



## Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Heartland, Inc. 2012-2013 Annual Report

**Mission Statement:**

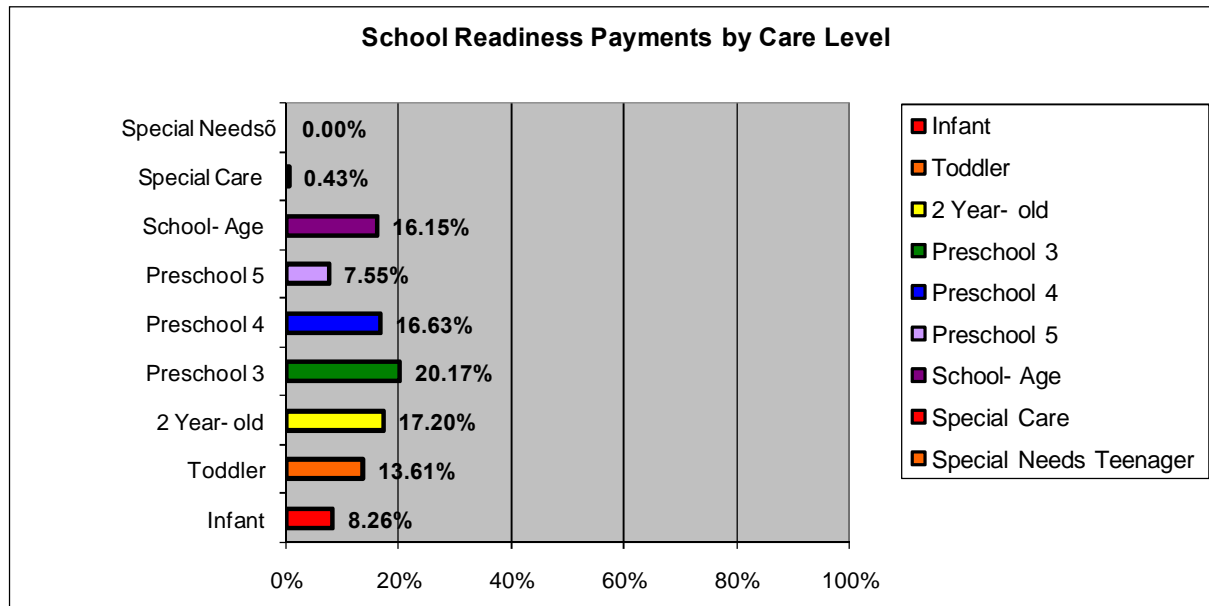
The mission of the Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Heartland, Inc. is to support families and children in accessing high quality early care and education services via School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-kindergarten programs. The ELCFH also serves as a point of access to resources and referrals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

**Data Summary:** The following information is based on data collected from July 1, 2012- June 30, 2013.

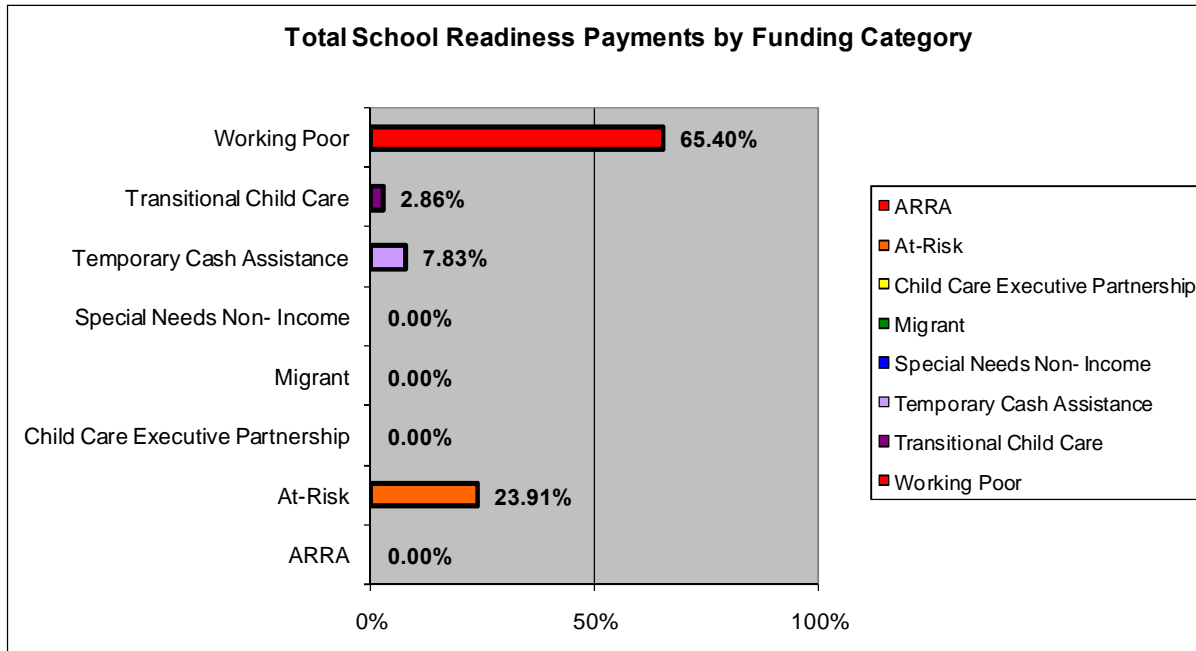
**Number of unduplicated School Readiness (SR) children and families:**

