

Providing a
solid foundation
for children
through
early learning.



2015-2016 Annual Report

Early Learning Coalition

of Indian River, Martin and Okeechobee Counties, Inc.



Mission Statement

Partnering with parents, providers and communities to ensure quality early learning experiences through programmatic and financial support.

Vision Statement

Building Blocks for Educational Success.

Message from the CEO

The staff of the Early Learning Coalition of Indian River, Martin and Okeechobee Counties is pleased to present our 2015-2016 Annual Report, outlining our accomplishments during the past year.

Coalition staff provide a network of services to prepare children for entrance into kindergarten. Our Provider Services Department continues to offer numerous professional development opportunities to our more than 100 child care providers throughout the three counties, while the Family Services Department supports families through the eligibility process for the more than 5,000 children served on a monthly basis in our School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Programs.

Although School Readiness funding does not meet the needs of all the children eligible in the three counties, we continue to stretch the funding, keeping administrative costs below 5%, while utilizing more than minimum state mandate of 78% for direct services for children.

This was the second year of the Performance Funding Pilot, a special project developed by Florida's Office of Early Learning, to see whether specific training approaches improve how well children perform in the school readiness program. We are happy to report that the program has shown great success while increasing funding for the select group of providers.

Thank you for taking the time to review our Annual Report which will show you the progress being made. We strive to build a strong foundation through quality early education and care for the children in our communities.

Jacki Jackson
Chief Executive Officer



Single Point of Entry and Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)

Child Care Resource and Referral is a free service that provides parents with information about choosing quality child care, as well as information on other services in the community. All families, regardless of income, may utilize this service. This year the Coalition assisted approximately 1,156 families with CCR&R services.

1,156 families served through CCR&R

Community awareness is expanded through the Coalition's participation in outreach events hosted by community agencies. In addition, the Coalition hosted their annual Touch-a-Truck and Storybook Forest events to inform parents about our agency and programs.

With the release of the new Family Portal, families now register online for VPK and for School Readiness. This new system allows families to save time, improves accountability and streamlines the enrollment process. To assist parents who may not have access to a computer/tablet or smart phone or the internet, the Coalition has set up kiosks in each of our offices with internet access and the availability to scan documents. Staff is available to assist as needed.

Through the online portal:

- ♦ **2,534 VPK applications processed**
- ♦ **2,080 School Readiness applications processed**



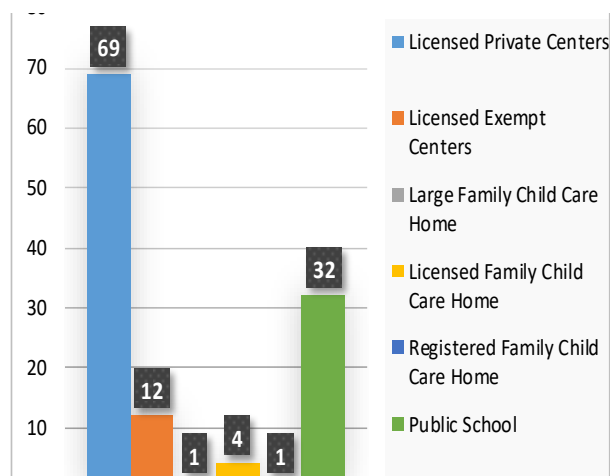
Great Beginnings—career choices

School Readiness

The School Readiness program provides early care and education services to low income families. Priority is given to parents that receive temporary cash assistance and children that are determined to be at-risk of abuse or neglect. The second priority level are those families whose income is up to 150% of the federal poverty level, who must be working a minimum of 20 hours per week or are a full-time student. Families must pay a copayment for child care based on income and family size. Financial assistance is essential for many families to be self-sufficient, knowing their children are cared for in a high-quality educational program.

The Coalition contracted with 119 School Readiness providers, affording parents the opportunity to choose the type of provider that best meets their needs, selecting from Family Child Care Homes, Private Child Care Facilities and Public School settings. All School Readiness contracted providers must implement a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate, contributing to a quality early learning experience.

