

VI. SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection criteria are the focal point of the application and peer review. A panel of peer reviewers will evaluate the applications based on the extent to which the selection criteria are addressed.

Core Areas -- Sections (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development. (20 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's—

(a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;

(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;

(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and

(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(1):

- The completed background data tables providing the State's baseline data for--
 - The number and percentage of children from Low-Income families in the State, by age (see Table (A)(1)-1);
 - The number and percentage of Children with High Needs from special populations in the State (see Table (A)(1)-2); and
 - The number of Children with High Needs in the State who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs, by age (see Table (A)(1)-3).

- Data currently available, if any, on the status of children at kindergarten entry (across Essential Domains of School Readiness, if available), including data on the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers.
- Data currently available, if any, on program quality across different types of Early Learning and Development Programs.
- The completed table that shows the number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years (2007-2011) (see Table (A)(1)-4).
- The completed table that shows the number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years (2007-2011) (see Table (A)(1)-5).
- The completed table that describes the current status of the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards for each of the Essential Domains of School Readiness, by age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers (see Table (A)(1)-6).
- The completed table that describes the elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-7).
- The completed table that describes the elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-8).
- The completed table that describes the elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State by different types of Early Learning and Development Programs or systems (see Table (A)(1)-9).
- The completed table that describes all early learning and development workforce credentials currently available in the State, including whether credentials are aligned with a State Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have each type of credential (see Table (A)(1)-10).
- The completed table that describes the current status of postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators (see Table (A)(1)-11).
- The completed table that describes the current status of the State’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment (see Table (A)(1)-12).
- The completed table that describes all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State (see Table (A)(1)-13).

(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development.

The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs—

For over a half a century, Florida has provided bold visionary leadership in shaping public policy and making significant investments to respond to the needs of high needs children. In 1946, the first of now 11 Children’s Services Councils was conceived in response to lack of services for at-risk children. In 1986, the Florida Legislature passed the Handicapped Prevention Act (Chapter 411, F.S.) requiring interagency collaboration toward implementing

a continuum of prevention and early intervention services focused on high-risk children. As early as the 1980s Florida's Department of Education had a premiere PreK program for at-risk children funded with lottery dollars. The '80s also brought state-of-the-art regional perinatal system for premature babies and former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno connected the dots between teen mothers, poverty, and early childhood by starting child care centers and employment training for low-income moms in the projects in Miami. Florida is the only state with legislation incentivizing teen parents to stay in school through health and social services, childcare, and transportation (Florida Dropout Prevention and Academic Intervention Act of 1986, amended in 1994 and 1997). Responding to high infant mortality rates, the late Governor Lawton Chiles birthed Florida's Healthy Start in 1991 (Florida Statutes, Section 409.906) with universal screening for all pregnant women and infants, which became the model for the federal Healthy Start. In 1998, Florida implemented Healthy Families, an intensive home visiting program in several Florida counties with proven success at preventing child abuse and neglect. Former Governor Jeb Bush furthered Florida's policies through The Florida School Readiness Act, 1999, with the intent of preparing children to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Subsequent legislation in 2004 created the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK), a free program for all four-year-olds.

Florida hopes to continue this tradition of valiant leadership for its youngest children with a successful application for Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge funds. Florida continues to be challenged by pervasive and growing poverty, lack of health care, emotional and behavioral challenges and lack of school readiness. Decades of longitudinal research have shown that quality early childhood programs can successfully alter the trajectory for children with high needs. However, there is no one single agency or program dedicated to coordinating the spectrum of physical and mental health, childcare, developmental or socio-economic needs of families with young children. This proposal offers a bold vision, an ambitious plan, and targeted resources to create a real integrated system to benefit children with high needs.

Florida's Young Children and Families

As the fourth largest state in the nation, with over 350 languages and a rich multicultural diversity, more than a million children birth to age 5 call Florida their home. Florida is a microcosm of our diverse multicultural nation with rural farms with seasonal migrant workers, large urban cities with many immigrant families, isolated fishing communities, busy tourist towns, small quaint towns with high unemployment, large retirement communities, 24 military installations with over 100,000 personnel, and even a Magic Kingdom. But Florida's children do not live in fairytale castles; rather, they have pervasive needs. Of the 7-million households in Florida, about 3 in 10 include children under the age of 18. A little more than a million of these

children are under the age of 5, representing 28% of Florida's total youth population. According to the KID COUNT data book, in Florida, 10% of the state's children were impacted by foreclosure since 2007, and in 2010, an estimated 468,000 or 12 % of children lived in households where there was at least one parent who was eligible for and or seeking employment, but was unemployed at the time the data were collected. Florida has the fourth largest number of children living in poverty nationally. An estimated 26.1% of children under age 6 live in povertyⁱ (defined as living at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or \$18,530/annual income for a family of three).ⁱⁱ For Florida children under age 6 who live in poverty, 66% live with a single parent. By almost every measure of health and development, children living in poverty are at greater risk for poorer outcomes than other children; they are more likely to have inadequate nutrition, mental health and emotional problems, accidents and injuries, and chronic health problems, dental problems, developmental delays and learning disabilities (*Children in poverty: Trends, consequences, and policy options*, 2002).

Fortunately, Florida has expansive early learning programs to support children with high needs. Head Start programs serve 42,667 low income children; 4,040 starting in pregnancy with Early Head Start until the child's third birthday and another 38,627 children ages 3-5 in Head Start. Even with this significant expansion, only 3% of all eligible birth to 3-year-olds are served and only 28% of eligible 3-5 year olds.

In addition to Head Start, Florida's children with high needs are served by a network of diverse child care programs, including the more than 10,000 child care providers who delivered Florida's child care subsidy program, School Readiness, in 2010-2011 and served more than 236,000 children. More than 6,000 providers offered the state's constitutionally established, free, Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education program to more than 157,000 4-year-old children in the same year. The state's network of early learning providers includes private centers and schools, family child care homes, public schools, faith-based organizations, and informal settings. Florida has a network of respected home visiting programs with a proven track record of family engagement, healthy birth outcomes, enhanced child development, child abuse prevention; and the state's IDEA Part C and B services strive to keep pace with the increasing number of young children with identified developmental delays.

Florida children served who are from low-income families with high needs, and considered within special populations with high needs, are shown in Tables (A)(1)-1 and (A)(1)-

2. Children supported by program area, in addition to historical data on these children are shown in Tables (A)(1)-3, (A)(1)-4 and (A)(1)-5.

