



1750 17th Street, Building L
Sarasota, FL 34234
(941) 954-4830
www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

For more information contact:
Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County
jkahn@earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org

New Program Supports Access to High Quality Early Education

Improves day to day finances for participants

February 3, 2017 (Sarasota, FL) – With support from United Way Suncoast, providing funds for a small pilot program, parents in Sarasota will have additional financial resources for meeting the costs of high-quality child care and teachers in selected centers will also receive additional support and resources. “We are extremely excited and appreciative to receive this funding to implement this new pilot that benefits working families as well as early care and education teachers,” says Janet Kahn, Executive Director of the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County.

This new program impacts financial stability by putting funds back into the budgets of working parents, so they will no longer have to choose between high-quality care, critical for the success of their children, and other basic needs. The Bridges to Financial Success program pays the full cost of childcare for program participants along with an incremental additional payment to the childcare site so that pay for the teachers in the program can be increased. Additional education around financial stability is offered along with access to other community services to meet the family needs, working within a two-generation approach supporting both the child and the adult. Increasing pay for childcare teachers to a living wage improves their financial stability and helps to ensure continuity of care for children.

This model builds upon a similar state-funded initiative that is in place within the Early Learning Coalition to support both the working families receiving childcare subsidies and the early care provider. The funds from the United Way Suncoast for this new initiative are leveraged with the state-funded program for maximum impact. The United Way Suncoast also continues to provide ongoing support to ELC to assist community child care sites to maintain high star rated quality environments overall.

Assisting parents with access to high-quality early care and education is critical for working parents both for the success of their child, and so they can work or attain education themselves. Parents need access to quality care with minimal barriers and without having to make difficult and challenging choices.

The mission of the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County is to prepare children for lifelong success through quality early learning. Its vision is that every child develops a strong foundation of learning in a community dedicated to ensuring all families have the necessary support to thrive and all children reach their full potential.

The Early Learning Coalition provides administration and oversight of the local, integrated system of early education for preschool age children in Sarasota County, ensuring quality childcare and early learning programs, family access to services, and positive outcomes for young children. The ELC serves over 4000 children and assists 180 providers annually. For more information, visit the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County <http://earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org/>.