Types of School Readiness Providers



- ♦ **4,396 children served in the School Readiness Program**



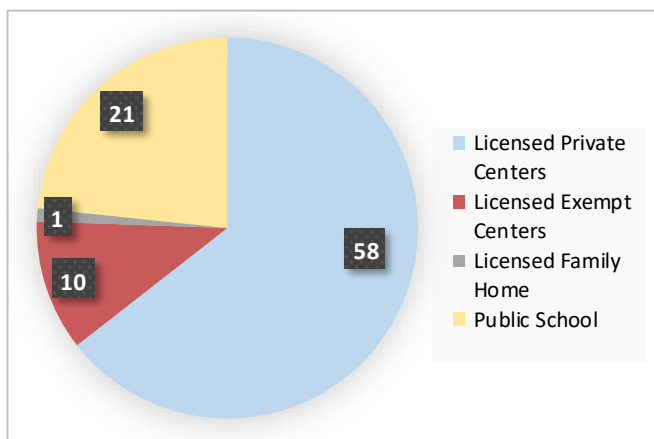
The Learning Nest

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

All children, regardless of family income level, are eligible to receive FREE VPK services. Children must be 4-years old on or before September 1 of the current year to be eligible for enrollment in the program. The family may choose from either the school year program (540 hours) or the summer program (300 hours). In 2015-2016 there were 90 VPK contracted providers from which parents could choose. Types of providers include faith-based, private centers and public school settings.

Voluntary Pre-kindergarten helps children perform better in school and throughout life with quality programs offering high literacy standards, accountability, appropriate curricula, substantial instruction periods, manageable class sizes and qualified instructors.

Types of VPK Providers



♦ 2,496 children served in the VPK Program

In January 2016, Florida's VPK Program celebrated 10 years of success with a month of statewide events and activities. Since the program began ten years ago, more than 1.7 million children have benefited from the successful program.

Beginning July 1, 2016, the new law extends VPK eligibility for 4-year olds with birthdays from February 2nd through September 1st in a calendar year. Those children can be enrolled in the free VPK program that year or wait until the following year when their child is 5.

Training & Technical Assistance

Instructor-led training is offered at no cost to Child Care Providers. In 2015-16, the Provider Services Team conducted 15 training presentations, comprising 61 hours of training, for 352 participants. Training topics were wide-ranging, and included both Infant/Toddler and Preschool age levels:

- ♦ Classroom Management
- ♦ Fundamentals of the CLASS Assessment
- ♦ Emergent Writing
- ♦ Write Right
- ♦ Composing Accurate Observational Notes
- ♦ Make it Real
- ♦ Infant/Toddler Development
- ♦ VPK Assessment Implications
- ♦ VPK Phonological Awareness
- ♦ Teaching Strategies GOLD

Additionally, a special training event, *Rainbows within Reach*, featured music and movement and was contracted out to national trainer, Debbie Clement.

And finally, staff conducted 5 cohorts of the 20-hour CLASS MMCI (Making the Most of Classroom Interactions) training in multiple counties for approximately 100 participants active in the Performance Funding Pilot Program.



Technical assistance was provided through on-site visits, Initial Visits, ELCIRMO newsletters, Facebook, Provider Meetings and End of Year visits. Areas of technical assistance included:

- ♦ Developmentally appropriate practices
- ♦ Curriculum
- ♦ Lesson plans
- ♦ Room arrangement
- ♦ School Readiness monitoring
- ♦ ASQ screens
- ♦ Developmental assessments
- ♦ Inclusion
- ♦ Behavior
- ♦ Interaction
- ♦ Classroom management

Consumer Education & Outreach

Early Learning Coalition staff participated in various community events throughout our service area to educate parents and the public on VPK, School Readiness and parental choice

Those events included: the Help Me Grow Initiative, Devereux CBC Foster Parent Recruitment Event, House of Hope and ALPI's Energy Fair, YMCA Healthy Kids Day, Helping People Succeed Annual Baby Shower, Okeechobee Health & Safety Expo, and the White Doves Community Outreach Event.

We partnered with the local Head Start Program at their Annual Community Day Fair and Health Screening. Also, partnered with the Indian River School District at their Pre-K and Kindergarten Round up which allows parents to learn about our services.



ELC participating at the
Help Me Grow—Pirate Family Fun Day

The Coalition's website contains information, links and resources. Enhancements were made to allow for parents to apply for School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten programs directly from the home page of the website.

The Coalition's Facebook page provides information on upcoming events, parenting tips and more.

Signature Events

Our signature event, Storybook Forest, was held in all three counties. The event promotes early literacy, allowing children to experience their favorite storybook in a whole new way. These free events were held at Flagler Park in Martin County in celebration of Children's Week, at Riverview Park in Sebastian and in Okeechobee.

