



HOUSE PROPOSED COMMITTEE BILL

AMENDING SECTION 411.0102

SCHOOL READINESS ACT

In the Proposed House Committee Bill dealing with School Readiness, the Business and Community Affairs Sub Committee eliminates all children of school age working poor families including 6, 7, and 8 years olds. These children will no longer be eligible for school readiness child care. At a minimum 25,000 children will go un-served or be dis-enrolled.

Section 6. Section XX Florida Statutes is created to read:

XX SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT

- (1) Each early learning coalition shall give priority for participation in the school readiness program as follows:
- (a) Priority shall be given first to a child from birth through age twelve from a working family receiving temporary cash assistance under ch. 414.
 - (b) Priority shall be given next to an at-risk child from birth through age eight from a working family.
 - (c) Priority shall be given next to a child from birth to the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2. from a working family that is economically disadvantaged. However, the child ceases to be eligible if his or her family income exceeds 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

The proposal limits services to children birth to age five for children in low-income families and birth to age eight for children in protective services; the immediate impact will be disenrollment of thousands of children statewide, with the potential of impacting family work

- Almost 750,000 (25%) of Florida’s K-12 youth are responsible for taking care of themselves after school. These children spend an average of 15 hours per week unsupervised afterschool.
- According to the Office of Early Learning, approximately 32,000 children ages 6,7 and 8 of “working poor” families would be dis-enrolled or go unserved.

Attendance at quality afterschool programs has been linked to higher test scores, greater gains in scores, and upward shifts in proficiency levels on standardized test scores.

- The Legislative Office of Program Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability (OPPAGA) found that elementary and middle school participants in the Boys and Girls Clubs performed better on the FCAT in reading (in elementary school) and math at grade level versus a comparison group of students who were not in quality afterschool programs.
- Florida Tax Watch study of Boys and Girls Clubs: found participating students to have gains on both reading and math standardized test scores.
- Tampa Metropolitan YMCA: reports participating students showing gains in scores on standardized reading math tests.
- National Institute on Out of School Time (NIOST) evaluation of Jacksonville TEAM UP: found gains on both standardized tests of reading and math.
- Ounce of Prevention evaluation of YMCA Reads: found reading improvement across the board, regardless of grade level, gender, or race.
- University of Florida evaluation of Florida’s 21st Century Community Learning Centers: found that students participating at a minimum of 12 hours per week consistently have higher math and reading scores on standardized tests.

The Cost of Reduced Productivity Among Parents with Kids Who are Not in Afterschool Programs.

- A Brandeis University and Catalyst, a NY based non-profit research firm, study of 1755 working parents at three Fortune 100 companies found that parental concern about afterschool time (PCAST) “can be very toxic to employee attitudes, work performance and well-being. The study estimates that with over 52 million working parents in the US, PCAST contributes to worker stress and can cost businesses up to \$300 billion annually in lost job productivity.
- American Business Collaboration (ABC) a collaboration of leading U.S. companies (Champions) noted that the issue of afterschool is critical for parents, children, businesses and communities. “Working parents want their children to be safe and engaged in age-appropriate, constructive activities during out-of-school time hours. Employers are concerned about the impact on their employees' productivity. Productivity is often compromised if parents worry about children during after-school.

- **Question 1.** How does the Florida Legislature expect 6, 7, and 8 year olds to take care of themselves?
- **Question 2.** What is the cost to businesses in terms of lost productivity while parents worry and check up on kids.
- **Question 3.** If a parent does leave a 6, 7, or 8 year old to care for themselves is there a potential allegation of “lack of supervision” against a working parent?”
- **Question 4.** What is the cost to the state of Florida if the child welfare system intervenes in terms of possible Abuse Hot Line calls for kids left un-supervised afterschool?