

End of Year Report for



EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF ORANGE COUNTY

CCR&R, SR, VPK, Child Screening, Finance, and Special Projects

July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026



Contents

Executive Summary	3
Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R).....	4
School Readiness Program (SR)	5
Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK)	6
Child Screening and Assessment.....	6
Finance and Accounting.....	7
School Readiness Match.....	7
Non-Match Funding	7
Forecasting	7
SR and VPK Reimbursement	8
Baby Institute.....	9
Educational Support	9
Special Projects	10
Communications and Events	11

Executive Summary

This year's Annual Report reflects the Early Learning Coalition of Orange County (ELCOC) vision of providing every child with equal access to high-quality early learning programs by supporting those who help children grow and develop.

Quality childcare combined with quality early childhood education is crucial for the success of young families and communities. As an educator with more than 38 years of experience and a parent myself, I recognize the importance of parents having peace of mind when they leave their babies in a childcare facility.

This is why ELCOC is determined to offer childcare providers and workers the latest research and evidence-based education to ensure that all children receive the best care and education possible.

We are dedicated to preparing all children for kindergarten and school, which is why we continue to have a close partnership with Orange County Public Schools. Today's childcare must include quality early childhood education to guarantee our children's future success.

ELCOC is invested in the continued success of our communities because the first 2,000 days in a child's life matter the most.

Scott Fritz

Dr. Ronald "Scott" Fritz
Chief Executive Officer

Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R)

Data collected up to 06/30/2026 YTD

Choosing a child care provider is one of the most important decisions a parent will make. Our team of Family Engagement Specialists helped families navigate their choices by providing customized referrals to legally operating Orange County child care providers, information on state licensing requirements, and resources for paying for child care, in addition to other community referrals. The team processed **8,371** waitlist applications for families seeking enrollment into the School Readiness (SR) program.

The CCR&R team completed requests for information from calls/requests within two (2) business days of the request, in the format requested by the individual. Additionally, 100% of parents requesting child care referrals received a list with a minimum of six (6) written referrals, unless fewer than six (6) providers met their criteria. To ensure accurate information to families, provider data was verified monthly against the DCF CARES system.



For the convenience of families, we offered the following access points, available on-line 24/7:

- On-line CCR&R contact form with which families can get in touch with Family Engagement Specialists.
- Links to Department of Children and Families (DCF) inspection reports and consumer education materials for selecting quality care.
- On-line request forms for provider transfers or break-in-service, among others.

ELCOC is proud to report that although our Semoran Boulevard satellite location closed this past year, our West Oaks mall location is still open and serving the community and assisted **2,456** families. All locations are open to families on a walk-in basis to apply for SR, VPK, complete a recertification, or receive assistance with any other matter. A total of **8,209** in-person visits were made during the 2025-2026 program year.

The ELCOC call center is available every weekday to serve families in the Orange County community. During the 2025-2026 program year, the call center received **46,326** calls with an average percent of 5-star reviews at **92.43%**.

School Readiness Program (SR)

The Family Services team makes the final determination of eligibility for families waiting for School Readiness services. Once funding is available to enroll, a system generated notice is emailed to the family, followed by a detailed email containing helpful tips for completing the enrollment process. Families are assisted through the process as needed and choose their own provider, based on their unique needs.

Our team continued to process new enrollments, recertifications, provider transfers, breaks-in-service, and other requests as families accessed SR waitlist and enrollment services through DEL's web-based Early Learning Family Portal.

Child enrollments using the SR Plus program continued during the 2025-2026 program year, helping families currently in the SR program but have exceeded the program income limits continue services. Staff continued eligibility/enrollment services for families who qualified, providing support for **59** children who otherwise would have lost child care services.

Enrollment from the waitlist was in effect for much of the contract year. A total of **6,653** funding notifications were sent from the waitlist leading to **3,597** enrollments. The resulting turn rate is **54%**.

Our At-Risk team is dedicated to serving families of children at risk of abuse or neglect, referred by DCF or their contracted partners. The team processed referrals as well as recertifications and transfers and worked with families referred for SR by community partners. Our at-risk team helped provide children with necessary services.

At-a-Glance

- ✓ Families Served
 - **9,452**
- ✓ Children Served
 - **17,867**
- ✓ Household Type
 - **5.9%** Married
 - **81.6%** Single Parent
- ✓ Ethnicity
 - **32.09%** Hispanic
 - **61.6%** non-Hispanic
 - **6.5%** Not Disclosed
- ✓ Employment Status
 - **78.9%** Employed
- ✓ Household Income
 - **56.9%** Less than \$25,000
 - **33.7%** \$25,000 – 50,000
 - **9.7%** Over \$50,000

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK)

Data collected up to 06/30/2026 YTD

VPK is a free educational program that prepares 4-year-old children to succeed in future academic experiences. To be eligible, children must be a Florida resident and 4 years old on or before September 1st of the current school year. Children with birthdays between February 2nd – September 1st have the option to enroll in VPK during the current year or postpone their enrollment until the following year.