SR Children	SR Families
2,652	1,594

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



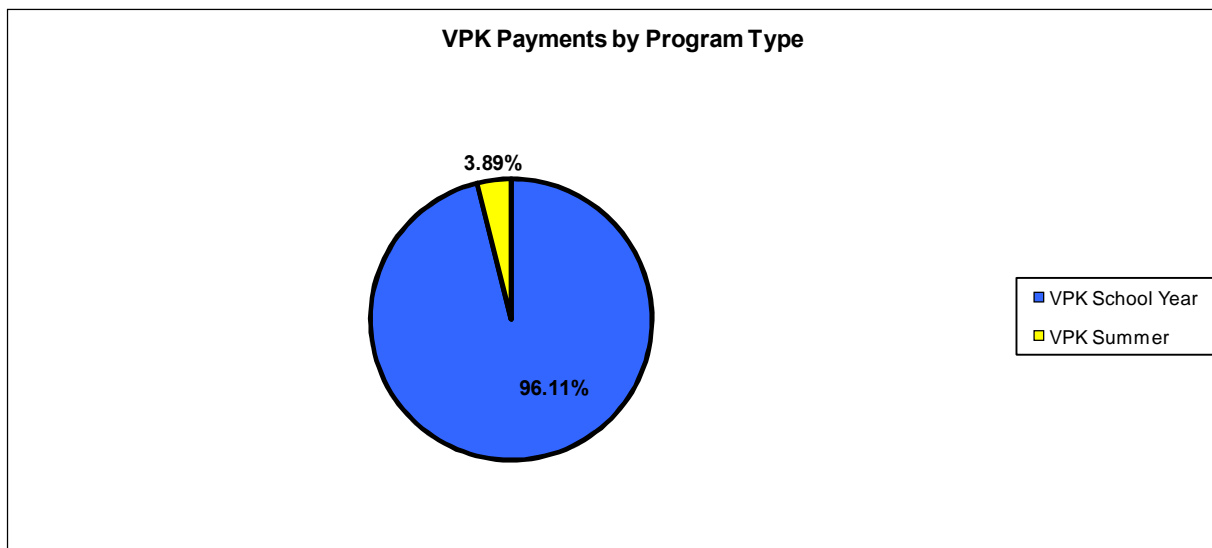
**School Readiness: Percentage of total payments (including match) by funding category:**



