



## Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Heartland, Inc. 2009-2010 Annual Report

**Mission Statement:**

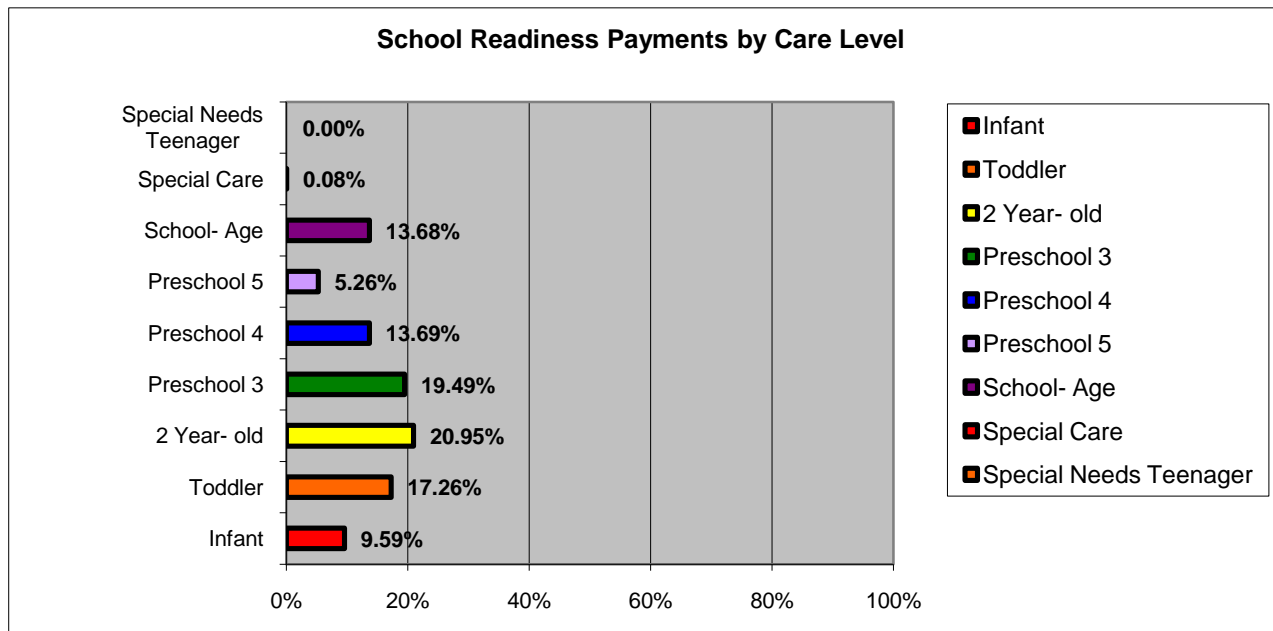
The mission of the Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Heartland, Inc. is to support families and children in accessing high quality early care and education services via School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-kindergarten programs. The ELCFH also serves as a point of access to resources and referrals for health care and family support services.

**Data Summary:** The following information is based on data collected from July 1, 2009- June 30, 2010.

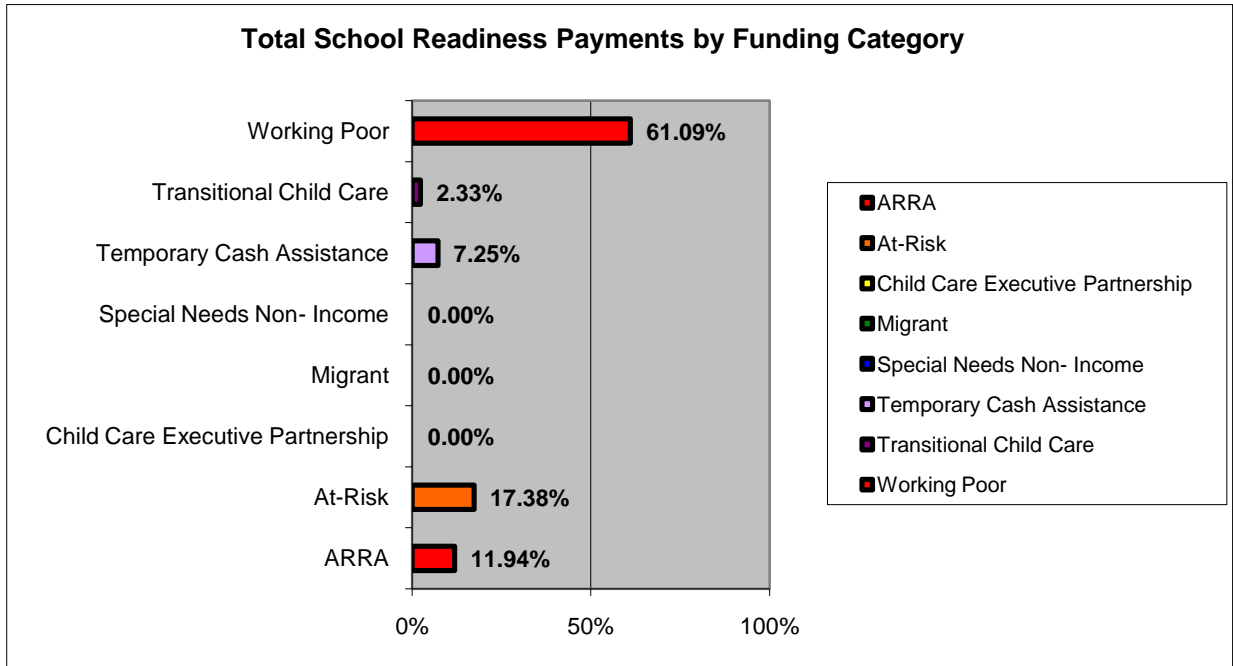
**Number of unduplicated School Readiness (SR) children and families:**

