

BY-LAWS OF THE EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF THE NATURE COAST, INC.
REPRESENTING: CITRUS, DIXIE, GILCHRIST, LEVY, AND SUMTER COUNTIES

ARTICLE I
NAME, AUTHORIZATION, LOCATION

- Section 1.1 **NAME:** The name of the organization shall be the Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast, Inc., hereinafter referred to as the "Coalition" for the counties of Citrus, Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy and Sumter.
- Section 1.2 **AUTHORITY:** The Coalition is authorized by the provisions of Florida Statutes *Part 5 of Ch. 1002, F.S.; Voluntary Prekindergarten and Section 411.01 School Readiness Programs*
- Section 1.4 **LOCATION:** The principle office of the organization shall be located in Citrus County, Florida. The Coalition may have offices within the organizations service delivery area as the members may determine or as the affairs of the organization may require.

ARTICLE II
PURPOSE, INTENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Section 2.1 **PURPOSE OF THE COALITION:** The purpose of the Coalition shall be to carry out the duties and responsibilities invested and entrusted to the Coalition pursuant to the provisions of the "Early Learning Act and the Voluntary Prekindergarten Programs and pursuant to the "School Readiness Act." The Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast, Inc. *recognizes the primacy of parents as their children's first teachers and the importance of children entering the education system ready to learn, and seeks to assist parents by providing opportunities for the at-risk birth-to kindergarten population to enhance their chances for educational success by participating in quality school readiness programs that can better prepare them for school.*
- Section 2.2 **INTENT OF THE COALITION:** The Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast, Inc. *recognizes that early learning programs increase children's chances of achieving future educational success and becoming productive members of society.*
- Section 2.2.1 *It is the intent of the Coalition that early learning programs be developmentally appropriate, research-based, involve parents as their child's first teacher, serve as preventative measures for children at risk of future school failure, enhance the educational readiness of eligible children, and support family education. Each School Readiness Program shall provide the elements necessary to prepare at risk children for school, including health screening and referral and an appropriate educational program.*
- Section 2.2.2 *School readiness programs shall be operated on a full-day, year-round basis to the maximum extent possible to enable parents to work and become financially self-sufficient and that Private and Public Prekindergarten programs will be offered according to Part V F.S. 1002 and any subsequent sections relating to Voluntary Prekindergarten programs.*
- Section 2.2.3 *School readiness programs shall not exist as isolated programs but shall build upon existing services and work in cooperation with other programs for young children with coordinated to achieve full effectiveness. However, the coalition shall not commingle systems relating to school readiness and voluntary prekindergarten. The voting members of the coalition will make decisions that are specifically related to each program area.*
- Section 2.3 **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COALITION:** *In carrying out the intent of the "School Readiness Act" AND the Voluntary Prekindergarten Programs, the coalition will develop a plan for implementing the school readiness program and voluntary prekindergarten programs to meet the requirements and the performance standards and outcome measures established by the Agency for Workforce Innovation and the Department of Education. The plan must also demonstrate how the program will ensure that each child receives scheduled activities and instruction designed to enhance the age-appropriate progress of children in attaining the performance standards adopted by the Agency for Workforce Innovation. Prior to implementation of the*

program, the School Readiness Coalition must submit the plan to the Agency for Workforce Innovation for approval. AWI may approve the Plan, or approve with conditions. The plan will be reviewed by the Agency for Workforce Innovation at least annually.

Section 2.3.1 The plan for the School Readiness program must include the minimum standards and provisions set forth in the "School Readiness Act" and any subsequent revisions. The coalition will also work with the local school systems to establish procedures for entering a prekindergarten program.