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

VPK Children	VPK Families
2,457	2,410

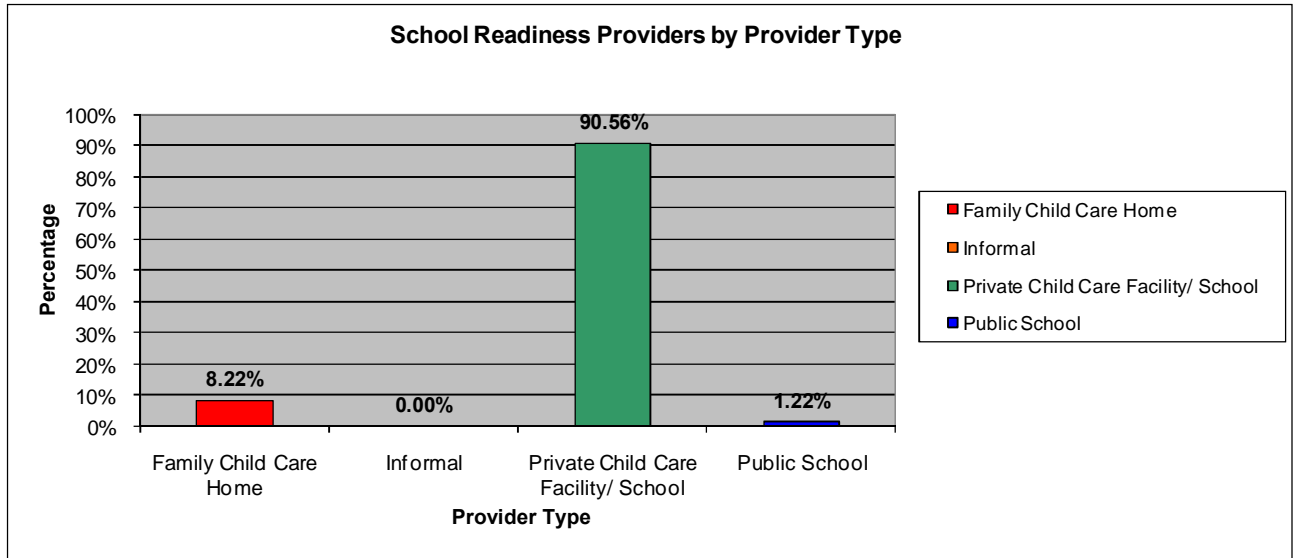
**Total percentage of VPK payments by program type:**



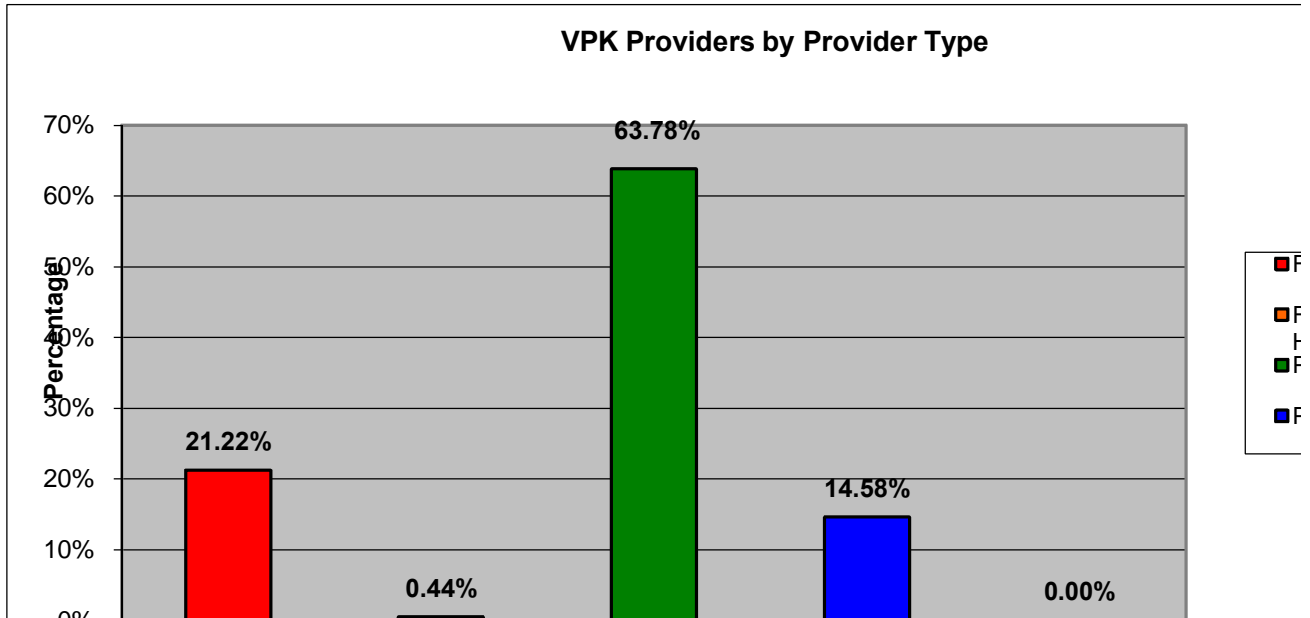
Total number of providers that participate in the coalition’s early learning programs:

