



**Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast**  
Serving Citrus – Dixie – Gilchrist – Levy – Sumter Counties

# **Annual Report**

## **2008 – 2009**

## Table of Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Component</b>	<b>Page</b>
a.	Mission	3
b.	Data Summary	3
c.	Service Delivery Summary	6
d.	Quality Activity Summary	6
e.	Fiscal Summary	10
f.	Program Year Summary	11



## Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast 2008 – 2009 Annual Report

**Mission Statement:**

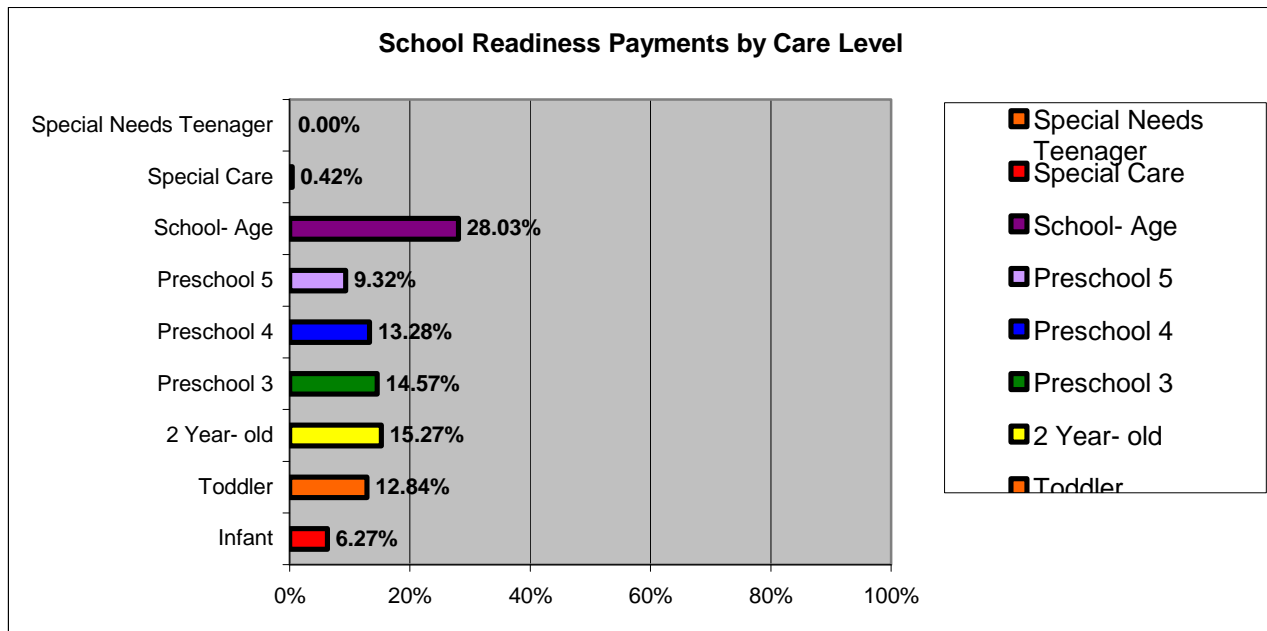
The Coalition will collaborate with parents to integrate a system of services and facilitate quality early education programs that include linkages to all areas of child development.

