



SUNDAY UPDATE

The current plan is for three ELC staff and a group of aid workers to travel to Key West on Tuesday with supplies for child care programs and families. We will be visiting centers and family child care homes along the way. We will be offering ongoing assistance until every program reopens. We are gathering resources to help with playgrounds, health and safety issues and immediate family needs. On good advice we are also encouraging all programs to apply for FEMA and SBA assistance, even if they get turned down. We hear the denial documentation can be very helpful for the second round of assistance.

Following is our recent news release.

Early Learning Coalition Helps Hurricane Impacted Child Care Centers Reopen and Serve Low-income Families

Organization Raises Funds and Prepares Teachers to Provide Emotional Counsel to Children in Miami-Dade and Monroe

MIAMI — (September 15, 2017) — As the South Florida community deals with the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, child care programs, a crucial support for working parents, are struggling to reopen. The impact of not being able to reopen is far-ranging. After housing, childcare is the second biggest obstacle to adults returning to work after a disaster. For most families, not being able to leave their children at a child care facility means not being able to go back to work, and with a significant portion of the workforce making hourly wages, the financial impacts are immense and potentially long-lasting. In some of the most vulnerable programs, early education teachers are without work given the exhaustion of resources, affecting even more families. Additionally, children are uprooted from their routines, and for many of Miami-Dade and Monroe counties' child care programs serving families living at or below 150% of the poverty line, this means children not having access to warm, hot meals and general food insecurity. As of September 13, only two of the Early Head Start centers had opened, and reported that their children ranging from ages 0-3 were visibly tired and hungry, sleeping and eating significantly more.

The Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade and Monroe (ELC) has launched an effort to help child care programs open their doors as soon as possible, prepare their teams to provide counsel to young children coping with trauma from the storm, and help minimize needs. The ELC funds and supports more than 1,700 child care programs that provide valuable early education to children under the age of five throughout both counties, which includes the Florida Keys, a region devastated by Hurricane Irma. Through the Early Learning Children Foundation and a partnership with Child Care Aware, the ELC has launched a webpage, <http://www.elcfoundation.net/>, to help raise funds for centers that need to repair schools, and help communities normalize again.

“If parents cannot go back to work, they cannot support their families. Furthermore, the sooner children can return to their preschool programs, teachers, and friends, the more quickly they will be able to get past the trauma of the storm and its many material effects,” said Evelio Torres, President and CEO of the Early Learning Coalition Miami-Dade/Monroe. “With the help of donations made on our web page for child care providers in our region, we can help in the recovery from Hurricane Irma, especially in Miami-Dade and Monroe’s impoverished communities.”

The ELC has also assembled a team of mental health experts to train staff and teachers to provide social and emotional support to children coping with the experience and impact of a hurricane. Among the lessons that will be incorporated into the training will be: what language to use when addressing the storm, how to respond to kids that are worried that a hurricane will happen again, and how to help kids understand that their parents and homes are OK.

“Children in low-income communities are especially susceptible to trauma after a storm. Many had no back-up lighting sources while power was out and dealt with more severe damage to their homes as well as face food insecurity,” said Torres. “We want to ensure that all children receive the care and support they need to cope with the experience and get back to their daily routines.”

The post-hurricane training for child care center staff and teachers will begin as soon as centers are reopen.

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Miami-Dade

- Superintendent Carvalho announced the reopening of Miami-Dade schools on Monday, September 18th. He added that some delays, inconvenience and discomfort are to be expected, but that the workforce is ready to welcome students back to school tomorrow.
- All ELC offices in Miami-Dade will be open to the public on Monday, September 18th and will maintain the regular schedule. Note: The Miami Gardens office will be relocated to our Edison Plaza office. We are doing our best to notify parents via social media, e-mails, text messages and robo calls.
- Although schools are reopening, some preschools are not. This creates challenges for parents of preschool children.

Monroe

- Our Key West office has power and seems to be in good condition. No internet or telephones, but we can work with what we have. The office will remain closed on Monday, September 18th. We will reassess the situation daily and open as soon as possible. We will do our best to serve families.
- A preliminary report on our Marathon office indicates that it sustained no major damage, but we are not sure if it has power and other utilities. The office will remain closed for now.
- Our Key Largo office will open on Monday, September 18th.
- The gas situation seems to be getting better with some gas stations reopening.
- Only minor damage to St. Justin in Key Largo. They will be reopening on September 25th.
- St James sustained some damage. The steeple fell into the playground and there are some other damages. However, the community is rallying to help them

with repairs next week. Without question they will reopen as soon as it is safe for the children and staff.

- We are working with Monroe County Public Schools on the list of centers that will be open asap so teachers can plan where to leave their children. Important if Monroe schools are to reopen on September 25th.
- The Sugarloaf Key home of our managing director will require some repairs before she can move back. Full damage assessment pending.
- From Superintendent Mark Porter:

MCSD Employees:

The much awaited re-entry update:

- *Middle Keys Re-entry – 9:00 AM, Saturday, September 16th*
- *Lower Keys Re-entry – 7:00 AM, Sunday, September 17th*
- *This is re-entry for residents and recovery providers only. The checkpoint in Florida City will remain in effect. There may also be a second checkpoint operational as needed (currently at 73.5 MM, moving to North side of 7 mile bridge and possibly re-located later). Be prepared to display the proper re-entry sticker and your personal ID to establish residency. Without these you will not be allowed to proceed.*
- *Power and water continues to be somewhat unstable. You should plan to be self-sufficient for a number of days upon re-entry. Supplies, etc. will gradually improve, but do not expect to return to “normal” circumstances.*
- *Limited sheltering for those without inhabitable homes is being established. For those in the most impacted areas (Big Coppitt to Big Pine) please try to have an alternative plan in place (i.e. someone you may be able to stay with, etc.)*
- *Middle and Lower Keys curfew remains dusk to dawn. Curfew in Upper Keys is 10:00 PM to dawn. Be prepared for heavy law enforcement presence, particularly in impacted areas.*

Power and water improvements continue, but as expected at a slower pace. All providers also emphasize instability in the system. Expect intermittent power and water interruptions. Some areas are still without any power or water. Remarkably, Keys Energy has provided power to the shopping center on Big Pine. The influx of residents returning will place additional stress on an already unstable system. There will be failures that hopefully will be short-term in duration. For homes in areas where power and water have been restored, but there is still no service, this is likely a localized failure (i.e. on your property). FCAA is testing water quality, but boil water continues to be the order of the day. Water use is still restricted to sanitation only. Be careful and come prepared.

For those of you seeking to return by boat and avoid the traffic and checkpoints, bad news. The port remains closed due to debris and safety issues. This is not an alternative at this time. Still no clear direction regarding residents returning via commercial air.

All communities are working hard to establish sheltering plans for displaced residents. While our school facilities are attractive from a space perspective we are maintaining our targeted re-opening of schools for Monday, September 25th and are trying hard not to become long-term sheltering locations. We believe we can accommodate shelter facilities on site (e.g. using field space) but not in our buildings concurrent with school operations. During our upcoming ELT and Principals conference calls we will also be looking at creative alternatives to support and assist our displaced employees.