School Readiness Providers	Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Providers
144	98

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 generous funding from the following organizations to support local programs:

<b>Partner</b>	<b>County(ies)</b>	<b>Funding Awarded for Direct Services</b>
Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners	Charlotte	\$75,000
United Way of Central Florida	Hardee	\$45,000
United Way of Central Florida	Highlands	\$32,500
Wells Fargo Foundation	Charlotte, Desoto	\$5,000
Publix Supermarket Charities	Charlotte, Highlands	\$3,000
City of Punta Gorda	Charlotte	\$4,500
United Way of Sarasota County-DeSoto County Chapter	DeSoto	\$1,000
Build-A-Bear Workshop Foundation	Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands	\$1,500

***United Way of Charlotte County:*** UWCC awarded the ELCFH \$3,906.36 to support developmental screening and assessment of children in Charlotte County using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP) systems.

***United Way of Central Florida- Highlands County:*** A total \$9,000 was awarded to the ELCFH to support child assessment in Highlands County using the Learning Accomplishment Profile system.

***Target:*** Funds were awarded in the amount of \$2,000 for the "Sign Language for Young Children" project for Charlotte County. The program focused on promoting simple sign language skills with very young, pre-verbal children and their parents and caregivers.

***DeSoto Literacy Council:*** A donation of \$50 was presented to the ELCFH to support child literacy in DeSoto County. The Sign with your Baby quick reference guide was purchased for SR contracted Desoto County child care providers.

***William G. and Marie Selby Charitable Foundation:*** Funds in the amount of \$10,000 were awarded to the ELCFH to upgrade the ELCFH- Port Charlotte Training center. The training center is utilized by child care providers, ELCFH Board members, staff and community partners for various training and meeting events.

***Highlands County Child Health Initiative:*** The Highlands County Hospital District Board granted \$59,850 to the ELCFH to provide support services for children with health related or development needs in Highlands County. These children are receiving child care services through ELCFH School Readiness contracted providers.

***Champion for Children Foundation of Highlands County:*** Funding in the amount of \$12,000 provided free vision screenings in Highlands County to children in kindergarten, first and third grade as well as children attending ELCFH non-contracted child care sites.

**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 generates 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 provided in response to 681 inquiries. The ELCFH has noted a large decline in the number of R&amp;R requests; this is attributed to the ready access of internet searches for needed child care. 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>Family Child Care Home Start-Up Mini Grants assisted one new family child care home in meeting the cost of opening their business. 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 12-13, 144 providers signed the School Readiness Provider Contract with the ELCFH to provide quality child care to the children of eligible families. A total of 79 private providers and two school districts (multiple sites) within the four counties delivered the 540 hour school year VPK program. Two private providers and three school districts (multiple sites) delivered the 300 hour summer VPK program.</p> <p>100% of contracted school readiness providers within the four county service area had a contract monitor visit during FY 12-13. 100% of contracted providers outside of the four county area were also monitored. The monitoring tool used focused directly on the ELCFH provider contract. The core areas were Liability Insurance, Environment, Curriculum/Character Development, Parent Involvement/Access, and Provider Responsibility. Providers meeting at least 80% compliance in monitoring were presented with a book and certificate of commendation.</p> <p>Three licensed-exempt providers in the ELCFH service area had regular health and safety checks as part of the School Readiness contract monitor. Any identified deficiencies were addressed by an ELCFH ECE Specialist with the provider.</p> <p>The Environment Rating Scale (ERS) was facilitated at 21 provider sites upon request. As needed, improvement plans were developed and follow-up visits were made to sites needing support. Scores can range from 1.0 to 7.0; the scores</p>

