

Welcome!

The Children's
Movement
of Florida



All in for Early Learning

The growing movement of Floridians who believe every child deserves a strong start in the first five years.

* Whether you're a parent, educator, policymaker or concerned citizen, your voice matters.



ALL IN FOR EARLY LEARNING



LAKELAND IS ALL IN FOR EARLY LEARNING



In Partnership with

**LAKELAND
CHAMBER
of COMMERCE**
**The Children's
Movement
of Florida**
**ALL IN
for
EARLY
LEARNING**



CATALYST CONVENER CHAMPION

ALL IN FOR EARLY LEARNING DAY

January 26, 2026 | 8:00 a.m.
Lakeland Regional Health Administrative Offices

AGENDA

Welcome

Sarah Vespa (GMF Steel Group), Vice Chair

A Statewide Moment Begins

Ric Banciella, The Children's Movement of Florida

Early Learning in Our City

Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley, City of Lakeland

Lakeland Chamber of Commerce Board Resolution

Par Sahota (Boring Business Systems), Board Chair

Community Strategy Session

Sarah Vespa (GMF Steel Group), Vice Chair

Alignment & Next Steps

Sarah Vespa (GMF Steel Group), Vice Chair

Adjourn, Networking & Photos

In Partnership with



**ACCELERATE
2030**

2024-2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

2030 AREAS OF FOCUS

STRONG BUSINESSES

Strengthen Lakeland's economy by improving access to resources, training and expertise for businesses and entrepreneurs.

ENGAGED LEADERS

Cultivate leaders with deep and wide understanding of complex issues by fostering relationships, curating training and sharing information.

PREPARED TALENT

Develop and retain a talented workforce by collaborating with education, business and nonprofit partners to ensure access to future-focused education and training.

PROSPEROUS COMMUNITY

Create a climate where business can thrive by prioritizing connectivity, collaboration and opportunity within our community.

FOCUS ON CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING

Access to high-quality childcare and early learning is both a present and future priority for the business community.

- According to the Florida Chamber's research, nearly \$5.4 billion dollars in economic value is lost due to working parents having to be away from their jobs while caring for children under the age of six.
- 44% of Polk County's kindergarteners enter school "ready to learn" based on Star Early Literacy Assessment data.
- Nearly 90% of brain growth happens before age 5.



Childcare and early learning successes and challenges impact all areas of the Chamber's **Accelerate 2030** Strategic Plan.

UNDERSTAND BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES FACING EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE PROVIDERS AND CONSUMERS.

- Support **strong businesses** through training and workshops that address the barriers and challenges of owning and operating early education and childcare businesses.
- Champion early learning's role in developing **prepared talent** as well as recruiting and retaining employees to the region.
- Cultivate **engaged leaders** by advocating for policies that support access and affordability in the childcare industry.
- Identify and implement solutions that create a **prosperous community** with economic opportunity for all residents.



A RESOLUTION OF THE LAKELAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE RECOGNIZING JANUARY 26, 2026 AS "FLORIDA EARLY LEARNING DAY"

The Lakeland Chamber of Commerce joins The Children's Movement of Florida, businesses, organizations, educators, and parents around the State of Florida to recognize and champion the importance of high-quality early learning programs for all Florida children.

WHEREAS, a child's first five years of life are critical to healthy brain development, future learning, and lifelong success; and

WHEREAS, high-quality early learning programs help children enter school ready to learn, build strong social and emotional skills, and support families in fostering their child's growth and development; and

WHEREAS, Florida's early learning educators play a vital role in preparing children for school and life, serving as dedicated professionals who nurture curiosity, creativity, and confidence; and

WHEREAS, access to affordable, high-quality early learning strengthens communities, supports working families, and contributes to Florida's economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS, the statewide awareness campaign All in for Early Learning unites families, educators, businesses, and community leaders in championing early learning as the foundation for success; and

WHEREAS, recognizing and celebrating early learning raises awareness of its importance and reaffirms our commitment to ensuring every child in Florida has the opportunity to thrive;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of Directors of the Lakeland Chamber of Commerce to recognize January 26, 2026, as

FLORIDA EARLY LEARNING DAY

in Lakeland, Florida, and to call upon all citizens, businesses, organizations, and institutions to join in celebrating our youngest learners, their families, and the educators who inspire them.

Par Sahota, Chair of the Board of Directors

Amy Wiggins, President & CEO

ALL IN FOR EARLY LEARNING DAY

When a community comes together, advocacy becomes visible.

Advocacy starts by
inviting people into the
conversation.



FAMILIES + COMMUNITY

Books & Breakfast brought people together around children and books.



ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Local news joined us live to talk about All In—and why early learning matters.



SHARE THE STORY

We opened our doors and invited our community to see what going ALL IN can look like.

BOOKS + BREAKFAST

We invited parents to stay, share breakfast, and read with their child.

Then we invited local businesses and community members to join them.

WHY IT MATTERED

We used a joyful, simple event to start conversations about early learning, the early childhood workforce, and the role all of us play in supporting young children.

THE MESSAGE WENT BEYOND BABY FOX

A local news station came for a live morning story, helping us amplify All In for Early Learning Day—and the importance of advocacy.

ADVOCACY DOESN'T ALWAYS START AT THE CAPITOL. SOMETIMES IT STARTS WITH A BOOK.

Celebrate All in for Early Learning Day With Us!

- Request a Proclamation
- Recognize an Early Childhood Educator
- Host an Event





TAKE THE PLEDGE

[Why It Matters](#) [Your Role](#) [Florida Stories](#)



All in for Early Learning Day

Across Florida, communities are coming together to celebrate the first five years and show that early learning matters. Join the statewide movement on Monday, January 26th 2026 — choose one simple action below and make your community part of All In for Early Learning



How You Can Participate

Choose one of the three options below.

Enter your email to get the toolkit you need — everything is simple, turnkey, and designed for you to have a fantastic All in for Early Learning Day!



Request a Proclamation

Ask your mayor or county commission to formally declare January 25, 2027 as All in for Early Learning Day in your community.

[GET THE TEMPLATE](#)



Recognize an Early Childhood Educator

Whether you're a parent or center director use this day to recognize a special early educator.

[DOWNLOAD CERTIFICATE](#)



Host an Event

Bring people together for a quick, meaningful moment in your community.

[GIVE US YOUR EVENT DETAILS](#)



How You Can Take Action Today



Get Movement Updates

Stay ahead of policy and programs impacting early childhood in Florida.



Take the “All in” Pledge

Show policymakers early learning is a priority for Floridians.



Register Today!

Built to Thrive Summit



Orlando, FL



November 9-10, 2026



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ChildMovementFL

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