The data demonstrate that there are more children from low-income families in Florida in the 3 to kindergarten entry age range than there are children ages birth-12 months or 1-3. In terms of high needs, the largest percentage of children birth to kindergarten entry from low-income families (3%) have developmental delays, as opposed to being English learners (1%), in foster care (1%), residing on Indian lands, migrant or homeless (each <1%). Florida's School Readiness (CCDF funded) program enrolls the largest number of young children (140,823) with developmental disabilities and other needs, followed by the state's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education program (81,005). The number of children with high needs served by Florida's VPK is steadily increasing, creating heightened need for high quality programs to serve them. As reflected in Table (A)(1)-4, *Florida has invested consistently* within the Early Learning and Development Programs. Although total State contributions to CCDF have decreased by about \$8-million over the past 5 years, VPK funding has increased by about \$41-million. Overall, State contributions to all early learning and development programs have increased about \$32-million over the past 5 years. In addition, Florida has two substantial sources of local match with the non-federal share of Head Start and the Children's Services Councils. During FY 2009, Florida Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant/Seasonal programs received a total of \$272,067,200 for 35,390 enrollment slots. As part of the 20% non-federal share of match, Florida's communities generated an additional \$54,413,440.

Florida is the only state in the country that has **Children's Services Councils (CSCs)** as investment partners. CSCs are a countywide special district created by ordinance, and approved by voters, to fund programs and services that improve the lives of children and their families. In 2010-2011 alone, Florida's 11 CSCs collectively invested more than \$370-million in hundreds of local programs and services for children and their families – primarily prevention and early intervention programs that produce measurable results. Among these investments are a voluntary, pilot Quality Rating Improvement System in 8 counties that includes more than 600 child care centers and 250 family child care homes; in Miami-Dade County the QRIS also includes all local Head Start and Early Head Start programs (72) and over 60 VPK classrooms in public schools. While the standards for these systems vary slightly among the counties, these pilot sites are working together to create shared standards and cross-county collaboration,

informing the statewide TQRIS being developed in this quality plan.

In tandem with consistent investments in early learning, *Florida has been planning and investing in its statewide early learning system for many years*. These efforts were solidified in 2006 with the collaborative adoption of a *clear and united vision*, articulated in Florida's Framework for Children (2006). [See **Appendix (A)(1)-1** Florida's Framework for Children]. This shared vision guides the development of quality programs and improvements by stakeholders across this state and serves as a united path for serving children and their families. The vision is also shared by the *Florida Children and Youth Cabinet*, which includes all child-serving state agency heads, and which added Safe and Supportive Communities to the vision. The Cabinet further developed key focus areas on 4 indicators important to the well being of Florida's youngest citizens: health care, kindergarten readiness scores, child abuse and neglect, and homelessness. These focus areas strengthen Florida's commitment to a quality early learning system, especially for children with high needs. The Cabinet also has been operating the *State Advisory Council*, and the State has the unique benefit of having the state's First Lady, Ann Scott, serve as Florida's Chief Child Advocate. This appointment demonstrates the Governor's commitment to the children of Florida and First Lady Ann Scott's eagerness to serve in this capacity illustrates the importance of this work.

In addition to this State-level impact, *Florida's early childhood system benefits from a strong local governance structure designed to meet the individual needs of each community*. There are 31 single- and multi-county Early Learning Coalitions (ELC) that serve each of the state's 67 counties. The ELCs are local, non-profit organizations established as community hubs for early learning and family services. Florida's OEL benefits from each ELC given the diversity of the State's population and variance in topography and geographic regions (i.e., rural panhandle versus major, metropolitan areas such as Orlando and Miami). Florida's OEL and other state agencies can rely upon the local expertise within each ELC to ensure services are catered to individual family needs, unique living conditions, and working environments. The ELCs are local implementers of the School Readiness program, VPK program and provide Child Care Resource and Referral services. The ELCs are funded, by legislative design, through the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), and generate private match dollars. The decentralized approach in Florida highlights the importance of services for the state's youngest children. The ELC have collaborated to build many of the state's local best-practice models for enhancing

quality and reaching more children with high needs.

The State's commitment to early learning is further demonstrated by implementation of the Early Learning Partners Initiative, **see Appendix (A)(1)-2**, in 2009 with American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funds. This allowed Florida's early learning system to make a significant investment in standardizing assessment and accountability practices and developing a statewide comprehensive professional development system. This initiative also engaged in further technology enhancements for child and program data collection and sharing, and developed the professional development registry, which will enable professionals within Florida to document their educational and professional accomplishments and follow a career pathway if they choose.

Focus on Children with High Needs

The numbers of children with high needs who are served by state early learning programs have been consistently increasing since 2007. The number has increased most significantly in the VPK program. Children served historically since 2007 are shown in Table (A)(1) -5.

The current programs where children are being served within Florida are:

Florida's State Funded Preschool: Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program

Florida is one of only three states in the nation with a voluntary, universal prekindergarten program. A total of 165,341 or 76.2% of all 4-year-olds in the state participate in VPK with choices in faith-based, community-based child care programs, Head Start) or public school programs.ⁱⁱⁱ

Head Start

The comprehensive federal child development program helps 4,040 low-income children starting in pregnancy with Early Head Start until the child's third birthday, 3% of all eligible birth to three-year-olds. Head Start is focused on children from ages 3-5 serving another 37,245 children, representing an enrollment of 28% of all eligible three- to five-year olds.

Services for Children with Special Needs

Children's Medical Services (CMS) provides services to children from birth to 21 years

of age who have special health care needs through two program divisions, the Division of Prevention and Intervention and the Division of CMS Network and Related Programs. The Division of Prevention and Intervention provides specialized services for two groups of children: those with special health care needs and those who have been alleged to be abused or neglected. Part C of the IDEA services include identification, evaluation, service coordination, and individualized family support plan (IFSP) development if the child is determined eligible, as well as early intervention services such as physical, occupational and speech therapies and special instruction, behavior support and family support services. Services are free of charge for eligible children, and are based on concerns and priorities of the family, the IFSP team, and the outcomes described in the plan. In 2010-11, 45,350 children were in the data system during the year, of these 25,350 children were newly referred to Early Steps and 26,021 were eligible and received a Family Support Plan for additional services.

Part B of IDEA entitles eligible children with disabilities, ages 3-21, who has not graduated high school, to receive special education and related services through school districts. Specifically, Part B, Section 619, serves children ages 3-5. A child is determined eligible when the requirements listed in the State Board of Education Rules for Exceptional Student Education have been met. For children age 3 to kindergarten, 22,758 children had Individual Education Plans authorizing services in 2010.