**Data Summary:** The following information is based on data collected from July 1, 2008- June 30, 2009.

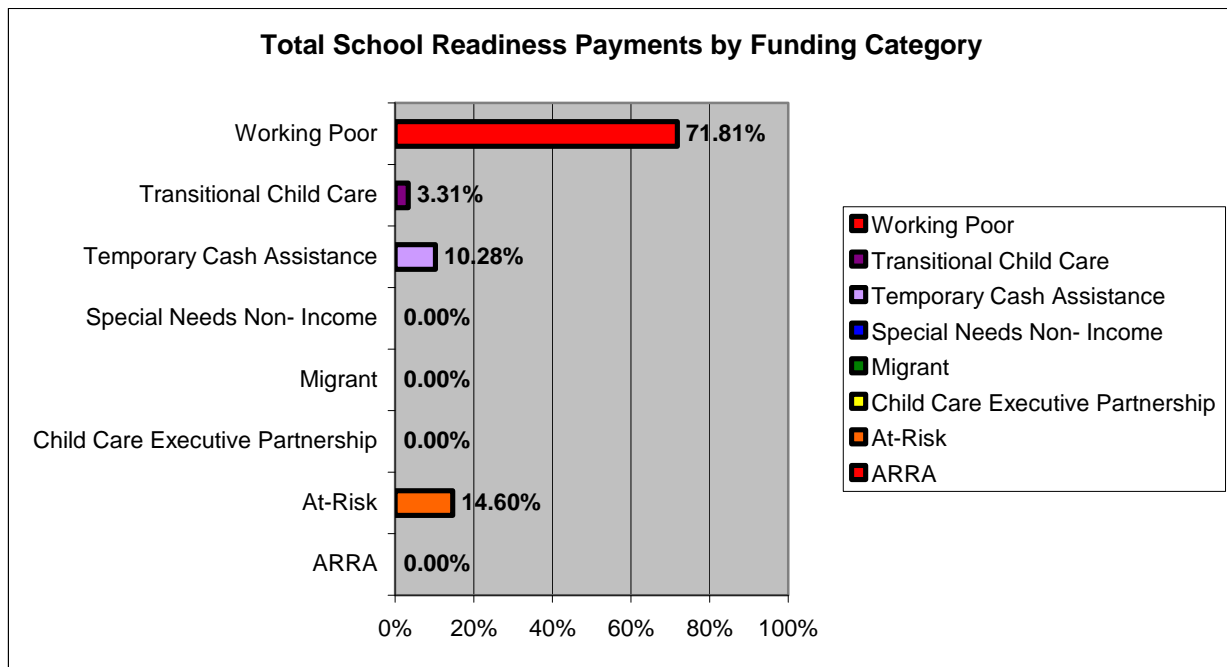
**Number of unduplicated School Readiness (SR) children and families:**

SR Children	SR Families
3356	1825

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



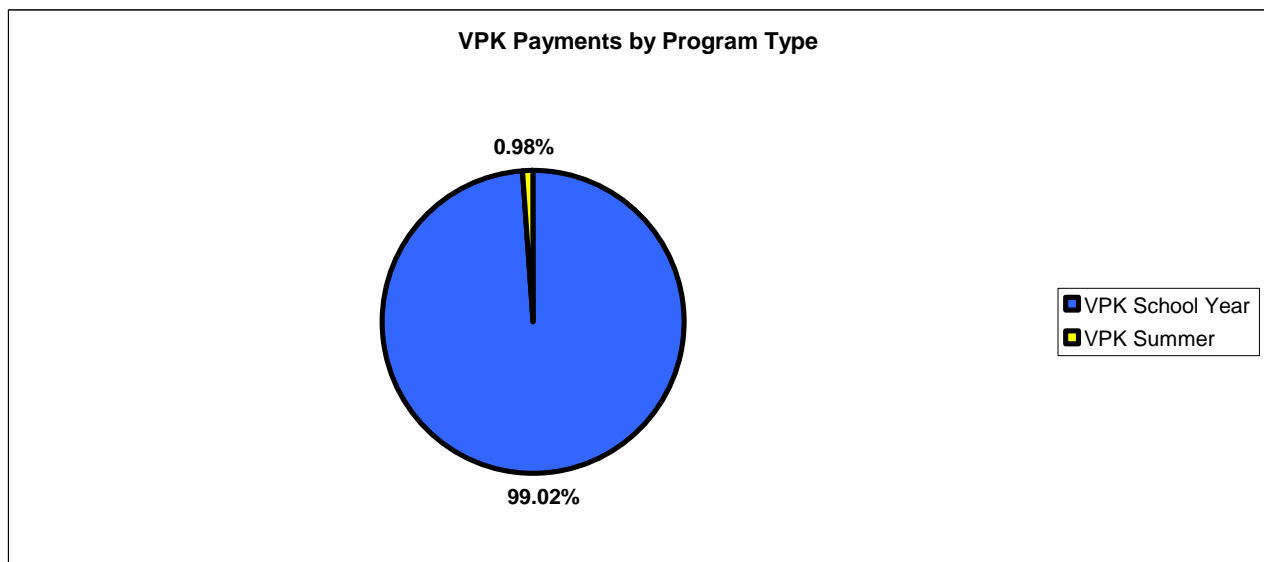
**School Readiness: Percentage of total payments (including match) by funding category:**



