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Early Learning Coalition
of Florida's Heartland, Inc.

2008-2009

**PROVIDER STORIES
FROM
THE HEARTLAND**

Dear Board Members of the ELCFH

**As a token of our appreciation
for the work you do on behalf of the children
We wanted to share some stories
about providers and their facilities.**

**This little booklet was put together to share with you
the story behind some of our providers.
There is one provider from each county represented.**

**In the future it is our plan to provide more stories
about the child care providers
who work with the ELCFH
to provide quality care and education to children.**

ELCFH staff

Proud to be in Family Child Care

Cherie Loomis Family Child Care Home



Cherie Loomis, owner of Cherie Loomis Family Child Care Home, found herself as a young mother of two children looking for quality child care. After several tries at various types of child care programs she realized for her comfort and ease of mind she would need to venture into the field of Early Childhood. She became a family child care provider over twenty five years ago when she began caring for children in Charlotte County. High quality has always been her standard. Currently Cherie is mentoring her daughter Carrie by sharing her knowledge and experience. Passing on her knowledge and skills she knows that now her grandson will enjoy the benefits of quality family child care to prepare him for success in school.

Cherie is currently working towards NAFCC accreditation with the assistance of the Accreditation Mentoring Program provided by the ELCFH. Upon completion of the accreditation process she will be awarded the DCF Gold Seal for providing quality child care.

When asked “What does she find most rewarding in family child care?” she passionately responds “Seeing the children comfortable and happy fulfills her.” When asked her advice to other child care providers she states “Take care of yourself, be professional and make your business what you want it to be.”

Following Her Dream

Little Paradise FDCH



Alijandrina Pulgarin is the owner of Little Paradise FDCH.

Ali believes in spending time with children on the floor at their level. Talking with them and listening to them. Ali realizes that communication is more than listening and speaking or even learning to read & write. She works to understand the emotions behind the communication and strives to help the children understand each other in the classroom.

Born in Texas, Ali moved to Florida as a child and finally settled in Arcadia. Ali was about 7 years old when she began working in the fields with her parents. She stated that she helped to harvest watermelons, strawberries, tomatoes, apples and oranges.

Ali married at the young age of 19 & has 3 children. Her career in child care began in Arcadia once her children were born she worked for 6 months of the year in child care then she would pack up her children to travel north with her husband to work in the fields harvesting apples. Once her children entered high school Ali made the decision to quit going to Michigan with her husband to work the apple crop. Her children had begun having problems keeping up in school due to the travel. She wanted to give them the stability that would enable them to be successful in school. Remembering the difficulties of her school days and wanted a better experience for her children.

Staying in one place and working year round in child care she began to take advantage of training opportunities. Learning about child development and other best practices in quality child care improved her skills

Some time later Ali went to work for a new child care site in Arcadia that was contracted with the ELCFH, the Director of the site encouraged her to enroll in the CDAE class offered by the ELCFH. Ali earned her CDAE in 2004. Unfortunately, during this year tragedy struck her family when they lost their home to hurricane Charlie. Ali did not give up on her dream and as a result the family eventually moved into a “Brand New House” in which she dedicated the extra family room to her future Family Child Care.

Little Paradise FDCH has been open for 2 years now. Ali continues to enjoy going to trainings and learning all she can about providing quality child care and understanding child development. Some of the trainings Ali has successfully completed are: Beyond Center’s & Circle Times, Beyond Cribs and Rattles, Heads Up Reading & just recently completed Cradling Literacy.

An advocate for children and a role model for younger teachers, Ali encourages others to pursue furthering their knowledge and education. Perseverance and dedication to young children enabled Ali to achieve her dream of owning her own business & working with children in her home.



DESOTO COUNTY



Island of Adventure Child Care Center

This Wauchula Child Care Center has undergone many changes in the past few years. The center has moved from Chamberlain Street where they were licensed for twenty children and had approximately 1,000 square feet, to Main Street and are licensed for 133 children in a center that consists of over 5,000 square feet.



What makes this center unique is that it is family operated. Mrs. Michelle and Miss Addie are mother and daughter. They are both at the center from 7:00 to 5:30 Monday through Friday. Mr. Mike is Mrs. Michelle's husband is also an essential part of the program, and he reaches out to many of the children. He works as the assistant teacher in the VPK classroom. Besides being a positive male role model, he is very effective in helping children overcome fears, bringing out their creativity, and his story telling style brings books to life.

Many of the children who attend Island of Adventure often have grandparents visit from out of state. It is a common occurrence for the grandparents to stop by and visit the center out of curiosity to find out who Mr. Mike is and why their grandchildren talk about him so often.

Their hopes and dreams are to eventually have a room that would serve children who are too ill to attend the usual childcare environment. Michelle and Addie would like to partner with the community hospital and assist parents or caregivers who can not take any more time off work or classes, and need a place for their child to go.

Another long term goal is to offer a place where fine arts could take place, where the instructor would come to their center and have a place to teach, dance, music or art classes.

Quality is the Standard

Busy Kids Creative Learning Center



Busy Kids Creative Learning Center, located at 1000 Persimmons, Sebring, FL is owned and operated by Ann and Brian Lang. Presently they have VPK classes serving 54 children. The owners of Busy Kids believe in the holistic approach to learning, placing equal value on each area of learning for children. This center serves special needs children. This dedication to quality care and education of all children carries with it a special commitment to working to develop a close partnership with parents. This relationship leads to a team approach and higher levels of success in meeting the developmental needs of the child. All of the VPK teachers are degreed with assistant teachers having their CDA. Developmentally appropriate activities engage the children throughout the day. Teachers are actively involved in facilitating and working with the children on the activities that they have chosen. This center supports quality in learning, staff and environment.



HIGHLANDS COUNTY