



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Florida Legislature and Governor DeSantis Prioritize Early Education with Over \$1.7 Billion in Funding**

*This funding will accelerate the goal of increasing child outcomes through access to quality early care and education*

During the 2024 regular Florida Legislative Session, the legislature passed over 300 bills and a \$117.4 billion budget for FY 2024-25. With \$30.1 billion allocated to education, this year's budget invests \$1.7 billion in early childhood education, emphasizing supports to providers and the importance of structures that increase kindergarten readiness and allow families to remain in the workforce.

*"By supporting quality early learning in Florida," said Representative Dana Trabulsy, "we are not only laying a foundation for growth and success for our children, but also addressing the biggest barrier for families to enter the workforce."*

#### **Early Learning Budget Highlights Include:**

##### ***\$1.7 billion for Early Learning programs***

- \$23 million to address the child care fiscal cliff for Florida's working families;
- \$46.4 million to increase School Readiness provider reimbursement rates;
- \$12 million to provide a 3% increase to the per-child funding for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program;
- \$4.1 million to establish a summer bridge program for children who are identified with needing additional literacy supports prior to kindergarten; and
- \$5 million dedicated to child care tax credits for employers who support their employees with child care accessibility and affordability.

*"We will not rest on our success", said Senator Alexis Calatayud. "This upcoming session, the Florida early learning advocacy ecosystem must stand united for a significant investment in school readiness income eligibility increases to ensure the American Dream of economic upward mobility is accessible to all, without hard working households experiencing the devastating financial hardship of the social benefit fiscal cliff, only further exacerbated by constitutionally required increasing minimum wage."*

*Floridians deserve a subsidized workforce childcare system that rewards and incentivizes the hardest working parents, and includes two-parent households."*

Prioritizing the needs of Florida's youngest learners contributes significantly to the overall well-being and prosperity of Florida's communities. These critical investments in early learning will increase child learning outcomes through quality care and education. The Association of Early Learning Coalitions thanks Governor DeSantis, Senate President Passidomo, and House Speaker Renner for their dedicated leadership and continued investment in early education. Additionally, the AELC thanks the legislative members and staff for their unwavering support and recognition that early learning begins at birth.

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#### **About the Association of Early Learning Coalitions (AELC)**

The [AELC](https://www.aelc.org) works with Florida's 30 early learning coalitions and RCMA to leverage resources and strengthen best practices in support of high quality early learning programs that increase child outcomes. The AELC advocates for continued investment in early learning to increase access, affordability, parental choice and workforce participation across the state.