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

VPK Children	VPK Families
1733	1704

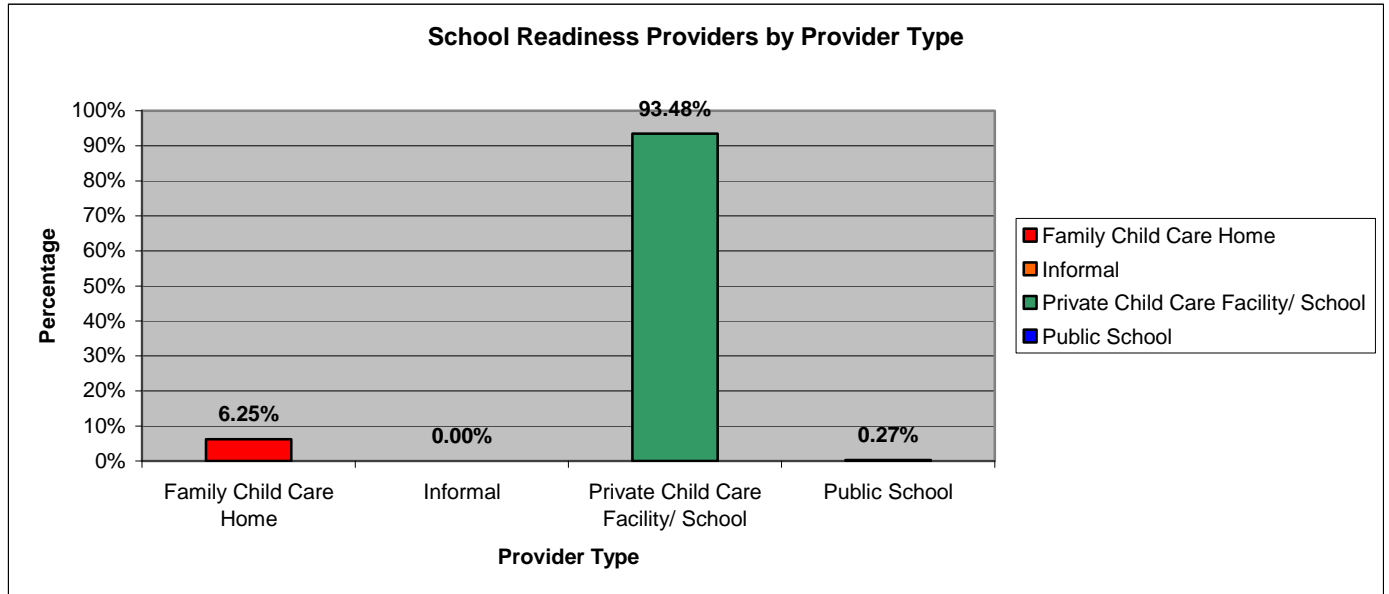
**Total percentage of VPK payments by program type:**



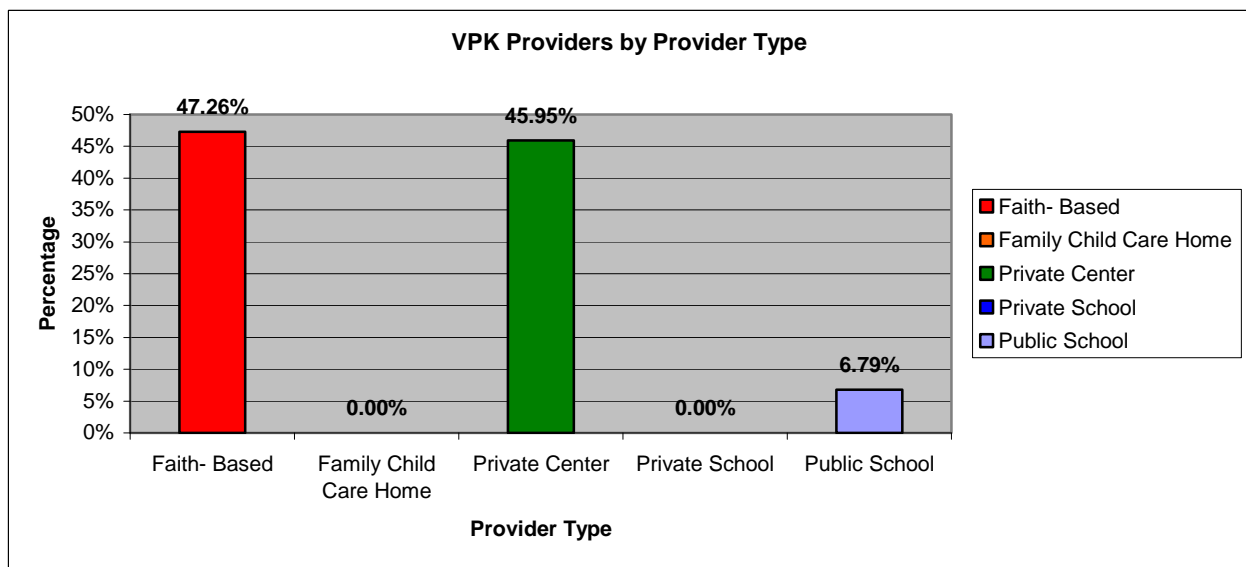
Total number of providers that participate in the coalition's early learning programs:

