



EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF POLK COUNTY

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Chairman's Message

In 1999 the School Readiness Act was signed into law. Coalitions were formed as the entity responsible for the oversight of early education and care programs which use federal, state and local funds. As of June 30, 2005, with a budget of \$22,003,739 the Coalition served approximately 9,671 children who met eligibility requirements in a wide variety of settings including public and private child care centers, family child care homes, and informal settings.

Now in its fifth year of operation the Coalition had some dramatic changes in FY 2004-2005. With changes in legislation, the Polk County School Readiness Coalition, Inc. continues to be a not for profit 501 (c)(3) organization but is now doing business as the Early Learning Coalition of Polk County. The Coalition is under the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI)/Office of Early Learning (OEL).

The board Chair and two (2) private sector members are appointed by the Governor. Approximately two-thirds of the board members are either mandated to serve or are an agency that must have an appointee representative. Several of these members are no longer eligible to vote.

The Coalition became responsible for the implementation and oversight of the new Voluntary PreKindergarten (VPK) program. With the advent of VPK, the Coalition board and staff along with their community partners continue to strengthen their commitment to quality early education and care. We are growing and showing the strains of that condition both in staffing and office space. It is an exciting time for the Early Learning Coalition of Polk County.

Artemas "Judge" Holmes
Chair

