



# June 2018



Happy Father's Day

- Early Learning and Developmental Standards
- Celebrate Father's Day
- Stay safe and have fun this summer

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## N-E-W-S

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

### *Coalition unveils new learning center*

#### **New center will accommodate more children**

The [Early Learning Coalition of the Emerald Coast](#) opened the doors of its new children's learning center in North Eglin Parkway. The new location accommodates more children, families and staff than the old location in Fort Walton Beach. The coalition serves families all the way up to the Alabama line in North Okaloosa and Walton, down the Emerald Coast stretching from west Okaloosa to east Walton County.

The coalition's mission is to provide access to early education and care to foster success in children and families. The executive director, Renea Black, hopes the services will help parents to be self-sufficient if they are struggling financially to afford childcare. Currently, there are almost 1,700 children enrolled in their school readiness program that promotes reading and writing skills.



[Click here](#) to read more.

### *Coalition awarded grant to support fitness program*

## WAVE fitness program encourages healthy choices for preschoolers

The [ELC of Manatee County](#) was awarded a \$1,500 grant from the Kathleen K. Catlin Foundation to support the WAVE fitness program. WAVE focuses on the health and wellness of preschool children. Preschools receive a block of functional fitness programming for their student twice per week. WAVE aims to encourage a lifestyle of consistent physical activity and healthy choices for children.

The \$1,500 grant follows a previous \$4,000 grant received at the Florida Winefest & Auction Grants Award ceremony. Sharon Oakes, ELC Chief Operations Officer, said: "We are thrilled that our program has received this additional funding after it was highlighted at the recent Florida Winefest Grants Award ceremony. We would like to express our gratitude to the Kathleen K. Catlin Foundation for this financial support of what is a crucial program, as we try to combat the issue of child obesity in our local communities."



[Click here](#) to read more.

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## Coalition receives grant award for Help Me Grow

### Initiative will provide one-stop-shop for parents

The [ELC of Marion County](#) has been awarded grant funding through the Children's Forum in Tallahassee to become a Help Me Grow Affiliate for Marion County.



Help Me Grow links families with local resources to address parents' concerns about the health, development, behavior and learning of their young children. The program focuses on early screening and connecting families to existing programs and services to address potential health challenges in young children.

The coalition will partner with United Way's 2-1-1 and Healthy Start North Central Florida, among other organizations, to provide a centralized telephone access point, perform screenings, conduct outreach to families and health care providers, and collect data and perform analysis.

Help Me Grow is a uniquely connected expansion of the early childhood inclusion services and the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) resource already provided by the coalition.

"This initiative will demonstrate the collaboration of our partners by highlighting resources to meet the needs of children", said Roseann Fricks, CEO of the coalition. "Through our partnership with United Way's 2-1-1, parents will have 24/7 access to information on resources concerning support and services. And through our partnership with Healthy Start of North Central Florida, our medical community will assist with sharing this information with parents. Bringing this initiative to our county strengthens the coalition's role as a 'one-stop shop' for parents of children ages birth to eight years old."

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## Local Healthy Start names coalition 2018 Partner of the Year

### Partnership allowed for various early learning initiatives

The Healthy Start Coalition of Manatee County, Inc. honored the [ELC of Manatee County](#) as the 2018 Partner of the Year. Fred Leonard, executive director for the Healthy Start Coalition of Manatee County said, "We sincerely appreciate their efforts, and look forward to seeing the continued impact of the Early Steps to School Success home visiting program on local families."



Both organizations partnered together to accept referrals and enrollment at the Early Steps to School Success program. They also collaborated on local initiatives such as the Community Baby Shower. Sharon Oakes, chief operating officer of the coalition, was honored to receive the award and reminded everyone that their common goal is to improve the early education of the local children in Manatee County.

## *Coalition holds First Five Years Gala*

### **Orange County's annual gala raises money for early learning initiatives**

The [ELC of Orange County](#) hosted its biggest fundraiser of the year at the most magical place on Earth - Walt Disney World Resort's EPCOT World Showplace Pavilion on Saturday, June 9, 2018.

"Early childhood is one of the most critical periods of time for everybody," said Karen Willis, chief executive officer of the coalition. "During the first five years of a child's life, 90% of the brain's architecture is created, and that's the foundation of the rest of our learning as young people and as adults. Starting young and starting early is absolutely critical if we are going to make sure that that brain architecture is as strong as it can possibly be. When you change the first five years, you change everything."

During the gala, the coalition honored Linda Landman Gonzalez, the organization's vice president of social responsibility and the president of the Orlando Magic Youth Foundation. The night also provided many opportunities to give, including a Love of Learning Sweepstakes with a \$10,000 grand prize and the Fund-A-Child program. For every dollar raised, the federal government matched \$15.67.



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