Why is this important for your business?

There are well over 15,000 children, ages 0 to 5 in our community with more than half of them in some type of early care and education program while their parents are working. Quality child care is therefore a critical issue of concern to working parents. Not being able to find quality early child care that is safe and reliable is a major cause of absenteeism, distraction at work, and decreased productivity for many working parents.

When a working parent leaves a company due to inadequate care arrangements for their children it costs the organization money to rehire and train their replacements, and the knowledge that walks out the door can take years to replace.

However, when working parents feel confident that their child is receiving optimal care, the businesses they work for experience:

- Less absenteeism and turnover
- Improved work quality
- Increased productivity
- Better employee morale

The bottom line is that working moms and dads will be more focused in the workplace if they have appropriate and affordable child care arrangements in place.
What can your business do to support working parents?

First and foremost, smart employers recognize that their most valuable assets are their employees, many of whom are parents. Employees display increased productivity and are more effective working with customers and clients when they are able to balance the many competing demands in their lives.

Show your employees that you are a company that cares by helping them meet the needs of their children and manage their work by:

• Developing and implementing family friendly policies that will provide employees flexible scheduling options that allow use of leave time to support family/school involvement and to resolve child care concerns
• Offering some type of child care benefits. Investing in some form of employer-supported child care can give employers an advantage by:
  – Improving staff retention rates
  – Reducing absenteeism levels
  – Being recognized as an employer of choice

In addition to supporting employees who are parents, your business may be eligible for a tax incentive. Child care assistance provided by an employer is a tax deductible “ordinary and necessary” business expense under the Internal Revenue Codes Section 162. The eligibility is made possible because providing child care services reduces absenteeism and turnover, aids in recruitment and retention, and increases employee productivity. It makes smart business sense!

How can the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County help YOUR BUSINESS provide these family friendly benefits?

The Coalition can help support your employees by assisting you to develop family friendly policies and practices and provide guidance on establishing employer supported child care benefits. Employer funded child care benefits can qualify for matching state dollars through Florida’s Child Care Executive Partnership; the Early Learning Coalition can work with you to set up a program for your employees.

The Coalition offers services to all Sarasota County parents FREE of charge, including:

• Assistance in finding quality child care, including customized listings of sites based on desired criteria
• Access to the Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK) FREE program for all 4 year old children
• Parenting information and brochures and access to related community resources

Families may also apply for financial scholarships for early child care and education programs based on eligibility criteria.

Make sure your employees with young children know about the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County and the assistance available to them by:

• Including ELC of Sarasota County brochures in your new hire packets
• Developing pay check stuffers
• Displaying lunchroom posters for community events like the annual Ready Set Grow Conference
• Distributing Voluntary Pre-kindergarten (VPK) registration information
• Requesting ELC experts as guest speakers for employee meetings
• Providing a link to the ELC Website on your company Website’s employee benefits page.

For more information please contact the Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County:
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www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org

Sponsorship by Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County, State of Florida, Office of Early Learning, and in whole or in part by Sarasota County Government