The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Child Find program is a discretionary project funded by federal dollars through the Department of Education's Bureau of Exceptional Education & Student Services (BEESS). It is administered in coordination with school districts to identify and locate children ages 3-5 who are potentially eligible for services under the IDEA and links them with needed services. This program screens children to determine the need for formal evaluation, and facilitates service planning and initiation through tracking potentially eligible children and providing service coordination as they progress through the continuum from identification to placement.

Florida's Subsidized Child Care Program: School Readiness Program

An estimated 64.8% of young children in Florida have working parents, making child care a necessity. The state of Florida supports approximately 105,000 children ages birth to 5 on a monthly basis with school readiness funds^{iv}, representing 5% of eligible one-year-olds and 14% of eligible 4- to 5-year olds.^v More than 80% of participating children are cared for in

center-based settings, while 11% are cared for in family childcare homes, 5% in public schools and 1% in informal arrangements. More than 58% of families receiving School Readiness services need child care to maintain employment, while 18% have children enrolled to ensure protection and 16%, so that parents can participate in training and maintain employment.

School readiness funding is administered by OEL and is distributed to 31 local Early Learning Coalitions (ELCs). Local implementation of the School Readiness program by ELCs allows for adaptation of the program to focus on the areas of greatest need in each unique community and to prioritize local quality initiatives.

Mental Health Services

The Florida Department of Children and Families, the Agency for Health Care Administration, the Medicaid agency and the Department of Health provide early childhood mental health services to children. These departments also provide mental health and substance abuse services for the family members of the young children. Children's mental health services are provided through a network of providers that are contracted with the Department of Children and Families. With the exception of a few programs, the large community mental health centers have not traditionally provided early childhood mental health services. The Florida State University Harris Institute for Infant Mental Health Training and other partners have trained more than a 200 mental therapists in addition about a thousand frontline practitioners to help address the social emotional needs of young children. Florida also has made strides toward building a cadre of early childhood mental health consultants to childcare.

Healthy Start

The Healthy Start Prenatal and Infant Coalitions have the legislative authority and responsibility to plan and develop improved local Maternal Child Health (MCH) service delivery systems. In calendar year 2007, 161,206 pregnant women and 194,441 infants (of the 239,120 birth total) were screened through Healthy Start. The screening process identified a total of 124,645 women and infants at risk for poor outcomes.

Florida also has successfully competed for six federal Healthy Start sites that are focused on inter-conceptual care, maternal depression and eliminating racial disparities in birth outcomes. These sites provide services to women living in predominantly African American communities during and between pregnancy to reduce poor birth outcomes.

Taken holistically, Florida's early learning landscape has both breadth and depth. The leadership behind the services described above can be credited for initiating several projects and programs aimed at improving child health and development outcomes. Ranging from the foundational work of the Early Learning and Developmental Standards to the creation of a comprehensive professional development opportunity for early childhood educators, Florida's trajectory for tangible change is solid. Following is a brief description of some of these projects and programs.

Early Learning and Developmental Standards

Florida was one of the first states in the nation to have early learning guidelines. The School Readiness Act, Section 411.01 of the Florida Statutes called for the creation of standards for all school readiness programs. In 2000, the Partnership approved standards for 5-year-olds, which were augmented in 2001 by standards for 3- and 4-year-olds. In 2004, the Office of Early Learning adopted the Florida Birth to Three Learning and Developmental Standards, and in 2005, the Florida Department of Education's Office of Early Learning established the Voluntary Prekindergarten Standards, which were revised in 2008. Recently the Office of Early Learning and the Department of Education's Office of Early Learning partnered to create one comprehensive set of 4-year-old standards for Florida's children, which streamline implementation for providers that administer multiple programs. In an effort toward continuous quality improvement, The Early Learning Partners Initiative used the ARRA funding to further improve the Early Learning and Development Standards for children ages birth to 5 years old and the Florida Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Practitioners. These revised standards will be approved and adopted in October 2011.

Table (A)(1)-6 demonstrates that Florida's Early Learning and Developmental Standards address essential domains of school readiness for all age groups. The Standards are further discussed in section C.

Comprehensive Assessment Systems

Florida has made significant investments and strides toward implementing a comprehensive assessment system for children with high needs. **Florida's comprehensive assessment system includes 5 key components: Screening and referral, formative assessments, measures of environmental quality, measure of adult-child interactions, kindergarten readiness and overall systems evaluation.**

Screening and referral. Florida has an outstanding system for screening with has multiple portals and high utilization rates to identify children with high needs. Florida's Healthy Start provides universal screening for high needs beginning in pregnancy; all newborns receive the Healthy Start Newborn screening while in the hospital. After birth, developmental screenings are offered by multiple disciplines in numerous places--- doctor's offices, school readiness programs, VPK, Head Start, teen parent programs, schools, churches, home visiting programs, county fairs and community round-ups are conducted to find children wherever they are. The Medicaid Child Health Checkup Handbook recommends that providers follow the guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Bright Futures program for screenings under the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Testing program. Of the 745,924 EPSDT eligible children ages 0-5 in 2010, Florida had 100% screening rate for children <age 1, with the number of screens (632,059) exceeding the expected number (409,346) for the periodicity schedule; for ages 1-2 there were 494,076 expected screens and 413, 181 actual screens, (a 84% screening rate); and for ages 3-5, there were 317,292 expected screens but 268,472 actual screens (85% screening rate). Of the 745,924 children ages 0-5 eligible for EPSDT, 9.15% or 68,252 children were referred for treatment. Training of judges and child protective services workers, and interagency agreements between DCF and DOH have facilitated the implementation of CAPTA, the federal mandate to refer all children 0-3 with verified maltreatment to Part C for developmental screening. Based on the high rate of delays and mental health problems in maltreated children, Comprehensive Behavioral Assessments are conducted for each child in out-of-home care as part of their case plan. Children who fail screening are referred to for more in-depth assessment to either Early Steps, the Part C program for 0-36 months, or the Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource System, the Part B program for 3-21 years of age.

