



Volunteering at the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County

The Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County's mission is to prepare children for lifelong success through quality early learning.

We oversee a broad range of services to ensure that all children have access to high quality early education in their preschool years so they enter kindergarten ready for school with the solid foundation they need to grow and develop. We welcome having volunteers assist us in our efforts to support young children.

The following are current volunteer opportunities:

Literacy Buddy Volunteer

This is our most popular opportunity and we currently have 200 volunteers in the program. Additional volunteers allow more children to participate.

The purpose of this project is to teach children about correspondence, communication, and to provide them with quality books that they take home. For many of our children, the Literacy Buddy Project provides the only opportunity for them to have books of their own at home.

Anyone, any age, anywhere can become a Literacy Buddy. It doesn't take much time to be a Literacy Buddy but it has a huge impact. All exchanges between buddies are done by mail, sent to the child care site and using first names only. Many Literacy Buddies are winter residents of Florida.

What is a Literacy Buddy?

Children in preschool programs in Sarasota County are paired with a volunteer who agrees to receive pictures from a child. In turn, the volunteer sends a letter and a book to this child in response to the child's picture. In the picture from the child, he or she indicates a specific book or interest that he or she would like to receive a book about. These exchanges take place three times over the course of the school year.

While most of our volunteers work individually as a Literacy Buddy, many are part of a work or service club team and work together on choosing appropriate books for their respective children buddies.

"Adopt" an Early Care and Education site

Throughout the year many organizations look for an opportunity to their staff to work as a team on a service project. This could be a one-time day or a set day and time, each week, month or quarter.

Many of the early care and education sites can use assistance in such tasks as creating gardens, sprucing up a classroom, painting inside or outside, or setting up a particular learning station. These can be simple projects finished in a couple of hours, or major makeovers that last over several sessions.

Conducting Book or School Supply Drives

We welcome assistance in gathering books or funding the purchase of books to widely distribute to young children seen in our offices, at local child care sites or through our key partners in the community who work closely with us.

School supplies, both for use during the year at child care sites including VPK (voluntary Pre-Kindergarten), but also to outfit the “first backpack” for those children leaving VPK and entering Kindergarten are needed as well.

Roving Reader program

This program is for those volunteers who would like to regularly commit to reading to young children and be assigned to a particular site or classroom where they come on a regular basis to read to groups of children, and/or assist the teacher in other projects that support reading skills.

Bucket of Books program

This is a program for local businesses or other organizations to be a host location for an ELC Bucket of Books. This allows young children to look at books and have fun while their families are visiting a local business or organization. There is no cost to hosting a Bucket of Books. ELC provides the books and manages the program, replenishing them as needed. This is one way that businesses can easily support early literacy efforts.

Administrative Help

We always welcome individuals who would like to volunteer for short or long term administrative projects within our offices. This can include data entry, compiling information or survey results, filing, organizing storage rooms, or assisting with a designated project, etc.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities please send an e-mail inquiry to:

mail@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org or (941) 954-4830, ext 225 and we will get back to you to discuss your interests.

Thank you for your interest!

1750 17th Street, Building L
Sarasota, FL 34234
Phone 941.954.4830 ~ Fax 941.954.4831
www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org