

September 30, 2014

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Dear Directors:

Pursuant to Chapter 216, Florida Statutes, our Long Range Program Plan (LRPP) for the Office of Early Learning is submitted in the format prescribed in the budget instructions. The information provided electronically and contained herein is a true and accurate presentation of our mission, goals, objectives and measures for Fiscal Year 2014-15 through Fiscal Year 2018-19. The internet website address that provides the link to the LRPP located on the Florida Fiscal Portal is <http://floridafiscalportal.state.fl.us/Document.aspx?ID=11023&DocType=PDF>.

This submission has been approved by Shan Goff, Executive Director.



Shan Goff
Executive Director

SHAN GOFF
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

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LONG RANGE PROGRAM PLAN

Fiscal Years

2015-2016 through 2019-2020

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FLORIDA'S OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING: MISSION

To administer and deliver a quality comprehensive early learning system of services

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES AND PROJECTION TABLES IN OFFICE PRIORITY ORDER

EARLY LEARNING SERVICES GOAL I:

Oversee continuous quality improvement and accountability for Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK) Education Program, providing every 4-year-old child in the state a high-quality early learning opportunity while practicing careful stewardship of resources.

Objective 1: Provide for availability of information and outreach activities to all families with 4-year-old children and all providers of early education services so they may participate in the VPK Program, Chapter 1002, Florida Statutes (F.S.).

Outcome 1.A: Percentage of children who participate in VPK who are ready for school when they enter kindergarten based on the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS) results. This measure is being replaced and new outcome results will be requested in 2015.

Baseline FY 2006-07	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18
90.80%	95.53%	96.03%	96.53%	97.03%	97.53%

Outcome 1.B: Percentage of all 4-year-old children served in the VPK program.

Baseline FY 2006-07	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18
56.96%	77.37%	77.40%	77.39%	77.40%	77.40%

EARLY LEARNING SERVICES GOAL II:

Oversee continuous quality improvement and accountability of School Readiness and Child Care Resource and Referral programs, while practicing responsible stewardship of resources, to enable parents to get information about child care and high-quality, full-choice, affordable early learning opportunities for their children allowing them to work and achieve financial self-sufficiency, Chapter 1002, F.S., Rule 6M-9.300, Florida Administrative Code.

Objective 2: Provide high quality, affordable early learning and child care services to all eligible Florida families.

Outcome 2.A: Percentage of children who participate in only the School Readiness Program or both the School Readiness and VPK programs who are ready for school when they enter kindergarten based on Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS) results. This measure is being revised and new outcomes will be requested in 2015.

Baseline					
FY 2006-07	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18
86.31%	88.30%	88.50%	88.70%	88.80%	88.90%

Outcome 2.B: Percentage of families receiving school readiness services who are offered child care resource and referral services.

Baseline					
FY 2006-07	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15	FY 2015-16	FY 2016-17	FY 2017-18
86.91%	71.16%	73.66%	76.16%	78.66%	81.16%

LINKAGE TO PRIORITIES OF THE SCOTT ADMINISTRATION

The Office of Early Learning has reviewed the priorities of the Scott administration, which are as follows:

- Accountability budgeting.
- Reduce government spending.
- Regulatory reform.
- Focus on job growth and retention.
- World class education.
- Reduce taxes.
- Phase out Florida’s corporate income tax.

The Office of Early Learning links its goals and objectives to the current administration’s priorities as it seeks to ensure all eligible Florida families receive access to early learning services through Child Care Resource and Referral, School Readiness and VPK programs. These programs provide access to quality, affordable early education and child care for children between the ages of 1 month and 5 years, when children’s brains develop as much as 90 percent of their lifetime intellectual potential. The following table matches this administration’s priorities to the office’s statutory mandate and operational focus.

Scott Administration Priority	Early Learning Operations
Accountability budgeting Reduce government spending	Careful stewardship of Florida’s resources through monitoring activities of its fraud prevention and recovery unit is a principal focus for the Office of Early Learning.
Regulatory reform World class education	By promulgating rules deliberately and aggressively in a number of areas including creating a statewide standardized contract, a curriculum review and approval process, child performance standards, and child screening and assessment, the office continues to ensure consistent, quality services to Florida’s children and support the development of a world class education system.
Focus on job growth and retention	OEL’s School Readiness Program supports the state’s workforce with quality affordable child care and early education programs that aid families to gain economic self-sufficiency while preparing children from birth to 5 for educational success. Supporting professional development for Florida’s early education and child care providers continues to be a key initiative in the office’s operations and plans.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Early Learning’s Long-Range Program Plan (LRPP) for fiscal years 2014–2015 through 2018–2019 is a goal-based, five-year planning document that identifies OEL’s goals, objectives and outcomes, structured around administration of early learning services—the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program and the School Readiness Program. OEL reviewed and evaluated past, current and projected performance data for all early learning services and activities. The evaluation used performance data and trends to adjust performance objectives and outcomes where necessary. The LRPP’s intended purpose provides strategic direction for the office to ensure its goals are attained and to serve as a resource for Florida citizens, policy makers and stakeholders.

