

Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Heartland, Inc.

www.elcfh.org

ELCFH Quality Committee Meeting Thursday, March 12, 2026 at 9:00 AM via ZOOM

Zoom meeting link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86229289007?pwd=AP7NQEwRZQEEdCV8Z3FrcDS05KuInPo.1>

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Agenda Item	Content
Opening	Welcome and Introductions- <i>Susan Norris, Committee Chair</i>
Discussion	<p>Items for Committee discussion are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review- 1.15.26- Quality Comm meeting minutes (p.2-4)- <i>Anne Brewer</i> 2. ELCFH position statement- defining school readiness- Board direction to develop talking points and strategies to support statement (p.5)- <i>Anne Brewer</i> 3. Kindergarten Transition conversations- <i>Beth Mueller</i> 4. Hurricane Disaster funding: review of current status of application and implementation phases (p.6)- <i>Anne Brewer</i> 5. Lesson Planning update: assuring implementation of approved curriculum for SR programs
Healthy Families	6. Updates from the Healthy Families Charlotte and DeSoto/ Hardee Programs (p. 7) - <i>Maria Magowan and Trena Miller</i>
Open Forum and Adjourn	<p>Other items for discussion?</p> <p>Upcoming meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracted Provider meeting- Thurs April 23 @ 6:00 PM • Quality Committee meeting- Thurs, May 21 @ 9:00 AM

Item 1: ELCFH Quality Committee (ZOOM) Meeting Minutes- January 15, 2026

Committee/ Board Members Present: Susan Norris, Trena Miller, Gail Werley, John Stover, Leigh Ann Moccia, Alma Ovalle, Billie-Jo Moretta, Maria Castillo, Maria Magowan Nancy Ebrahimi-Driggers, Rick Pucci, Susan Flemming

Staff Members Present: Anne Brewer, Beth Mueller, Janet Lane, Pam Hillestad, Kelly Wertenbach, Tina Yates

Guests Present: Amber Chudoba, Bianca Petco, Altagracia Lajara-Paredes, Casia Merlos

Agenda Items	Item Overview	Comments/ Actions
1. Opening	The meeting opened at 9:00 AM. Introductions were made. The 10.23.25 Quality Committee meeting minutes were reviewed.	
2. Committee Discussion Items	<p>ELCFH position statement development: local definition of school readiness: The DRAFT statement was reviewed with the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few typos in the draft had been identified and were announced as corrected. • Understanding that socio-emotional development is a prevailing concern for children, Dr. David Elkind’s quote about children understanding how to relate within the classroom was highlighted. • A framework for a truly “Ready Child” is inclusive of ready families, ready schools and ready communities. This is understood to be the “Readiness Equation”. This is important to acknowledge so that all the pressure of “readiness” is not put on the child- which can result in push down academics, where child readiness is based solely on what the child can perform/ memorize, rather than the child’s state of mind towards learning and the programs ability to engage children in developmentally appropriate learning experiences. • Ideas for how readiness can be measured within the ELCFH School Readiness Program (and VPK!) were discussed- this is important to agree upon as conversation continues with community partners who may be more focused on memorization and recitation based skills. • Further definitions and ideas about a child’s true readiness for school was included as a “food for thought” piece to include with the SR statement. • The specific needs of foster families and involvement of case managers were noted. Case managers were mentioned as hard to include and should be a source of family resources. • The ELCFH is poised to assist all families with needed resources, whether funded or not. This is most specific to childcare services and information on selecting a quality program, but certainly the ELCFH will help families with referrals to other needs. • The committee discussed some of the important parameters of ready community and ready programs- citing inexperienced directors, misinformation about the importance of 	

early screening/ early identification, and how to best assure families in need are pointed in the right direction for resources. It was agreed that some issues such as parent engagement are huge with no easy answers, and that the finalized statement can help with discussion and training of community members.

The committee recommends adoption of the School Readiness Position Statement by the ELCFH Board as presented. The statement will be presented to the Board at the February 25, 2026 Board meeting.

Hurricane Disaster/ Hurricane Ian funding follow-up: The ELCFH has contracted with Child Care Biz to provide COOP training and resources that will help providers develop individualized COOP plans and have access to needed supplies in response to weather emergencies. An idea about purchase of playground turf for providers to support resilient outdoor surfaces and to address impacted sand/ mulch washing away (making playground surfaces unsafe). This is in response to federal guidance regarding use of grant funds to support child care supply (and not just in response to emergency situations).

2026 Legislative Conversations surrounding early learning: session started this past week and the AELC state level weekly advocacy meetings are getting going. A presentation about “Fraud Prevention” at the ELC level will be facilitate by DEL and the AELC at the Jan 20th House Pre-K-12 subcommittee meeting.

Concerns that programs are having trouble being able to afford to deliver the VPK program have been voiced. An idea is to talk with local legislatures about the true cost of a quality early learning program, the challenge in finding teachers, how much VPK pays vs private pay, and the requirements of being a VPK provider. There remains prevailing concern regarding children’s behavior- which many early learning programs in the ELCFH report as a significant challenge.