Section 2.3.2 In addition to the above cited minimum standards and provisions, the plan for school readiness program shall also include such future standards and provisions as may be enacted and/or imposed by the legislature in subsequent revisions.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

Section 3.1 **NUMBER OF MEMBERS:** *The Coalition shall have at least 18 but not more than 35 members. The coalition must have representation from each county that is represented by the coalition. The coalition will adhere to the minimum and maximum membership standards that are adopted by AWI. The Governor shall appoint the chair and two other members of each early learning coalition, who must each meet the same qualifications as private-sector business members appointed by the coalition under subparagraph 6 of F.S. 411.*

Section 3.2 **MANDATED MEMBERS:** *Each Early Learning Coalition must include the following members:*

- A. Department of Children and Family Services District Administrator or his or her designee who is authorized to make decisions on behalf of the department.*
- B. A district superintendent of schools or his or her designee who is authorized to make decisions on behalf of the district, who shall be a nonvoting member.*
- C. A regional workforce board executive or director or his or her designee.*
- D. A county health department director or his or her designee.*
- E. A children's services council or juvenile welfare board chair or executive director, if applicable, who shall be a nonvoting member if the council or board is the fiscal agent of the coalition or if the council or board contracts with and receives funds from the coalition.*
- F. An agency head of a local licensing agency as defined in s. 402-302, where applicable.*
- G. A president of a community college or his or her designee.*
- H. One member appointed by a board of county commissioners.*
- I. A central agency administrator, where applicable, who shall be a nonvoting member.*
- J. A Head Start director, who shall be a nonvoting member*
- K. A representative of private childcare providers, including family day care homes, who shall be a nonvoting member.*
- L. A representative of faith-based child care providers, who shall be a nonvoting member.*
- M. A representative of programs for children with disabilities under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, who shall be a nonvoting member.*

Section 3.3 **APPOINTED MEMBERS:** *The terms of all appointed members of the Coalition must be staggered and must be a uniform length that does not exceed 4 years per term. Appointed members may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms. When a vacancy occurs in an appointed position, the coalition must advertise the vacancy. (Please see section 3.2 of these bylaws for appointed members)*

Section 3.4 **VOTING REQUIREMENTS:** *Each voting member is a local public officer who must abstain from voting when a voting conflict exists. For the purpose of tort liability, each member or employee of the coalition shall be governed by s.768.28. Each member of this coalition is subject to ss. 112.313, 112.3135, and 112.3143. A majority of the voting membership of an early learning coalition constitutes a quorum required to conduct*

the business of the coalition. The coalition may continue a Board meeting for informational purposes only if a quorum is lost, or the Board may open a meeting for informational purposes only if a quorum is not achieved.

- Section 3.4.1 *Including members appointed by the Governor more than one-third of the members of the early learning coalition must be private sector business members who do not have, and none of whose relatives as defined in s.112.4143 has substantial financial interest in the design or delivery of the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Education program designed under Part V of Chapter 1003F.S.or the coalitions school readiness program. To meet this requirement the early learning coalition must appoint additional members from a list of nominees presented to the Coalition by the County Chamber of Commerce or Economic Development Council. Nominations will be solicited from the area Chambers of Commerce.*
- Section 3.5 **MEMBERSHIP TERMS:** Serving on the Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast, Inc. will require a commitment of time including regular coalition meetings, committee involvement, reading and becoming educated about the many aspects of early childhood development and school readiness. *A voting member of an early learning coalition may not appoint a designee to act in his or her place. A voting member may send a representative to coalition meetings, but that representative does not have voting privileges. When a district administrator for the Department of Children and Family Services appoints a designee to the early learning coalition, the designee is the voting member of the coalition, and any individual attending in the designee's place including the district administrator, does not have voting privileges.*
- Section 3.5.1 Any representative or appointed member may be removed by majority vote of a quorum of the members whenever, in their judgment, the best interests of the organization would be served. The Chair prior to the next Coalition meeting shall give notice of removal in writing to the member.
- Section 3.5.2 Absences from three (3) consecutive meetings or six (6) meetings within a twelve month period by a representative or appointed member is equivalent to resignation from the Coalition.
- Section 3.5.3 Mandated members absent from three (3) consecutive meetings or six (6) meetings within a Twelve month period without due cause may be notified by the Chair that their membership is not in good standing.
- Section 3.5.4 Any member may resign by giving written notice to the Chair. Such resignation shall take effect at the time specified in the notice and the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.
- Section 3.5.5 Members will not receive any compensation for their services.