In 2009, a panel of state experts on child screening and assessment engaged in a review of practices throughout the state. With input from state agency staff and other statewide stakeholders, they concluded that there were a wide a variety of screening tools in use by various state and local agencies and organizations. Further, not all children receive a screening that addresses the full range of developmental capacities, and often the individual administering the screening lacks sufficient knowledge of child development and skill in screening. In too many instances, screening information for children with findings is not referred to a qualified provider for further assessment and diagnosis. Screening and assessment information, when produced,

may not be shared between programs, services, and providers resulting in duplication of screenings, unknown or lost information as a child/family accesses more than one service, and/or delay in receiving needed interventions. This creates missed opportunities to build resiliency and optimal development in the child and family. The panel did not further explore assessments, but agreed that consistency at the screening level was a predecessor for a trusted referral pathway that results in assessments for those who need them, and assessments that are used to guide learning and development,

Florida adopted and implemented the Ages & Stages Questionnaires, 3rd edition (ASQ-3TM) statewide through the Early Learning Partners Initiative in 2010. Recognizing the importance of the early detection of developmental and learning delays, Florida prioritized this project, which has resulted in every child enrolled in the School Readiness program receiving a screening for delays in the areas of communication, gross motor, fine motor, and problem solving. In addition, the state has created a Statewide Screening Task Force, led by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, which is developing recommendations and policy changes for broader application of the streamlined screening system accomplished through the Early Learning Partners Initiative.

Recently, stakeholders throughout the State have combined efforts to implement statewide screening for all young children. These efforts are supported by highly reliable public poll data from The Children’s Movement of Florida, which shows strong approval for accessible, affordable screenings available to all parents in their children’s early years to see whether they might have special needs (http://childrensmovementflorida.org/issues/polling/florida_poll/). Providing statewide screenings for all children is an admirable goal. Additional issues to be addressed to develop a comprehensive system include the availability and supply of services for children screened and determined eligible for them, and how to further utilize assessments for those children not “delayed” enough to be eligible for Part C services, yet not functioning at developmental level and therefore at-risk.

Ongoing, observation-based assessment used for formative purposes and to inform instruction

Table (A)(1)-7 shows that elements of a comprehensive assessment system have yet to be put in place or fully implemented across all programs, and are not represented in all tiers of Florida’s developing TQRIS. One reason is that effective assessment of young children,

particularly those with high needs, requires skilled and well-educated staff. Like screening, there are a variety of assessment practices across the state. Currently, in School Readiness and VPK, assessment practices are defined independently by ELCs based on very broad requirements established in Section (411.01, (5)(c)2.c, Florida Statutes. Most early childhood programs in Florida administer one of a number of observation-based early childhood assessment instruments, including Teaching Strategies GOLD, the Child Observation Record, Galileo, or Work Sampling. The Association of Early Learning Coalitions (AELC), represented by executive directors from all 31 ELCs representing all of Florida's 67 counties, began an initiative in 2010 to adopt a standard ongoing assessment measure and reporting system. This work is in progress and is developing in partnership with OEL, and will inform practice in state Early Learning and Development programs.

Early Steps, the IDEA Part C state program for high needs children, also allows flexibility in assessment instruments used, but does require that the assessments guide the Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP) and subsequent intervention. These assessments generally follow the children into Part B, school-based programs, but there is a need for a stronger linkage for young children in Part C and in School Readiness programs.

Program assessment, including classroom-level measures of environmental quality and teacher-child interactions

ELCs use a variety of program assessment processes to ensure accountability for subsidized child care programs. The Environment Rating Scales (ERS) are the most frequently used program assessment tools. Implementation of the tool varies, with some coalitions utilizing coalition staff (trained by the developers) and others contracting with a vendor trained in use of the instrument. ELCs will begin standardizing consistent adoption of the ERS. Tied to technical assistance, and in some areas of the state, local QRIS, coalitions have demonstrated progress in improving program quality through ERS reports. Approximately five coalitions have begun to use Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Replication of these program assessment practices will be informative. As well, it will be helpful to review how the parameters for program assessment align with those of other programs and services for young children, especially those with special needs.

Health Promotion Practices

Knowing that optimal child development is achieved when children are healthy and well

nourished, all of Florida's early childhood programs provide health promotion. The Department of Children and Families and Department of Health oversee all child care licensing ensuring base health and safety including up-to-date child immunizations. ELCs are responsible for ensuring that publicly-funded early learning programs meet the requirements of the School Readiness Act, (section 411.01, Florida Statutes) requiring developmental screening and implementation of Florida's Early Learning Standards which include physical development with an emphasis on physical activity, healthy eating habits and health literacy. Head Start provides the most comprehensive health services including nutrition, dental, immunizations, lead screenings, depression screenings and other mental health services. Florida's Department of Children and Families (DCF) works with the privatized child welfare partners to address the health needs of maltreated children including a full medical examination, developmental screen and appropriate referrals for services. OEL maintains a statewide toll-free Warm Line for the purpose of providing assistance and consultation to early childhood educators about health, developmental, disability, and special needs issues. A statewide network of professional Inclusion Specialists are available to provide timely on-site technical assistance to the child care centers when children have special health care needs. Each are knowledgeable about community resources available to assist the child and their families including programs such as CMS and Early Steps.

Social/emotional/ behavioral issues are frequent challenges for the child care programs. DCF's Mental Health program funded the Florida State University Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy to research funding and expansion of Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation in child care centers. The local ELCs and Children Services Councils have funded Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation for child care centers in several parts of the state. Additionally, the Florida's Association for Infant Mental Health has 19 Infant Mental Health chapters, many of which are co-located with Early Learning Coalitions, to promote services and practices that support the social and emotional health of young children. Many ELCs utilize the ASQ-SE to identify problems and contract with Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants to help programs address behavioral challenges. The University of South Florida is a National Technical Assistance Center has trained numerous child care centers in positive behavioral supports. As Table (A)(1)-8 demonstrates, key elements of high-quality health promotion practices are in place but tend to underemphasize the area of health literacy.

Family Engagement Strategies

Family involvement is the cornerstone of all of Florida's early childhood programs [Table (A)(1)-9]. . Healthy Start engages pregnant women through prenatal providers offering parenting manuals and supports in all the hospitals and home visiting during infancy. Head Start is mandated to engage families from pregnancy until kindergarten through home visiting, volunteering in classrooms, monthly group socializations, participation in child screening and assessments, development of Family Partnership Agreements, outreach to fathers, and empowerment through decision making on Policy Councils. The DCF provides a toll-free number as well as web-based resource and referral by zip code and licensure results for parents in search of childcare. Early Learning Coalitions engage families through "one-stop centers" where they can register for multiple services, community "round-ups" for screenings, daily communication with caregivers, and parent training and special family events, Early Steps (Florida's Part C), engages parents in the NICUs and links to First Contacts, a program where families share their child development concerns and receive information about Early Steps which engages parents in screening, evaluation and if needed, Individualized Family Support Plans, customized to meet their child's needs in the natural environment. Similarly, Part B's Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System engages parents in every step along the way of meeting their child's individual special needs. Numerous programs provide outreach through home visiting to engage parents as their child's first teacher such as Even Start, Parents as Teachers, HIPPY, Early Head Start and Healthy Families. Department of Children & Families and Department of Health sponsor a variety of evidence based parenting classes such as the Nurturing Program and Positive Parenting Program (Triple P).

