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October 2017
Early Learning Parents' Pages

How to survive sibling rivalry and prevent child bullying. Ideas for fall, pumpkins, Halloween. Learn about Head Start and read aloud with your child.

[Click to read the October issue.](#)

Office of Early Learning Executive Director Rodney MacKinnon presents at the Constitution Revision Commission

Executive Director MacKinnon gave an overview of the voluntary prekindergarten program and its history

A group of Florida political leaders who are members of the education subcommittee of the Constitution Revision Commission met Thursday, Oct. 5, in Tallahassee for a series of presentations on education issues. Office of Early Learning Executive Director Rodney J. MacKinnon presented an overview of the voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) education program, describing both its history and its importance as one of the first state-funded prekindergarten programs.



The Constitution Revision Commission meets every 20 years and has the power to put constitutional amendments on the 2018 general-election ballot.

Coalitions continue operations despite damages from Hurricane Irma

Most coalitions have recovered from the storm's damages and are back assisting families

On Sept. 9, Hurricane Irma made landfall in the Florida Keys as a Category 4 storm. Over the next two days, it pushed up the Florida peninsula. Severe flooding, storm surge and damaging winds devastated communities. Many early learning coalitions and child care provider locations across the state were likewise affected by the storm. In particular, the early learning coalitions of St. Lucie and Miami-Dade/Monroe received significant damage. Pictured in the top right is the St. Lucie coalition office, which received substantial flooding. The coalition is currently operating out of a temporary location. Child care providers in the Florida Keys were especially affected.



The picture above shows damage to a preschool located in the lower Florida Keys area.

However, despite the devastation the hurricane left behind, coalition staff around the state have been working diligently to recover and have quickly made adjustments, temporary relocations and other efforts to return to assisting families as quickly as possible. Child care locations that are currently inoperable are also receiving assistance to help rebuild.

In light of the significant damage that Puerto Rico suffered from Hurricane Maria, Florida Governor Rick Scott declared a state of emergency to accommodate an influx of displaced Puerto Rican families. Currently, the Office of Early Learning and other state education officials are working to waive or suspend some requirements to enable young Puerto Rican students to enter VPK and School Readiness programs in Florida.

N-E-W-S

Early learning highlights from North, East, West and South Florida

Coalition cultivates staff skills, discusses importance of early learning programs with legislators

ELC of Palm Beach County has been busy strengthening staff and speaking with legislators

Michael Alvarez, an [Early Learning Coalition of Palm Beach County](#) board member and senior vice president/regional manager at PNC Bank, shared his time and customer service expertise through three individualized sessions for each of the coalition's Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R), family services and executive leadership teams. The coalition has been strengthening staff skills and reinforcing customer service focus across all departments to better serve the children and families in the community.



On Aug. 21, Florida State Representative David Silvers met with coalition Chief Executive Officer Warren Eldridge and Dr. Lisa Williams-Taylor, chief executive officer of the Children's Services Council (CSC) of Palm Beach County, to discuss the coalition's legislative priorities for the 2018 session and showcase the collaborative early learning work in Palm Beach County among the coalition, CSC and

Lutheran Services Florida. The group was provided a tour of a local child care provider, Little Dude Ranch Academy, by Terrie Ellis, the owner/operator and coalition board member. State Representative Silvers even took the time to read a book to one of the voluntary prekindergarten classes.

Coalition celebrates National Literacy Month, calls for early literacy all year

ELC of the Big Bend Region CEO Matt Guse appears on WTXL to talk early literacy

Last month was National Literacy Month, and Matt Guse, CEO of the [ELC of the Big Bend Region](#), appeared on WTXL on Sept. 21 to discuss the importance of early literacy year-round.



The coalition held a "Stroll and Read" event on Sept. 17 to encourage families to listen and read while walking the grounds of Cascades Park in Tallahassee.

[Click here](#) to watch Matt Guse's interview on WTXL.

Port Orange Walmart donates to coalition's Dolly Parton Imagination Library

ELC of Flagler & Volusia receives contribution to expand their Imagination Library

The [ELC of Flagler & Volusia](#) received a check for \$2,500 from a Walmart located in Port Orange, Florida. The contribution will go toward expanding the coalition's Dolly Parton Imagination Library program.



The actual Dolly Parton Imagination Library is located in Tennessee, but Parton created a program for use in all communities to help foster a love of reading in preschool children and their families by providing them with the gift of specially selected books each month. The coalition is using the program to involve more children and families in early reading, and the donation will go a long way to including more children in Volusia County in the program.

Coalition hosts Reading Pals Conference

Participants experienced different reading stations throughout the day

The [ELC of North Florida](#) hosted a conference for their "Reading Pals" at the Marywood Retreat and Conference Center in St. Johns County on Sept. 27. Forty of the coalition's reading volunteers from Clay, Putnam and St. Johns counties attended.

The conference had two keynote speakers, Michelle Kiley and Sandra Dunnivant. Kiley is a youth services librarian who has worked for the St. Johns County Public Library system for more than 12 years as a children's librarian. Dunnivant is a part-time employee for the coalition and was an educator in the Clay County school system for 48 years.

[Click here](#) to read more about the conference.



Dunkin' Donuts supports children through donation to coalition

ELC of Northwest Florida partnered with

Dunkin' Donuts for a fundraiser in August

The Dunkin' Donuts location in Chipley, Florida, donated \$4,360 to the [ELC of Northwest Florida](#) in August. The coalition's grant matched every dollar raised by Dunkin' Donuts with \$16. The funds will help provide child care.



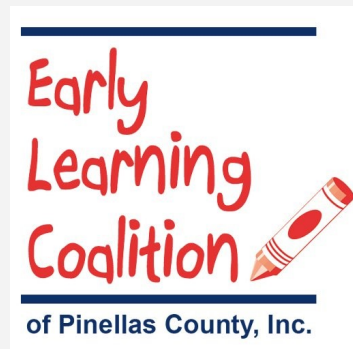
The Chipley franchise, as well as 21 other Dunkin' Donuts businesses across the Panhandle and lower parts of Alabama, raised a grand total of almost \$70,000 to fund organizations that support children's education and well-being.

Coalition releases call for proposals for upcoming conference

ELC of Pinellas is calling for proposals for its Annual

Early Care and Education Conference

The [ELC of Pinellas County](#) is releasing a call for proposals for its upcoming Annual Early Care and Education Conference. All proposals should be received no later than Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2017. [Click here](#) to download the proposal form. Email it to Ken Buchanan, professional development trainer at the ELC of Pinellas, at kbuchanan@elcpinellas.net.



The Annual Early Care and Education Conference will be held on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2018, at St. Petersburg College in St. Petersburg, Florida. Topics will include infant and toddler early education, developmentally appropriate activities, brain development and much more.

For more information about the conference, [click here](#).

Contact: Communications, Office of Early Learning
250 Marriott Drive, Tallahassee, FL 32399
866-357-3239

