ELC Legislative Committee Meeting
August 25th, 2015, 9:00 a.m.
ELC Executive Conference Room

I. Welcome & Introductions Alexander Soto
II. Review Legislative Priorities of Partner Agencies
III. Select 2016 Legislative Priorities for Approval by ELC Board
IV. Discuss Fall 2015 Legislative Visits
V. Public Comment Alexander Soto
VI. Adjourn Alexander Soto
State Legislative Priorities 2015-16

Support the economic stability of Florida’s families with young children by restoring School Readiness funding to support working families and children at-risk

• Restore School Readiness funding levels to those provided during FY 2001-02 (state and federal funding was $681,392,070) to assist working families in being economically stable (there are over 58,000 children on the waiting list)

Maximize School Readiness investments by linking funding to performance standards, good business practices, and informed families

• Align Florida Statutes with federal Child Care Development Fund reauthorization requirements
• Link performance standards to a quality improvement tiered payment structure to support good provider business practices and ensure accountability for School Readiness investments
• Help inform families’ decision-making regarding selecting good early learning settings by ensuring clear and concise information about School Readiness programs through a quality improvement recognition system
• Utilize nonrecurring funds for quality improvement system building (e.g., establishment of a professional development registry for providers and trainers, development of training and technical assistance capacity to support providers)
• Clearly establish DCF Office of Child Care Regulation and Background Screening as the responsible entity for licensure and the DOE Office of Early Learning as the responsible entity for child care performance standards and accountability by transferring responsibility for the Gold Seal program and professional development requirements to the Office of Early Learning
• Establish child assessment requirements to inform classroom practices and document child progress

Ensure accountability in Florida’s Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK) by linking increased investments to performance standards that improve kindergarten readiness

• Restore VPK student funding levels to those provided during FY 2007-08 (school year base student allocation was $2,677 versus $2,437 for 2015-16) and tie funding increases to benchmarks: staff to child ratios of 1:10 or better; 15 hours annually of in-service training; increased specialized training and education requirements; and vision, hearing, health, and developmental screenings

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

Association of Early Learning Coalitions
Alisa S. Ghazvini, Ph.D., Executive Director/ aghazvini@hotmail.com/ 850-545-7716
State Legislative Priorities 2015-16

**Restore School Readiness funding to support working families and children at-risk**
- Restore School Readiness funding levels to those provided during FY 2001-02 to serve eligible children and support working families; current federal and state funding has decreased by over $100 million since funding of $681,392,070 in 2001-02
- Utilize recurring dollars to reduce Florida’s waiting list for families seeking support to work; there are over 58,000 children on the waiting list.

**Address Health and Safety Concerns**
- Align Florida Statutes with federal CCDF reauthorization and rule-making:
  - Require all programs receiving School Readiness funds to meet licensure standards; require all programs to be monitored for adherence to these standards
  - Ensure all programs serving children meet all background screening requirements
  - Establish pre-service training requirements within Florida licensure standards and increase in-service training requirements
  - Establish group size limitations that correspond with adult-to-child ratio licensure requirements for programs receiving School Readiness funds (at a minimum; consider incorporating a phased-in group size requirement for all licensed programs)
  - Revise the adult-to-child ratio licensure requirements for two-year-old children
- Strengthen language prohibiting programs that have been terminated from contracting with the School Readiness program due to licensing violations, Child Care Food Program violations, public assistance fraud, and/or other violations, from reopening under a new corporate name or through transfer of ownership to family members or friends

**Improve School Readiness performance standards and business practices**
- Enhance resources for families to inform their decision-making regarding selecting good early learning settings and supports for their children; resources should be available in formats (e.g., via telephone, web, or in-person) that meet their needs through Child Care Resource and Referral
- Align Florida Statutes with federal CCDF reauthorization and rule-making:
  - Adjust the 22% cap on all quality, nondirect, and administrative expenditures in Florida to ensure that the increasing federal expenditure requirements for activities related to the quality of early learning services can be met (anticipated gradual movement from 4% federal requirement to 9%)
  - Ensure that a minimum of 3% of performance/quality expenditures are directed toward infants and toddlers as the federal expenditure requirements are increased
  - Increase training requirements for staff in School Readiness programs, ensuring, at a minimum, all have specialized training regarding the ages of children in their care
  - Move to annual eligibility redetermination
  - Establish payment policies based on enrollment rather than attendance
  - Ensure Child Care Resource & Referral provides information to families on health and safety as well as quality enhancement efforts made by School Readiness programs (e.g., accreditation, CLASS, child assessment, local quality improvement systems)
Support establishment of statewide program performance and effectiveness standards and supports by establishing a Statewide Tiered Reimbursement System Task Force to review national QRIS standards, examine findings from the Performance Funding Pilot and local QRIS efforts, and develop recommendations regarding a statewide continuous performance and quality improvement and support system.

