

2018 Legislative Agenda

The Children's Movement of Florida



School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Programs

Florida's School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten programs mean hundreds of thousands of children across our state have access to an early learning experience – allowing for both a foundation for future educational success and for parents to maintain employment. Even in these improved economic times, tens of thousands of children currently find themselves on a waiting list, unable to access School Readiness services, along with a very real need to promote and ensure higher quality statewide.

- **Incorporate standards** for quality as a requirement of childcare provider contracts. 'Low performing' providers will have 12 months to complete a corrective action plan and if after the 12 months there is no improvement, the contract will be terminated.
- **Support** funding to expand implementation of Early Learning Florida — enabling thousands of teachers throughout Florida to access high-quality, effective, responsive professional development to improve teacher skills: \$3 million.

Parent Skill-Building – Help Me Grow

Parents must play the most central and formative role in children's lives. Caring, knowledgeable adults are central to children's healthy development. All parents have questions and concerns about their children, but not everyone has trusted sources for the answers they need – and all parents can benefit from information and support.

- **Building** off of the progress made during the last four legislative sessions, continue to expand Help Me Grow services — a statewide platform in multiple languages focused on providing parents with the most up-to-date information about their children's development — across Florida: \$2.5 million.

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Health Care

With a rate that is almost double the national average, Florida ranks at the top of states nationally in the number of uninsured children. More than 238,000 of Florida's youngest, most vulnerable citizens do not have health insurance, yet more than 80 percent are fully eligible and could be enrolled today if our state provided adequate outreach and enrollment.

- **Provide** support for a work group that will look at streamlining and improving Florida KidCare.

Developmental Screening, Assessment and Treatment for Children Who May Have Special Needs

One of every six children has a special need – autism, cerebral palsy, ADHD and many more. Information and support can help parents guide children through these challenges and find peace of mind. Knowledge at parents' fingertips gives them the best chance to help their children fulfill their potential.

- **Provide** online and phone-based screening and referral tools for families through a statewide Help Me Grow system.
- **Support** adequate funding for the Early Steps intervention system, offering services to children (birth to 36 months) with significant delays or a condition likely to result in a developmental delay.

Mentoring

The Movement, working with United Ways and others from around the state and through the support of Carol and Barney Barnett, is in Year 6 of ReadingPals — an early literacy initiative focused on reading by grade 3. The goal: Provide a mentor to at-risk children in 15 Florida regions — from VPK through the third grade.