SR Children	SR Families
3104	1888

**School Readiness: Percentage of total payments (including match) by care level:**



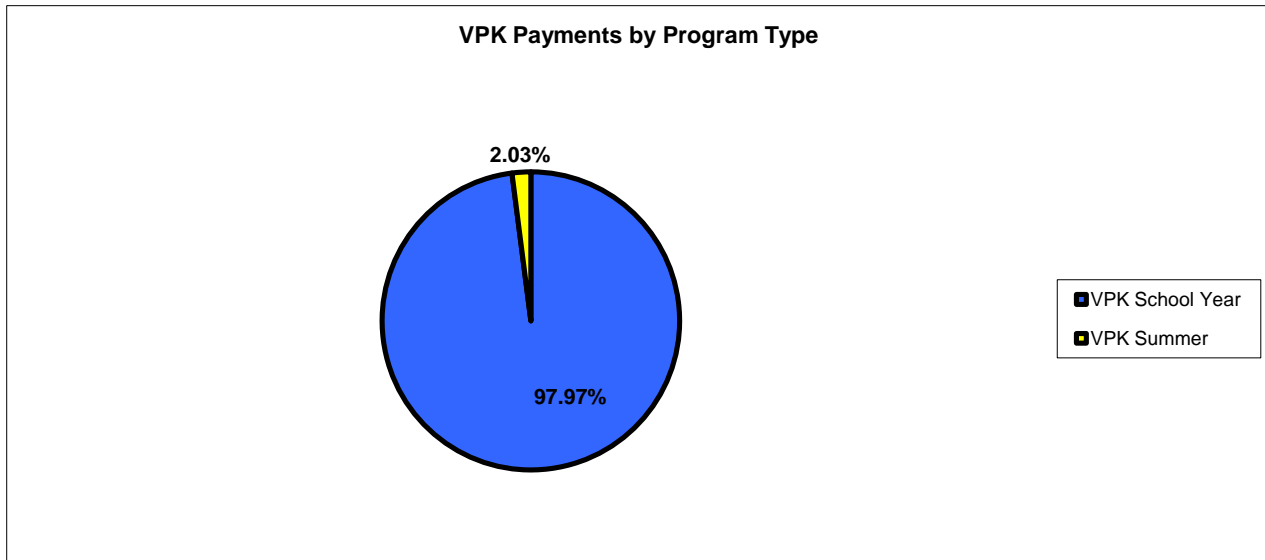
**School Readiness: Percentage of total payments (including match) by funding category:**



**Number of unduplicated Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education children and families:**

VPK Children	VPK Families
2119	2076

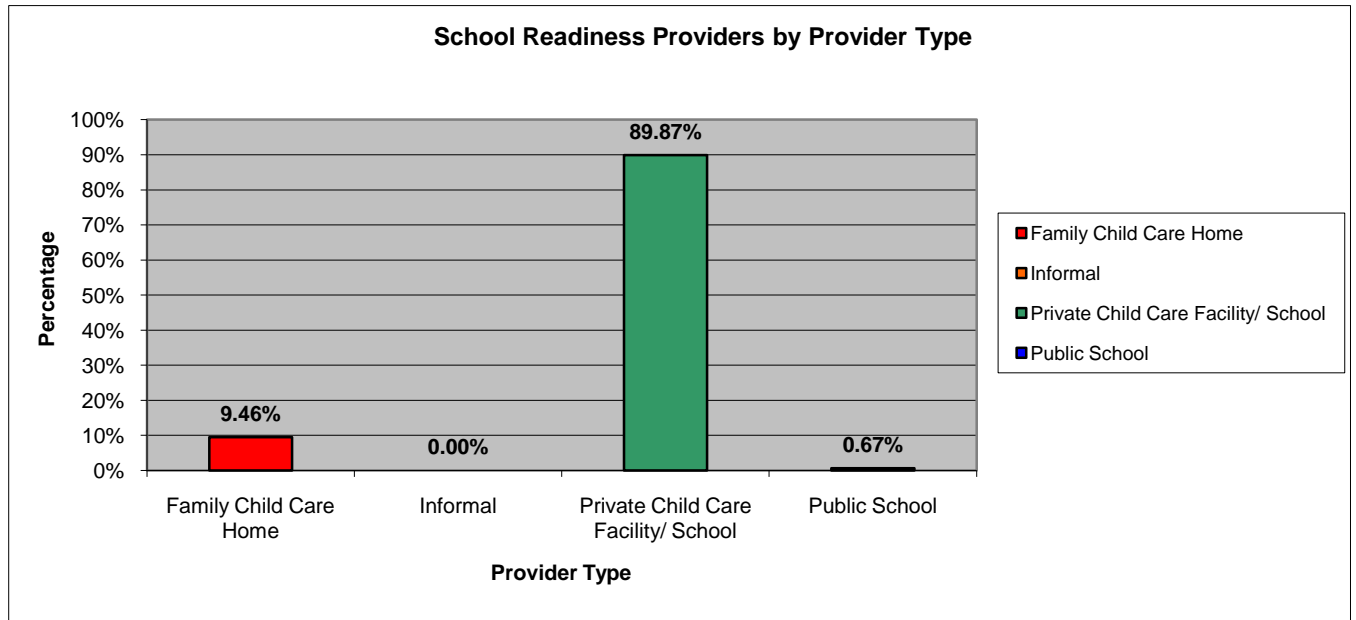
**Total percentage of VPK payments by program type:**