ELCFH Agency Updates- the following items were reported:

Teacher Feature: this is a new concept being facilitated by the ELCFH to highlight teachers and best practices in the classroom. These monthly features will be posted on the ELCFH website and blasted via the provider blast.

Celebrate Literacy Week: Jan 26 – 30, 2026; THEME: Read, White and Blue: 250 Chapters of America!: The books are Parade Colors by Barbara Barbieri McGrath (infant/toddler) and What Is America? by Michelle Medlock Adams (preschool). CDE will be delivering the books as soon as they arrive. DEL has provided activities for providers and families to do with the children with a Patriotic theme which are included in the ELCFH blast.

Lesson plan implementation: (excerpt of email sent to providers): During upcoming site visits, CDE Specialists will look for the materials and activities noted in the lesson plans and engage in brief conversations with teachers to better understand how plans are used throughout the day. ELCFH CDE Specialists are available to work with provider to support lesson planning and

	<p>implementation in a way that is practical, meaningful, and responsive to the needs of the children in your care.</p> <p>CDE Lead- Child Support Specialist- change! The ELCFH CDE Lead, will be working closely with the CDE staff to strengthen partnerships with families and teachers – especially in supporting children who may benefit from extra help. The goal is to provide individualized support for children and connect families with the resources needed to best support their child at a deeper level.</p> <p>ELCFH 2026 Provider Event: Registration for the ELCFH 2026 Provider event with guest presenter Stephen Fite is underway. Providers can register on the ELCFH website at www.elcfh.org.</p>
<p>3. Healthy Families</p>	<p>The Charlotte program provided the 2nd quarter performance measures report (10.1.25 – 12.31.25) which was in draft form at the time of the meeting packet prep. Program outcome numbers were run as of the date of the meeting and a couple of minor differences were noted. A total of 14 of the 20 outcomes were met at 100%, four outcomes exceeded the required standard and two outcomes were narrowly missed. The updated outcomes will be provided at the next meeting. The program is fully staffed at this time, having hired the last vacant position with a bilingual staff member.</p> <p>The DeSoto/ Hardee program has noted some struggles with outcomes due to the total number cited in the indicator (which is a small number). It was shared that to even miss one of the required assessments (which must be completed within 30 days of program enrollment) meant that the outcome would not be met. The program is currently fully staffed, which ultimately will help with family enrollment and retention.</p>
<p>4. Open Forum</p>	<p>It was shared that there appear to be some glitches with the DCF website, resulting in staff trainings not posting to transcripts. It was advised that for the time being, providers should have staff print certificates so they can assure they receive credit for the trainings completed.</p>
<p>5. Adjourn</p>	<p>The next Quality Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, March 12, 2026 at 9AM via ZOOM. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 AM.</p>

School Readiness Definition- Talking Points and Strategies

Best Practices Statement adopted by the ELCFH Board on 2.25.26

What IS School Readiness? - *What does it mean for children to really be ready for school? It's not just about the child- we all play an important part!*

Be part of the equation- be part of the solution!

Ready Children: Dr. David Elkind from Tufts University asks- Can your child talk with others, follow directions and play with other children? These are the true building blocks of Kindergarten Readiness! These skills set the stage for learning other things like ABC's, 1-2-3's and tying shoes! **Screen early and often- developmental screenings such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) helps families understand how their child is developing!**

Ready Families: Parents are their child's first teacher!

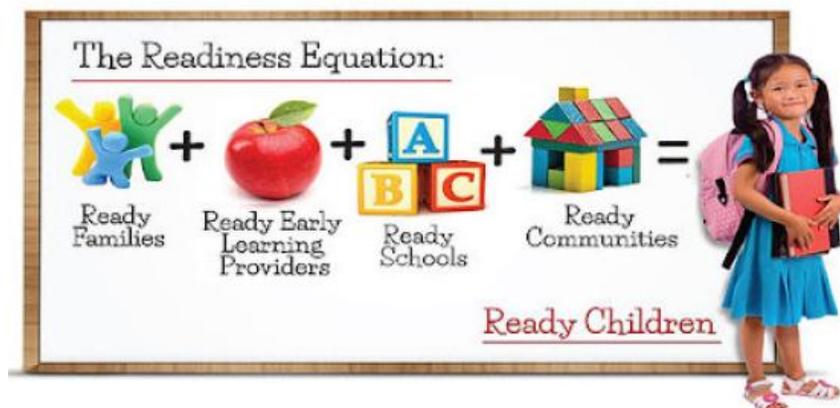
- Be part of your child's preschool and kindergarten program.
- Keep your child's daily routine predictable- two easy routines to build in every day are:
 - **Have a conversation with your child every day about their day.**
 - **Read to your child daily! This is a great way to wind down and connect before bedtime!**

Ready Schools: Developmentally appropriate, child centered classrooms understand how to teach individual children and meet children and families where they are! These classrooms provide:

- **Developmentally appropriate/ hands-on (concrete) learning experiences based on child interest,**
- **An engaging literacy focus with high quality children's books,**
- **Encourage parent participation through volunteer opportunities and family centered activities!**

Ready Communities: assure families have the support services they need!

