



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Dawn Bell, Early Learning Coalition of Putnam & St. Johns County, 386-328-8225 X 204 or dbell@elcpsj.org

Association of Early Learning Coalitions Awards Florida Senator, Nan Rich, the *Early Learning Champion Award*

FT. LAUDERDALE, Fla. *June 1, 2009* — The Association of Early Learning Coalitions awarded Florida Senator, Nan Rich (Broward/Miami-Dade) their first ever “Early Learning Champion Award” .

Senator Rich, whose district covers parts of Broward and Miami-Dade counties, has a long history of advocating for children, families and early learning issues. She has worked tirelessly this past Legislative Session to ensure more children would have access to health care, by passing a bill to improve “Florida Kid Care”, the state’s children’s health insurance act.

Senator Rich is passionate about the importance of providing high quality early learning to all children. Additionally, Senator Rich supports the ongoing professional development of early learning teachers through scholarship opportunities to enable child care teachers to earn higher credentials and educational degrees. Senator Rich is an outspoken advocate for Florida’s Voluntary Pre-K program and works tirelessly to ensure that a high quality program is available for all four year olds.

“ Senator Rich’s reputation is one to be admired, ”says Susan Main, Chair of the Association of Early Learning Coalitions and Executive Director of the Early Learning Coalition of Duval. “ By striving to fulfill her commitment to Florida’s children, especially in troubling economic times, Senator Rich has proven herself as someone to be admired and emulated. The “Early Learning Champion Award” recognizes all the hard work Senator Rich has done over the years for families and children of this state.”

The Association of Early Learning Coalitions is a non-profit organization comprised of leadership from the state’s 31 separate Early Learning Coalitions that cover Florida’s 67 counties. The Association aims to bring the coalitions and the state together to achieve an integrated, comprehensive system of early care and education across Florida by promoting services of the highest quality, advocating for all of Florida’s children and their families, and supporting one another’s professional growth.

###