Utilize nonrecurring funds for quality improvement system building (e.g., establishment of a professional development registry for providers and trainers, development of training and technical assistance capacity to support providers)

- Clearly establish DCF Office of Child Care Regulation and Background Screening as the responsible entity for licensure and the DOE Office of Early Learning as the responsible entity for child care performance standards and accountability by transferring responsibility for the Gold Seal program and professional development requirements to the Office of Early Learning.
- Establish child assessment requirements to inform classroom practices and document child progress.

**Restore funding for Florida’s Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK) to support providers in meeting performance standards**

- Restore VPK student funding levels to those provided during FY 2007-08 to ensure programs can meet performance standard requirements (school year base student allocation in 2007-08 was $2,677 versus $2,437 for 2015-16).
- Revise the VPK assessment and readiness rate process to incorporate a valid, reliable, and authentic assessment of child progress, addressing all domains of development and delivered during the VPK program year.
- Improve Florida’s rankings regarding the quality of VPK by reducing staff to child ratios back to 1:10 or better and requiring: 15 hours annually of in-service training; lead teachers to have specialized training in prekindergarten; secondary instructors to have a CDA credential; and vision, hearing, health, and developmental screenings.

**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**

Association of Early Learning Coalitions
Alisa S. Ghazvini, Ph.D., Executive Director/ aghazvini@hotmail.com/ 850-545-7716
POLICY Priorities for 2016:

- **INCREASE** Early Learning funding for children birth-5 to ensure children’s access to educational, enrichment programs that support low-income working families and children’s readiness for and success in school.

- **AMEND** the early learning statute for School Readiness to:
  1. **Health and safety standards**: Include explicit standards for the health, safety and well-being of children in all publicly funded programs.
  2. **Education standards and tiered reimbursement**: Establish education-based performance standards (including professional development, CLASS and a curriculum-based assessment) and a tiered-payment structure for early learning to prepare children for school success, enhance the private business model of early learning, and to ensure accountability of public funds.
  3. **Differential rate contracts**: Allow early learning coalitions to establish differential-rate contracts with high quality early learning programs in high-poverty areas to increase family access to quality early learning programs.

- **INCREASE** investments in Florida’s Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program for four-year-olds aligned to quality benchmarks to improve kindergarten readiness and later school success.

- **EXPAND** eligibility for Florida KidCare, the state’s children’s health insurance program, by removing the five year wait for children of lawfully residing immigrants.

**APPROPRIATIONS** required? Yes

- School Readiness: $30 million *(can/should we fine-tune this number?)*
- VPK: $95.7 million *(3000-2437=$563/child x 170,000 four-year-olds = $95.7 million)*
- KidCare: < $2 million

**Contact Information**

- Jess Scher, Director, Public Policy, United Way of Miami-Dade
  [scherj@unitedwaymiami.org](mailto:scherj@unitedwaymiami.org) (305) 322-6143
2015-2016 STATE LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE ISSUE SUBMISSION FORM
DEADLINE: AUGUST 7, 2015

FULL RESPONSES MUST BE PROVIDED FOR ALL QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS.
Incomplete forms will not be accepted. Please submit supporting documentation: reports, studies and background papers.

COMMITTEE: EDUCATION

PRESENTED BY:
Jessica Scher, United Way of Miami-Dade
Diana Ragbeer, The Children’s Trust
Evelio Torres, Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade and Monroe
Vance Aloupis, Jr., Children’s Movement of Florida

ISSUE: High Quality Early Education

ROLE THE CHAMBER IS BEING ASKED TO TAKE (please select one): ( ) PRIORITY (ACTION) (X) SUPPORT ( ) MONITOR

I. Explanation of the issue in 50 words or less (attach proposed authorizing or appropriations legislation if applicable):

- **Increase** funding for the School Readiness program by $30 million and link School Readiness provider payments to early learning quality standards and the actual cost of providing quality care.