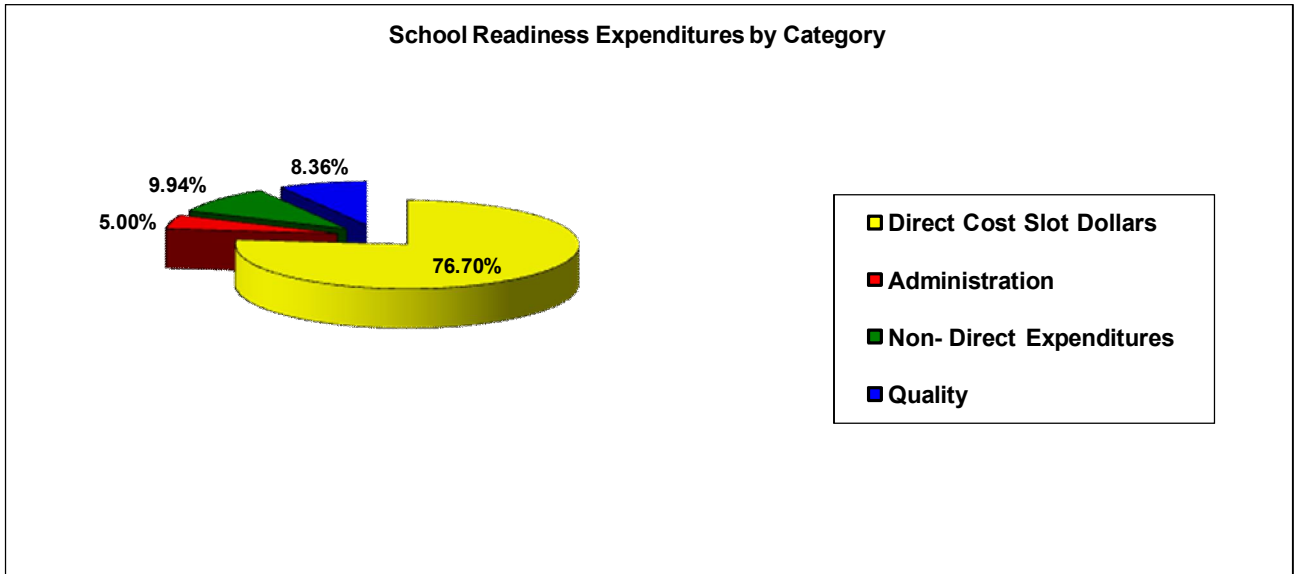
	<p>ranged from 2.98 to 5.11.</p> <p>VPK monitors were completed during August, 2012 through June, 2013, on 100% of the ELCFH contracted VPK programs. The school district sites provided monitoring reports as requested by the ELCFH. Letters of commendation for substantial compliance were sent to over 80% of the VPK programs; with follow up letters to the remaining VPK providers. 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>Three providers achieved accreditation or re-accreditation in FY 12-13 with support from the ELCFH. At the end of the fiscal year there were three programs pending validator visits.</p> <p>The ELCFH offered numerous in-service trainings including Healthy Kids/ Back to Basics; Recipes for Success; Fun and Easy Alternatives to Worksheets; Thinking Outside the Box/ Creative Approaches to Learning; Family Child Care Lesson Planning; Re-Thinking Circle Time; Learning Spaces for Preschool; and Making the Most of Classroom Interactions.</p>
<p>Describe initiatives by the coalition to improve salaries and other compensation for child care providers.</p>	<p>The ELCFH did not undertake this activity during FY 12-13.</p>
<p>Describe activities to support a Quality Rating System.</p>	<p>The ELCFH did not undertake this activity during FY 12-13.</p>
<p>Provide information on activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development.</p>	<p><u>ELCFH FY 12-13 Literacy Programs</u></p> <p>The following literacy programs were offered in at least one of the four counties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cradling Literacy</li> <li>• Florida’s Standards for Four-Year-Olds</li> <li>• Integrating the Standards: Phonological Awareness</li> <li>• Phonological Awareness Make and Take</li> <li>• Participation in Celebrate Literacy/ Million Minute Marathon including the distribution on Hotrod Hamster books to providers</li> </ul> <p><u>ELCFH FY 12-13 Pre- Math and Science Programs</u></p> <p>The following pre-math and science workshop was offered in at least one of the four counties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards for Four Year Olds - three hour workshop that introduced VPK</li> </ul>

