

PALM BEACH COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Meeting Date: | March 12, 2019 | <input type="checkbox"/> Consent | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regular |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing |
| Department | | | |
| Submitted By: | Youth Services Department | | |
| Submitted For: | Youth Services Department | | |

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF


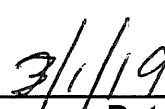

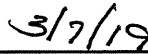
Motion and Title: Staff recommends motion to approve: a Letter supporting The Children’s Movement of Florida’s efforts to prioritize state funding for early childhood development.

Summary: The Children’s Movement of Florida has gathered over 100 letters of support from Mayor’s across Florida (#100Mayors For Early Childhood), requesting the Governor prioritize funding for early childhood. The goal of The Children’s Movement of Florida is to connect local voices to one another, amplify the call for greater state support and bridge the local concerns to statewide conversations. Their 2019 Agenda is titled A Strong Start #ForFloridaChildren. The Letter shows Palm Beach County’s support, and urges the Governor of Florida to make investment in early childhood a priority in the State. Countywide (HH)

Background and Policy Issues: Science shows us children’s early experiences build the foundation for their later success. Investing in the years between birth and age five will ensure a prosperous future for society. The Children’s Movement of Florida supports state programs that help lay a strong foundation for children by focusing on health care, high quality early learning, and parental support.

Attachments:

- 1. Letter
- 2. Children’s Movement of Florida’s February 21, 2019, Press Release

| | | |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Recommended by: |  |  |
| | Department Director | Date |
| Approved by: |  |  |
| | Assistant County Administrator | Date |

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:


| Fiscal Years | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|
| Capital Expenditures | | | | | |
| Operating Costs | | | | | |
| External Revenue | | | | | |
| Program Income (County) | | | | | |
| In-Kind Match (County) | | | | | |
| NET FISCAL IMPACT | *\$0 | | | | |
| No. ADDITIONAL FTE POSITIONS (Cumulative) | | | | | |

Is Item Included in Current Budget? Yes _____ No X
Does this item include the use of federal funds? Yes _____ No X

Budget Account Exp No:
Fund _____ Dept _____ Unit _____ Obj _____
Rev No:
Fund _____ Dept _____ Unit _____ Obj _____

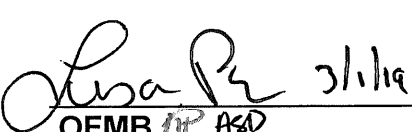
B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

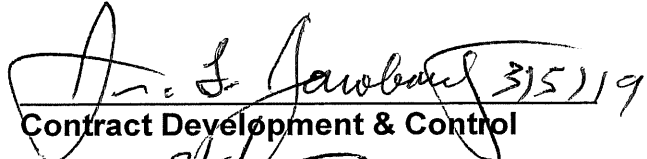
*There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

Departmental Fiscal Review: 

III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Dev. and Control Comments:

 3/1/19
OFMB ¹⁰ ASD
3/1 3/1

 3/5/19
Contract Development & Control
3/5/19 TW

B. Legal Sufficiency:

 3-5-19
Assistant County Attorney

C. Other Department Review:

Department Director

This summary is not to be used as a basis for payment.



MACK BERNARD
Commissioner, District 7



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March 12, 2019

The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Governor DeSantis,

We, as the Board of County Commissioners of Palm Beach County, 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 of 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 five, 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 Florida Grade Level Reading Campaign, The Office of Early Learning, and The United Way of Florida. In Palm Beach County, through Birth to 22: United for Brighter Futures, we have partnered with over 300 local agencies investing in our youth.

We support The Children's Movement of Florida and the #100Mayor's Initiative in requesting the prioritization of early childhood funding.

Sincerely,

Mack Bernard, Mayor
Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners

cc: Vance A. Aloupis, CEO, The Children's Movement of Florida

The Children's Movement of Florida

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 2/21/2019

Annik Babinski
The Children's Movement of Florida
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101 Florida Mayors Join Forces with The Children's Movement of Florida to urge Governor DeSantis to prioritize early childhood for Florida

- 101 Florida mayors from small and large cities have signed a collaborative letter asking Gov. Ron DeSantis to prioritize Florida children's early years through budgets and policy.
- Spearheaded by The Children's Movement of Florida, the 100 Mayors initiative (www.childrensmovementflorida.org/100-mayors) represents millions of citizens in blue and red districts.
- This achievement speaks to the universal importance of the early years for securing Florida's prosperity.

Miami, FL: In an overwhelming outpouring of support, 101 Florida mayors have joined forces and signed a letter asking Governor Ron DeSantis to use his leadership to prioritize early childhood issues for Florida's future. Their letter is being sent by email to the Executive Office of the Governor today.

These local government leaders, who represent millions of citizens in blue and red districts, have embraced the universal, overarching importance of prioritizing the state's youngest children. Support for the statewide initiative spans from Apalachicola to Bartow, Gainesville to DeLand, and Cape Canaveral to Vero Beach. Members of the initiative also include leaders from cities like Miami, Orlando, Fort Lauderdale, St. Petersburg, and our state capital, Tallahassee.

"As mayors, we take seriously the responsible stewardship of our constituents' tax dollars," the letter begins. The mayors reflect that by investing in early learning initiatives, more widespread health care for children under five, and greater access to parent support resources, Florida actually saves money in the long run. Beyond what is right, prioritizing Florida children's early lives is also the most practical, effective and efficient solution to numerous problems faced by our state, like crime and workforce gaps.

