the site, including new homepage slider images and extensive information within their main site sections. Additionally, all marketing efforts be backed up with content on the site, with a focus of driving individuals who are interested back to your website to learn more. ELCHC will need to make sure that adequate information is available to help educate and engage these visitors once they arrive.

## MEASURING OUTCOMES

Any effective marketing plan should establish well-defined success measurements. The following section provides short-, intermediate-, and long-term success measurements that the coalition may use to track progress.

### Short-Term Outcomes: One Year

- Increase in brand awareness – measured with research pre- and post-awareness studies
- Increase in Web traffic – measured with Google Analytics
- Increase engagement of partners in marketing tasks implementation
- Increase following in existing and new social media platforms
- Increase number of e-newsletter subscribers

### Intermediate-Term Outcomes: Two to Three Years

- Increase number of inquiries, on-site visits
- Increase engagement of local businesses in early childhood as a community wide economic development effort
- Increase earned media coverage
- Change perception and improve local image, specifically from community partners
- Positive interaction with site selection consultants
- Establish ELCHC's authority in target areas

**ISSUE:****Communications & Outreach DRAFT Plan****RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

It is recommended that the ELCHC Communications & Outreach Committee review and offer input on the proposed DRAFT Communications and Outreach Plan for FY 2017-18

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**NARRATIVE:**

The Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County (ELCHC) is positioning itself to serve as the hub and primary influencer of early learning and early childhood development services, programs, and information in Hillsborough County. The ELCHC, as it grows and changes over the next several years will seek to offer a complement of programs, services, tools and resources designed to educate and empower families, early childhood professionals, advocates and businesses in understanding and promoting the value and importance of high quality early childhood care and education.

The attached DRAFT Communications and outreach plan takes the established organizational strategic priorities into account and outlines specific marketing recommendations for Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County (ELCHC).

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