



For Immediate Release

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Early Learning Coalition Celebrates 16 Years of Serving Escambia County Families

The Florida Legislature passed the School Readiness Act in 1999 to consolidate the state’s early learning programs into a more cohesive, efficient and integrated school readiness system. The goal of this massive restructuring was to increase our children’s chances of achieving future educational success and becoming productive members of society. A part of this initiative the Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County was created on November 22, 2016.

At its inception, the School Readiness Program’s primary mission was to enable parents to obtain and maintain employment by providing subsidized child care. While basic child care is still one of the main purposes of the School Readiness Program the importance of early learning and child development has increased significantly in recent years. According to Bruce Watson, Executive Director of the Coalition, “One of the biggest changes over the years is that we have moved from a babysitting service to an early education system with emphasis on preparing children to enter school ready to learn. What have always been the integral components of a quality early education program, children’s health, developmental screenings, curriculum implementation and character development, are becoming the standard requirements all of our child care providers must achieve in Escambia.”

From the early years until today, the Early Learning Coalition of Escambia County has served over 30,000 children from birth to 12 years of age through its School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Programs. To celebrate this vital contribution to our community the Early Learning Coalition will host an Open House on Tuesday, November 22, 2016 from 3 – 5 pm at their offices at 3300 North Pace Boulevard, Suite 220, in Pensacola.

“Former Board members, community partners and other advocates for early childhood are invited,” Watson continues. “We welcome and encourage them to stop by and meet our current staff and Board members who serve this community’s children.”

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