OFFICE OF LEARNING’S PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

EARLY LEARNING SERVICES

In 2001, the Florida Legislature transferred the Florida Partnership for School Readiness and the responsibility for administering school readiness programs to the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI). Effective January 2, 2005, the legislature established the Office of Early Learning (OEL) within AWI to serve as the state’s principal organization responsible for enhancing early childhood education for Florida’s children.

On June 14, 2011, Governor Rick Scott approved Senate Bill 2156 referring to Governmental Reorganization. As a result, on October 1, 2011, AWI was transferred to the Department of Economic Opportunity. As part of this transfer, the early learning division became a separate budget entity within the Department of Education with a direct report to the governor, becoming Florida’s Office of Early Learning.

During the 2013 session, the legislature passed new early learning legislation. Designed to improve quality and bring more accountability and transparency to the state’s early learning programs, House Bill 7165 took effect July 1, moving OEL into the Florida Department of Education within the Office of Independent Education & Parental Choice, consolidating operational and programmatic duties and responsibilities for the VPK Program in OEL.

OEL administers three major early learning programs— the VPK Program, the School Readiness Program and the Child Care Resource and Referral Program.

Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program—In December 2004, the legislature created the VPK Program to fulfill the constitutional requirement that

“[e]very four-year old child in Florida shall be provided by the State a high quality pre-kindergarten learning opportunity in the form of an early childhood development and education program which shall be voluntary, high quality, free, and delivered according to professionally accepted standards” (see Article IX, Section 1(b) of the State Constitution).

OEL administers operational and programmatic requirements of the VPK program, which is universally available to every 4-year-old child in the state.

School Readiness Programs—In 1999, the legislature enacted the School Readiness Act (see Chapter 1002, F. S.). The act authorizes the establishment of school readiness programs administered at the local level by early learning coalitions and administered at the state level by OEL. School readiness programs are early childhood education and child care programs that are provided for specific populations of children based on need. As of 2014, this includes children who are economically disadvantaged (i.e., family income does not exceed 150 percent of federal poverty level), who have disabilities, or who are at risk of abuse, neglect or abandonment, homeless or victims of domestic violence. School readiness programs prioritize serving children from birth to 5 years of age.

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Program—Mandated by federal and state laws, the CCR&R Program is a free service that helps families locate an early learning provider that meets their needs. The CCR&R network office is housed in OEL. The program provides information and referral services to individuals seeking child care and also provides training and technical assistance to child care providers, enhancing the quality of care and expanding the capacity for services. State CCR&R network staff provide technical assistance and training in areas including community outreach; consumer/public awareness activities; quality customer service; staff development and program oversight; and recruiting and retaining child care providers.

Early Learning Coalitions—The OEL administers the VPK, school readiness and CCR&R programs at the state level and coordinates local service delivery through 30 early learning coalitions that provide services in each of Florida's 67 counties. Each coalition board is composed of at least 15 but not more than 30 members. The governor appoints the board chair plus two additional members for each coalition. Remaining members are appointed locally from the coalition's local community.

Early Learning Advisory Council—The 2004 legislation also created the Florida Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC), which is composed principally of the chairs of the early learning coalitions. The Governor appoints the advisory council chair. Two additional members are appointed by the presiding officers of the legislature. The advisory council submits recommendations to OEL on best practices, including recommendations relating to the most effective administration of the VPK Program and the School Readiness Program.

Child Care Executive Partnership—OEL also administers the Child Care Executive Partnership (CCEP) program—an innovative, public/private partnership program created by the Florida Legislature in 1996 to help employers meet the needs of their working parents by providing financial assistance to cover child care expenses. The CCEP helps private business and charitable foundations match federal and state funding on a dollar-for-dollar basis to provide child care services to participating employee families. Employers investing in employee child care increase the impact of child care assistance funds by 200 percent.

