



# Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast

Serving Citrus-Dixie-Gilchrist-Levy-Sumter Counties

Provider Alert #1  
August 2, 2007

**Potential Budget Cuts:** As you may be aware, the Governor, along with the House and Senate, have requested all state agencies to engage in an exercise to reduce their budgets by 10%. This exercise is a result of an estimated \$800 million to 1.2 billion dollar short fall in the State Revenue Fund (caused by Tax Reform).

Although it is likely that the Agency for Workforce Innovation will not suffer a full 10% loss in revenue, it is likely a cut between 1-4% will be realized. In an effort to prepare for the potential cuts the Nature Coast Board has frozen all non-essential vacant employment positions, quality initiative spending, and non-essential spending.

As a result, Tonya and Ingrid will continue to accept applications for quality initiatives; however, the applications will only be approved "pending funding". Once the Coalition receives official word on the budget reduction amounts we will be able to revisit the approved applications and fund them as possible. **It is important that providers and teachers continue to submit the quality initiative applications within the timelines determined to be eligible for an award if funding becomes available. Applications received after the determined deadline dates will not be considered.**

The Nature Coast Board has directed me to present a draft budget, reduced by 1%, to the Executive Committee. It is my intent to develop this budget without any reduction in direct services to children (slot dollars) or in quality initiative dollars. I will accomplish this by working with Childhood Development Services to identify any services that can be transferred to the Coalition and incorporated in our current operational structure. In addition, I will identify possible reductions in the Coalition's operating budget.

In addition, the Administrative Committee has directed me to present a draft budget, reduced by 4% (\$339,529), at the next Administrative Committee meeting. Again, it is my intent to develop this budget with as little reduction to direct services and to quality initiatives as possible; however, in order to meet a \$339,529 reduction there must be some impact on both the budgets. In preparing to complete this task I have reviewed the quality initiatives in each county and drafted the following recommendations:

1. Reduce all remaining amounts in the Literacy Line Item. Although I believe the activities under this line item are important, the results of the activities are impossible to track and are not tied to the children that we serve.
2. Reduce the Mini Grant and Professional Development line items by 10%.
3. Reduce all remaining amounts in the quality resources line item. Since this money is not specifically allocated to benefit any one provider, or program, it seems this reduction will come with no direct impacts.
4. Reduce all amounts in the provider recruitment/expansion program: It seems logical to do this since we know that we will not have any great increases in enrollment anytime soon.
5. Reduce the training and conference line items by \$1,000. This will leave \$5,000 for the Infant and Toddler Conference and all other training sponsored by the Coalition.
6. Reduce all amounts in the unallocated slot dollars. These dollars are not specifically allocated to benefit any provider or program; therefore it appears a reduction will have no direct impacts.
7. Reduce all amounts in the Resource Room. I understand replenishing is important however it should not be prioritized over serving children.

As a result the overall quality budgets would be reduced by the following

Citrus	\$ 22,418
Dixie	\$ 9,880
Gilchrist	\$ 9,718
Levy	\$ 19,505
Sumter	<u>\$ 17,715</u>
Total	\$ 79,418

I would like your feed back on the above recommendations as soon as possible.

**Provider Retreat Follow Up:** I apologize that I have not provided you an update on the results of the provider retreat; however, budget cuts and provider payments have been a priority!

#### Coalition and Provider "To Do Lists"

During the provider retreat Coalition staff documented Coalition and Provider "To Do Lists". The following are from that list:

Providers:

1. Please notify the Coalition of any Waterford Program costs you expect to incur as a result of implementing the Waterford program this fiscal year. (This request was for the purpose of completing a budget amendment to assist providers with the costs of implementing the Waterford Program; however, we were not expecting any budget cuts. This exercise is no longer appropriate at this time. If a miracle presents and we have appropriate funding we will request you to complete this at a later date.)
2. Please provide the Coalition with the names and contact information of your First Aid/CPR trainers. We will share this information will all providers in an effort to assist you in finding low cost First Aid/CPR trainers.
3. If you have not already done so, please forward a copy of your Worker's Compensation Insurance Certificates to Tom Scheffey. This requirement is only intended for those providers who are required to carry Worker's Compensation Insurance (typically providers who employ four (4) or more people.)
4. Please flag your calendars with the following quality initiative due dates:
  - a. TIP Program Applications: Initial applications are due September 4, 2007, the following applications for payment (referred to as the first) are due January 15, 2008, the final applications for payment (referred to as the second) are due July 7, 2008.
  - b. Accreditation Mini Grant Applications: The Part 1 application is due September 4, 2007, the Part 2 application is due March 1, 2008.
5. Please send the Coalition your ideas for topics for the Infant/Toddler Conference.