Families apply for VPK through DEL's web-based Early Learning Family Portal. In the 2025-2026 program year, after completing that process, **12,166** children from **11,708** families were served in the VPK program. This was a diverse population with parents self-reporting ethnicity as **36.5%** Hispanic, **52%** non-Hispanic, and **11.5%** not disclosing.

Based on internal monitoring activities, **100%** of VPK children were accurately determined eligible by established criteria. Families who submitted all required documentation were issued a Certification of Enrollment for their child. Additionally, there were **632** children with unused VPK Certificates of Enrollment and those families were emailed to remind them of their enrollment options.

Child Screening and Assessment

Our Inclusion Team facilitated the completion of the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE) with families and early learning providers. By statute, screenings must be completed within 45 days of enrollment by either the parent or the provider. Parents have five (5) days to complete the screenings before deferral to the provider. The Inclusion Team is available to assist both parents and providers with the screening and send reminders to providers to keep them from becoming non-compliant.

Children who scored below the cut-off score in one or more domains were observed by an Early Childhood Screening Specialist; for children whose low scores were validated by the observation, a referral was sent to the family to help connect them with further diagnostics and additional care specialized for their child's needs. This year, **2,865** referrals were received by the Early Learning Support Division for further assistance. The areas of top concern identified by ASQ-3 were speech, behavior, and global development. Technical assistance calls, emails, texts & visits were made **11,720** times to families and **18,999** times to providers.

Finance and Accounting

The Finance team had oversight of cost allocation, prepared budgets and reconciled to actuals, processed payroll, as well as performing many other financial activities. The team processed **5,420** SR payments and **5,129** VPK payments as of June 2026 with an advance payment option available for VPK providers.

School Readiness Match

Match is a requirement of SR funding with local dollars utilized to expand available funds. Allocated dollars are applied monthly, totaling **\$1,899,455.13** from **23** funders. The ELCOC ensured that the local match requirements were spent. Over **fourteen** private early learning providers participated in the SR Match Program, offering referrals to cost-share their employees' child care expense.

Non-Match Funding

Local donor funds are applied to expand services to client populations who may not qualify for SR or to reach underserved communities. Allocated dollars were applied monthly with the impact of this funding allowed **620** additional children to be served with a total of **\$2,122,055.95**.

Forecasting

The progress of enrollments and the child care forecasts were completed monthly and reviewed with the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Financial Officer, with all strategic implementations mutually agreed to by all parties. The minimum amount of total SR funds spent on child care slots is 78%; the ELCOC spent **81.04%** of the total SR funds on child care slots in the 2025-2026 program year.

At-a-Glance

- ✓ SR Reimbursement:
 - **\$60,851,830.37**
- ✓ Child Assessment:
 - **\$51,724.13**
- ✓ Provider Registration Fees:
 - **\$321,282.25**
- ✓ QPI:
 - **\$2,971,739.83**
- ✓ Gold Seal:
 - **\$4,529,851.75**
- ✓ Special Needs:
 - **\$149,251.00**
- ✓ VPK Reimbursement:
 - **\$32,860,577.57**

SR and VPK Reimbursement

The Finance Department provides services in areas related to School Readiness (SR) and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) reimbursement. Some of the most important tasks associated with these areas are:

- Verify and process monthly attendance and reimbursement of SR and VPK.
- SR had **96%** on-time attendance submitted, averaging **380** providers and **\$5,932,065.65** paid monthly.
- VPK had **97%** on-time attendance submitted, averaging **417** providers and **\$2,728,006.46** paid monthly.
- Track and verify reimbursement related source documentation.
- Perform data integrity checks.
- Provide technical assistance (TA) to providers
- Process changes to provider related data such as contracts, amendments, providers, coalition, and differential rates.

As part of the department's commitment to provide quality customer service and support to all SR and VPK providers, the team provided Technical Assistance Calls to providers for different matters including Post Attendance Audits (PAA), payments and child attendance inquiries, source documentation, and program guidance. In the 2025-2026 program year, TA included:

- **963** General
- **189** VPK Provider
- **190** SR Provider
- **425** PAA Pass
- **211** PAA Fail



Baby Institute

The Baby Institute is a free and voluntary parent education program offered by the ELCOC designed to support our community in Orange County with preparing their children to be school-ready. The program takes place over six weeks including virtual classes and individual weekly support. Three curricula are offered to better support parents: Infant, Toddler, and Preschool classes.

- Sector Mercy Drive had **39** parent attendees with **47** children aged 0-5 joining them.
- Sector Parramore had **44** parent attendees with **67** children aged 0-5 joining them.
- Sector Engelwood had **49** parent attendees with **62** children aged 0-5 joining them.