School Readiness Providers	Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Providers
112	72

Participating School Readiness providers by provider type:



Participating VPK providers by provider type:



**Service Delivery Summary:**

From July 1, 2008 – May 31, 2009, the ELCNC utilized a service provider to offer some services required by the school readiness and VPK programs. On June 1, 2009, the ELCNC transitioned to an in-house service delivery system. Over the past several years, the ELCNC had been transitioning a variety of child- and provider-related services, with the final functions of client eligibility and redetermination, provider reimbursement, and Child Care Resource & Referral transitioning as of June 1, 2009. New staff members were brought on board on May 1, 2009, to allow for intensive training on client services functions prior to the transition date. Finance Department staff underwent extensive training on provider reimbursement through a partnership with the ELC of Florida’s Heartland.

**Quality Activity Summary:**

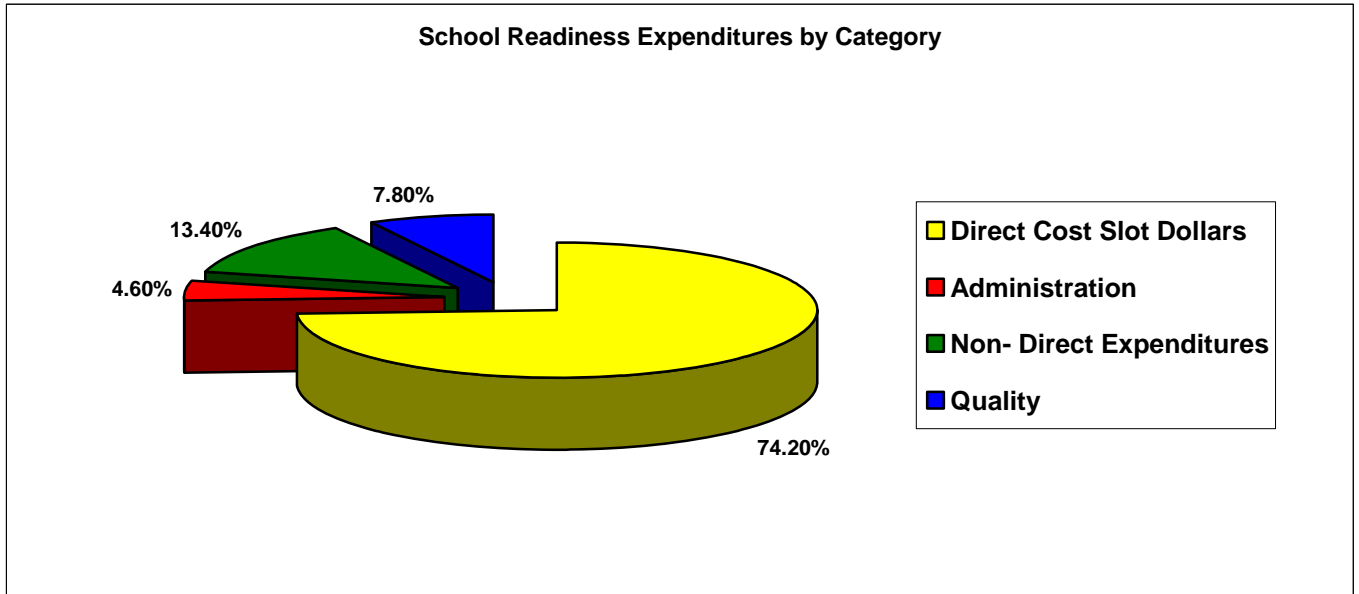
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Narrative</b>
What opportunities are offered by the Coalition for comprehensive consumer education?	The ELCNC offers consumer education through materials available to clients and the public in all three Client Services Departments. Prior to the transition, these materials were available through our service provider. In addition, the ELCNC is represented at a variety of community events throughout our five counties, making available to the public a variety of information, including but not limited to information on the ELCNC, VPK, parenting, quality child care, the importance of family literacy, parents as a child’s first teacher, and community support services available to families.
Provide a list of grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting State and local standards.	Contracted early learning providers are able to apply for grant funds to assist them in achieving and/or maintaining Gold Seal status. As funds allow, providers are able to request quality enhancement materials to support their efforts to meet the ELCNC’s provider observation tool requirements. The ELCNC also offers a mini-grant program to support the unique needs of the special needs children that may be attending at a contracted early learning site.