Coalition:

1. Coalition staff will upload the Early Learning Program Operating Procedure (ELPOP) to the Coalition's web-site by July 1, 2007: This task has been completed.
2. Coalition staff will attend Waterford Training by July 31, 2007: This activity has not been completed; however, the Coalition is working with Waterford to receive this training. The budget reductions listed above may impact the Coalition's ability to complete this training. Further updates will be provided as they are available.

3. Contact CFCC with regard to early childhood education classes: Specifically, providers requested staff to research options for teachers such as online classes (discuss TCCC with Cozette). Staff will provide updates as they are available.
4. Provide LAP and ELAP training for providers in all counties: This task has been completed.
5. Organize training for the dispensing of prescription medications: Staff is working to secure this training. Additional updates will be provided as they are available.
6. Organize training for Teacher Parent Communication: Staff is working to secure or develop this training. Additional updates will be provided as they are available.
7. Organize training for Infant and Toddler lesson plans: Staff is developing this training. Additional updates will be provided as they are available.
8. Certify staff as Fist Aid/CPR trainers: Recent budget cuts may prohibit the Coalition from completing this exercise. Further updates will be provided as they are available.
9. Provide reminder notices for quality initiative due dates: This August 2, 2007 Provider Update is the reminder notice for the TIP Program initial applications and Mini Grant Part 1 applications due on September 4, 2007. Additional reminder notices will be provided for the remaining TIP Program applications and the Mini Grant Part 2 applications.
10. Research the reimbursement amounts for children 60-72 months of age: Specifically, providers were concerned that children in this age level were paid less than children 48-59 months of age; however, the same services are provided to both age levels. Recently, the Agency for Workforce Innovation released the 2007 Market Rate Survey. The survey captures costs in the following age levels:
  - a. 0 - 12 months
  - b. 12-23 months
  - c. 24-35 months
  - d. 36-47 months
  - e. 48-Kindergarten Entry
  - f. School Age

You will notice that the Market Rate Survey does not separate 48-59 months from 60-72 months; however, captures all children in that range in the 48-kindergarten level.

Although the Agency for Workforce Innovation's "Reimbursement Rate Document" that Coalitions are required to submit as part of the Early Learning Plan separates the 60-72 month age level, the Coalition has the authority to revise the current reimbursement rates to pay the same amount for children in this age level as paid for children in the 48-59 months age level. However, considering the potential budget cuts and the fact that the Coalition pays a lesser rate for the 60-72 month age level the Coalition can not consider amending the rates at this time.

It is the intent of Coalition staff to prioritize the increase in the 60-72 month rate when funding becomes available and the criteria to increase the reimbursement rates have been met (no waiting list).

11. Research CDS' Finger Printing Services: Staff is researching this service and will provide further updates as they become available.
12. Research the Coalition's ability to offer CEUs: Staff is researching this service and will provide further updates as they become available.
13. Research the Coalition's ability to offer more technical assistance from the Education Specialists: Staff is working on developing a system as well as policy and procedures that are designed to

increase the technical assistance offered by the Education Specialists. Additional updates will be provided in the near future.

14. Research resources for Foster Parents: Coalition staff will incorporate this request within the Parent Involvement and Education Program.
15. Develop a system to develop and distribute a Provider Newsletter that includes information with regard to action taken by the Coalition Board, Administrative Committee, and Advisory Councils that is relevant to the operation of early learning providers: This task has been completed.
16. Develop a system to distribute Provider Alerts that include time sensitive information that must be provided prior to the release of the next Provider Newsletter: This task has been completed.

Workgroups: During the retreat staff requested volunteers to serve on the LAP/ELAP Data Review Workgroup and/or the Parent Involvement and Training Program Work Group. The following individuals responded:

**LAP-D/E-LAP Data Review Workgroup:**

Christi Wadsworth  
Karen Lord  
Cassie Romanik  
Kim Watson  
Diane Lord  
Marilyn Beach  
Vicki Pitts

**Parent Involvement and Education Program:**

Kathy Spears  
Dawn Marsh  
Melisa Jaquot  
Christi Wadsworth  
Holly Bussard  
Cassie Romanik  
Kechia Williams  
Jo Geib  
Jeanie Davis  
Linda DeBusk  
Penny Hanson  
Lori Barnes

Please let me know of any additions or deletions to the workgroups. Staff will begin to organize the workgroups after the budget reduction activities have been completed.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments with regard to any of the information provided in this Provider Alert please contact me at [sbosanko@elc-naturecoast.org](mailto:sbosanko@elc-naturecoast.org) or at the address or phone numbers provided below.

Thank you for your commitment to the children and families in the Nature Coast. It is an honor and privilege to partner with you in this journey to improve the lives of children and families.

Sincerely,

Sonya Bosanko, Executive Director  
Early Learning Coalition of the Nature Coast  
1564 North Meadowcrest Blvd.  
Crystal River, FL. 34429  
1-877-336-5437 Ext 224 Office  
352-302-4633- Cell Phone  
352-563-5933 Fax