

**Palm Beach County's Children's Services Council,  
Early Learning Coalition and Healthy Beginnings Coalition**

***A Comprehensive System For Early Childhood Is Within Reach!***

**2010 Legislative Priorities**

***\*\*\*Background and Talking Points\*\*\****

**Position Florida for Federal Funds**

Significant federal funds for home visiting, early learning and various early childhood initiatives are available or being debated in Congress. Florida should position itself to take advantage of all federal funds for early childhood programs and system development by providing resources to conduct planning processes, make application, and provide required matching and maintenance of effort funds. Florida's poor standing in the receipt of federal funds and the benefit of the funds to our economy make it essential to be ready to apply.

**Background**

**Early Childhood Advisory Councils**-The Head Start reauthorization requires governors to designate or establish an advisory council to improve the quality, availability and coordination of services for children from birth to school entry. The act designates certain membership of the council but may include representatives deemed relevant by the Governor who must also designate an individual to coordinate the activities of the council.

Florida is currently in the process of developing an application for its advisory council. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding for Head Start includes \$100,000,000 for State Advisory Councils which will "lead the development or enhancement of a high-quality, comprehensive system of early childhood development and care that ensures statewide coordination and collaboration among the wide range of early childhood programs in the state including child care, Head Start, IDEA, preschool and infants and families programs and prekindergarten programs and services" (Administration for Children and Families ACF).

The application deadline is August 1, 2010. The federal share of the cost of activities shall be 30% and the state share is 70%, which may be met by cash or in-kind contributions. It has been estimated that Florida could receive \$4 million for the advisory council and related activities.

Proposed **Early Learning Challenge Grants** would make available \$1 billion a year over 8 years in competitive grants that would challenge states to build a comprehensive, high-quality early learning system for children birth to 5 that includes: early learning standards reform, evidence-based program quality standards, enhanced program review and monitoring of program quality; comprehensive professional development, a coordinated system for facilitating screenings for health, disabilities or mental health, improved support to parents, a process for assessing children's school readiness and using data to improve child health outcomes. Funds are available for renewable quality pathways grants and development grants, which are not renewable.

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**Home Visiting** The President's budget proposed \$8.6 billion over 10 years for a new mandatory program that provides funds to states for evidence-based home visiting programs for low-income families. Various home visiting and health care proposals make available funding to state and or local governments for rigorously evaluated home visiting programs.

**HR 2667 The Early Support for Families Act** would provide grants to states for high quality home visiting programs. The grants would be distributed to states that meet application requirements based on the number of children in families living below 200% of the poverty level. The grants require maintenance of effort beginning in 2011. The bill places priority funding for programs with the strongest evidence. This is achieved by providing a diminishing percentage of funds available for programs that do not adhere to models of home visitation with the strongest evidence of effectiveness: The bill appropriates \$100 million for fiscal year 2010 and increases annually to \$700 million for fiscal year 2014.

**S 1267 the Evidence-Based Home Visitation Act of 2009** introduced in the Senate June 16 would also provide grants to establish or expand quality home visitation programs for low-income families. The bill does not specify the amount of match or the funding that would go to programs that have a strong level of effectiveness. The bill calls for initial funding of \$100 million in FY 2010 and increasing to \$700 million by 2014.

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