ARTICLE IV MANAGEMENT

- Section 4.1 **POWERS AND DUTIES:** The powers, management and control of the Coalition, and all of its affairs, shall be vested in the members as outlined in the School Readiness Act" and F.S. 1002 Chapter V relating the Voluntary Prekindergarten programs. Members of the coalition are subject to the ethics provisions in part III of Chapter 112 of the Florida Statutes.
- Section 4.2 **MEETINGS:** Regular meetings shall be held at a time and place to be decided by the members. The Coalition will meet monthly unless decided otherwise by a vote of the members.
- Section 4.3 The annual meeting of the Coalition will be held each year in the first quarter of the fiscal year.
- Section 4.3.1 Special meetings of the voting members may be called by or at the request of the Chair or by a majority of the voting members. Special meetings shall be held at the regular coalition board meeting place or such other readily accessible location within the service delivery area.

- Section 4.3.2 The agenda and order of business at all Coalition meetings shall be prepared by the staff of the coalition and approved by the Chair or Vice Chair of the Coalition.
- Section 4.3.4 Minutes of all Coalition meetings shall be kept. These minutes shall be provided to Members at least five (5) days prior to the next scheduled meeting.
- Section 4.3.5 Notice of all Coalition meetings shall be provided in a manner designed to provide reasonable and actual notice to members or as otherwise required by law.
- Section 4.4 **PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY:** Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall govern the Coalition in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these by - laws and any special rules of order the Coalition may adopt. However, the failure to strictly comply with the provisions of Robert's Rules of Order shall not affect the validity of any action taken by the Coalition in conformity with these by-laws unless it can be affirmatively demonstrated that the failure to follow Robert's Rules of Order directly resulted in a lack of understanding of the action being proposed or other injustice occurred.

ARTICLE V

OFFICERS

- Section 5.1 **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** A Coalition member in good standing shall be eligible for nomination and/or appointment to office of this Coalition. The Governor will appoint the Chair of the coalition unless otherwise stated by legislation. The coalition will adhere to the procedures established by AWI for board membership.
- Section 5.1.1 A Nominating Committee, appointed by the chair and approved by the members, shall convene for the purpose of certifying the eligibility of candidates for office and to prepare an official slate of nominees. Any person so nominated shall have given prior consent to nomination and election as an officer.
- Section 5.1.2 Each elected officer shall be installed and take office at the end of the annual meeting and shall serve for a term of one year or until a successor is duly qualified and elected. Officers may serve in the same position for a maximum of two consecutive years.
- Section 5.1.3 If an office is vacated prior to the completion of a one-year term; a member in good standing may be appointed by the Chair and approved by the members to fill the vacancy until the term ends.
- Section 5.2 **OFFICERS OF THE COALITION:**
- Section 5.2.1 The chair shall preside at all meetings of the Coalition and perform the duties, which are usually executed by the Chief Executive Officer. The Chair shall serve on the Florida Early Learning Advisory Council created in Florida Statute 1002.77 within the Agency for Workforce Innovation. The Chair shall appoint Chairpersons of all committees, work closely with the Treasurer to assure proper financial reporting to the Coalition, and perform such other duties as prescribed by the Coalition.
- Section 5.2.2 The Co-Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair when the Chair is absent, coordinate sub-committees and their reports to the Coalition enforce Roberts Rules of Order, and have such other responsibilities as may be designated by the Chair.
- Section 5.2.3 The Treasurer, in cooperation with coalition staff, shall keep an account of moneys received and expended for the use of the Coalition and will make a monthly report at each meeting. The summary report will be given at the annual meeting.
- Section 5.2.4 The Secretary shall ensure that notice required by these By-Laws is given, keep records of all proceedings of the Coalition in cooperation with the staff, keep the record of attendance, and report correspondence to the Coalition at each meeting. Correspondence shall be conducted relative to the nomination of required membership and other

business as called upon by the chair. The Secretary may perform any other duties incidental to the office of Secretary (roll call and establish attendance) or when called upon by the Chair.