Children visited booths decorated with a storybook theme, played games, made crafts, danced to music, and visited with their favorite characters. Participating in the events were School Readiness and VPK Providers from each of the counties, as well as community agencies.



The Board's signature fundraising event, **Touch-a-Truck**, was held for the second year with more than 2,000 attendees. Children and families enjoyed climbing on, learning about, and discovering big trucks.



Inclusion

The Early Learning Coalition supports the inclusion of children with special needs in early childhood settings. Warm Line and referral information is shared with child care providers, and many facilities display the flyers in their offices. Inclusive practices are embedded into training presentations as well as onsite technical assistance visits to child care facilities. The toll-free Warm Line is available to parents and early education providers to assist with information relating to the disability or special health care needs of children.

The following trainings offered in 2015-16 included Inclusive practices:

- ◆ Teaching Strategies GOLD
- ◆ Infant/Toddler/Two's Oh My! (included activities for special needs children)
- ◆ Classroom Management - with emphasis on visual schedules and transitions
- ◆ VPK Assessment Implications (with a social-emotional component)
- ◆ Communicating with Children - language and sign language
- ◆ VPK Phonological Awareness (with strategies to support children with special needs)
- ◆ Write Right - taking observational notes
- ◆ Rainbows within Reach - literacy workshop, included different learning styles and sign language
- ◆ Helping Your Child Succeed

During 2015/16, staff received and responded to 49 Warm-Line calls, resulting in 28 classroom observations. Additionally, staff reviews and processes developmental screens submitted by School Readiness Child Care Providers, including providing results, activities and referral information, as appropriate.

During 2015/16, staff reviewed 1,943 developmental screens. Of these, 78% were within typical range, however, 430 were red-flagged for follow up. While each area had some low scores, Communication and Problem Solving were the most prevalent low-scoring areas.

Child care facilities and parents were provided with specific activities to assist each child whose scores are not within the typical range.

There were 52 referrals recommended throughout the year. Where appropriate, technical assistance was offered, including recommended strategies to help children who were experiencing difficulty.

Quality Activities for Infant and Toddler Care

The Provider Services team provides classroom walkthroughs, conducts annual classroom assessments using the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) or Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), and offers technical assistance to contracted School Readiness Providers. During 2015-16, staff conducted annual assessments using the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) in 14 classrooms.

The Provider Services team members were re-certified in CLASS as Observers for the Infant and Toddler age levels. The Team administered 12 annual assessments in Infant/Toddler classrooms using CLASS. Assessment results were reviewed with each Child Care Provider and technical assistance was offered. Additionally, there were 24 Infant/Toddler CLASS assessments conducted as part of the Performance Funding Pilot Program.

Also, a training specifically for teachers of Infants, Toddlers and Two-year olds was presented which examined the developmental stages of this age group, including the temperaments and brain science. Handouts and interactive activities were included.

And, the ELCIRMO Facebook page includes ideas, information and resources targeted at this age group.

Monitoring

The Provider Services team conducted on-site annual Program Assessments to assess quality and offer technical assistance at our School Readiness facilities. Tools used are the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the Environment Rating Scale (ERS). Assessments were administered in 51 classrooms - not including those paid for by the Performance Funding Pilot Program. If any licensing violations were observed, they were reported to DCF.

Curriculum Monitoring was conducted at 61 School Readiness facilities, and VPK Monitoring was conducted at 70 facilities.

This was the implementation year of the School Readiness Contract Monitoring Tool which was utilized to monitor School Readiness Providers' compliance with contract requirements. Monitoring of providers identified areas of non-compliance and technical assistance was provided as indicated.

Quality Initiatives

Provider Assessment Stipends:

Monitoring Specialists used the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) or Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tools to assess quality in School Readiness classrooms and technical assistance was offered to assist with low areas. At year-end, data was analyzed and grouped by tiers to establish stipend levels to reward facilities that met or exceeded standards. In all, 29 Providers received a stipend, totaling \$41,250. An application was required, and a rubric determined the amount of award.

Education Stipends:

Education Stipends were awarded to practitioners and directors at School Readiness facilities for completing college courses, to promote professional development. Practitioners were awarded \$200 per class, with a 2 class maximum. The Coalition funded 37 courses for 24 individuals at 14 School Readiness facilities. Total expended: \$7,400.

\$41,250 in Provider Assessment Stipends were awarded to 29 Providers.