- **The Early Learning Coalition of Florida's Heartland is here to help families with child developmental screenings and connection to needed services. Visit our website at www.elcfh.org for more information.**



(Image Source: Delaware Readiness Teams- <https://www.facebook.com/DELTEAMS/>)

Hurricane Ian Disaster Funding- Implementation Phases

1st Allocation Funding Timeline: July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2028

Grant Scope as related to Hurricane Ian impact: *Materials, Supplies, Furnishings, and Equipment (MSFE); Child Care Supply Building (CCS); Mental Health Consultation or Services (MH); Quality Improvement Activities (QI)*

PHASE 1: January – June 2026 (Pre 2026 Hurricane Season)

- ~~(MH) ELCFH Staff Devereux Training (Dec 2025)~~
- ~~(CCS) Discovery Source Hurricane Shelter Kits – Charlotte County (Jan 2026)~~
- (QI) Child Care Biz **COOP Training and Plan Development**- *sessions currently in process*
 - (QI) Distribution/ drop-ship **COOP Kits** with portable back-up power source to all participating COOP Plan completers (by site)- *pending procurement requirements*

PHASE 2: June – December, 2026

- (MSFE) **Playground Development Grant:** turf, shade, fencing, and large playground equipment (Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee) – *application concept approved by DEL on 3.4.26; application/ process under development*
- (QI) Discovery Source **Weathering the Storm** curriculum and training- *PO created and pending*

PHASE 3: January – June 2027

- (MH) Provider In-person Event- Devereux training- **FLIP-IT/ Challenging Behaviors** training (February 2027) – *proposal received; contract discussions in process*
- (MH) Provider Virtual Devereux Training- **Strengthening Future Resilience Disaster Preparedness for Early Learning Settings**- *proposal received; contract discussions in process*

PHASE 4: July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028 (pending 2nd allocation of Hurricane Ian funding if available)

- (QI) ELCFH Considering curriculum and training initiative to address core ELCFH TA concerns specific to curriculum implementation, developmentally appropriate practices, positive classroom climate.

Healthy Families Charlotte

HEALTHY FAMILIES CHARLOTTE Performance Measures (Quarterly) (10/1/2025 - 12/31/2025)

Performance Measures	Percentage Achieved
Eighty (80) percent of all families will enroll in the program prenatally or within the first three months after the birth of the focus child.	N/D = 3/3 = 100%
Ninety (90) percent of families are assessed within 30 days of enrollment.	N/D = 4/4 = 100%
Eighty (80) percent of participants that enroll prenatally will have the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) administered to them at least once prenatally.	N/D = 7/7 = 100%
Eighty (80) percent of participants will have the EPDS administered to them within the designated time period after the birth of the focus child.	N/D = 19/19 = 100%
Eighty (80) percent of participants will have the EPDS administered to them within the designated time period for any subsequent pregnancies.	N/D = 1/1 = 100%
Ninety (90) percent of participants will be administered the CHEERS Check-In (CCI) Tool according to schedule.	N/D = 36/38 = 95%
Eighty-five (85) percent of participants will have the baseline HFPI administered to them within the designated time period.	N/D = 10/12 = 83%
Eighty-five (85) percent of participants will have the subsequent interval of the HFPI administered to them according to the designated intervals for the tool.	N/D = 10/11 = 91%
Eighty-five (85) percent of participants who were low on one or more HFPI subscales will improve on at least one of the low subscales from baseline to six months.	N/D = 5/6 = 83%
Ninety (90) percent of families will develop a Family Goal Plan with their home visitor within the first 90 days of enrollment.	N/D = 22/22 = 100%
Eighty (80) percent of primary participants that close on level three, level four or complete the program will have improved or maintained self-sufficiency while enrolled in the program.	N/D = 1/1 = 100%
Ninety (90) percent of focus children will receive age appropriate developmental screenings according to schedule using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition (ASQ-3).	N/D = 19/21 = 90%
Ninety (90) percent of focus children will receive age appropriate social-emotional screenings according to schedule using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ:SE-2).	N/D = 21/21 = 100%
Eighty (80) percent of focus children will be up-to-date with immunizations at 24 months of age.	N/D = 2/2 = 100%
Eighty-five (85) percent of focus children will be up-to-date with well-child checks at 24 months of age.	N/D = 2/2 = 100%
Eighty-five (85) percent of focus children over 24 months old will have the most recent well-child checks according to the schedule.	N/D = 3/3 = 100%
Ninety (90) percent of focus children enrolled in the site six months or longer will be linked to a medical provider.	N/D = 36/36 = 100%
Ninety (90) percent of primary participants enrolled in the site six months or longer will be linked to a medical provider.	N/D = 30/30 = 100%
Eighty (80) percent of mothers enrolled in the project will not have a subsequent pregnancy within two years of the focus child's birth.	N/D = 61/61 = 100%
Seventy-five (75) percent of participants will have received at least seventy-five (75) percent of home visits according to the participant level.	N/D = 44/53 = 83%

Note: N = numerator D = denominator A result of Indeterminate means the denominator (D) value is 0. Bold numbers met goals.