



## EARLY LEARNING UPDATE

MAY 2014

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION AND EARLY LEARNING

While this year's session of the Florida Legislature did not result in a comprehensive early learning bill, a great deal of effort went into proposed legislation. The hard work of drafting legislation that failed to pass in the waning hours of the 2014 session will serve as a strong foundation for the 2015 session. Although there was no new early learning bill, there was new funding for programs and services that will have a positive impact on children, families, educators and early learning stakeholders around the state. You can read the budget approved by the legislature—[House Bill 5001](#)—on the Florida House website. For details about early learning, pay attention to pages 17 through 21. The bill has been presented to Governor Rick Scott who has until June 4 to act on it.

Work to complete implementing 2013 legislation—HB 7165—much of it about rule-making—continues. Email [HB7165@oel.myflorida.com](mailto:HB7165@oel.myflorida.com) to receive legislative updates.

### NEED HELP WITH VPK ASSESSMENTS?

Technical support for the VPK Assessment Online Reporting System is available in the *VPK Assessment Teacher's Manual—Fourth Edition* and by contacting the VPK Assessment Help Desk. Online help is available on the [Bright Beginnings](#) website. Email requests go to [vpkassessment@fcrr.org](mailto:vpkassessment@fcrr.org). Help is available by phone in Spanish or English at 850-645-0835 or 1-844-545-4777 (toll-free) Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST and Friday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.



*Miami-Dade/Monroe ELC employees accept an organizational 2014 Technology Leaders of the Year Award from the 2014 Miami Chamber of Commerce.*

### JUST THE FACTS

More than 351,000 children in Florida have participated in the VPK or School Readiness Program through March of this fiscal year. Look for a monthly profile plus state, coalition and program detail in OEL's online [Fact Book](#).

## N-E-W-S EARLY LEARNING COALITION HIGHLIGHTS FROM NORTH, EAST, WEST AND SOUTH FLORIDA



*The ELC of Escambia County hosted dignitaries, community guests and their popular dolphin mascot Mr. Readmore at the ribbon cutting for their new offices.*



On Sunday, March 30, the **Early Learning Coalition of Southwest Florida** joined the Children's Advocacy Center,

Addiction Counseling Treatment and Child Care of Southwest Florida to co-sponsor the Fort Myers "Walk in My Shoes" 2014. Lauren Book and her team walked through Lee County as part of their 1,500-mile walk from Key West to Tallahassee raising awareness about preventing child sexual abuse. About 80 walkers joined to walk the local 10-mile part of the journey and listened, along with children, as Lauren talked to them about keeping safe. Upon arriving in Tallahassee at the end of the walk the team celebrated legislation in support of this issue.



You are invited to check out the new website that the **ELC of Palm Beach County** launched in April.

The **ELC of Duval** will soon introduce a new website as well, thanks to a \$135,000 three-year grant from the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida. The grant is to centralize parent and community information and access to resources for parents of children from birth to 5 via a website that will be a resource for early learning, health, development and parent engagement information. A two-year public awareness campaign will target parents, caregivers and the general public about the site and the resources it offers.

### UPCOMING...

- Early learning coalition finance directors will be meeting in Orlando from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Thursday, June 4. ELC executive directors will convene the following day.
- The planning group for the school readiness performance funding pilot project is also scheduled to meet in Orlando June 4.



*Volunteers for the ELC of North Florida packed book bags for children prompting a story in the [St. Augustine Record](#) about the project. Dora the Explorer delivered the bags.*



*The ELC of Osceola County's WEE Read program got help from a Disney Princess who read to preschoolers. The ELC also held their 10th Annual Early Educators Conference "Ready, Set, Grow!" drawing 300 participants. They too had a "bag" theme decorating 350 bags with "bling" to donate to children in DCF custody.*



*The ELC of Orange County accepts a \$100,000 grant from the Orlando Magic Youth Foundation to add 20 infant/toddler teachers and put 15 directors through the infant/toddler coaching program.*