Development of Early Childhood Educators

Tables (A)(1)10-11 clearly demonstrate that an early childhood professional development system is currently being built in Florida. The 5 components of the framework are funding, core competencies, quality assurance, qualifications and credentials, and access and outreach. The system ensures that high quality, professional development opportunities are available to the early childhood workforce with informal training and formal education available and an articulated pathway from high school to higher education. The system, called Steps to Success, has an infrastructure to build and sustain a stable, high skilled, knowledgeable, and diverse workforce. The project includes: creating a registry to track success, capturing data to target workforce needs, and communicates trainer-training quality assurance system policies and

procedures. The project will also house core competencies for practitioners, directors, and coaches, trainer-training standards, and assessments tools, support of career advisors and coaches, a mechanism to distribute scholarship dollars and incentive awards (see Section D).

Kindergarten Entry Assessments

Florida has a substantial and fully implemented kindergarten-entry measurement system. The state has allowed or required some assessment or screening at kindergarten entry since 1997, but a statute change in 2005 required that each school district “administer the statewide kindergarten screening to each kindergarten student within the first 30 days of each school year.”¹

Each year, over 180,000 children entering kindergarten (over 94 percent) are administered Florida’s kindergarten assessment. The results from these assessments are used to calculate a school readiness rate, to drive instruction and educate parents about their child’s school readiness. It also enhances program improvement, by holding programs accountable for promoting school readiness. The kindergarten assessment calculates a VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate based on the scores of children who completed VPK and who are screened upon entry using into kindergarten.

However, Table (A)(1)-12 shows that the state’s kindergarten entry assessment is not currently included in the statewide longitudinal data system, an issue that will be addressed with the full implementation of the early learning data system. The assessments used also do not have evidence of validity for children with disabilities or for English learners, a special consideration in relation to children with high needs. More information is in Section E

Effective Data Practices

Florida currently has 3 projects underway to realize and support the required elements for a coordinated early learning data system with the ultimate goal of connecting these data systems to the Department of Education (DOE) State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). Florida's early learning data system consists of 3 primary elements: an Early Learning Data System, a process for performing on-site program assessment and guiding quality improvement, and a professional development registry. Table (A)(1)-13 reflects the development of this system ,which is further

¹ Section 1002.69 of the Florida Statutes, which created the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program, also included language for the statewide kindergarten assessment.

discussed in Section E.

Legislation

Current early learning legislation is supported and guided by federal regulations, state statutes, and Florida Administrative Code. Furthermore, local early learning coalitions are allowed to adopt operating procedures that must be incorporated into their Early Learning Coalition Plans, which are subject to review and approval by Florida’s Office of Early Learning. See **Appendix (A)(1)-3** for a list of guiding legislation, policies and practices that support the State’s early learning and development programs.

Table (A)(1)-1: Children from Low-Income² families, by age

	Number of children from Low-Income families in the State	Children from Low-Income families as a percentage of all children in the State
Infants under age 1	110,000	53%
Toddlers ages 1 through 2	210,000	49%
Preschoolers ages 3 to kindergarten entry	333,000	51%
Total number of children, birth to kindergarten entry, from low-income families	654,000	51%
<i>Number of children from low-income families obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2010. State population data was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census. Percentages were calculated by dividing the Number of Children from Low-Income families by the Number of children in the state (e.g., percentage of children Infants under age 1 who are low-income = 110,000/208,724).</i>		

²Low-Income is defined as having an income of up to 200% of the Federal poverty rate.

Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs

The State should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The State will describe such activities throughout its application.

Special populations: Children who . . .	Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...	Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...
Have disabilities or developmental delays³	35,916	3%
Are English learners⁴	10,780	1%
Reside on "Indian Lands"	317	< 1%
Are migrant⁵	1,882	< 1%
Are homeless⁶	288	< 1%
Are in foster care	8,408	1%
Other as identified by the State		
Describe:		
<p><i>Have disability or developmental delay: Part B, section 619 Source - Department of Education (DOE), Survey 2, October 2010. [These are children aged between 3 and 5 years who have been identified as having a disability and are receiving services through the public school system.] Part C Source: Department of Health Annual Child Count consistent with DOE, Survey 2 October 2010. This is a point-in-time count. Number of Part C children served for the whole fiscal year is reflected in Table A1-5, which includes children who aged in and out of the program during the fiscal year.</i></p> <p><i>Are English learners: Source – DOE Survey 2, October 2010. [These are children aged between 3 and 5 years who have been identified as English language learners.]</i></p> <p><i>Reside on "Indian Lands": Source - Census 2000 American Indian and Alaska Native Summary File (AIANSF) – Sample Data. Population reported is limited to Seminole Tribe. Miccosukee Tribe was not included in the Census results.</i></p> <p><i>Migrant: Source – DOE Survey 3, Spring 2010. [These are children aged between 3 and 5 years who have been</i></p>		

³ For purposes of this application, children with disabilities or developmental delays are defined as children birth through kindergarten entry that have an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

⁴ For purposes of this application, children who are English learners are children birth through kindergarten entry who have home languages other than English.

⁵ For purposes of this application, children who are migrant are children birth through kindergarten entry who meet the definition of "migratory child" in ESEA section 1309(2).

⁶ The term "homeless children" has the meaning given the term "homeless children and youths" in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (425 U.S.C. 11434a(2)).

Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs

The State should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The State will describe such activities throughout its application.