ARTICLE VI **COMMITTEES**

- Section 6.1 COMMITTEE/COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP: Standing and/ or special committees/councils may be established by the members, as they deem necessary.
- Section 6.1.1 The Chair ~~and Vice Chair~~ of each committee/council will be a voting member of the Coalition and shall be appointed by the chair of the Coalition. Committee/Council chairs may serve more than one term.
- Section 6.1.2 Ideally each committee/council ~~shall~~ should have consist of the committee/council Chair and at least two (2) voting members of the Coalition in addition to the committee Chair. additional voting members of the Coalition. A quorum is achieved if 51% of the committee members are present as long as one member is a voting board member. All other members of committee/councils may not have a financial interest in the Coalition.

ARTICLE VII **PROGRAM**

- Section 7.1 **PROGRAM PARTICIPATION:** *The School Readiness Program shall be established for children from birth to the beginning of the school year for which a child is eligible for admission into kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2 F.S., The voluntary prekindergarten program will be established for children who reside in the State of Florida who will have attained the age of 4 years on or before September 1 of the school year is eligible for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education program during that school year. The program shall be administered by the Early Learning Coalition. Within funding limitations, the Coalition, along with all providers, shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate the Early Learning needs of children (enrolled in the school readiness program) for extended-day and extended-year services without compromising the quality of the program.*
- Section 7.1.1 The School Readiness Program must meet the program expectations and implementation guidelines as outlined in the "School Readiness Act" and the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education program must meet the program expectations and implementation guidelines as outlined in Part V of Chapter 1002, F.S., and in any subsequent legislative revisions.

ARTICLE VIII **BOOKS AND RECORDS**

- Section 8.1 **RECORDKEEPING:** Correct and complete books and records of the proceedings of the Coalition and its committees are the responsibility of the elected Secretary. Records of the Coalition's financial accounts are the responsibility of the Treasurer. All records will be kept and maintained at the principal office of the Coalition and will be subject to the inspection of any member of the Coalition or the Public at any reasonable time. The organization shall keep a current and accurate record of the names and addresses of the members.

ARTICLE IX **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

- Section 9.1. **FISCAL YEAR:** The fiscal year of the organization shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30.
- Section 9.1.1. An outside audit of the books and records of the organization shall be conducted annually.

- Section 9.1.2. The audit report shall be presented to the members within thirty (30) days of its completion.
- Section 9.2. **CHECKS AND DRAFTS:** All checks, drafts, or other orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Coalition shall be signed by such officer(s) and/or agent(s) of the Coalition as determined by resolution of the members.
- Section 9.3 **DEPOSITS:** All funds of the corporation shall be deposited in a timely manner to the credit of the Coalition in such banks, savings, and loans, or other depositories as the members may select.
- Section 9.4 **PAYMENT SCHEDULE:** *Each Early Learning Coalition shall adopt a payment schedule that encompasses all school readiness programs funded by the Coalition in accordance with the provisions of the "School Readiness Act" and all other applicable law. The payment schedule must take into consideration the relevant market rate, must include the projected number of children to be served, and must be submitted for approval to the Agency for Workforce Innovation. Informal child care arrangements shall be reimbursed at not more than 50 percent of the rate developed for family day care homes.*

ARTICLE X
BY-LAWS

- Section 10.1 **IMPLEMENTATION:** These by-laws shall become effective immediately upon adoption. The Coalition's interpretation of the by-laws shall be considered the correct interpretation when reached by majority.
- Section 10.2 **AMENDMENTS:** These by-laws may be altered, amended, or repealed and new by-laws may be adopted by a majority of the members present at any regular meeting or at any called meeting of the members provided that notice of the meeting at which said alteration, amendment, or repeal of the by-laws will be considered has been provided to each member of the Coalition at least ten (10)days prior to said meeting and further provided that copies of the proposed amendments, alterations or deletions shall have been forwarded with notice of said meeting. These bylaws are a part of the Coalition's early learning plan. Any amendment to them constitutes an amendment to the plan.

THESE BY-LAWS were adopted at a duly scheduled and noticed meeting of the Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast, Inc. on the 11th day of November 2007.