

Dear Governor DeSantis:

As mayors, we take seriously the responsible stewardship of our constituents' tax dollars. We know that prioritizing early childhood development is a wise investment in Florida's future prosperity, one with an impact on 3rd and 10th grade reading scores, high school graduation rates, future employment prospects, and the military. We ask that you make this a priority in your administration.

We know that the basic structure of the human brain is mostly constructed in the first three years of a child's life. If all children are cared for and sheltered from damaging stressors in this pivotal time, they have a stronger start at leading a self-sufficient life of service to society.

Whether this takes the form of support for early learning initiatives, more widespread health care for children under 5, or greater access to parenting support resources for all parents, the result is the same: a state that prioritizes children will reap rewards over time with a better workforce and lower crime.

We have made significant progress in Florida in the last 20 years through investment in quality early education, health care, and parent resource systems, in partnership with The Florida Association of Early Learning Coalitions, The Florida Children's Council, The Florida Association for the Education of Young Children, The Children's Forum, The Florida Association of Childcare Management, The Florida Chamber Foundation, The Office of Early Learning, and The United Way of Florida.

We lead 100 small and large Floridian cities and counties, comprising millions of citizens in blue and red districts. We have come together to do everything we can for our youngest children. This is not an unselfish act. We are acting in our own best interests, and the best interests of our cities, by valuing investment in children 5 and under. If we do not invest in children today, we will pay tenfold in the future.

Please, Governor DeSantis, make investment in our youngest children a priority for Florida.

Sincerely,

Mayors of Florida