- **Restore** funding for Florida’s Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program to the pre-recession (2007) level of $2,677 per student.

- **Expand** access to early detection and treatment of developmental delays and disabilities by appropriating $4 million to the ‘Help Me Grow’, a parent information and referral resource.

II. Please provide a comprehensive explanation of:

(Refer to Early Learning brief, below)

a) Present situation and the change that is desired: (Refer to Early Learning brief, below)

b) Impact of the proposed legislation on the desired change: (Refer to Early Learning brief, below)

c) Scope of statewide interest: (Refer to Early Learning brief, below)

d) Additional background including past Chamber advocacy positions and results: The GMCC has supported quality Early Learning as part of its Education Agenda for the past 8 years. For the past two years there have been small increases in the Early Learning budget.
III. Why should the Chamber support this legislation? In what way does this impact the business community?

Quality early learning is the foundation for a strong, stable, and competitive workforce. More than 85% of the foundation for communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork -- skills that employers nationwide cite as critical to success in the workplace -- is developed by the age of five. Research shows that investing now brings greater economic returns later.

Quality childcare provides essential supports to working families that contributes to productivity, retention and business success. Working families depend on quality childcare, which increases productivity and reduces absenteeism.

Childcare is also an essential industry employing over 75,000 Floridians (according to the US Census and Bureau of Labor Statistics). Childcare businesses make significant contributions to local economies – adding over $1.1 billion in wages and $1.8 billion for industries that support childcare businesses in Florida.

And finally, children who are ready for school will succeed and become the workforce we'll need for our community's growth and prosperity.

Our priorities reflect a bipartisan consensus that high quality early care and education is essential not only to healthy child development but also to a healthy economy and a strong community.

IV. Will this request require an appropriation of funds (please select one)? (X) Yes – if so, provide information below ( ) No

a) What is the anticipated appropriation request:
   • School Readiness: $30 million to increase access to quality childcare
   • Restore VPK funding to 2007 level ($2,677 per child): $40 million*
     *(2,677-2,437)=$240 per-child increase x 169,000 4-yr-olds in Florida = $40 million
   • Expand ‘Help Me Grow’: $4 million for statewide expansion of ‘Help Me Grow’

b) From what budget should/will the appropriation be made? GR Education

V. Identify the fiscal and economic impacts of this legislative request on:

   a) Miami-Dade County businesses: (see Policy Brief, below and III, above)
   b) Local and state government: (see Policy Brief, below and III, above)

VI. Please identify known or potential support for this proposed legislation (including local and state organizations/associations):

Private child care and early education providers (small businesses); The Children’s Trust/Florida Children’s Services Council, Early Learning Coalitions; United Way of Miami-Dade, Miami Dade County Public Schools, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Florida Chamber of Commerce

   a) Is there a lead entity on this issue? Is there a lobbyist or a political action committee engaged on this issue? Please identify: Ballard and Partners

   b) Has any industry group or economic development organization taken a position on this issue? Please identify: Supported by child care industry and local and state chambers of commerce
 VII. Please identify any known or potential opposition to this proposed legislation.

None

VIII. Please list the legislators who are sponsoring the issue:

Supported by members of the Miami-Dade Delegation

EARLY LEARNING POLICY BRIEF

The foundation for communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork - skills that employers nationwide cite as critical to workplace success - is developed by age five. Research shows that investing in high quality early education yields big returns. Quality early learning, as well as early detection and treatment of childhood developmental and behavioral challenges, are essential to successful outcomes for children. And affordable childcare is essential for low-income working parents to maintain employment and become financially self-sufficient, increasing state tax collections and economic productivity. Despite these compelling facts, School Readiness funding has declined by almost $100 million since 2001.

School Readiness: Nearly 10,000 small and large private businesses provide affordable childcare to Florida’s low-income working families through the School Readiness program, which serves nearly 225,000 children. Thousands more eligible Florida families don’t get these services due to insufficient state resources. Inadequate or non-existent statewide standards and low reimbursement rates mean many School Readiness programs are of low quality, further contributing to the achievement gap.