Special populations: Children who . . .	Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...	Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...
<p><i>identified as migrant.]</i></p> <p>Homeless: <i>Source - DOE Survey 3, Spring 2010. [These are children aged between 3 and 5 years who have been identified as homeless.]</i></p> <p>Foster Care: <i>Source - Florida Department of Health, Florida Charts: 2010.</i></p> <p><i>State population data was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census. Percentages were calculated by dividing the Number of Children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in each special populations category by the total Number of children in the state (from birth to kindergarten entry) (e.g., percentage of children who have developmental disabilities or delays (from birth to kindergarten entry) = 35,916/ 1,073,506.</i></p>		

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
<p>State-funded preschool</p> <p><i>Specify: Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)</i></p> <p><i>Data Source and Year: Department of Education, Survey 2 results for High Needs children who participated in VPK during the 2009/2010 program year.</i></p>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	81,005	81,005

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
Early Head Start and Head Start⁷ <i>Data Source and Year: 2009/2010 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR); Enrollment Statistics Report – State Level</i>	1,459	3,789	37,245	42,493
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 <i>Data Source and Year: Part B, section 619 Source - Department of Education (DOE), Survey 2, October 2010. [These are children aged between 3 and 5 years who have been identified as having a disability and are receiving services through the public school system.] Part C Source: Department of Health Annual Child Count consistent with DOE, Survey 2 October 2010. Number if Part C children served for the whole fiscal year are reflected in Table A1-5.</i>	1,440	11,718	22,758	35,916
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>Data Source and Year: Department of Education 2011/2012 Title I, Part A Applications.</i>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	9,600	9,600
Programs receiving funds from the State’s CCDF program <i>Data Source and Year: Office of Early Learning. State fiscal year 7/1/2010 – 6/30/2011. Data exclude children who have been identified as at-risk of abuse but who have not been placed in foster care.</i>	8,501	46,384	85,938	140,823
Note for CCDF: <i>Children with High Needs served represents a unique count of children served during the state</i>				

⁷ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
<i>fiscal year and is not based on a monthly average as reported in Table (A)(1)-5.</i>				

Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development

Type of investment	Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Supplemental State spending on Early Head Start and Head Start⁸	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)</i>	343,750,562	353,488,827	353,802,409	331,610,249	384,606,382
State contributions to IDEA Part C	20,136,608	19,331,144	19,537,612	19,938,254	23,906,056
State contributions for special education and related services for children with disabilities, ages 3 through kindergarten entry	172,267,977	177,865,395	184,899,978	196,680,761	185,386,844
Total State contributions to CCDF⁹	113,410,056	116,078,112	108,588,737	108,846,182	105,709,676
State match to CCDF <i>Exceeded/Met/Not Met (if exceeded, indicate amount by which match was exceeded)</i>	Exceeded 13,520,957	Exceeded 13,884,745	Exceeded 2,354,728	Exceeded 7,713,164	Not Available

⁸ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

⁹ Total State contributions to CCDF must include Maintenance of Effort (MOE), State Match, and any State contributions exceeding State MOE or Match.

Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development					
Type of investment	Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs¹⁰	256,835,731	246,902,340	238,902,340	238,902,340	238,902,340
Total State contributions:	906,400,934	913,665,818	905,731,076	895,977,786	938,511,298

State-funded preschool: funding is based on State fiscal year (i.e., 7/1/2007 – 6/30/2008).

IDEA Part C: funding is based on the State fiscal year (i.e., 7/1/2007 – 6/30/2008).

Special Education: 2011/2012 State contribution is estimated.

State match to CCDF: funding is based on the Federal Fiscal Year.

TANF spending: funding is based on Federal Fiscal Year. [\$18,340,755 in Direct TANF is contingent upon receipt of TANF supplemental grant funds. \$11,887,136 in TANF transfer to CCDF is contingent upon receipt of TANF supplemental grant funds.]

Table (A)(1)-5: Historical data on the participation of Children with High Needs in Early Learning and Development Programs in the State					
<i>Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.</i>					
Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Total number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years¹¹				
	2007	2008	2009¹²	2010¹⁷	2011¹⁷
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)</i>	67,552	69,541	81,005	Not Available	Not Available

¹⁰ Include TANF transfers to CCDF as well as direct TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs.

¹¹ Include all Children with High Needs served with both Federal dollars and State supplemental dollars.

¹² Note to Reviewers: The number of children served reflects a mix of Federal, State, and local spending. Head Start, IDEA, and CCDF all received additional Federal funding under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which may be reflected in increased numbers of children served in 2009-2011.

Table (A)(1)-5: Historical data on the participation of Children with High Needs in Early Learning and Development Programs in the State

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Total number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years ¹¹				
	2007	2008	2009 ¹²	2010 ¹⁷	2011 ¹⁷
Early Head Start and Head Start¹³ <i>(funded enrollment)</i>	39,345	39,423	38,708	40,494	Not Available
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619	44,299	46,973	49,384	48,779	Not Available
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>(total number of children who receive Title I services annually, as reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report)</i>	4,618	7,767	9,806	5,613	Not Available
Programs receiving CCDF funds <i>(average monthly served)</i>	95,060	96,545	94,881	94,144	Not Available
<p>State-funded Preschool: Source - Florida Department of Education, Survey 2 administered in October of the school year following Voluntary Prekindergarten participation. Only includes children who attended public school after participating in the Voluntary Prekindergarten program. Only includes children identified as eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch (185% FPL) and/or with developmental disabilities.</p> <p>IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619: Part C Source: University of Florida Early Steps frozen data sets for children served with an IFSP for the whole fiscal year. Part B Source: Annual Child Count based on Survey 2, October.</p> <p>Title I of ESEA: Department of Education Title I, Part A Applications provided by Office of Federal Programs.</p> <p>CCDF: Source - Office of Early Learning. Data exclude children who have been identified as at-risk of abuse but who have not been placed in foster care.</p>					

¹³ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-6 : Current status of the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards			
<i>Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards address the different age groups by Essential Domain of School Readiness</i>			
Essential Domains of School Readiness	Age Groups		
	Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers
Language and literacy development	X	X	X
Cognition and general knowledge (including early math and early scientific development)	X	X	X
Approaches toward learning	X	X	X
Physical well-being and motor development	X	X	X
Social and emotional development	X	X	X
<i>Sources: Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards (2010); Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four-Year-olds (2011)</i>			

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.</i>					
Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)</i>	X				
Early Head Start and Head Start¹⁴	X	X	X		
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	X	X			
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	X	a	a	a	X ^b

¹⁴ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State

Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.

Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA		^c			
Programs receiving CCDF funds	X				X ^d
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements ^e <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>					
State licensing requirements					

Sources:

State-funded preschool - State of Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program Statewide Provider Agreement

Early Head Start and Head Start source – 2009-2010 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR)

Programs funded under IDEA Part C - Early Steps Policy Handbook and Operations Guide

Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619 – Part B State Annual Performance Report (APR) for FFY 2009

Programs funded under Title I of ESEA – No Child Left Behind Act

Programs receiving CCDF funds - School Readiness Act, s. 411.01, F.S.; Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan for Florida FFY 2012-2013.