\$7,400 was awarded in Education Stipends to 24 individuals.



MMCI Training

Miscellaneous:

- ◆ The Coalition hosted a professional development workshop for all providers, free of charge, featuring children's author and singer, Debbie Clement.
- ◆ Upon completion of the 20-hour training for MMCI (Making the Most of Classroom Interactions), a total of 115 participants received a 5-piece puppet set to utilize in their classrooms.
- ◆ Through a collaborative with the Martin County Library System's "Season's Readings Program", 294 new books were delivered to 3 and 4-year old School Readiness children.
- ◆ In celebration of Provider Appreciation Week, providers were given bags with puppets.
- ◆ Infant CLASS Dimension Guides and Toddler CLASS Dimension Guides were distributed.
- ◆ Various resources and materials were purchased for Provider Services staff for training use.
- ◆ An ELC staff member has been trained in the Nemours BrightStart Curriculum.
- ◆ ELC staff attended the One Goal Summer Conference, Bridges Out of Poverty training, Fraud training, and computer classes.

Performance Funding Pilot

Early Learning Performance Funding Pilot is a professional development initiative funded by the Florida Legislature in 2014 to see whether specific training approaches improve how well children do in school readiness programs.

Using an instrument called CLASS™, the quality of teacher/child interactions is evaluated in three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. Research has shown that children in classrooms with higher scores on the CLASS™ tool make greater gains in language, math, and early literacy development.

The program provides incentives to School Readiness providers and instructors for improvement in School Readiness Program outcomes and provides data for an independent evaluation.

School Readiness Providers must meet eligibility criteria as established by Florida's Office of Early Learning, must apply for the program and be accepted. Once accepted, Providers must continue to meet benchmark deliverables at the end of each phase in order to receive compensation.

In 2015-2016, eleven of the Coalition's contracted School Readiness providers were selected to participate in the Performance Funding Pilot, encompassing 76 classrooms and 120 early education practitioners.

At the completion of this second year of the program, improved outcomes resulted in bonus compensation for Providers that participated.



"Research suggests that the quality of teacher-child interactions has a direct and positive impact on child outcomes and the quality of early learning programs."



Congratulations to those providers that participated in the 2015-16 Performance Funding Pilot.

Although there was a lot of work involved, providers were compensated for their efforts and great outcomes were achieved.

Apple Tree Jensen Beach	\$32,115
Apple Tree South	\$53,960
Apple Tree Central	\$54,140
Bridges Early Learning Center	\$44,900
Dunbar Child Care Center	\$50,075
Gertrude Walden	\$54,270
Global Learning of Stuart	\$39,695
The Learning Nest	\$29,860
Stepping Stones I	\$29,810
Stepping Stones II	\$24,213
Tendercare Day Care & Preschool	\$49,575
TOTAL	\$462,613

For delivery of services, the Coalition received \$36,425.



Fiscal Summary

During the 2015-016 fiscal year, the coalition's total operating budget was \$15,097,288.

Segregation of School Readiness Program funds, Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program funds, Child Care Executive Partnership Program funds, and other local revenues available to the coalition.

Program Funds	Amount
School Readiness funds	\$ 7,615,367
Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program funds	\$ 5,607,316
Child Care Executive Partnership Program funds	\$ 1,133,833
Other Local Revenues	\$ 740,772
Total	\$ 15,097,288

Details of expenditures by fund source, including total expenditures for administrative activities, quality activities, non-direct services, and direct services for children.

Details of Expenditures by Fund Source	School Readiness	VPK	CCEP	Other Local Revenues	Dollars
Administrative Activities	\$ 360,676	\$ 173,555	\$0	\$0	\$ 534,231
Quality Services	\$ 831,672	\$ 17,539	\$0	\$ 10,300	\$ 859,511
Non-direct Services	\$ 552,905	\$ 30,792	\$0	\$0	\$ 583,697
Direct Services for Children	\$ 5,870,114	\$ 5,385,430	\$ 1,133,833	\$ 730,472	\$ 13,119,849
Total	\$ 7,615,367	\$ 5,607,316	\$ 1,133,833	\$ 740,772	\$ 15,097,288

Child Care Executive Partnership:

The Child Care Executive Partnership (CCEP) program is a public/private partnership that helps employers meet the needs of a growing segment of their work force—working parents. Through the program, federal and state funding is used to match contributions from local governments, charitable foundations and/or private businesses on a dollar-for-dollar basis to provide child care services to participating families. The program helps communities expand child care funding for lower-income working families and helps employers increase profits by providing valuable work-life benefits for employees.