Voluntary Prekindergarten: In Florida the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program is available to all 4-year olds and access is among the highest in the country. However, the National Institute for Early Education Research ranks Florida’s VPK 35th among 38 states in per pupil funding and reports that the program meets only three of 10 nationally recommended standards. Current VPK per-child funding of $2,437 is less than it was five years ago and far below the 2013 national average of $4,026 per child.

Help Me Grow: Early childhood is the optimal time for detection and treatment of children with developmental or behavioral concerns. ‘Help Me Grow’ links families through a centralized call center (2-1-1) with local resources and programs to quickly and effectively to address parents’ concerns about their young children’s health, development, behavior and learning.

Child success is essential to Florida’s future, and taxpayer investments should be made wisely. The benefits of early care and education are linked to program quality and to appropriate supports including developmental screening and parent information. These require a commitment to adequate funding.

Thank you for participating in the Greater Miami Chamber’s legislative process.
Please feel free to contact the Governmental Affairs should you have any questions.
Daniel Tapia, Director, Governmental Affairs
Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce
305-577-5469 | dtapia@miamichamber.com

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Date presented:
Action by Governmental Affairs:
Early Learning: Quality for Florida’s Future

*Florida’s United Ways urge the 2016 Florida Legislature to Provide Access to High Quality Early Learning Programs for All Children*

**BACKGROUND**

The foundation for communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork - skills that employers cite as critical to workplace success - is developed by age five. Early language abilities, measured at age three, are directly related to later reading abilities, and children in low-income families are at greatest risk. Quality early learning, as well as early detection and treatment of childhood developmental and behavioral challenges, are essential to successful outcomes for children.

**School Readiness:** Affordable childcare is essential for low-income working parents to maintain employment and become more financially self-sufficient, increasing state tax collections and economic productivity. Nearly 10,000 small and large private businesses provide affordable childcare through the School Readiness (SR) program, which serves almost 225,000 children of Florida’s low-income working families. Thousands more eligible Florida families don’t get these services due to insufficient resources. And many SR programs are of low quality, due to inadequate or non-existent statewide standards and low reimbursement rates, further contributing to the achievement gap.

**Voluntary Prekindergarten:** Florida’s prekindergarten program is available to all 4-year olds and access is among the highest in the country. However, the program meets only 3 of 10 national quality standards. Current per-child funding of $2,437 is less than it was five years ago and far below the national average.

**Help Me Grow:** Early childhood is the optimal time for detection and treatment of children with developmental or behavioral concerns. ‘Help Me Grow’ links families through a centralized call center (2-1-1) with local resources and programs to quickly and effectively to address parents’ concerns about their young children’s health, development, behavior and learning.

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

**Expand funding for early learning programs:** United Way supports increases in recurring funds for the Early Learning budget to: Improve program quality, allow more low income families to participate in the School Readiness program and increase per-child funding for the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program.

**Incentivize quality for School Readiness program providers:** United Way supports efforts to develop early learning quality standards and provider incentives that link School Readiness payments to the actual cost of providing quality care.

**Expand access to early detection and treatment of developmental delays and disabilities:** United Way supports programs such as ‘Help Me Grow’ that link parents with appropriate supports including information and referrals for developmental screenings.

**The Achievement Gap Starts Early**

- 1,116 words (Children in professional families)
- 749 words (Children in working-class families)
- 525 words (Children in welfare families)

For additional information, please contact the United Way of Florida at: (850) 488-8276.
Healthcare for a Healthy Florida Future

Florida's United Ways Urge the 2016 Florida Legislature to Expand Access to Affordable Healthcare for All Floridians

BACKGROUND:

Access to affordable healthcare is a critical need for working families, and fundamental to children’s ability to succeed in school. Ensuring that people have the opportunity to achieve optimal health is core to United Way’s mission and community focus.

Expanding Health Coverage: Florida has the 2nd highest uninsured rate in the United States. Nearly one million Floridians are without basic health coverage because they make too much to qualify for Medicaid and too little to afford coverage through the Health Exchanges. Extending health insurance to Floridians in the ‘coverage gap’ will provide access to affordable healthcare for thousands of working families. Florida businesses and local chambers of commerce support coverage expansion because it contributes to economic growth and prevents companies from paying the hidden tax of higher insurance rates.

Access to Affordable Care: Florida KidCare is the state’s health insurance program for uninsured children of low to moderate income families. Removing the five year waiting period for children of lawfully residing immigrants will extend coverage to over 22,000 children. Children who are insured through KidCare are more likely to receive preventive care and less likely to use more expensive emergency room visits (and hospital charity funds) for primary care. The cost to the state for providing KidCare coverage for these children is estimated to be under $2 million.