Educational Support

Data collected up to 06/30/2026 YTD

The Educational Support team works closely with the educators that are in direct contact with the Orange County community's children and strive to do annual assessments while providing support. The team has maintained continuous communication with all providers through frequent correspondence with center owners and Family Child Care providers, including communications pertaining to training materials, program updates, and deadline reminders.

1,415 CLASS program assessments were completed during the 2025-2026 program year. The Educational Support team supported Orange County providers with **1,539** coaching visits and **103** materials delivery visits. In addition, the team facilitated four cohorts, two in English and two in Spanish of our CDA program with a total of **94** individuals completing the program (February through April). Our Institute for Early Learning CDA Alumni Network (ICAN) successfully hosted four events throughout the fiscal year with a total of **83** participants.

Special Projects

The ELCOC hosted several special projects with the aim of enriching Orange County communities and supporting the development of children in Central Florida.



The Great Garden Project builds vegetable gardens in early learning centers, promoting healthy-eating and scientific learning among children aged 0-5. Through hands-on activities, children will learn about healthy nutrition, responsibility, and environment awareness while increasing their willingness to try fruits and vegetables. In the 2025-2026 program year, **7** centers participated in teaching **139** children about the importance of plant science and nutrition.

The Talk To Learn Program previously known as “Chatter Box” – Focuses on enhancing language development focusing on interactive talk for children 3-5 years of age which includes age-appropriate, interactive lessons rooted in early childhood developmental milestones and evidence-based strategies. LENA technology integration helps provide educators and caregivers the tools they need to track their children’s learning progress and personalize instruction. Six centers with a total of **139** children participated in the Talk to Learn Program, increasing meaningful verbal interactions critical during foundational language development.

Conscious Discipline is a trauma-informed, social-emotional learning approach that focuses on combining behavior management, relational, self-regulation, and relationship-building to help children develop the skills they need to manage emotions, solve problems and build healthy relationships. There were **15** participants who received conscious discipline training during the 2025-2026 program year.

Trauma-Informed Care training takes place over four hours, equipping teachers with the tools needed to create safe, supportive, and responsive classroom environments by coaching them about how trauma affects the behavior of young children. In the 2025-2026 program year, **140** teachers received trauma-informed training.

The ELCOC partnered with the Central Florida Theatrical Association to bring Broadway-style activities to preschool classrooms, introducing children to performing arts through engaging, age-appropriate activities. Two centers encouraged **75** children to express their creativity, self-expression, and confidence through music, movement, and storytelling.

Communications and Events

The ELCOC's Communications team sent out **9,898** texts and **201,488** emails to parents and providers, including funding information, payment schedules, new legislation updates, and upcoming events. **121** Events were either hosted by or participated in by the ELCOC.

The ELCOC's 4th annual Slide into Summer Event's theme this year was Safari. This event is held by the ELCOC's Family Services team to help set up families and their children for summer learning success. During this event, **250** attendees received laptop computers and educational toys and took part in activities to get families and children alike excited about the possibilities of summer learning.



The ELCOC 2026 Diaper Drive occurred in January 2026 and was held for a total of 8 weeks to help distribute diapers to families with young children in need of support. Over those 8 weeks, the ELCOC initiative collected **48,084** diapers from board members, ELCOC partners, and community members. All diapers were distributed at the Diaper Distribution Event at the Central Florida Diaper Bank, helping many families in our community.

The theme this year for Celebrate Literacy Week, Florida! was “Read, White and Blue: 250 Chapters of America”. Literacy week’s goal is to raise awareness about the importance of reading. During Literacy Week, ELCOC volunteers joined with DCF volunteers to read to children. There were **19** Volunteers who read to children at **8** different centers across Central Florida from January 26th through January 30th, 2026.



