



September 16, 2024

Child Care Directors,

First, I wanted to introduce myself, I am Diana Jacobson, Executive Director of the Early Learning Director's Collaborative and I am so excited about partnering with Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation to provide another round of retention check bonuses and the launch of the Early Learning Director's Collaborative. I am very proud of all the work our Early Childhood Community does to provide quality Childcare in Sarasota County and with the help of Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation we are always trying to find ways to help and serve more people. Please read the information below regarding both initiatives and if you have any questions, please see the emails in each category.

**Retention bonus checks:** The purpose of the Teacher Retention and Appreciation Bonus Program is to recognize teachers who provide high quality instruction with special emphasis on those who have dedicate their career to helping young children learn and grow.

Applications are ready to be collected using the [www.eldcollaborative.org](http://www.eldcollaborative.org) website or the direct link of [https://ymcanwflorg.formstack.com/forms/retention\\_bonus\\_application\\_2024](https://ymcanwflorg.formstack.com/forms/retention_bonus_application_2024).

Below is some information regarding the process for the retention checks.

- We will collect retention applications and W-9's from September 16<sup>th</sup> – September 27<sup>th</sup>
- Staff can go into the site and enter their own information and must complete & upload their own W-9
- Starting September 30<sup>th</sup>, we will be reaching out to you to verify the information for your staff
- Once everything is verified, we will start delivering checks between October 21<sup>st</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024
- YMCA of Southwest Florida will send out 1099's in January 2025 for your tax purposes to the addresses provided.
- For any questions, please email [retentionchecks@ymcaswfl.org](mailto:retentionchecks@ymcaswfl.org)

**Early Learning Director's Collaborative:** We understand that in this field of Early Education that safe and high-quality childcare centers can look and operate very differently and can have a varying number of resources (dollars, human capital, etc.) available. We also know that this field continues to be challenging, between a nationwide staff shortage, minimum wage continuing to increase each year and youth mental health issues on the rise in children of all ages. This collaborative will provide support to centers who commit to helping the cause of elevating early education in Sarasota County. This collaborative is for anybody, it doesn't matter if you are a large center or small, public or private, church-based or home-based, the purpose of this collaborative is to help our ever-changing childcare crisis. Look below for some of the items we will be tackling and if you want to be part of the solution or need support think about applying at [www.eldcollaborative.org](http://www.eldcollaborative.org).



- Access to a substitute pool of trained teachers
- Staff recruitment support
- Marketing collateral to help with student recruitment
- Professional Development opportunities
- Mentorship program (Need mentors and mentees)
- Shared resources and information
- Work together to continue to provide tools, best practices and elevate early education
- If you are interested in being a part of this collaborative, please apply at [www.eldcollaborative.com](http://www.eldcollaborative.com).

Once again, thank you for everything you do, your work is changing lives and our little humans are so lucky to have you.

I look forward to working with everybody and if you do one thing today, please go in every room and thank your teachers for the work they do each day.

Have a great day.

*Diana Jacobson*

Diana Jacobson  
Executive Director of Early Learning Director's Collaborative

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