

2019 AGENDA

A Strong Start #ForFloridaChildren

The Children's Movement
of Florida



EARLY LEARNING

Florida's two largest preschool programs, School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-K (VPK), provide access to an early learning experience for hundreds of thousands of children. We must ensure high-quality programs statewide so that children benefit from greater kindergarten readiness, and must ensure greater accountability to garner increased public investment.

Promote Accountability

- The recommendations of the Committee for Early Grade Success should be implemented. The same direct assessment tool should be used at the beginning and end of VPK, as well as at kindergarten entry. It should adequately measure learning gains and readiness across domains (language, social/emotional, pre-literacy, early math, executive function).
- We support the full implementation of HB 1091, passed in 2018 to incorporate standards for quality as a requirement of child care provider contracts—and to provide additional funding to programs that meet quality standards.

Increase Funding for VPK

Providing high-quality early learning programs is expensive and low payment rates make it difficult to sustain them. The Base Student Allocation (BSA) for VPK should be increased, alongside quality requirements.

Support Professional Development

We support appropriations for Child Care Wage\$ program & T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships that provide effective professional development and encourage higher education among early learning teachers.



PARENT SUPPORT

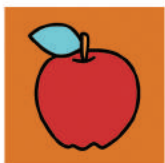
Parents play the most central and formative role in children's lives. Caring, knowledgeable adults are central to children's healthy development. All parents have questions and concerns about their children, and knowledge at their fingertips gives them the best chance to help their children fulfill their potential.

Expand Help Me Grow

This unique statewide resource offers free early-detection services for parents who have concerns about their children's development or behavior—with screening services available by phone 24 hours a day. We will build upon the progress made during the last five legislative sessions and continue to support expansion of Help Me Grow Florida to all 67 counties.

Support Children with Special Needs

One in five children has a special need—autism, cerebral palsy, ADHD and many more. Screening and assessment are important for early intervention and treatment. Information and support can help parents guide children through these challenges and find peace of mind. We support adequate funding for the Early Steps intervention system, offering services to children (birth to 3 years old) with significant delays or a condition likely to result in a development delay.



HEALTH

With a rate that is almost double the national average, Florida ranks at the top of U.S. states in the number of uninsured children.

Support Outreach Efforts

More than 325,000 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. We will support community-based outreach efforts to enroll eligible children.

Simplify Enrollment

We encourage Florida Healthy Kids in its process to streamline Florida KidCare programs, making it easier for parents to make the best choice for their children while promoting cost savings.



MENTORING

The Movement oversees ReadingPals, a volunteer-based literacy initiative focused on reading proficiency from VPK through third grade, which is currently in Year Seven and operating in 17 Florida regions. The program is administered by United Ways and others across the state, and is made possible by the generous support of Carol and Barney Barnett. The goal: promote early literacy and social-emotional development by building meaningful relationships between volunteer community mentors and children who may need extra help.