Eligibility & Enrollment Services

17,867

SR Children
Served

9,452

SR Families
Served

12,166

VPK Children
Served

6,653

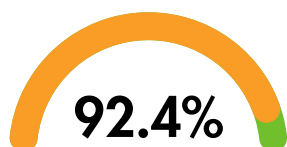
SR Funding
Notices Sent

8,371

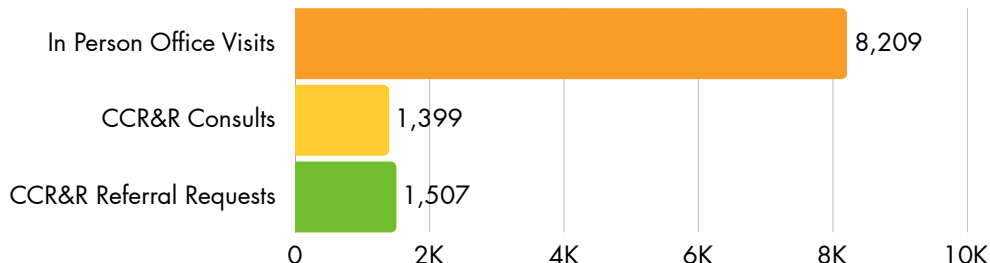
Waitlist
Applications
Processed

12,798

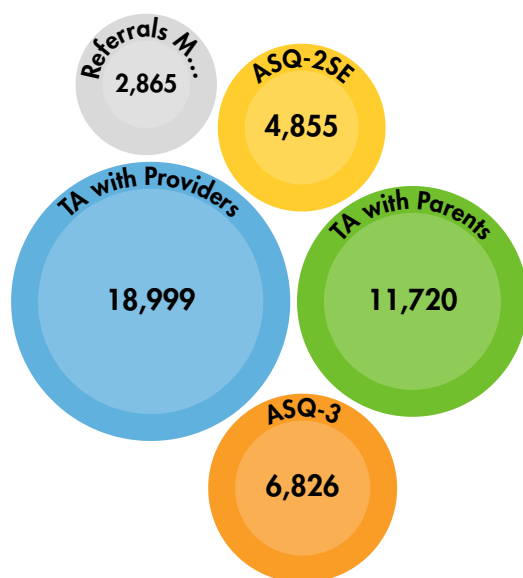
VPK
Applications
Approved



Call Center
Satisfaction



Child Screening



Communication

- 9,898 text messages, and 201,488 emails were sent to families and providers.
- 632 emails sent to VPK families with unused certificates to remind them of their enrollment options.
- 46,326 calls received by the call center.





End of Year Report

July 1 2025–June 30 2026

Reimbursement

School Readiness

441

Contracted Providers

\$60,851,830.37

Provider Payment Total

On average, **380** SR
providers are paid monthly

\$321,282.25

Provider Registration Fee Payments

\$51,724.13

Child Assessment Payments

\$1,899,455.13

Match Payments

VPK

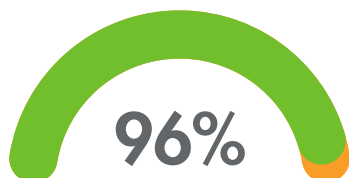
472

Contracted Providers

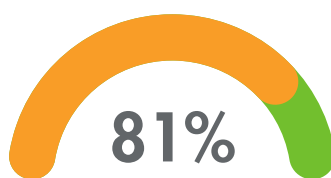
\$32,860,577.57

Provider Payment Total

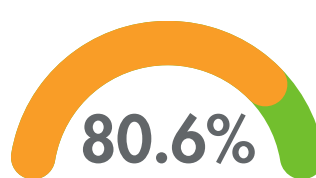
On average, **417** VPK
providers are paid monthly



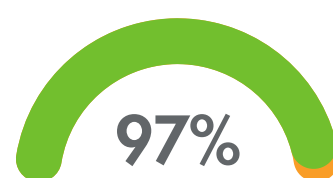
SR Providers who submit
on-time attendance



Percentage of dollars
used on slots including
SR match

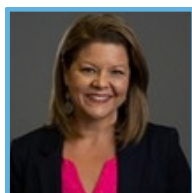


Percentage of dollars
used on slots not
including SR match



VPK Providers who submit
on-time attendance

Educational Support Contacts

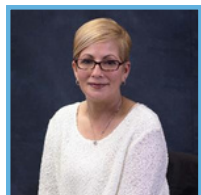


Chief of Strategy & Educational Support

Melanie Kestory

MKestory@elcoc.org

407-839-6526

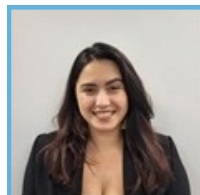


Director of Program Services & Grants

Jessica Ruiz-Ahorrio

Jruiz-ahorrio@elcoc.org

407-747-9732



Educational Support Manager

Denisha Ramos-Cubero

dramos-cubero@elcoc.org

407-863-0723



Educational Support Manager

Cecile Hairston

Chairston@elcoc.org

407-506-2192



Educational Support Manager

Kayla Gravenmeir

Kgravenmeir@elcoc.org

407-697-4278

Staff: Lakeira Davis, Millie Ortiz, Rosanie Jean Philippe, Danielle Loney, Alisha Henry, Kiema Nisbett, Elizabeth Ramirez, Mikeriia Clark, Derrick Carr

Staff: Aishanterra Bailey, Steven Bell, Krystal Collins, Rosa Gonzalez, Natalie Joachim, Dallas Ledford, Briana Campbell, Maria Matos Rodriguez, Lizette Molina, Isabel Nix, Helena Pumphrey Stier, Erin Ramos, Edilka Ruhlman Moya, Connie Selmi, John Sullivan, Shayna Torres, Miosotti Trinidad