Community Partners & Funders

The Coalition partners with agencies to assist families with additional services.

- ♦ 211 Palm Beach/Treasure Coast
- ♦ Big Brothers Big Sisters
- ♦ CareerSource Research Coast
- ♦ Center for Autism & Related Disabilities
- ♦ Department of Children and Families
- ♦ Devereux CBC of Okeechobee and the Treasure Coast
- ♦ Dunbar Center—Early Head Start
- ♦ East Coast Migrant Head Start Project
- ♦ Economic Opportunities Council of Indian River
- ♦ Exchange Club C.A.S.T.L.E.
- ♦ Father and Child Resource Center
- ♦ Florida Diagnostic Learning & Resource System
- ♦ Health Department of Indian River County
- ♦ Health Department of Martin County
- ♦ Health Department of Okeechobee County
- ♦ Helping People Succeed
- ♦ Indian River County Healthy Start Coalition
- ♦ Indian River County School District
- ♦ Martin County Healthy Start Coalition
- ♦ Martin County School District
- ♦ Martin County School District Head Start
- ♦ Okeechobee County School District
- ♦ Okeechobee County Family Health/Healthy Start Coalition
- ♦ Treasure Coast Food Bank
- ♦ Tykes and Teens
- ♦ Whole Child Connection



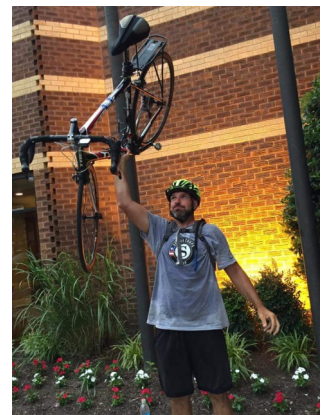
Funders and Donors:

- ♦ Children's Services Council of Martin County
- ♦ Children's Services Council of Okeechobee
- ♦ United Way of Indian River
- ♦ United Way of Lee, Hendry, Glades & Okeechobee
- ♦ United Way of Martin County
- ♦ Publix Super Market Charities
- ♦ SunTrust Bank
- ♦ Katherine & Richard Garlington Fund
- ♦ Harry Webster Walker II Charitable Trust

Bike Across America for the ELC

ELC's Director of Finance, Zack Hackley, took on a new adventure this year, bicycling across America. He began his journey in Oceanside, California on May 27, 2016 and in 21 days completed his trek in Annapolis, Maryland. Not only was this a personal endeavor for him, it was a fundraising event for the Coalition, raising \$4,000.

- ♦ More than 3,000 miles
- ♦ Across 12 states
- ♦ Climbed over 170,000 vertical feet



Oral Health Initiative

The Coalition collaborated with the Martin County Health Department who provided dental screenings to children at Gertrude Walden Early Learning Center and Pebblestone Academy. Children were referred for additional dental care as required.



Untreated tooth decay is painful and keeps children from school. According to the American Journal of Public Health, children with poor oral health are three times more likely to miss school due to oral health problems.