State licensing requirements – Chapter 65C-20 Florida Administrative Code Family Day Care Standards And Large Family Child Care Homes; Chapter 65C-22 Florida Administrative Code Child Care Standards

Notes:

^a While not state required, this may be occurring at the district and school-level.

^b refers to the required assessment that must be done upon entry and exit into the preschool disability program as an accountability measure required by Indicator #7 of the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report. This plan is required by the federal DOE, Office of Special Education Programs for all state education agencies

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.

Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
<i>(SEA)</i>					
^c There are no required assessments through Title I, Part A; however Title I, Part A requires that LEAs use assessment data for several purposes including evaluating the program and making decisions about the types of activities to provide at Title I schools.					
^d Section 411.01(5)(c)2.d, F.S. requires an age-appropriate assessment administered to children when they enter a program and an age-appropriate assessment administered to children when they leave the program.					
^e QRIS is not required statewide, but it is being implemented locally in some areas. Some early learning coalitions that have a QRIS require programs obtain a minimum score in order to contract to provide school readiness services.					

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.

Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)</i>	X		X		
Early Head Start and Head Start	X	X	X	X	

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.

Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
Programs funded under IDEA Part C		X			
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	X	a	a	a	
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA					
Programs receiving CCDF funds	X	X	X		
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements ^b <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>					
State licensing requirements	X		X		
Other <i>Describe:</i>					

Sources:

State-funded preschool - State of Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program Statewide Provider Agreement

Early Head Start and Head Start source – 2009-2010 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR)

Programs funded under IDEA Part C - Early Steps Policy Handbook and Operations Guide

Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619 –Florida Rule 6A-6.0331; 1003.22, F.S.

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.

Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other

Programs funded under Title I of ESEA – No Child Left Behind Act

Programs receiving CCDF funds - School Readiness Act, s. 411.01, F.S.; Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan for Florida FFY 2012-2013.

State licensing requirements – Chapter 65C-20 Florida Administrative Code Family Day Care Standards And Large Family Child Care Homes; Chapter 65C-22 Florida Administrative Code Child Care Standards

Notes:

^a *While not state required, this may be occurring at the district and school-level.*

^b *QRIS is not required statewide, but it is being implemented locally in some areas. Some early learning coalitions that have a QRIS require programs obtain a minimum score in order to contract to provide school readiness services.*

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
<p>State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Program is the state funded program that serves over 165,000 4 year olds.</i></p>	<p>Curriculum's require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies be implemented by director's which promote alliances with families and collaboration among programs, families, and community resources • Directors to recognize the importance of family involvement in all aspects of early care; Education programs and awareness of the diverse strengths and needs of families and understanding of families in the cultural contexts • Knowledge of community support systems, including public and private resources for families and how to access them. • Early Literacy Training for Florida VPK teachers includes learning on the "Dad's Playbook" program. <p>The early learning community in Miami-Dade operates the Kindergarten Transition Program which links the childcare providers to the principals and teachers of their local public schools. The goal of involving the family and linking the child preschool teacher to the kindergarten principal is a shared goal among early learning coalitions.</p> <p>Early learning communities across Florida conduct the "It's OK to Play" training program teaches child care providers to have meaningful discussion with parents about the developmental importance of playing. In a similar effort one early learning community developed "all about me posters" for all VPK children to complete with their parents as a communication tool for VPK teachers.</p>
<p>Early Head Start and Head Start</p>	<p>Head Start Policy Council/Committee; Home Visits; Healthy Marriage; Fatherhood Initiatives; Even Start; Safe Family-Safe Homes; Earned Income and Child Tax Credits; Housing; Employment Strategies; Financial Literacy; Classroom Volunteers; Transition (K-12 activities including transfer of portfolio of children's records); Parent Training; Referrals for Domestic Violence, Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Child Abuse Prevention.</p>
<p>Programs funded under IDEA Part C</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Contacts – Families share their concerns related to their child's development. During this time, families also receive information about Early Steps; Families participate with their child during the evaluation and assessment process, communicating whether their child's functioning during the evaluation and assessment process is typical. • Families are active participants in the development of the Individualized Family Support Plan. • Families identify their priorities for outcomes they would like their child and family to achieve • Families work with service providers to identify and learn a variety of strategies to enhance their child's learning and development within their typical, everyday home and community routines.
<p>Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619</p>	<p>The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) must provide information and referral resources to parents including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents must be invited to all meetings with regard to the consideration of eligibility for special education • Parents must be invited to attend individual educational plan meetings • Parents must be provided with information regarding their procedural safeguards and remedies if they disagree with decisions made • Parents must be provided written notice prior to any changes related to the provision of a free appropriate education • The SEA is required to annually obtain statewide data on the % of parents of children with disabilities, including preschool children with disabilities, who believe that the school facilitated parent involvement. For more information link to http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/FFY-APRforOSEP.pdf. <p>Note: while not "required" by state regulations, districts and other IDEA funded discretionary projects provide training opportunities, resource information, and other supports for parents.</p>

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	<p>According to the Title I, Part A requirements, each local education agency (LEA) must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the effectiveness of parental involvement activities in Title I schools; • Develop a plan that include high quality professional development parents • Coordinate activities found in section 1120B(b) with Head Start agencies and, if feasible, other entities who carry out early childhood development programs; • Coordinate Title I, Part A and Title II, Part A for parents, if appropriate; • Provide parents of participating private school students are provided services and activities developed pursuant to sections 1118 and 1119 on an equitable basis; • Ensure that the comprehensive school wide program plans are available to parents in an understandable and uniform format • Provide to parents of each student enrolled in a school served by an LEA identified for improvement the results of the state's review of schools receiving assistance under Title I; • Disseminate the required information contained in the annual report card(s) to all parents; • Implement programs, activities, and procedures to involve parents in programs assisted under Title I, Part A; • Shall ensure that each Title I school has a written parental involvement policy/plan (PIP) according to Section 1118(b)(1), (c-f); • Write a parental involvement policy/plan (PIP); • Ensure Title I schools convene an annual parent meeting • Develop a school-parent compact; • Conduct annual evaluations with • Provide parents timely notice regarding the "Parents' Right-to-Know" requirement • Ensure schools receiving Title I funds provide communication on child's level of achievements
Programs receiving CCDF funds	<p>Throughout Florida there are exciting programs such as: "Wee Read", "Wee Count", "Parents as Partners", "World Café", "Reading Stars", "Word Words Words", "Let's Read Together", "Born Learning", "Parenting Counts", "Positive Solutions for Families", "Father Child Connection", "Grandparents as Parents" and "Five Protective Factors" targeting the early learning community professionals as well as parents and families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida Statutes requires the Office of Early Learning to have expanded access to community services and resources to help families achieve economic self sufficiency (Section 411.01). • The Governor's office created the Governor's Child Abuse and Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council for the purpose of establishing a comprehensive statewide approach for the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect; the promotion of adoption; and the support of adoptive families. • 20 local councils for abuse prevention and permanency were established with representation from Florida's 31 early learning coalitions. Florida's Office of Early Learning was designated as the lead agency to incorporate the five protective factors as a foundation for work within Florida's early education and care systems by 30 June 2015. <p>Parental access to a child's programs is required.</p>