	<p>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. This workshop provided a strong emphasis on math and science.</p>
<p>What activities has the coalition implemented to promote inclusive child care?</p>	<p>The Early Care and Education Specialists across the four counties maintained the “warm line”, which providers can call for technical assistance in working with children with special needs. On-site technical assistance visits to provider sites for further inclusion support was also facilitated.</p> <p>Based on screening and assessment results, parents are afforded the opportunity to obtain support/ activity materials as well as information to proceed with referrals to partner agencies as necessary.</p> <p>Training that addressed the 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>• Building a Healthy Brain: workshop for providers with a concrete focus on the elements of healthy child brain development.</li> <li>• Standards for Four Year Olds</li> </ul> <p>The ELCFH provided 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 promote the social and emotional development of children?</p>	<p>Children at contracted school readiness sites received free developmental screening using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). With parental permission, children also received a comprehensive child development assessment using the Learning Accomplishment Profile system (E-LAP or LAP-3).</p> <p>The ASQ tool was provided to parents for all School Readiness funded children age birth to kindergarten entry for new SR enrollments and annually for those already enrolled. A total of 1184 children were screened. A summary of the screening results were shared with the child’s parent. The ASQ-SE was utilized with 160 children.</p> <p>ELCFH ECE staff facilitated pre and post assessments with 1229 School Readiness funded children age birth to kindergarten entry. Assessment results were shared with parents and used as a component of technical assistance to inform instruction.</p> <p>Of the children who were screened and/ or assessed, 68 children were referred to partner agencies (FDLRS or Early Steps) for further evaluation. Classroom activities to support child development were available to providers via ELCFH ECE staff. Over 400 children received additional support or activities based on screening and/or assessment results.</p> <p>Workshops focused on healthy child development and the social emotional needs</p>

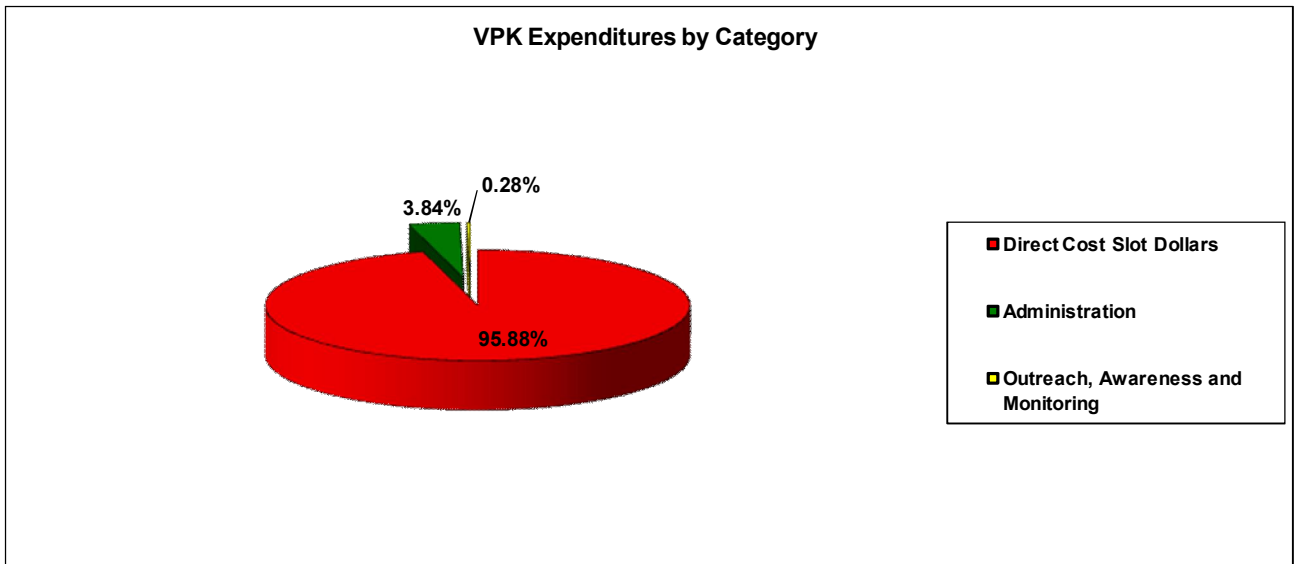
	<p>of children were facilitated in the four county area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards for Four Year Olds</li> <li>• Healthy Kids/Back to Basics two hour training which included information about safety issues pertaining to supervision and equipment for outdoor play</li> <li>• First Aid/ CPR Training for child care providers</li> <li>• Making the Most of Classroom Interactions training- 10 part training for 20 hours, including 10 hours of homework.</li> </ul> <p>In partnership with the Punta Gorda Lions Club in Charlotte County and the Lake Placid Lions Club in Highlands County the ELCFH facilitated vision/hearing screenings and/or BMI checks with over 759 children age birth to five years attending contracted School Readiness programs. Screening results were provided to each child’s parent. Results with a "refer" indicated that it was advisable the parent have their child seen by a physician. Of the 759 children screened, there were 71 vision refers and 159 hearing refers.</p>
<p>Please describe other quality activities that increase parental choice, and improve the quality and availability of child care. (§98.51(a)(1) and (2))</p>	<p>During FY 12-13, the ELCFH continued to distribute educational materials with the ELCFH logo stating “Look Before You Lock”. These materials were made widely available to the public and were designed to serve as a reminder to not leave young children unattended in vehicles.</p> <p>Age appropriate books were provided to families at VPK and SR in office appointments. Each ELCFH office adopted a more family friendly environment by adding developmentally appropriate child-sized kitchens, shopping checkout including grocery displays and shopping carts, manipulatives, and books.</p> <p>The ELCFH “Parent Communicator” went out to all School Readiness families on a quarterly basis. The Communicator gives clients important information about child care provider options, activity ideas to try at home with their children, and pertinent information about the School Readiness Program.</p>



