

Early Learning Update

OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING

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Early learning – what to watch for this spring.

- ✓ The House Education Committee held a first reading for House Bill 7069 titled *Early Learning and Child Care Regulation* on opening day of the 2014 legislative session. It was ranked favorably (including some amendments) and referred to the Education Appropriations Subcommittee.
- ✓ The process of promulgating the administrative rules needed to implement HB 7165 (last year's early learning bill) has begun. OEL held two workshops about revising the rule for school readiness curricula in February. A workshop on an anti-fraud plan is scheduled for March 20.
- ✓ Governor Rick Scott's *It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget* includes an increase of \$59 million overall for early learning. House and Senate Education Appropriations subcommittees will be considering those recommendations as the legislative session progresses.
- ✓ Expect to see many events of interest during the 2014 Children's Week coming up in early April. The Children's Forum is holding a luncheon for business leaders on April 7 in Tallahassee.

Follow the latest news about early learning in the [News section](#) of the early learning website.

Spotlight on VPK

If you want your 4-year-old to be well-prepared for kindergarten in Florida, the [results of the just-released kindergarten readiness rates](#) suggest that sending them to one of the state's free VPK programs would be a wise decision. For the fifth consecutive year, results from screening children as they began kindergarten last fall show that those who completed VPK were better prepared for kindergarten than those who only attended part of the program or did not participate at all.

Governor Scott has included an increase in the base student allocation of \$100 per child for the school-year and summer programs in his budget. He is promoting that as he visits VPK programs in Florida.

Ranked first in the country for access to prekindergarten, equally important, Florida's readiness rate results show that VPK is working for the 4-year-olds who attend.

N.E.W.S.

NorthEastWestSouth

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The **Early Learning Coalition of Northwest Florida** was the site for a visit by Gov. Rick Scott March 12 as he highlighted his early learning budget proposals at the Academy of Science and Discovery Preschool in Panama City. Twin 5-year-old girl VPK students led the Governor through the center.

If it is March, it must be time to register for VPK. The **ELC of the Big Bend Region** held a "Summer Camp Splash" Sat., March 8, and reported great success as they launched a new single-point-of-entry online sign-up system working with the Office of Early Learning. The **ELC of Duval** reported that they enrolled more than 1,500 4-year-olds in VPK over the last weekend in February using their new online VPK system.

The **ELC of Pasco and Hernando Counties** will host a 5th annual "Story-book Forest" event Sat., April 5, to celebrate Children's Week and support early childhood literacy. The free event is one of hundreds held statewide to raise awareness about early education among legislators and community leaders. There will be interactive displays based on children's books. Children will learn about stories through hands-on activities and create a related make-and-take project at each display. Storytellers will bring tales to life and children will get a chance to meet and greet their favorite characters such as Clifford the Big Red Dog, Super Why, Curious George, The Man in the Yellow Hat, and many more!

The **ELC of Palm Beach County** took part in *Stand up Against Bullying Day* on Feb. 26, wearing pink shirts and listening to a national expert on the subject.

The Governor's Corner by Governor Rick Scott

During the recent opening of the 2014 Legislative Session, we took the time to review how far Florida has come. Four years ago, unemployment was high, home values were shrinking and more people left the state of Florida than moved in from other states. Now,

thanks to our pro-growth policies and the efforts of our public servants, our unemployment rate is down, our crime rate is at a 42-year low, our tourism industry is breaking records, and we have added almost half a million jobs.

With the help of our dedicated public servants, we are working together to create an opportunity economy in Florida. We are

continuing to pay down debt and cut taxes for Florida families and small businesses by \$500 million. We're on the way to making Florida the best state in the nation to find a good job, raise a family, and achieve the American Dream. So let's keep working to make Florida number one.

Monthly State Report January 2014 School Readiness By Provider Type

	Private Center or School	Public Schools	Family Day Care Home	Informal	Total
Children Served in 2013-14 as of 1/2014	172,589	9,760	14,481	77	188,755
Providers Active in 2013-14 as of 1/2014	5,942	922	2,128	41	9,035

¹Duplication may exist if a child receives School Readiness services from more than one provider within the limits allowed by OEL policies.

²Duplication may exist if a provider's type changed during the service period.

By Care Level

	By Age								Total
	Infant	Toddler	2 Yr	3 Yr	4 Yr	5 Yr	School Age	Special Needs	
Children Served in 2013-14 as of 1/2014	9,605	20,935	26,663	28,934	28,772	16,293	56,706	845	188,755
Providers Active in 2013-14 as of 1/2014	4,355	5,652	6,133	6,237	6,347	5,848	6,614	547	9,035

¹Duplication may exist if a child receiving School Readiness services has a birthday during the service period.

VPK

By Provider Type

	Private Centers	Public Schools	Family Day Care Home	Private School	Total
Children Served in 2013-14 as of 1/2014	131,672	27,708	782	1,854	160,546
Providers Active in 2013-14 as of 1/2014	5,047	1,038	93	60	6,230

¹Duplication may exist if children receiving VPK services transfer among different providers within limits allowed by OEL policies.

²Duplication may exist if a provider's type changed during the period of time being examined.

Current Program Year Compared to the Previous Program Year

	School Year	Summer	Program Year
Children Served in 2013-14 as of 1/2014	160,546	0	160,546
Providers Active in 2013-14 as of 1/2014	6,230	0	6,230
Children Served in 2012-13 Final Count	167,303	6,938	174,241
Providers Active in 2012-13 Final Count	6,313	506	6,422

¹Duplication may exist if a provider participates in both VPK programs.