



2012 State Legislative Priorities Support investment in early childhood

Quality early learning is the foundation for a strong, stable, and competitive workforce.

More than 85% of the foundation for communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork -- skills that employers nationwide cite as critical to success in the workplace -- is developed by the age of five. Research shows that investing now brings greater economic returns later.

Quality childcare provides essential supports to working families that contributes to productivity, retention and business success. Working families depend on quality childcare, which increases productivity and reduces absenteeism.

Childcare is also an essential industry employing over 75,000 Floridians (*according to the US Census and Bureau of Labor Statistics*). Childcare businesses make significant contributions to local economies – adding over \$1.1 billion in wages and \$1.8 billion for industries that support child care businesses in Florida

And finally, children who are ready for school will succeed and become the workforce we'll need for our community's growth and prosperity.

Our priorities reflect a bipartisan consensus that high quality early care and education is essential not only to healthy child development but also to a healthy economy and a strong community.

- **SUPPORT** adequate funding for high quality school readiness programs, including a **high-quality Voluntary Prekindergarten** program.
- **REQUIRE** the use of **research-based curricula** with proven successful outcomes in early childhood programs.
- **REQUIRE** pre- and post- assessments for every child in a VPK program for 4 year olds, and require the state, using those assessments of progress, to tell the people of Florida which programs, which providers are most effective and what the common factors were in their success. Then, the following year in kindergarten, use an appropriate assessment instrument to **ascertain the “readiness”** of each child to learn.

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