<p>Describe the process for monitoring compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements.</p>	<p>The ELCNC monitors licensing reports posted by DCF on all licensed contracted school readiness providers. Inspection report information is logged into the ELCNC provider workbook spreadsheets. Licensed providers are required to notify the ELCNC within 48 hours of being cited for non-compliance by DCF staff members. Consequences are imposed by the ELCNC for non-reporting of health/safety issues. Non-licensed early learning providers are monitored at least twice per year by ELCNC staff members, utilizing a Board-approved Health &amp; Safety Checklist which mirrors the Department of Children &amp; Families Licensing requirements. ELCNC staff provide technical assistance as needed. These inspection reports are also logged into the ELCNC provider workbook spreadsheets.</p>
<p>Provide a list of available professional development opportunities that the coalition offers, including training, education, and technical assistance</p>	<p>The ELCNC offers an extensive provider training program, which includes provider meetings, training on a wide variety of topics, and technical assistance to teachers as needed. The ELCNC offers a minimum of 120 hours of training per year, throughout the five county region. Large centralized trainings are also offered – this fiscal year we were able to offer Dr. Becky Bailey’s Positive Discipline training. Inclusion trainings are offered quarterly, to meet the requirements of the state’s Inclusion Program as outlined in the Child Care Resource &amp; Referral Standard Levels of Service. The Coalition’s Education Specialists offer on-site training to early learning providers as requested or as necessary to maintain provider compliance with the ELCNC provider observation tool. Education Specialists also work directly with teachers to assist them in planning and implementing appropriate learning opportunities for children.</p> <p>The ELCNC offers the Professional Development Reimbursement Program to assist teachers employed in contracted early learning facilities with the cost of training and certifications. Upon completion of approved training, reimbursement is processed.</p>

