

## **Rhiannon Forker Of The Learning Cove Preschool Elected As New Early Learning Coalition Board Appointee**

The Director of The Learning Cove Preschool in Palm City, Rhiannon Forker, was recently elected as the Martin County Private For-Profit Representative for the Board of Directors of the Early Learning Coalition of Martin, Indian River, and Okeechobee Counties. The appointment will begin July 1, 2017, with a term running through June 30, 2021

"Having worked in early childhood education for over a decade, I felt it was important to get involved in the politics that help shape legislature and decisions affecting our sector," states Forker. "The first five years of a child's life help set the tone for future learning and development, and it is important that there are policies in place to ensure that preschool programs are maintaining the quality that will enable our children to succeed."

The Learning Cove Preschool was established in Palm City in 2013 by Ed and Jeanee Cwieka. With a goal of changing the fundamental pedagogy of preschool education, the Cwiekas were successful in turning what was a failing center on the verge of closing its doors into a profitable school where students thrive in an environment that focuses on utilizing higher trained, higher paid teachers.

"Many preschools hire staff with little to no training and pay minimum wage, and wonder why students are not learning," says Ed Cwieka, owner of The Learning Cove. "We are passionate in our belief that when teachers who have put in the time and effort to complete degrees and training are paid a competitive wage, they will in turn put in the time and effort to give our students the best early childhood education possible."

In 2016, the Cwiekas expanded The Learning Cove, opening a second location in Daphne, AL; on June 5th the third location of The Learning Cove opened in Jackson, MS. As Ed and Jeanee travel to help change the face of early childhood education, Rhiannon Forker joined The Learning Cove team in 2016 to maintain operations in Florida as Director.

"I am excited to bring my knowledge and experience to the Early Learning Coalition's Board of Directors and help expand resources for our preschool-age children," Forker says. "This is a chance to make sure that our children are not forgotten. With so many changes taking place currently regarding education, now is the time to get involved so that our students can continue to receive the care and instruction they deserve to help them develop a love of learning from the get-go."

The Early Learning Coalition is a government agency that offers programs to families of young children, including Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten, which allows children who turn 4 on or before September 1 of each year the chance to attend an approved VPK program free of charge. The goal of the program is to make sure that all children are fully prepared to enter Kindergarten. The Learning Cove offers the school-year VPK program with Bachelor degreed teachers, and graduates consistently achieve 100% for Kindergarten readiness. In fact, The Learning Cove requires lead teachers in its 3-year-old class and up to possess a Bachelor or higher degree in Early Childhood or Elementary Education. In time, the owners and Director hope that more preschools will adopt this model and require preschool teachers to have qualifications in line with elementary school teachers.

*The Learning Cove Preschool is dedicated to providing high quality early childhood education. Our model utilizes higher educated, higher paid teachers to ensure our students are prepared not only to do well in Kindergarten, but to excel. We are located at 3001 SW Mill Creek Way, Palm City, FL 34990. If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Rhiannon Forker at (772) 223 7706 or email at [info@thelearningcovepreschool.com](mailto:info@thelearningcovepreschool.com).*