OFFICE PARTNERS

LIST OF ALL TASK FORCES

The OEL and staff members are involved with several initiatives, which include the Children and Youth Cabinet; the Governor's Child Adoption and Permanency Council; the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care; the Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers; Florida's Transition Project for Infants, Young Children and Their Families; Help Me Grow Florida; Interagency Agreement to Coordinate Services for Children Served by More than One Agency; PreK Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Early Childhood; Florida Expanding Opportunities for Early Childhood Inclusion; Florida Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS); Florida Association for Information and Referral Services (FLAIRS); Military Child Care Collaboration; and Preventing Childhood Obesity State Team among others.

SIGNIFICANT STUDIES

The Office of Early Learning was the designated fiscal agent for federal funding that supported the State Advisory Council. The council's overall responsibility tied to OEL's mission by assisting the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early education and care, which are designed to improve school readiness and early learning services. A major project within the advisory council's scope was to commission the Early Education and Care Workforce Study. This comprehensive, statewide study was concluded and published in spring 2013 and provides baseline data on early education and care personnel, which includes

- Professional preparation and development.
- Ethnic and linguistic background.
- Compensation and tenure.

The study's goal was to inform the development and enhancement of a quality early care and education system.

The council's scope included a statewide needs assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry. The assessment included a measure of the availability of high-quality prekindergarten services for low-income children in the state.

This Early Education and Care Needs Assessment informs state and local early childhood professionals, policy makers and service providers about issues affecting families and children, from birth to school entry. The data gathered allows the state to identify gaps and opportunities; make data-driven decisions to prioritize areas; and develop recommendations to improve or sustain supports, services and policies for Florida's early learning system. Ultimately, this effort should improve the quality, accessibility and affordability of Florida's early education and care programs.

PLANNING APPROACH OF THE OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

Working with early learning coalitions, providers, educators, policy makers, legislators, early child education advocates, parents, families and other early learning stakeholders, the OEL solicited input to guide development of its strategic plan. Concurrently, during the 2013 legislative session, the Florida Legislature passed House Bill 7165, which moved OEL into the Florida Department of Education and consolidated VPK responsibilities formerly assigned to a DOE bureau within OEL.

OEL adopted a strategic plan that incorporates its key principles—greater transparency, accountability and quality throughout the state’s early learning system. Simply stated, OEL increased accountability and transparency at state and local levels through clear, efficient governance to deliver quality early learning services for children and families.

OEL’s mission is to administer and deliver a quality comprehensive system of early learning services. Its vision is that every child in Florida has access to quality early learning services.

The office set forth four strategic goals. The first goal is to increase accountability at state and local levels to best serve Florida’s children and families. The second goal is to increase transparency at state and local levels to provide all early learning stakeholders with information that is relevant, accessible, timely and accurate. Goal three is to improve the quality of early learning programs. The fourth goal is to sustain a statewide early learning system with a clear governance structure to maximize efficient use of resources.

Serving in an advisory capacity to OEL is the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC), an advisory board made up of Governor-appointed early learning coalition chairs, which provides early learning advice and consultation at the state level. The council submits recommendations about early learning policy to OEL.

ELAC members are expected to use their business expertise to provide oversight to their local early learning coalition; form and implement ideas to maximize funding received from the state; form and maintain community partnerships to include their local legislators; advise the early learning community on ways to ensure Florida’s youngest children are prepared to enter school; and advise community leaders on early learning needs and accomplishments within the community.

The ELAC, in addition to local early learning coalitions, provide valuable input that helps OEL administer the state’s early learning programs effectively and efficiently.

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

EARLY LEARNING SERVICES

Florida's early learning programs and services provide valuable early educational opportunities for families and their young children to help increase the likelihood of ongoing educational achievement and future success. The OEL is dedicated to ensuring accessible, affordable and high-quality early learning services for Florida's children and families by supporting the following primary goals for Florida's early learning system:

- Administer operational requirements of Florida's VPK Program in a timely and effective manner so that every 4-year-old child can receive a high-quality early learning opportunity.
- Oversee continuous quality improvement and accountability for quality, affordable early education and child care through the School Readiness Program, providing Florida's working and underemployed families the opportunity to achieve economic self-sufficiency.
- Administer Child Care Resource and Referral programs to inform parents with child care information, local community services and high-quality, full-choice early learning opportunities for their children.

