

Early Learning Bills

There is an early learning bill, **HB 1013** proposed by Representative Erin Grall (Indian River) and a companion bill, **SB 1688** submitted by Senator Harrell (Port St. Lucie) in the Senate. The bill is highly comprehensive and includes (but is not limited to) the following VPK related components:

Coordinated Screenings:

- ★ All children in VPK will participate in coordinated screenings and individual skill assessments.
- ★ Student's performance results must be shared with parents within seven days of completing assessments.
- ★ Children not ready for Kindergarten by the end of VPK will be referred for appropriate services.
- ★ Implementation of a new coordinated screening and assessment plan from PreK – Third Grade

VPK Accountability:

- ★ VPK Providers will participate in a program assessment (similar to the School Readiness Assessment which is based on teacher child interactions AND includes an emotional and behavioral component).
- ★ VPK performance metrics will include pre and post assessment (with learning gains made during year).
- ★ Specialized training and professional development will be required for VPK directors and educators to ensure they are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to support child outcomes

Other changes:

- ★ A \$12 million Increase in VPK Base Student Allocation (BSA) back to 2008 level
- ★ Full transition of the Office of Early Learning (OEL) into the Department of Education
- ★ Replaces the Early Learning Advisory Council with the **Early Grades Success Advisory Committee**
- ★ Sets up independent third party consultants to establish Counties' School Readiness market rate

ELC has already been actively meeting with local legislators as well as those from throughout the state. Additionally, ELC Broward was an active participant of Broward Days, a nonprofit group advocating for the needs and concerns of residents of Broward County. The ELC joined the Broward County Board of Commissioners, the League of Cities, business community, and other non-profit service leaders to meet with the Florida Legislature in Tallahassee during Broward Days on January 21st and 22nd.

Bill Progress:

★ HB 1013 has received a lot of support and praise throughout the State from the early learning community as well as legislators from the House and Senate. To date HB 1013 and SB 1688 have been heard and successfully passed through the relevant subcommittees in the Florida House: *PreK-12 Innovations* under Education as well as *PreK-12 Appropriations* and the full *Education and Appropriation* Committees and is now in its second reading. The companion senate bill also reported favorably from the *Senate Education* Committee and is pending a final vote in the *Senate Appropriations* Committee.

For additional information contact **Renee Jaffe**, Chief Executive Officer at rjaffe@elcbroward.org.

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Other Early Learning bills currently being considered:

Early Learning and K-3: SB 88 Steward – HB 111 Williams

These two bills require that vehicles used by child care facilities to transport children be equipped with DCF-approved alarm system prompting the driver to manually inspect vehicle for children¹.

Early Childhood Music Education Incentive Pilot Program: SB 156 Perry – HB 1321 Aloupis

These similar bills extend the scheduled expiration of the Early Childhood Incentive Pilot Program from June 2020 through June 2022 and modifies eligibility requirements. The bill modifies the eligibility for a school district to participate in the program by allowing the superintendent to certify that specified elementary schools have a comprehensive music education program, rather than all of them.

Child Care Subsidies for Foster Parents SB 354 Montford – HB 193

These identical bills provide early education or child care subsidies for certain foster parents. In addition to the foster care room and board rate, a foster parent who is required under s. 39.604 to place a child in an early education or a child care program and who chooses a program in which the state subsidy from an early learning coalition under part VI of chapter 1002 is insufficient to pay the full cost, shall receive a payment of up to \$300 per month to pay the difference between the amount of the early learning coalition subsidy and the full cost of the services.²

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) SB 1132 Brandes – HB 663 Newton

These bills establish grant funding for practitioners to begin evidence-based home visitation programs. The new grant is established to fund HIPPY programs throughout the state to support the development and operation of such programs, which help empower parents to be their child's first and most important teacher by equipping them with the tools, skills, and confidence needed to educate their children at home.

Child Welfare: SB 236 Book – HB 449 Mariano

These bills authorize circuit courts to create early childhood court programs and requiring certain early childhood components in these programs. Authorizes Trial Court Budget Commission to provide funding to circuit courts that choose to establish coordination system in lieu of creating community coordinator position; requires DCF to contract with certain university-based centers; requires university-based centers to hire clinical director.

Two-Generational Approach: SB 1624 Perry– HB 1323 Aloupis

These bills require the auditor general to complete audits of family assistance programs and document eligibility requirements, frequency of redetermination and other factors for families. It also revises definitions of income and changes service priorities within the School Readiness program.

¹ Note that in Broward County, this is already a local requirement which is enforced by BC Childcare Licensing.

² ELC of Broward County already prioritizes foster parents required to enroll children in our programs for subsidy assistance.