



MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

15506 County Line Road
Spring Hill, FL 34610
Phone: (727) 233-8291
Fax: 727.857.0151

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Contact: Audrey Stasko
Communications Specialist
a.stasko@phelc.org
O: (727) 233-8291
C: (315) 877-3031

EARLY LEARNING COALITION HOSTS FLORIDA'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL EARLY LEARNING CONFERENCE

The 9th Annual Early Learning Conference is a red carpet event offering new and exciting trainings from local, regional, and for the first time, global presenters.

The Early Learning Coalition of Pasco and Hernando Counties, Inc. will host Florida's first international early learning conference, its 9th Annual Conference, on **Saturday, October 15, 2016 at Bishop McLaughlin Catholic High School, 13651 Hays Road, Spring Hill, FL 34610.**

This year's theme, "Celebrate Diversity: Together We Make Our World Complete," will focus on the importance of diversity in early childhood education.

The highlight of the conference will be the live broadcast connecting attendees in a global discussion featuring two (2) speakers from the United Kingdom (UK). Siobhan Fitzpatrick, Chief Executive Officer of Early Years-the Organization for Young Children, and Lynne Peyton, an independent child care specialist and management consultant, who will offer the Coalition's guests a global perspective on the significance of diversity in early childhood education.

Representing Tampa Bay will be Ernest Hooper, Bureau Chief and Columnist for the *Tampa Bay Times*, who will offer conference attendees, both in Florida and in the UK, a motivational speech for those individuals he refers to as "Soldiers for Society" and the invaluable role these early educators play within the community.

Early childhood education is an industry that is constantly evolving; hence the critical need for high-quality professional development opportunities. Each child learns differently because of their diverse backgrounds, experiences and abilities. It is essential for all early educators, early learning professionals, parents and guardians to acquire strategies that will help instill a sense of tolerance and acceptance in our future generations. In a world where diversity is conspicuous, there is no better time to celebrate its significance than now.

The Conference is a daylong event. Both breakfast and lunch are provided to attendees. Conference attendees will participate in four (4) breakout sessions, held in campus classrooms. This year's conference features a variety of trainings such as: "Diversity and Social Justice in Early Childhood Settings"; "Equality is the Key to Ending Violence"; "Simple Cooking Experiences to Integrate Cultural Awareness"; and "Creating Diversity in the Classroom Using Everyday Resources", among many others.

Nevertheless, this unique event is not just about professional development; it is a day devoted to hardworking early educators, early learning professionals, parents and guardians, who strive to positively shape the minds of our youngest citizens at a time children are most influenced. The Coalition's Annual Early Learning Conference is well-known for its affordability and its array of presenters that allow guests to share their expertise and also indulge in a little shopping for themselves in the exhibit hall.

This event would not be possible without the generous support from community organizations including: Florida Lottery; Staywell; Oak Hill Hospital; Care One of Florida; Kaplan Early Learning Company; Boys & Girls Clubs of Hernando County, Inc.; JDR Properties of Pasco; GTE Financial; TodayCare Children's Center, among many other crucial members of the community.

A photo opportunity is available at Bishop McLaughlin Catholic High School, 13651 Hays Road, Spring Hill, FL 34610 on Saturday, October 15, 2016 at 7:00 a.m. At that time, the Coalition will provide a red carpet and backdrop for attendees along with access to the exhibit hall.

For more information about the Conference, visit www.phelc.org/annualconference9.

For more information about the Coalition and its services, visit www.phelc.org.

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 nonprofit serves over 13,000 children between infancy and twelve-years old, working with more than 400 providers in the counties.

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