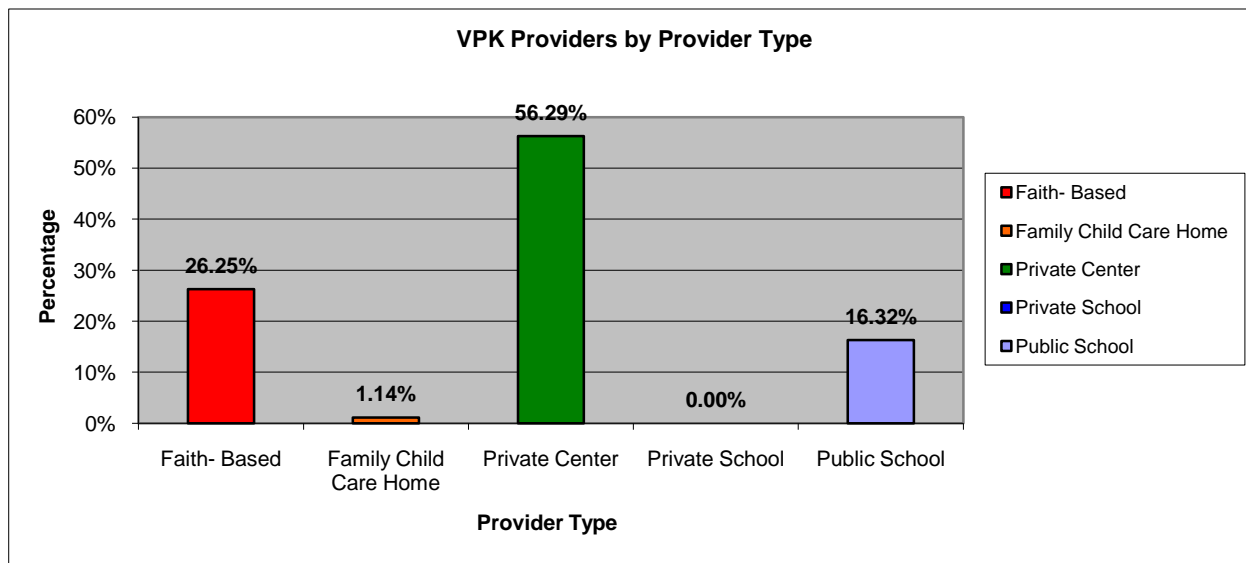
Total number of providers that participate in the coalition's early learning programs:

School Readiness Providers	Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Providers
176	96

Participating School Readiness providers by provider type:



Participating VPK providers by provider type:



**Service Delivery Summary:**

In addition to the School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-kindergarten services, the ELCFH received funding from the following organizations to support local programs:

<b>Partner</b>	<b>County(ies)</b>	<b>Funding Awarded for child care slots</b>
Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners	Charlotte	\$56,500
United Way of Sarasota	DeSoto	\$500
United Way of Central Florida	Hardee County	\$45,000
United Way of Central Florida	Highlands County	\$19,800
Wachovia Foundation	Charlotte, DeSoto, Highlands	\$10,000
Wal-mart Foundation (Avon Park)	Highlands	\$1,000
Wal-mart Foundation (Sebring)	Highlands	\$1,000

**Charlotte County Nutrition Initiative:** Funds received from the Winn Dixie Foundation (\$2,000) focused on nutrition education for eleven child care classrooms utilizing the “Color Me Healthy” curriculum. Approximately 200 children in Charlotte County were directly benefitted.

**HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters):** The DeSoto HIPPY Program, funded by the University of South Florida, provided in-home educational services to 58 families during FY 09-10. Of these, 15 families completed 20 or more weekly activity packets and 32 successfully completed all 30 packets. Parents also participated in six monthly educational meetings. Topics included Car Seat Safety as well as Your Public Library, Seasonal Flu, Domestic Violence and Graduation Preparation. An average of 17 families attended each meeting and received books for their at-home library.

The DeSoto HIPPY Program screened 47 children enrolled in the HIPPY program using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). Referrals for further evaluation were generated as needed based on the results of the screening.

