



THE CHILDREN'S MOVEMENT OF FLORIDA

Who We Are -- What We Care About -- Why You Should Know More

Who We Are

- A non-partisan grassroots movement of Floridians insisting on increased investment in the first five years of all our children.

What We Care About

- Educating our business, civic and political leaders – and all Floridians – about the importance of making all children our state's highest priority.
- Encouraging increased investment of our state's public resources in the well-being and future of our children.
- We are working on:
 - Improving Florida's voluntary pre-K program.
 - Implementing high-quality parent skill-building programs.
 - Securing health insurance for all children.
 - Ensuring screening and treatment for all children who may have special needs.
 - Providing high-quality mentoring programs.

Why You Should Know More

- Did You Know...?
 - Every \$1.00 of early childhood investment can save \$4.00 of future taxpayer expenditures on prison, remedial programs, and higher healthcare costs.
 - Florida spends less than \$3,000 per year on a pre-K student, but spends more than \$51,000 per year to incarcerate a juvenile.
 - Only 3% of Florida's budget is spent on programs that benefit children in the early childhood years.
 - The state's prekindergarten program – a program that serves more than 170,000 4 year olds – meets just 3 of 10 nationally recommended standards and ranks 34th among 38 states in per pupil funding.
 - A fifth of our public high school students do not graduate, and almost half of 10th grade public school students in Florida cannot read at grade level.
 - Florida ranks near the bottom in terms of providing our children with access to quality health care, with more than 436,000 children currently uninsured.

Want to join The Movement? - visit www.childrensmovementflorida.org or sign-up below:

Name: _____

Email: _____



The 2015 Children's Movement of Florida agenda

School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK)

Florida's School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-K programs allow for hundreds of thousands of children across our state to 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.

- **Support** adequate funding for School Readiness and for voluntary prekindergarten (VPK) to ensure children's access to educational, enrichment programs that support working families and the academic and social skills needed for kindergarten and beyond. School Readiness: \$50 million/VPK: \$3,000 per slot.
- **Amend** the School Readiness statute to establish benchmarks and education-based performance standards for early learning to prepare children for school success, enhance the private business model of early learning, and to ensure accountability of public funds.

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 2014 legislative session, continue to expand Help Me Grow services – a statewide platform (phone, web, and mobile) in multiple languages focused on providing parents with the most-up-to-date information about their children's development – to an additional five regions in Florida: \$4 million.

Health Care

With a rate that is nearly double the national average, Florida ranks at the top of states nationally in its number of uninsured children. More than 400,000 of Florida's youngest, most vulnerable citizens do not have health insurance. Children without health insurance do not receive adequate care, often don't get prompt treatment when they are ill, and when they enter a hospital in Florida, they are 1.5 times as likely to die there as are insured children.

- **Extend** KidCare coverage to include children of "lawfully residing" immigrants as allowed by federal law and funded with federal matching dollars under provisions of the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA): \$14.5 million.

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 Early Steps intervention system, offering services to children (birth to 36 months) with significant delays or a condition likely to result in a development delay.

Mentoring

The Movement, working with United Way and others from around the state and through the support of Carol and Barney Barnett, is entering Year Three of ReadingPals – an early literacy initiative focused on reading by grade 3. The goal: Provide a mentor to at-risk children in 10 Florida regions – from VPK through the third grade.