**Fiscal Summary:** During the 2012- 2013 fiscal year the coalition’s total **School Readiness Program** operating budget was \$8,307,322. Below is a breakout of expenditures by category.



During the 2012- 2013 fiscal year the coalition’s total **Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program** operating budget was \$5,004,205. Below is a breakout of expenditures by category.



**Program Year Summary:**

*Family Success Stories.....*

***A letter from a Charlotte County parent to her Client Services Specialist dated April 14, 2013:***

*“The Early Learning Coalition has enabled me to pursue my dream and without them I would not have been able to do it. I decided to go back to school in 2009 to get my degree as an RN. I immediately found it difficult to afford everything I needed for school and childcare since I am a single mother of three. Luckily I was given the name of the Early Learning Coalition from a friend in school and they helped me so much! I was given aid to keep my youngest son in school while I went to school myself. I would not have been able to afford to do it without the help. I have received a substantial discount throughout my program and I am proud to say that I will finally be graduating in a few short weeks with an RN degree. My children will no longer have to struggle and I owe a huge thank you to the Early Learning Coalition and my Client Services Specialist for making my dream come true! Thank you from the bottom of my heart.”*

*And a Provider’s Success Story.....*

***The Learning Tree School Inc. in Arcadia (DeSoto County)***

*Donna Thomas is a dedicated provider in a small rural community who truly revels in teaching young children. Finding her program in a quandary with DCF, and enrollment down, she decided it was time to regroup and show what she, and her program, were all about! After a careful review of her program, identifying strengths and making decisions about possible changes, she forged ahead.*

*An office space was created with ample storage and a plan in place for record keeping. Donna commented that she had always wanted to do this, but had not taken the time to make it a priority. She was amazed by how little it really took to create a functional space. The result has been evident in subsequent licensing inspections.*

*She and her staff rearranged the learning environments, both inside and outdoors. Children have opportunities to play safely in all areas, engaging happily in carefully planned, developmentally appropriate activities. The outdoors was brightened with splashes of color from paint and sunflowers planted by children, which eventually towered over 6 feet tall!*

*Additionally, Donna and The Learning Tree staff have availed themselves of a wide variety of training opportunities. They have been willing to travel to other counties if necessary, to enhance the strategies they use to meet the needs of each child they teach.*

*Their efforts have paid off. At the time this synopsis of the program’s success was written, there is just one full time opening available for enrollment. Parent and children feel they are a part of The Learning Tree family.*