The Annual Promotion Ceremony was held in May with 40 children in attendance. Five families graduated from the HIPPY five year old program and successfully completed a minimum of two years in the HIPPY program; two families graduated from the five year old program and successfully completed a minimum of three years in the HIPPY program. Seventeen families were honored with Perfect Attendance Awards.

**The Community Foundation of Sarasota** provided \$1,000 to purchase needed curricular supplies for families participating in the HIPPY Program. Other community partners who provided donations for the DeSoto HIPPY Program were All Faiths Food Bank, Catholic Charities, DeSoto Literacy Council, Domino’s Pizza, First Assembly Church, Gold’s Gym of Sarasota, McDonald’s, Sonia Garcia Photography, Winn-Dixie, Women’s Club of Arcadia, and Zamora’s Taxi.

**Highlands County Child Health Initiative:** The Highlands Hospital District Board granted \$59,300 to the ELCFH to support the provision of hearing and vision screenings and BMI checks for children receiving child care services through an ELCFH School Readiness contracted provider in Highlands County. There were 1,059 vision screenings, 1,050 hearing screenings, and 1, 010 BMI checks facilitated at approximately

50 provider sites. In addition, 18 health and safety trainings were held with 268 parents, providers and teachers participating.

***Children's Services Foundation of Highlands County (Champion for Children):*** Funding provided free vision screenings to 1,934 children in kindergarten and second grade as well as child attending ELCFH non-contracted child care sites. Screenings were also provided at the local public library, YMCA and ELCFH office.

***Reading Is Fundamental (RIF):*** The RIF grant encourages early literacy by giving children the opportunity to choose a book to take home from a selection of high quality children's literature. 712 children served by 14 providers in Highlands County directly benefited from this program.

***Heartland for Children:*** Funding awarded by Heartland for Children provided training and activities on proper handwashing to 73 child care teachers/ 592 children in Hardee County and to 54 child care teachers/ 537 children in Highlands County.

***Charlotte Community Foundation:*** \$5,000 received from the Charlotte Community Foundation were used to establish family lending libraries at child care provider sites. A total of 20 Charlotte County child care providers serving 953 children were given children's books, a storage unit and parent resource materials. The libraries promoted family literacy by encouraging parents to select high quality early childhood books to borrow and read at home with their child. Participating providers attended literacy training as a condition of receiving the lending library materials.

**Quality Activity Summary:**

Activity	Narrative
<p>What opportunities are offered by the Coalition for comprehensive consumer education?</p>	<p>Client Services Specialists are blended positions that provide client eligibility services and Child Care Resource and Referral Services. Family needs assessments are offered during appointments and resources and contacts are provided as needed. The needs assessment provides information on housing, WIC, early intervention services, assistance with utilities, KidCare and other community agencies that offer support to families. The needs assessment is also offered at the time of redetermination or as needed via phone/email. Customized Child Care Resource and Referral information is provided when requested, either in person, by phone, fax, email or regular mail. Resource and Referral services were administered to 3,161 inquiries. The ELCFH's website family section provides additional links and current information that support parents in making educated decisions about child care.</p>
<p>Provide a list of grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting State and local standards.</p>	<p>The ELCFH gave environmental grants to eight contracted School Readiness Providers during FY 09-10. The purpose of the grant was to address critical needs for materials and equipment to enhance the early education environment as indicated on the Environment Rating Scale (ERS).</p> <p>Family Child Care Home Start-Up Mini Grants assisted three new family child care homes in meeting the cost of opening their businesses. These grant dollars were awarded through an application process followed by a site visit. Grant dollars were used to cover start-up costs such as background screenings, fire extinguishers, and fencing.</p>
<p>Describe the process for monitoring compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements.</p>	<p>In FY 09-10, 176 providers signed the School Readiness Provider Contract with the ELCFH to provide education and care to eligible families.</p> <p>Over 75% of contracted school readiness providers within the four county service area had a contract monitor visit during FY 09-10. Contracted providers outside of the four county area were monitored by their respective Early Learning Coalition. The monitoring tool used focused directly on the ELCFH provider contract. The four core areas were Quality Benchmarks, Assessment and Screening, Family Involvement &amp; Cultural Continuity, and Provider Responsibility.</p> <p>All licensed-exempt providers in the ELCFH service area counties have regular health and safety checks as part of the contract monitor. Any identified deficiencies were addressed by an ELCFH Quality Specialist with the provider.</p> <p>The Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) is conducted annually on all contracted school readiness programs. If expected outcomes are not achieved, an improvement plan is written, and a follow-up visit is made to these sites. Scores can range from 1.0 to 7.0 and all providers are expected to demonstrate improvement each year. ERS baseline scores were established for all contracted sites throughout the ELCFH. The scores ranged from 1.6 to 7. Each contracted provider has agreed to diligently work towards establishing a minimum score of 5.0.</p>

