

We advocate for the policies and investments that help each child in Florida thrive in their first five years.

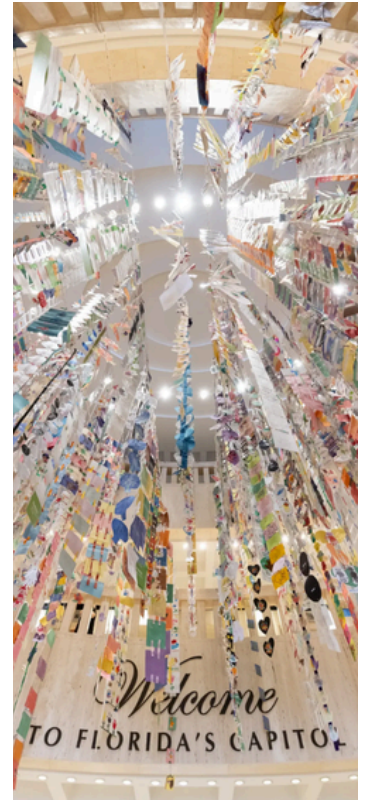
Florida's 2026 Legislative Session provided meaningful victories for early childhood education. The Children's Movement of Florida engaged lawmakers and partners throughout session to advocate for Florida's youngest children and their families.

● Top legislation we followed

This year, we closely followed [SB 1690/HB 765- Child Care and Early Learning Services](#). The House version, sponsored by Rep. Fiona McFarland, made it through all committees and was replaced with the Senate version, sponsored by Sen. Alexis Calatayud, which passed through all its own committees as well as a Senate floor vote. It was signed into law on June 12, 2026.

The bill:

- Replaced the outdated term “family day care” with “family child care” in Florida Statutes.
- Provides property insurance protections that prevent insurers from denying coverage solely because the home operates as a family child care program.
- Adjusts certain administrative responsibilities within the early learning system.
- Creates the Center for Early Childhood Professional Recognition and places its administration under the TEACH Scholarship Program.
- Allows the Department of Education's direct support organization (Florida Education Foundation) to include early learning programs, creating Florida's Child Care Trust Fund.



● State Budget and Early Childhood Funding Overview

Florida lawmakers held two back-to-back special sessions following the close of the regular session to finalize the FY 2026-27 state budget and pass a major property tax overhaul that will go before voters as a constitutional amendment in the November ballot.

The Florida budget, signed by Governor DeSantis on June 29, 2026, maintains steady funding for the early learning system as compared to the last fiscal year.

\$1.6 billion was allocated for early childhood education, including:

- **School Readiness Program** - \$1.2 billion
 - While the base funding for School Readiness was cut, the legislature allocated \$30.9 million to ensure coalitions wouldn't experience significant budget shortfalls and remove services from families.
- **Early Learning Standards & Accountability** - \$4.9 million
- **Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK)** - \$431 million (\$3,029/child for the academic year program)
 - **VPK Summer Bridge Program** - \$2.8 million
- **School Readiness match** –\$30 million
 - This funding enables Florida's 30 early learning coalitions and the Redlands Christian Migration Center to partner with local governments, businesses, and foundations to match federal childcare dollars, doubling the resources available to working families in need of affordable child care.



Additionally, the legislature allocated funds for some key early learning projects, which include:

- **TEACH** - \$20 million
- **The Florida Center for Early Childhood Professional Recognition** - \$5 million
- **Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)** - \$2.5 million
- **Help Me Grow** - \$6.5 million

The Legislature also extended the **Child Care Tax Credits Program** through 2027-2028 under HB 7031-E. The tax credit supports employers who establish a child care facility on site or contribute to their employees' child care costs.

The Legislature approved an overall budget of \$114.5 billion for the state. In other support for children and families, \$38 billion was set aside to fully fund both Medicaid and KidCare, which together provide healthcare to approximately one in every two children in the state, as calculated using **Florida's Early Childhood Data Hub**.



● Looking ahead to November and beyond

This November, Florida voters will decide on a new governor, as well as members of the House of Representatives and state Senate. We'll start the 2027 Legislative Session on March 2, 2027 with a new Senate President and Speaker of the House.

Our elected leaders will make decisions on eligibility and funding for projects and initiatives for you and your children. **[Learn more about the 2026 election season here.](#)**

Join us to build toward a safer, healthier, more prosperous state—for all Florida children.