OEL is responsible for administering early learning programs and services at the state level. It is responsible for adopting and maintaining coordinated programmatic, administrative, and fiscal policies and standards for all local early learning coalitions. Florida's 30 early learning coalitions are responsible for planning and implementing early learning programs at the local level. In partnership with 30 early learning coalitions and more than 11,500 child care providers, Florida's early learning programs serve more than 350,000 children and their families annually.

The following trends and conditions create challenges for administering and delivering Florida's early learning programs:

- Approximately 49 percent of the 1.3 million children younger than age 6 living in Florida are from low-income families who fall below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. According to the August 2014 Florida Demographic Database and the OEL Fact Book, school readiness programs serve approximately 25 percent of those children. Funding for school readiness programs has remained approximately constant.
- With current economic conditions, increased demand for child care (there is a monthly average of slightly more than 45,000 children on School Readiness Program wait lists statewide), the rising cost of quality child care and increasing demands and requirements for child care providers, early learning coalitions must balance deciding whether to serve more children, pay more to providers or increase child care quality.
- With ongoing delivery of VPK and demand for higher quality early learning educational programs, early learning coalitions are increasing monitoring and technical assistance to child care providers to ensure accountability and improved quality. While there was an increase in the Base Student Allocation this year, it has not returned to pre-recession level and continues to strain the limited administrative funds available to the coalitions for VPK responsibilities.
- Ongoing delivery of VPK has highlighted the need to ensure that there are enough willing, able and qualified providers and teachers to serve all of the families who want their children to participate in the program. There are administrative funding limitations at both state and local levels to

systematically ensure that there are enough qualified early learning providers and teachers. Partnering with the state's workforce system has filled some gaps, but additional funds are needed to ensure that there is a qualified early learning workforce to meet the demand.

- The current data system, the Enhanced Field System (EFS), cannot adequately support the administrative and programmatic needs of a statewide early learning system. EFS is a distributed data system that is more than 10 years old, outdated and independently maintained at each local early learning coalition or contractor site.

In June 2007 the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) re-launched the development and implementation of the Early Learning Information System (ELIS), a web-enabled, centralized data system for supporting families, providers, coalitions, and Florida's Office of Early Learning in tracking all aspects of the state's early learning system. During the 2010 Legislative session, the AWI's Office of Early Learning secured the funding to continue developing and designing ELIS.

After the reorganization and establishment of Florida's Office of Early Learning in 2011, authority to continue funding the project was provided in HB5001—General Appropriations Act enacted in March 2012 for Fiscal Year 2012-2013. ELIS was intended to be used to administer a \$1.1 billion early learning budget and provide the following benefits:

- Streamline administrative processes including attendance tracking, eligibility processing and provider payments.
- Reduce potential fraud and overpayments.
- Create data sharing capabilities between educators, parents, providers and state agencies.
- Allow parents easy on-line access to child care resource and referral information along with child development and early education information.
- Allow providers easy on-line access to update program information and enter attendance for children enrolled in the School Readiness and VPK programs.

The updated feasibility study estimated a cost savings of \$26 million a year due to enhanced efficiencies in program operations. The cost savings could potentially be used to fund 7,000 more children every year in the School Readiness Program.

On March 31, 2010, AWI–OEL entered into a contractual agreement with Hewett Packard (HP) to build ELIS. Work proceeded somewhat smoothly until fall 2010, when HP was placed on its first corrective action plan, which was completed in January 2011. In fall 2011, HP was placed on its second corrective action plan, which was accepted in January 2012. Payments to HP ceased in November 2012, when a significant milestone was not reached. Subsequent payments were not made and liquidated damages, consistent with the contract, began accruing. On July 11, 2013, HP and OEL entered into a settlement agreement. According to the terms of the settlement, HP completed delivery of the source code, documentation, hardware and supporting software to OEL. OEL has since confirmed inventories of hardware and third-party software.

An independent verification and validation vendor completed a compensative post mortem on the ELIS project. OEL then researched and identified four options to consider in moving forward with the establishment of a single statewide system. The four options included 1) developing a new system

using the ELIS source code, 2) purchasing a commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) package, 3) developing the system using another state's source code of a similar system, and 4) developing a custom system.