	<p>A total of 79 private providers and two school districts within the four counties delivered the 540 hour school year VPK program. 16 private providers and all four school districts were approved to deliver the 300 hour summer 2009 VPK program. VPK monitors were completed in October, 2009 on 100% of the ELCFH contracted VPK programs. The school district sites provided monitoring reports as requested by the ELCFH. Letters of commendation for full compliance were sent to 62% of the VPK programs; with follow up letters to the remaining VPK providers. The monitor follow-ups required additional on-site visits and/ or proof of requested documentation that brought them to full compliance within 30 – 45 business days of the on-site monitor. Additional VPK monitors were scheduled within the fiscal year as needed.</p>
<p>Provide a list of available professional development opportunities that the coalition offers, including training, education, and technical assistance</p>	<p>The ELCFH supported those seeking FCCPC credentials or higher degrees through partnering institutions by providing scholarship reimbursements for successful completion of class work. Two participants submitted paperwork for reimbursements for successful completion of college course work.</p> <p>ELCFH quality staff provided intense technical assistance with 10 providers through mentoring during FY 2009-10. Personalized on-site technical assistance, coaching, modeling in the classroom was provided due to issues identified through ERS assessments and/or licensing visits.</p> <p>Five providers achieved accreditation or re-accreditation in FY 09-10 with the support from the ELCFH Accreditation Program. At the end of the fiscal year there were five programs pending validator visits and an additional four providers were registered in the program and conducting self studies.</p> <p>The ELCFH offered numerous in-service trainings including First Aid and CPR and Universal Precautions. The highlights of the scheduled trainings offered by staff and presenters were the <i>Beyond Centers &amp; Circle Time</i>, <i>Beyond Cribs and Rattles</i>, <i>Color Me Healthy</i>, <i>Henry the Hand</i> (hand washing &amp; health), <i>Recipes for Success</i>, <i>Infant Mental Health</i>, <i>Cradling Literacy</i>, <i>Play Ground Safety</i>, <i>Creative Lesson Planning</i>, and <i>Shaken Baby Syndrome</i>. CEU's were offered to the providers when they attended trainings that were over five hours.</p> <p>The ELCFH held its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual conference (“Celebrate Early Learning”) for early learning professionals on March 12 – 13, 2010. The March 12<sup>th</sup> evening event focused on developing leadership capacity and was attended by 50 directors and family child care providers. The March 13<sup>th</sup> all-day conference was attended by approximately 270 early childhood educators and provided a myriad of early childhood relevant workshop sessions. The ELCFH received funding from local partners to support the provider conference: Southwest Florida Community Foundation (\$1,500) and Sunrise Kiwanis (\$500).</p>
<p>Describe initiatives by the coalition to improve salaries</p>	<p>The ELCFH did not undertake this activity during FY 09-10.</p>

and other compensation for child care providers.	
Describe activities to support a Quality Rating System.	The ELCFH did not undertake this activity during FY 09-10.
Provide information on activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development.	<p><b><i>ELCFH FY 09-10 Literacy Programs</i></b></p> <p>The following literacy programs were offered in at least one of the four counties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Cradling Literacy</u> consisted of twelve 2 hour classes focusing on building teacher skills in the nurturing and development of early language.</li> <li>• <u>Recipes for Success</u> – consisted of three 2 hour workshops focused on how to promote literacy with cooking experiences and children’s literature.</li> <li>• <u>Integrating the Standards with Phonological Awareness</u> – consisted of a 2 hour training teaching practical tools for teaching phonetic sounds and alphabetic knowledge.</li> <li>• <u>VPK Emergent Literacy</u> – consisted of a 10 hour hands-on training that focused on developmentally appropriate literacy skills for children in VPK programs.</li> <li>• <u>Story Stretches</u> – consisted of a two hour workshop focused on the powerful role of stories in supporting early language and literacy.</li> <li>• <u>Communication &amp; Language Development</u> – a three part series linking children’s various ways of communicating with language development.</li> <li>• <u>Families partnering to support early Language and Literacy</u> – Two hour training focused on strategies that that encourage language development and literacy in the home.</li> <li>• <u>Beyond Cribs and Rattles</u> - Playfully scaffolding the development of infants and toddlers</li> <li>• <u>Beyond Centers &amp; Circle Time</u> - Four part series of workshops focused on how to provide developmentally appropriate experiences for three to five year olds.</li> <li>• <u>Early Language and &amp; Literacy Development</u> – two hour workshop linking the importance of emerging early language to literacy.</li> <li>• <u>Storytelling and Cultural Influences</u> – two hour workshop focused on storytelling and how cultures influence literature choices by the teacher and perception by the child.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>ELCFH FY 2009-10 Pre- Math and Science Programs</i></b></p> <p>The following pre-math and science workshops were offered in at least one of the four counties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Homemade Teaching Resources</u> – Demonstrated the variety of common objects that could be used to introduce and reinforce science concepts.</li> <li>• <u>New VPK standards</u> - A three hour workshop that introduced VPK teachers to the standards and how to use the book as a guide and resource in planning their curriculum activities to ensure opportunities for children to learn expected concepts and skills. Strong emphasis on math and science.</li> <li>• <u>Workjobs for Math and Science</u> - A hands-on interactive training focused on</li> </ul>