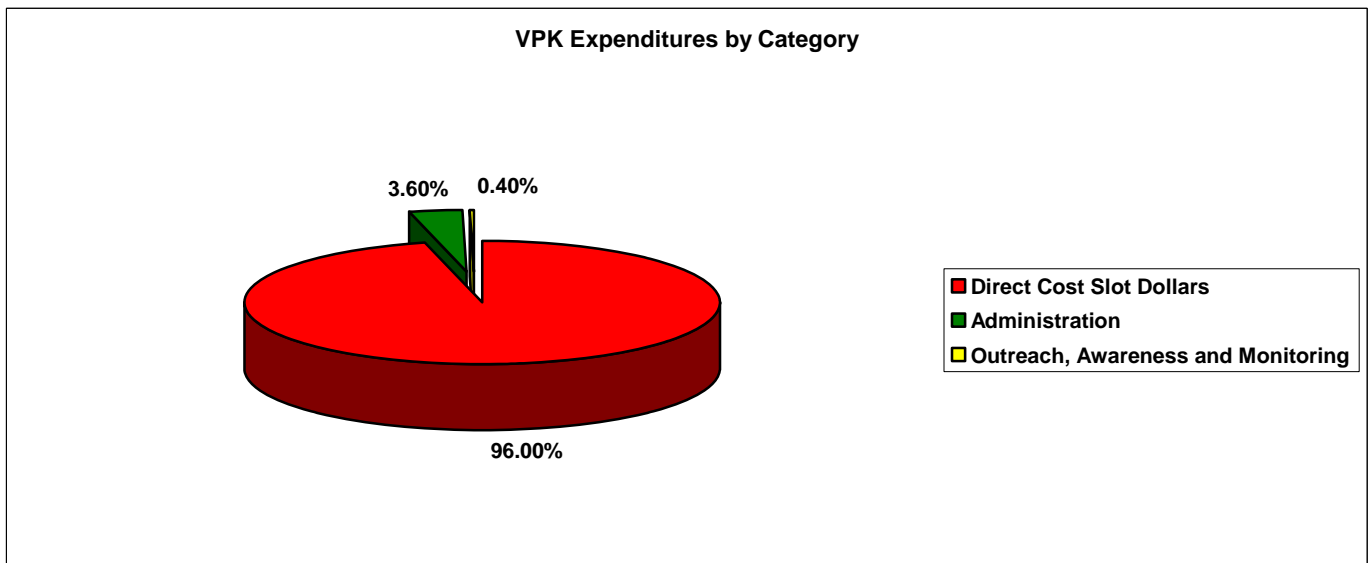
<p>Describe initiatives by the coalition to improve salaries and other compensation for child care providers.</p>	<p>The ELCNC offers the Teacher Incentive Payment Program (TIP Program) to credentialed teachers employed in contracted school readiness locations. The program is designed to encourage continuity of care and increased teacher training through financial stipend awards. Teachers can be paid for additional training activities completed (above and beyond the minimum required in law) on a sliding scale based on the length of continuous employment at the contracted school readiness site.</p>
<p>Describe activities to support a Quality Rating System.</p>	<p>The ELCNC does not operate a Quality Rating System at this time.</p>
<p>Provide information on activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development.</p>	<p>The ELCNC training program offers opportunities to teachers to enhance their understanding of early literacy and math skill development. Trainings are offered by the Education Specialists to enhance teacher performance in the implementation of activities in the classroom that will assist both school readiness and VPK children in the attainment of the skills outlined in the performance standards.</p>
<p>What activities has the coalition implemented to promote inclusive child care?</p>	<p>The ELCNC offers a mini-grant program to assist early learning providers with the cost of program adaptations that may be needed to support individual special needs children that are in attendance. In addition, the ELCNC training program includes a variety of inclusion-related topics. All ELCNC trainings (whether or not they are strictly inclusion-related) include information on adaptations that can be made to meet the needs of all children in attendance. The ELCNC operates an Inclusion Warm Line, which is publicized and posted on the ELCNC website. The Warm Line is available to providers, parents, and others that may be seeking information on inclusion and/or the rights of all children to be served in the least restrictive environment possible.</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>The ELCNC requires school readiness providers to offer character development programs designed to assist children in acquiring social and emotional skills needed to develop healthy relationships with other children and adults. Character development programs are monitored by the Education Specialists through the provider observation system, with technical assistance and training provided as needed.</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>The ELCNC offers a Provider Recruitment/Expansion Program. New providers are able to request funding assistance to help them achieve the quality standards set for the school readiness program and the ELCNC. Existing providers are able to request funding assistance to help them expand their capacity. Priority is given to applicants that wish to offer child care availability to underserved areas or age-groups. The program helps to ensure sufficient parental choice exists for families throughout our five county region.</p>

**Fiscal Summary:** During the 2008- 2009 fiscal year the coalition’s total **School Readiness Program** operating budget was \$8,762,678.00. Below is a breakout of expenditures by category.



During the 2008- 2009 fiscal year the coalition’s total **Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program** operating budget was \$3,972,358.00. Below is a breakout of expenditures by category.



### Program Year Summary:

The ELCNC closes the fiscal year with many accomplishments achieved. Through the Board and committee/council members' dedication and hard work, the following successes were realized:

- Implemented the Professional Development Reimbursement Program to further the education of teachers in the early education field
- Implemented the Teacher Incentive Payment Program to offer financial incentives to teachers, encouraging them to maintain continuity of care and enhanced quality of services to young children
- Participation in a variety of community events, educating parents and the community on the functions of the ELCNC and ways that they can enhance children's lives
- Distribution of age-appropriate books to young children, through community events and activities and through face-to-face interactions at the ELCNC Client Services Departments
- Co-sponsorship with Kids Central, Inc. of Dr. Becky Bailey's **Ten Principles of Positive Discipline** training workshop with approximately 100 participants
- Assisted providers with the achievement and maintenance of Gold Seal accreditation
- Implementation of a new provider observation system designed to monitor the compliance of school readiness providers with the requirements of the program, ensuring that children are offered quality early learning environments
- Identification of children with potential learning difficulties, assisting families with the referral process, and assisting teachers in developing plans to meet the individual learning needs of children
- Development of a provider workbook data system to house a variety of information on school readiness providers, allowing the ELCNC to study data with an eye to improving the school readiness program in the future