OEL conducted and completed a review of the available ELIS code and found it unusable. OEL also determined the option of procuring a COTS package was cost prohibitive at this time. OEL then contracted with an outside vendor to do a comprehensive review of other states' systems looking for applications that were similar to OEL's current EFS system and paid with Child Care Development Trust Funds, which allows the transfer to OEL at little to no cost. Understanding that every state is unique, and after careful consideration and detailed analysis of the options, OEL decided to obtain the source code from the Mississippi Department of Human Services Child Care Payment System. The Mississippi system meets many of Florida's requirements but will need to be modified to meet the state of Florida's needs. OEL is currently conducting a gap analysis of the Mississippi system and planning for the modifications needed.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND STANDARDS—LRPP EXHIBIT II

LRPP EXHIBIT II - PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND STANDARDS

Department: Office of Early Learning	Department No.: 48000000
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Program: Early Learning	Code:48220000
Service/Budget Entity: Early Learning Services	Code:48220400

NOTE: Approved primary service outcomes must be listed first.

Approved Performance Measures for FY 2012-13 (Words)	Approved Prior Year Standard FY 2012-13 (Numbers)	Prior Year Actual FY 2012-13 (Numbers)	Approved Standards for FY2013-14(Numbers)	Requested Standard FY 2014-15 (Numbers)
Percentage of children "ready" for school when they enter kindergarten	95.3%	95.03%	95.53%	96.03%
Number of 4 year olds enrolled in Voluntary Prekindergarten	174,251	174,251	170,828	172,706

**Based on estimates from August 2014 VPK Estimating Conference.*

**ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE FOR APPROVED
PERFORMANCE MEASURES—LRPP EXHIBIT III**

LRPP EXHIBIT III: PERFORMANCE MEASURE ASSESSMENT

Department: Office of Early Learning

Program: Early Learning

Service/Budget Entity: Early Learning Services

Measure: Percentage of children "ready" for school when they enter kindergarten

Action:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance Assessment of Outcome Measure | <input type="checkbox"/> Revision of Measure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Assessment of Output Measure | <input type="checkbox"/> Deletion of Measure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustment of GAA Performance Standards | |

Approved Standard	Actual Performance Results	Difference (Over/Under)	Percentage Difference
93%	77.6%	(15.4%)	16.5%

Factors Accounting for the Difference:

Internal Factors (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Factors | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Capacity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competing Priorities | <input type="checkbox"/> Level of Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Previous Estimate Incorrect | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Explanation:

External Factors (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resources Unavailable | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technological Problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal/Legislative Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Disaster |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Target Population Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This Program/Service Cannot Fix The Problem | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current Laws Are Working Against The Agency Mission | |

Explanation: The current outdated EFS system has posed technological challenges to the agencies and staff that use this system to enter and maintain the School Readiness data resulting in incomplete data entries in a system that requires dual data entry in the Child Care Resource and Referral and School Readiness parts of the database. Due to an increase in unemployment, the target population of School Readiness clients has declined, since one of the primary requirements of the School Readiness program is that the parent(s) be employed. In addition to this factor, there has been a reduction in State funds available for School Readiness causing an increase in School Readiness wait lists.

Management Efforts to Address Differences/Problems (check all that apply):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Recommendations: Florida's Office of Early Learning is developing a new Early Learning Information database system that will be implemented by January, 2016. This new system will eliminate duplicate data entry by staff; reduce staff time by utilizing a customer and provider portal for some of the functions currently performed by staff, allowing more funds to be utilized for School Readiness enrollments.

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ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTING TO PERFORMANCE MEASURES—LRPP EXHIBIT V

LRPP EXHIBIT VI: IDENTIFICATION OF ASSOCIATED ACTIVITY CONTRIBUTING TO PERFORMANCE MEASURES			
LRPP EXHIBIT VII: IDENTIFICATION OF ASSOCIATED ACTIVITY CONTRIBUTING TO PERFORMANCE MEASURES (CONTINUED)			
Measure Number	Approved Performance Measures for FY 2012-13 (Words)		Associated Activities Title
43	Percentage of children "ready" for school when they enter kindergarten		Provide Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Services Provide School Readiness Services
44	Number of 4 year olds enrolled in Voluntary Prekindergarten		Provide Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Services

APPENDIX - GLOSSARY OF AGENCY'S UNIQUE TERMS AND ACRONYMS

ARRA—American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

CCDF—Child Care Development Fund

CCEP—Child Care Executive Partnership

CCR&R—Child Care Resource and Referral

CDA—Child Development Associate

ECHOS—Early Childhood Observation System

EFS—Enhanced Field System

ELC—Early Learning Coalition

FLKRS—Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener

OEL—Office of Early Learning

SR—School Readiness

VPK—Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program