



Media Alert

For Immediate Release
15506 County Line Road
Spring Hill, FL 34610
Phone: (727) 233-8291

November 13, 2015

Contact: Audrey Stasko
Communications Specialist
a.stasko@phelc.org
O: (727) 233-8291

EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF PASCO AND HERNANDO COUNTIES, INC. AWARDS FIRST FIVE STAR RATING

Miss Betty's Childcare and Preschool shines bright with Sunshine Stars.

The Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. is proud to announce its first "five-star rating" of an Early Learning Center, issued to Miss Betty's Childcare and Preschool in Port Richey, Florida. On Tuesday, November 24, 2015, the Coalition will present Miss Betty's with the inaugural, five-star banner, thanks to the recent implementation of "Sunshine Stars."

Sunshine Stars is a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) designed to recognize and promote a culture of continuous quality improvement as well as assist parents in understanding how to choose and evaluate efficient early learning programs. Sunshine Stars ensures high quality learning experiences for our children by issuing a "star-rating." A five-star rating indicates the highest of quality programs.

Miss Betty's Childcare and Preschool was founded in 1996 and is currently owned by Hank and Betty Jowers. Miss Betty's is a licensed Childcare Provider for children, ages 6 weeks - 12 years old while also offering a Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program.

As a result of "Miss Betty's high standards and desire to always raise the bar, Miss Betty's is a success," says Deidra Jowers, Director of Miss Betty's. She noted that "We wouldn't be where we are without our staff and we never settle for anything less than excellence because it's for our children."

The Director is enthusiastic about Sunshine Stars and is glad to see an organization that provides a program devoted to educating parents about what goes on in an Early Learning Center. "Parents see so little of the good stuff: the fun; the teaching; and getting to know each other," explains Jowers. She is concerned, yet understanding of the idea that money is often a deciding factor for parents when choosing what program in which to enroll their children, however she suggests that there is much more to consider than cost. "The teacher's education, dedication, and loyalty to where they work are all important factors."

Miss Betty's is the first program to receive a five-star rating since the debut of Sunshine Stars this past summer. Joe Mascaro, the Coalition's Program Manager, is certain the Coalition will see an increase in four and five-star programs within the near future. Nearly forty providers are enrolled in the new system and working towards a star rating. The Coalition is optimistic that parents will seek quality providers based on their higher rating.

A photo opportunity is available at Miss Betty's Childcare and Preschool, 6926 Ridge Road, Port Richey, FL 34668 on Tuesday, November 24, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. At that time, the Coalition will present Miss Betty's with a five-star banner in recognition of their achievement. If you would like to attend, please contact Audrey Stasko, Communications Specialist, at a.stasko@phelc.org or (727) 233-8291.

For more information about Sunshine Stars, visit www.phelc.org/QRIS or call (727) 233-8291.

About the Coalition

The Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. is one of 30 Early Learning Coalitions in Florida. Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program is for all children who are four-years old on or before September 1st. School Readiness provides subsidized child care for low-to-moderate income working families. The non-profit annually serves over 13,000 children between infancy and 12 years old, working with more than 400 providers in the counties.

###