Board of Directors

Legislatively Mandated Members

Sandy Akre

Representative of Children with Disabilities
FDLRS/Galaxy, Director

Cathleen Blair

Children's Services Council of Okeechobee
Executive Director

Susan Curtis

Board of County Commissioners, appointee
The Learning Alliance

Brooke Flood

Indian River Schools Superintendent Designee
Coordinator of School Readiness

Ann Holmes

Faith Based Provider Representative
Gracie's Preschool, Director

Terri Marder

Head Start Director, Martin County Schools

Tom Peer

Department of Children and Families Representative
Licensing Supervisor

Lison Philor-Jonnassaint

Okeechobee County Health Department
Senior Public Health Nutritionist Supervisor

Donna Rivett

Indian River State College
Dean of Industrial Education Division

Deborah Schooley

Private For-Profit Child Care Representative
Tender Care Daycare and Preschool

Richard Stetson

CareerSource Research Coast, CEO

Private Sector Business Members

Brandon Tucker, Chair—Governor Appointee

Okeechobee County
The Tucker Group, LLC, President

Michelle Akins

Martin County
SafeSpace, Inc., Director of Programs

Lisa Giessert

Indian River County
Piper Aircraft, Retired

Sabina Guthrie

Okeechobee County
Okeechobee Christian Academy, Principal

William Laughlin

Martin County
Lochinvar Capital Management, Inc., President

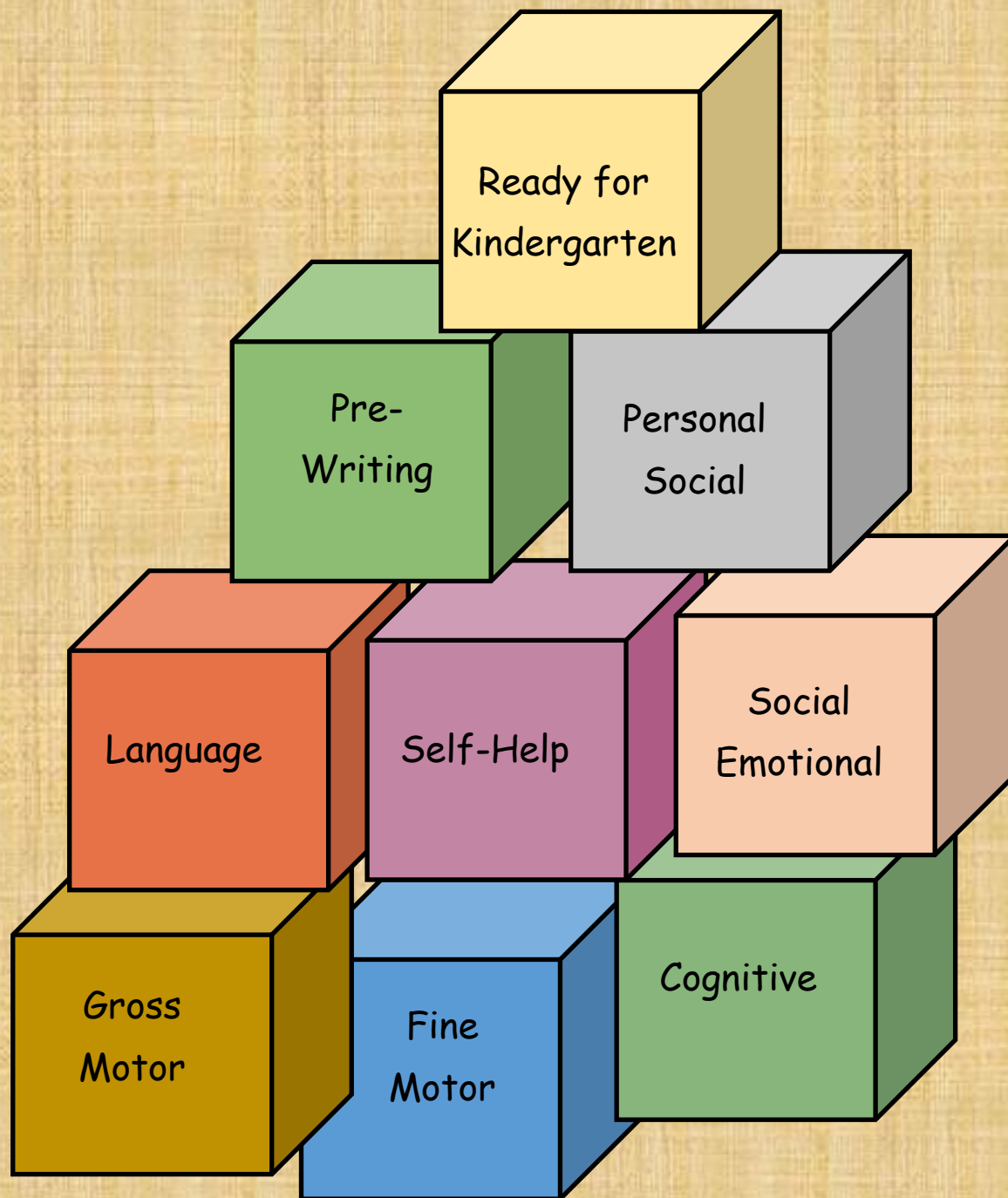
Ann Rodriguez

Martin County
SunTrust Bank, VP Business Banking Relationship
Manager

*Florida Statute 1002.83 mandates certain agencies must be represented on the Coalition Board.
A minimum of 1/3 of the members of the Coalition Board must be from the business sector.*

THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD MEMBERS

Early Learning ...



Building Blocks to Educational Success!