

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

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

3. Support a Statewide System of Evidence and Research-Based Programs to Improve Birth Outcomes, Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect and Improve School Readiness

Position Florida for federal home visiting program funds. Support a statewide system of evidenced based and research based home visiting programs in which local communities can select programs that achieve outcomes for target populations such as Nurse Family Partnership, Parent Child Home, Healthy Families and others that help children be ready for school, healthy and free from abuse. Maintain funding with increased rigorous evaluation of home visiting.

Background

A number of proposals for funding evidenced based home visiting programs are being debated in Congress. Florida has committed to home visiting and should be prepared to support an application if the proposals include competitive grants to states. These proposals have emphasized evidenced based home visiting programs.

Healthy Start -Fund and support development of data-driven, research based programs and strategies for pregnant women, mothers and newborns. **This program includes matching federal funds.**

Background: In response to the Governor’s budget instructions, the Department of Health has proposed a \$6.4 million reduction in funding for Healthy Start and the Agency for Health Care Administration has proposed reducing Medicaid coverage for pregnant women from 185% of federal poverty level to 150% of federal poverty level.

The Healthy Start Program provides essential prenatal and support services to at risk and low income pregnant women. A continued investment in women and newborns will create a significant return in the form of savings on future health, development, social and education costs through improved birth outcomes. Home Visiting Programs that target high-risk mothers and children return an average of \$3.00 for every \$1.00 invested. Assure that all Federal funds are drawn down. This program includes federal matching funds that could be lost if state funds are reduced.

Healthy Families –Fund the Healthy Families Florida program and continue to add to evaluation research about the program.

Background: An independent five-year evaluation shows that the Healthy Families program had a significant impact on preventing child abuse and neglect. Families who did not receive Healthy Families services were significantly more likely to abuse or neglect their children than families who completed or received long-term services. Healthy Families participants had 20 percent less child abuse and neglect than all families living in the target service area. Investing early is more cost effect than treating the consequences of abuse and neglect once it has occurred and it is the right thing to do.