	<p>recycled materials to create activity boxes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Cup Cooking</u> – a two hour workshop that taught math concepts using cooking experiences in which each child goes through every step of the cooking process and created an individual serving of a nutritious snack.</li> <li>• <u>Recyclables</u> – two hour workshop that focused on making homemade teaching tools to support math and science concepts.</li> </ul> <p><i>ELCFH FY 2009-10 Programs focusing on classroom basics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Lesson Planning</u> – a six part workshop series teaching how to write lesson plans linking LAPS and standards follow up was conducted on site with each participant to observe the lesson plans in practice. 12 providers attended (Charlotte).</li> </ul>
<p>What activities has the coalition implemented to promote inclusive child care?</p>	<p>The Inclusion Specialists across the four counties maintained the “warm line”, which providers can call for technical assistance in working with children with special needs. The Inclusion Specialists also made on-site technical assistance visits to provider sites for further inclusion support.</p> <p>Trainings addressing effective provision of child care services for children with special needs were provided in the four counties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Beyond Behavior Management</u> - Promoted appropriate behavior/ classroom management using sensory materials.</li> <li>• <u>Autism</u> – A two hour workshop focusing on how to include children with Autism in the classroom, including classroom management, communication, and the importance of routines.</li> <li>• <u>Beyond Differences and Diagnoses with Beyond Centers &amp; Circle Time</u> – State-approved, play-based curriculum for use with all ages; utilized in combination with the BCCT (a four part series of workshops focusing on how to provided loving, playful, developmentally appropriate experiences for three to five year olds).</li> <li>• <u>Challenging Behaviors-</u> A two hour workshop focused on strategies to deal with common behaviors that teachers find to be a challenge.</li> <li>• <u>Autism Spectrum Disorders</u> – A two hour workshop focused on the spectrum of disorders that are related to Autism.</li> </ul> <p>The ELCFH distributed Inclusion Brochures in the four county service area. These brochures provided parents and community members with important information about inclusion and the services offered by the ELCFH.</p>
<p>How does the coalition conform to Healthy Child Care America and other health activities including those designed to</p>	<p>Children at contracted school readiness sites received free developmental assessments using the E-LAP or LAP-3. During FY 09-10 the ELCFH Quality staff provided trainings and on-site TA across the ELCFH service area for providers. On-site technical assistance was provided to ensure that providers understand how to access and use the E-LAP/ LAP-3 website as a tool to enhance their lesson planning. All four counties now have access to the E-LAP/ LAP-3 website. United Way of Charlotte County provided \$8,100 to support facilitating of LAPs assessments with children receiving child care services in Charlotte County.</p>

