



Providing leadership to Florida's early learning community

**Promoting Efficiency, Effectiveness,
& Economic Growth**

State Legislative Priorities

SUPPORT EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR PREPARING CHILDREN FOR SUCCESS BY RESTORING SCHOOL READINESS FUNDING

Providing School Readiness Services (child care assistance) keeps Florida's families working and Florida's children learning!

- Children attending quality School Readiness Programs make developmental gains that support their success in school and productivity in life¹
- 50% of Florida's 1.34 million young children (under the age of 6) live under 200% of poverty and 24% live under 100% of poverty²
- Only 236,147 children received child care subsidies in 2010-11 due to funding limitations (meeting child care needs of less than 30% of eligible children)³
- Child care businesses in FL (primarily small business, representing over 2% of Florida's small businesses) make significant contributions to local economies: \$1.1 billion in wages and \$1.8 billion for industries that support child care^{4,5}

SUPPORT THE EFFICIENT PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCAL DECISION MAKING OF EARLY LEARNING FUNDING THROUGH EARLY LEARNING COALITIONS (ELCs)

Local decision-making allows local citizens to make the best decisions for the needs and priorities of local communities, and ELCs work efficiently!

- ELCs leverage over \$40 million to match and supplement state and federal dollars
- ELCs share resources, best practices, and maximize revenues
- ELCs average 9.5% in administrative and program support (e.g., eligibility determination, provider payments, child care resource and referral) costs although the cap is 19%⁶

SUPPORT A HIGH QUALITY VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

A high quality Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) ensures children enter school ready to learn and increases their potential for future productivity! High quality cannot be achieved if funding per child continues to be decreased!

- Florida meets only 3 of 10 national standards for prekindergarten programs⁷
- Florida does not meet teacher-to-child ratio, teacher education and in-service, child screening and assessment, and curriculum standards for high quality

¹Barnett (2008). *Preschool education and its lasting effects: Research and policy implications*. Boulder and Tempe: Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Policy Research Unit [http://epicpolicy.org/publication/preschool-education].

²National Center for Children in Poverty. (2011). *Florida demographics for low-income children*. [www.nccp.org/profiles/].

³AWI Office of Early Learning. (2011). *School readiness education program*. Tallahassee, FL: author.

⁴Office of Small Business Advocate. (2011). *Florida small business facts*. [www.osba.org; August 8, 2001].

⁵AWI Office of Early Learning. (2009). *Quality Initiative*, July 2009, Vol 1(1). Tallahassee, FL: author.

⁶OPPAGA. (2008). *Report 08-61*. Tallahassee, FL: author.

⁷National Institute for Early Education Research. (2010). *The State of Preschool 2010*. [www.nieer.org].

***Florida's economic growth strategy starts at birth by investments in early childhood
Lack of investment in the productivity of the next generation is a deficit strategy, not a growth strategy***

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