Mayor Ellen Glasser of Atlantic Beach is a former law enforcement officer and educator. Her experience taught her "that getting kids—and particularly those in at-risk environments—enrolled in school at 3 or 4 years old gives them a greater chance for later success. Keeping them interested in learning can actually keep them out of prison. Early learning is the key....It is good for kids and it is good for the community."

Currently, a mere 1.5% of Florida's total budget is spent on programs that benefit children from birth to age five. Meanwhile, about 325,000 children in the state lack health insurance. More than 220,000 children are born in Florida each year and only 54% are deemed "ready" by the Department of Education when they enter kindergarten. By third grade, nearly 40% of students are not reading at grade level, and it is difficult for them to catch up from there.

www.childrensmovementflorida.org



The Children's Movement of Florida

"My wife has been a VPK teacher for over 20 years and I have personally seen the benefits early education has for the students she has impacted in her tenure," said Ben Malik, Mayor of Cocoa Beach. Mayor Malik knows that what happens in a pre-k classroom is not babysitting—it is brain development, and it is the beginning of the education continuum.

In Pre-K, children develop pre-literacy and early math skills, as well as the social-emotional skills that allow them to pay attention, work collaboratively, and learn once they enter kindergarten and beyond. What's more, the working memory, mental flexibility, and self-control developed in the early years become the soft skills that prepare them to be successful in the workforce. According to the Florida Chamber of Commerce Foundation, graduates of high-quality early learning centers are 23% more employable than those who did not have access to high-quality centers.

"I want to see a greater percentage of high school students in Miami graduating on time and ready to train for high-paying jobs or to pursue a college education. I know that track starts with the early years," said Miami Mayor Francis Suarez.

"These mayors have acknowledged the positive impact early childhood investment has on Florida's public safety, economic health, and quality of life. This is about the continued prosperity of our state," said Dave Lawrence, Chair of The Children's Movement of Florida, the nonprofit organization that spearheaded the #100Mayors initiative.

Lawrence was a force behind the constitutional amendment passed in 2002 that guarantees access to Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) for all 4-year-olds in Florida and is designed to build the foundation for their success in school and in life. The program has meant progress for the more than 160,000 Florida children who enroll each year, but it is funded at a lower level today than it was when it began in the 2005-2006 school year. "We can do better," says Lawrence.

About The Children's Movement of Florida: The Children's Movement of Florida is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan movement of Floridians insisting on a strong start for all Florida children. We advocate for high-quality early learning opportunities, access to children's health care, and parent support programs in Florida. The Movement was founded in 2010 by former *Miami Herald* publisher and nationally known early childhood leader, David Lawrence Jr., who now serves as board chair. Visit www.childrensmovementflorida.org to learn more.

www.childrensmovementflorida.org



Florida's Early Childhood Policy Pathways

Up to 1998

Today

Florida's Future

Health Care

More than 823,000 children were uninsured in Florida. In addition, children who were lawfully residing immigrants had a five-year waiting period that prevented them from being insured through KidCare.

In 1998, Florida's KidCare was established to improve access to health insurance for the state's uninsured children. In 2016, HB 5101 passed, removing an enrollment wait period for legally residing immigrant children. Currently, 2.4 million children are enrolled in Florida KidCare, but more than 250,000 children remain uninsured.

We want every child in Florida to have access to a pediatrician.

Access to School Readiness

The early education and child care systems resulted in varying quality levels and outcomes, and insufficient accountability.

In 1999, The School Readiness Program was enacted. This program provided children from low-income working families with a subsidy to attend preschool. Today, however, 31,399 children are waitlisted for the program.

We seek adequate funding for the School Readiness Program so wait times are removed and the cost of preschool is subsidized for all children who qualify.

Quality Measures

No statewide system oversaw early childhood. That meant, community by community, outcomes varied and accountability was poor. Quality for centers receiving funds for subsidized programs was not measured.

In 1999, the Florida Legislature enacted the School Readiness Act, which created what we now know as Early Learning Coalitions statewide. In 2018, H.R. 1091 established quality measures for centers receiving funding for the School Readiness program.

We seek a comprehensive system that ensures all subsidized early learning programs are of high quality.



Florida's Early Childhood Policy Pathways

Up to 1998

Today

Florida's Future

Universal Pre-K

Four year olds in Florida were not guaranteed schooling.

In 2002, Florida voters passed a constitutional amendment for voluntary pre-kindergarten (VPK). Officially adopted in 2005, VPK today enrolls more than 175,000 Florida 4 year olds. But, many programs are still not high quality.

We are fighting for a comprehensive system that ensures all VPK programs are of high quality.

Parenting Support

A comprehensive parent resource system did not exist in Florida.

In 2012, Florida became an affiliate of the Help Me Grow network, now available through 2-1-1 in 32 counties.

We seek to provide adequate funding so Help Me Grow can serve all 67 Florida counties.

Business Buy-In

Business buy-in for early childhood initiatives was low. Local business leaders and Chambers of Commerce were typically not involved in early childhood initiatives.

In 2014, the creation of the Florida Chamber Foundation's Early Learning Business Alliance boosted business buy-in and participation statewide.

We look to expand local-Chamber level support for early childhood.

Support for Children with Disabilities

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C required a statewide system of coordinated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, interagency programs providing early intervention for all eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities. Children's Medical Services within the Department of Health provided administration and oversight of the Early Steps program in Florida.

The Early Steps program served 31,902 children in Florida in the 2016-2017 year. Although federal and state funding for Early Steps has increased by 23% from fiscal year 2014-2015 through fiscal year 2017-2018, additional funding is still needed.

We seek a fully funded Early Steps program so children with disabilities are identified at the earliest possible stages and provided with the appropriate screenings and interventions they need to be prepared for school.