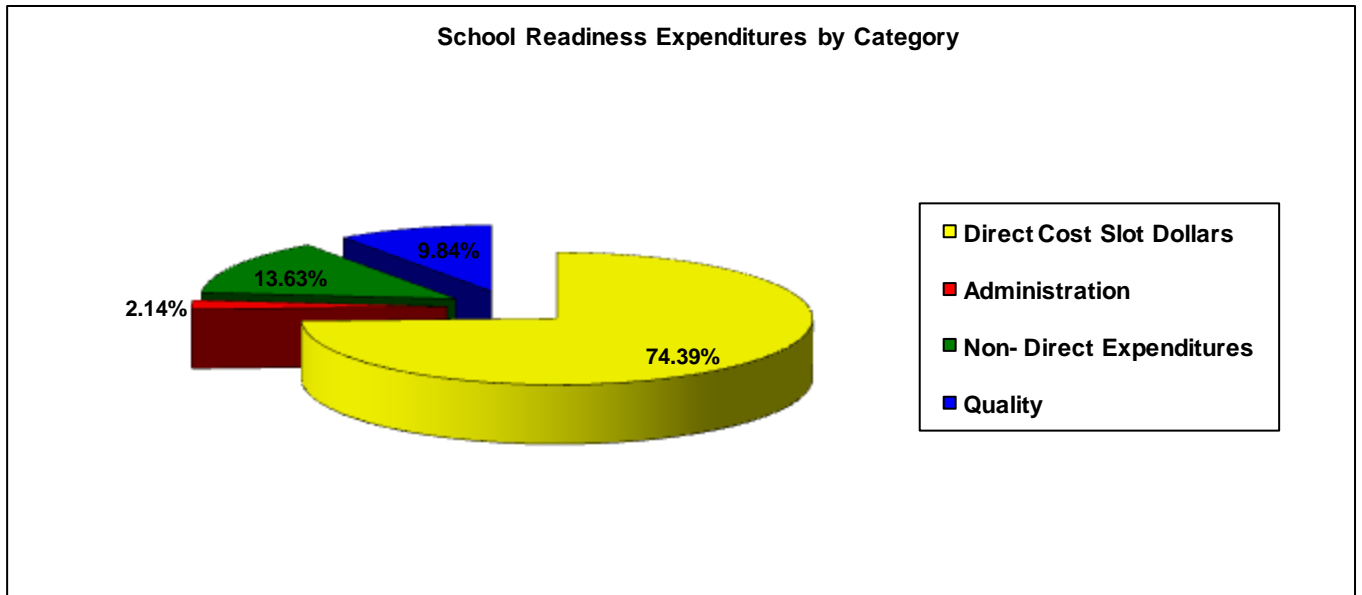
<p>promote the social and emotional development of children?</p>	<p>During FY 09-10 a total of 3644 unduplicated children in the four county service area received pre/ post assessments. Of these, 63 children (less than 2%) were referred to partner agencies (FDLRS, Early Steps) for further evaluation. Classroom activities to support child development were available to providers via ELCFH Quality staff and the Red-e-Learner (LAPs) website.</p> <p>In addition, the Ages and Stages Questionnaire Screenings were utilized as needed by the ELCFH to support the process of early identification of children’s special needs. Children were referred for further evaluation based on the outcomes of the screenings in tandem with the LAPs assessment.</p> <p>Vision/ hearing screenings and/or BMI checks were facilitated with over 5,300 children in the four county service area. Screening results were provided to each child’s parent. The ELCFH Health Specialists were available to parents who have questions regarding the screening results.</p> <p>Workshops focused on healthy child development and the social emotional needs of children were facilitated in the four county area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Global Diversity</u>- Focused on setting up a diverse classroom and appropriate activities to raise children’s awareness of differences.</li> <li>• <u>Infant Mental Health</u> – A two hour workshop teaching focused on infant attachments and bonding.</li> <li>• <u>Universal Precautions</u>- Strategies for combating illness in the child care setting.</li> <li>• <u>Heart Healthy Movement</u>- Focused on gross motor activities for children.</li> <li>• <u>Infant and Toddler Diapering and Hand washing</u>- Prevention of disease and contamination through proper diapering and hand washing procedures required by the ERS.</li> <li>• <u>Color Me Healthy</u>- Curriculum focused on health eating habits and exercise.</li> <li>• <u>First Aide/ CPR Training</u></li> </ul>
<p>Please describe other quality activities that increase parental choice, and improve the quality and availability of child care.</p>	<p>During FY 09-10, the ELCFH distributed magnets with the ELCFH logo and “It’s ok to play in VPK”. The magnets were distributed via community partners and providers as a VPK promotional item.</p> <p>The ELCFH sponsored a Community Event Sponsorship which provided funding support for the following community events and activities: Healthy Start of Hardee, Highlands and Polk Counties “Autumn Family Resource Festival”; South Florida Community College “Bridging the Gap” Provider Conference; and the Charlotte County Healthy Start Coalition New Mom Tote Bag insert.</p> <p>The ELCFH facilitated a Family Event on April 17, 2010. The focus of the event was to promote NAEYC’s Week of the Young Child and Florida Children’s Week and provide information about the VPK Program to families. Entitled “Come Dance by the Ocean” the highlight of the event was a performance by “the first lady of children’s folk songs” Ella Jenkins. Twelve child care providers participated by facilitating developmentally appropriate activities with children and their families. The event was well attended by families with young children. Ms. Jenkins also facilitated a provider workshop entitled</p>

“Adventures in Rhythm” the day prior to the family event. Approximately 50 providers attended this event.

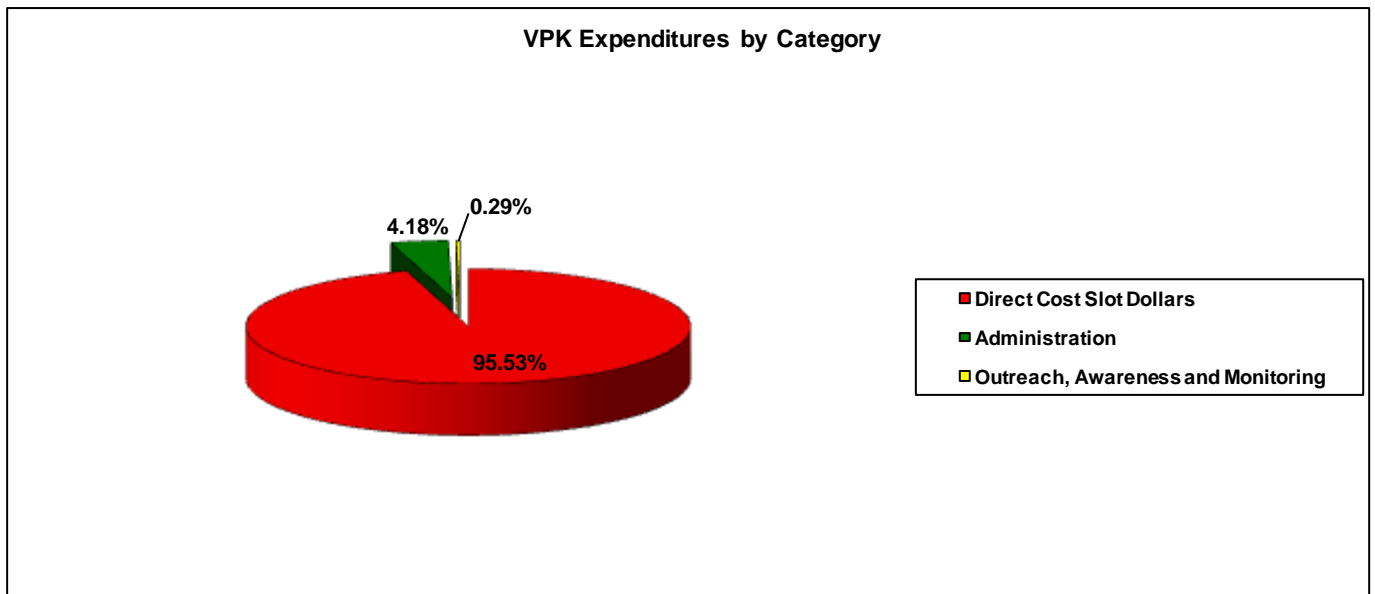
***ELCFH FY 2009-10 Provider Roundtables: offered in Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee and Highlands Counties***