Florida’s fastest growing demographic group is seniors over 65. As our population ages Florida must maximize funding for home- and community-based services, such as ‘Community Care for the Elderly’, to provide support for older adults and reduce the cost burden for Florida families as well as taxpayers.

New technologies such as ‘telehealth’ increase access and reduce healthcare costs in rural or under-served areas affected by a shortage of physicians and healthcare professionals.

PROPOSED CHANGES:

- **ADOPT** a bipartisan ‘Florida plan’ to use Federal expansion dollars to increase healthcare coverage and access to care for Florida’s uninsured residents.

- **ELIMINATE** the KidCare five-year waiting eligibility requirement for legal immigrant children and allocate $1.8 million to increase coverage.

- **MAXIMIZE** home- and community-based services for older adults reduce nursing home costs.

- **REMOVE** barriers to cost-saving technologies that reduce costs and increase access to healthcare.

For additional information, please contact
The United Way of Florida at (850) 488-8276
2016 Legislative Priorities

Improve Florida’s Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program

*Florida ranks #3 in access but only 36 in state funding; meets only 3 of 10 quality indicators*

- Restore the base student allocation for the VPK Program to the 2005 funding levels to support program quality. Increase BSA by at least $63 per student.
- Establish a rate differential based upon the teacher credential or degree.

Improve School Readiness Program

*There are nearly 3,000 children on a waitlist for child care assistance in Pinellas County and 57,000 statewide. Approximately $1.5 million would allow the ELC of Pinellas to serve all eligible children ages 0-5 years on our wait list.*

- Comply with requirements of the reauthorized Child Care and Development Trust Fund to ensure continued draw down of $283 million in federal funds to support Florida families.
- Adopt the language of 2015 HB7017; require comprehensive background screenings for child care center employees; establish group size maximums; require preservice training for school readiness instructors.
- Fund School Readiness scholarships based upon FTE enrollment rather than attendance.
- Require School Readiness providers demonstrate compliance with program requirements prior to contracting.
- Restore recurring general revenue funding for School Readiness to meet the community needs.

Support Early Learning Workforce Development

*less than 40% of VPK instructors have a college degree.*

- Increase educational requirements for early educators.
- Support continued funding for T.E.A.C.H. scholarships.
- Support incentives to retain high quality early educators.

Establish a Statewide Quality Improvement Recognition System

*Investments in high quality early learning yield a $7: $1 return on investment.*

- Utilize Child Care and Development Trust Funds earmarked for Florida to establish a Statewide Quality Improvement Recognition System.
- Establish a statewide professional development registry for early educators.
- Implement a tiered reimbursement system for School Readiness providers based upon quality benchmarks beginning 2017-2018.

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1 The State Of Preschool 2014 - State Preschool Yearbook - National Institute for Early Education Research - [www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org)

www.elcpinellas.net

Questions should be directed to Lindsay Carson, CEO, Early learning Coalition of Pinellas County.

lcarson@elcpinellas.net  727.239.5412
2015 - 2016 INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

September 2015 – Week of the 16th
October 2015 – Week of the 5th
October 2015 – Week of the 19th
November 2015 – Week of the 2nd
November 2015 – Week of the 16th
November 2015—Week of the 30th
## 2016 SESSION DATES

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<td>1, 2015</td>
<td>Deadline for filing claim bills (Rule 4.81(2))</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>20, 2015</td>
<td>5:00 p.m., deadline for submitting requests for drafts of general bills and joint resolutions, including requests for companion bills</td>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>8, 2016</td>
<td>5:00 p.m., deadline for approving final drafts of general bills and joint resolutions, including companion bills</td>
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<td>January</td>
<td>12, 2016</td>
<td>Regular Session convenes (Article III, section 3(b), Constitution)</td>
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<td>12:00 noon, deadline for filing bills for introduction (Rule 3.7(1))</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>27, 2016</td>
<td>All bills are immediately certified (Rule 6.8)</td>
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<td>Motion to reconsider made and considered the same day (Rule 6.4(4))</td>
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<td>March</td>
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<td>50th day—last day for regularly scheduled committee meetings (Rule 2.9(2))</td>
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