



2010 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Friday, March 12, 2010

Our Mission

To promote high-quality school readiness, voluntary pre-kindergarten and after school programs, thus increasing all children's chances of achieving future educational success and becoming productive members of society. The Coalition seeks to further the physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs of Miami-Dade and Monroe County children with a priority toward the ages before birth through age 5.

Our Vision

To ensure a comprehensive and integrated system providing for all families and their children, beginning before birth to 5 years, the affordable opportunity to enter school ready to learn and succeed in life.

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Over the last week, the House and Senate have released their proposed budgets for both the School Readiness and VPK programs. Below you will find a summary of the reductions as well as information that you may want to share as you continue to educate members on the benefits of Florida's early learning programs. As you look at the budget recommendations from both the House and the Senate you will notice very different funding recommendations coming from each committee. The reason for this is that each committee was given different reduction targets.

School Readiness Program

Both the House and Senate TEDA committees have released their anticipated reductions to the School Readiness Program. Below is a chart that represents the cuts in state general revenue, the impact on federal dollars and the projected number of children affected.

	State General Revenue	Federal Impact	Total	Children Impacted
House Reduction	\$15,838,744	\$19,342,829	\$35,181,573	8,795
Senate Reduction	\$3,112,087	*\$3,865,687	\$6,977,774	1,744

*Note: The Senate did not reduce the Federal budget authority, but the reduction of state GR would likely result in an inability to draw down the \$3.8 in federal matching funds for a total effective reduction of \$6.9.

- ◆ The School Readiness Program **provides significant savings to the state**. It costs far less to serve a family in the School Readiness Program than it does to provide services in other assistance programs. Using the House budget reduction example if families are unable to maintain employment due to lack of child care **it could cost state taxpayers 3 to 6 times as much in other assistance programs** such as Medicaid, food stamps, unemployment compensation, and temporary cash assistance. If the School Readiness Program is reduced by:

Amount of State Fund Reductions	Loss of Federal Funds	Impact on Children	Potential Increases for State Spending
\$15.8 million	\$19.3 million	8795	\$52.4 - \$99.6 million

- ◆ The child care industry supports job creation not only by ensuring parents are able to gain and maintain employment, but by the approximately 20,000 child care businesses that employ Floridian's.
- ◆ Child care is a major industry that supports the workforce by employing workers, paying wages and taxes, and purchasing goods and services from other state industries. Florida's child care sector generates approximately \$1.1 billion in wages for Floridians and an additional \$1.8 billion for industries that support child care settings and their workers. Florida's child care sector generates a total value of \$2.9 billion to the state of Florida.
- ◆ The School Readiness program allows families to work by providing quality child care for working families. Nearly 250,000 children participate in the School Readiness Program allowing lower-income parents to be employed and continue employment.

Voluntary Prekindergarten Program

Both the House and Senate PreK-12 Appropriation committees have released their anticipated reductions to the VPK Program. Below is a chart that represents the cuts in state general revenue and the impact on the program.

House PreK-12 Appropriations Recommendations	Senate PreK-12 Appropriations Recommendations
Total VPK Budget: \$402,321,505	Total VPK Budget: \$350,509,999
Base Student Allocation: School Year \$2,549 and Summer \$2,168	Base Student Allocation: School Year and Summer \$2,200
Coalition Administrative Spending: 4.5%	Coalition Administrative Spending: 4.5%
Teacher to Student Ratio: 1 to 12 and for any class with a thirteenth student secondary instructor must have a CDA credential for a total class size of 24.	Teacher to Student Ratio: 1 to 12 and for any class with a thirteenth student secondary instructor must have a CDA credential for a total class size of 24.
Current Year Deficit: Pending	Current Year Deficit: \$25 million in back of the budget

- ◆ Florida has the second largest prekindergarten program in the nation serving **70% of all four year olds in Florida.**
- ◆ Program growth is estimated to continue. Current estimates anticipate the program to serve **75% of all four year olds by 2011-2012.**
- ◆ **Children that participate in the VPK program consistently perform better** on the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener than children that did not participate in VPK.
- ◆ With anticipated growth and potential funding reductions, **Florida could become the largest program in the nation with one of the lowest rates for per pupil spending.** When the VPK program was first initiated in 2005 it was determined that \$2500 was the minimum per pupil spending that would allow providers to meet the program's quality mandates.