- The Director’s roundtable was initiated this year designed to provide specific information of interest to program directors and an opportunity for networking.
- The School-age provider roundtables were scheduled during morning hours to better serve staff serving school age programs. The focus was specifically on activities and topics of interest to after school programs.

**Fiscal Summary:** During the 2009- 2010 fiscal year the coalition’s total **School Readiness/ ARRA Program** operating budget was \$9,899,047. Below is a breakout of expenditures by category.



During the 2009- 2010 fiscal year the coalition’s total **Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education/ ARRA Program** operating budget including the **Outreach, Awareness and Monitoring Initiative** was \$5,068,269. Below is a breakout of expenditures by category.



## **Program Year Summary:**

### *Three Family Success Stories.....*

A client contacted an ELCFH office expressing his gratitude for the child care services he was able to receive due to ARRA funding. He explained that he is a single father and is currently attending school and working. He stated that because of the funding for child care he was able to continue to go to school.

A mom received her first redetermination packet and called her ELCFH Client Services Specialist with questions. She shared that her three year old son loves going to his preschool and that he now is a better behaved and happier child. She could not give him the opportunity to attend preschool without ELCFH.

In 2006, a new mom working for a childcare provider earning \$8 hourly started receiving School Readiness services. Balancing care for her son with work and school, she completed her Associates of Science in Radiologic Technology in August, 2009. Shortly afterwards, she called to advise her ELCFH Client Services Specialist that she had secured full-time employment with a radiologic technology service provider upping her earnings substantially and she was no longer in need of services.

### *And a Provider's Success Story.....*

#### **Small Hearts Too Family Child Care**

Angela Small is a single mother of two teenage daughters and owner of Small Hearts Too Family Child Care. Currently, Angela is working towards a Director's Credential with the goal of owning and directing a Child Care Center. Providing quality child care is Angela's passion and purpose in life. Her belief is that working with children is an opportunity and not a job because the parents chose which provider will care for their child. Angela's spiritual life is very important to her providing a standard for her life and business. This standard reminds her of the resiliency and struggle that all people face while working together for the common good of all.

Angela is passionate about her profession as a child care provider. Her story begins in New York in an afterschool program. During this professional experience Angela states that "she got in touch with her inner child" which helped lead to the realization that her destiny was to work with children. Angela recognized the innocence of children and how play was good for their souls. Once her passion and purpose for life came into focus the opportunities to grow professionally began to present themselves. Angela took advantage of Early Childhood professionals who would guide and mentor this growth helping Angela to grow to a place she never imagined.

In 1990, Angela opened her first family child care home in a one bedroom apartment. Along with this exciting adventure came the birth of her first child. These events brought new awareness of the tough reality that some children face as Angela listened to news stories that reported cases of child abuse and neglect. These are some of the factors that helped Angela know that she wanted to make a difference in the lives of families, children and the community.

In 1994, Angela's family grew with the birth of her 2<sup>nd</sup> daughter. The family child care blossomed into a child care center with twenty children which remained open for approximately 14 years.

In 2003, Angela relocated to Port Charlotte and began the process of becoming a family child care provider. The ELCFH provided needed funding for equipment to help her develop her child care space. Initially, she opened as a registered family child care home and with the support of the ELCFH

eventually became DCF licensed. Now fully licensed and contracted as a School Readiness Provider with the ELCFH, Angela's goal is to provide a high quality early childhood experience in a loving and joyful environment where children can thrive; an environment that is safe for infants, toddlers and preschool children alike. Angela works hard to provide a place where children can develop their social and emotional skills, and learn about cultural differences. The home setting along with a developmentally appropriate environment promotes optimal cognitive and social/emotional growth.

As an early childhood professional Angela recognizes the need to facilitate learning through the use of a developmentally appropriate curriculum while monitoring growth and behavior, and observing children for other delays and bridging the gap between home and child care. Angela's wealth of early childhood knowledge and a commitment to serve the families and the community results in a business that provides essential services today while preparing the responsible citizens of tomorrow. She continues to attend workshops and conferences held by the ELCFH to further deepen her knowledge of child development and appropriate practices. Angela's philosophy is that family child care is not just gainful employment but an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of each family and child.