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	<p>Several early learning communities are utilizing the “World Café” approach and have implemented parent cafés which bring parents to the table for community conversations and decision making.</p> <p>Providers receive community resource information from monthly Systems Partners Gatherings and quarterly Child Care Provider meetings where representatives from community organizations attend and notify participants about their services and available community resources.</p> <p>One of the more common and cost effective approaches to increasing family involvement practices among child care providers is by conducting trainings at workshops and symposiums.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalitions conduct specific trainings such as “Communication Skills for Challenging Conversations”, “Parents as Partners”, “Take 5 minutes for fun” to help increase the skills needed for child care providers to actively engage parents into their programs. • Other family involvement strategies include using families to help screen their children. <p>Some coalitions conduct parent and child care provider surveys to evaluate current family engagement practices. These survey results are often used to initiate technical assistance visits.</p> <p>Special effort is given to involve fathers and grandparents such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Grandparent’s as Parents” are designed specifically for grandparents to educate grandparents on current child development practices and provide supports such as social networks and assistance navigating the social services community. • Other outreach activities targeted the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren organization • A community partnership with United Way and Success By 6 was leveraged to conduct “Daddy and Me” trainings as well as other initiatives • One early learning coalitions training entitled Developmentally Appropriate Practices provides home activity sheets to providers to share with parents. <p>The early learning community in Broward conducts focused on creating exciting ways to enhance parent education in child development.</p> <p>Florida First Start activities address increasing parent education in child development.</p> <p>Other strategies involve providing parents calendars, newsletters and parent kits</p> <p>Some early learning communities have Parent Specialists who work with parents to conduct ASQ screenings on children.</p>
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System	

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
requirements^a <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>	
State licensing requirements	Florida licensing requires the following curriculum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of policies promoting alliances with families and collaboration among programs, families, and community resources. • Education programs and awareness of the diverse strengths and needs of families and understanding of families in the cultural contexts • Knowledge of community support systems, including public and private resources for families and how to access them. • Directors should also be able to describe five strategies they use or plan to use to involve families in their programs • Required to develop written operational polices for families in the centers
Other <i>Describe:</i>	

Sources:

State-funded preschool - Early Learning Coalitions Executive Director Race to the Top Survey 2011

Early Head Start and Head Start source – 2009-2010 Head Start Program Information Report (PIR)

Programs funded under IDEA Part C - Early Steps Policy Handbook and Operations Guide

Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619 – Florida Rule 6A-6.03028; Florida Rule 6A-6.03311; Florida Rule 6A-6.03313;1006.03, F.S.

Programs funded under Title I of ESEA – No Child Left Behind Act

Programs receiving CCDF funds - Early Learning Coalitions Executive Director Race to the Top Survey 2011

Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements – Guiding Stars of Duval (Quality Rating and Improvement System; 2009)

State licensing requirements – Early Learning Coalitions Executive Director Race to the Top Survey 2011

^a *QRIS is not required statewide, but it is being implemented locally in some areas. Some early learning coalitions that have a QRIS require programs obtain a minimum score in order to contract to provide school readiness services.*

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials¹⁵ currently available in the State

List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? (Yes/No/Not Available)	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
Florida Staff Credential^a	Yes ^b	56,177	Not available ^c	The total number reflects all individuals that have ever received the credential and is not reflective of how many practitioners are currently working in the field with the credential
Advanced Professional Certificate – Preschool (to be developed)	Not available	0	Not available ^c	
Advanced Professional Certificate – Infant/Toddler (to be developed)	Not available	0	Not available ^c	
College Certificates in Preschool, Infant-Toddler, Child Care Management, Inclusion	Yes ^b	235 ^d	Not available ^c	
Technical Assistance Specialist Credential (to be developed)	Not available	0	Not available ^c	
Director Credential - Level I	Yes ^b	9,328	Not available ^c	

¹⁵ Includes both credentials awarded and degrees attained.

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials¹⁵ currently available in the State

List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? (Yes/No/Not Available)	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
Director Credential - Level II	Yes ^b	5,161	Not available ^c	
Director Credential – Advanced	Yes ^b	3,656	Not available ^c	
AA/AS in field	Yes ^b	938	Not available ^c	
AA/AS out of field +480 of ECE	Yes ^b	810	Not available ^c	
BA/BS in field	Yes ^b	303	Not available ^c	
College Education^e	Yes ^b	1,199	Not available ^c	
BECE	Yes ^b	Not available	Not available ^c	
Infant and Toddler Developmental Specialist	No	366	Not available ^c	
Master Degree ECE/CD^f	Yes ^b	Not available	Not available	
Ph.D. ECE/CD^f	Yes ^b	Not available	Not available	

Data available:

Department of Children and Families Child Care Program Office database of license and license-exempt early learning practitioners.

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials¹⁵ currently available in the State

List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? (Yes/No/Not Available)	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
Early Steps State Office Infant Toddler Developmental Specialist database				
<p>^a Florida Staff Credential requirements can be met via several options, including completion of the National Child Development Associate (CDA), several approved Florida equivalencies to the CDA, or ECE college Associate or Bachelor degrees/coursework. The number of degreed practitioners are also included in the total number of Florida Staff Credentials – as degrees are one option for recognition as having a Florida Staff Credential. The number listed is total number of individuals that have completed the credential requirements, whether working in early learning currently or not. Steps to Success Registry, once launched statewide, will allow determination of current numbers in the classroom.</p> <p>^b Although all Florida credentials have been aligned to Florida’s Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, the alignment (see Appendix (A)(1)-4) is to course standards, and the competencies have yet to be embedded within the coursework. RTT-ELC work focuses on embedding the competencies in all informal and formal pathway options resulting in a comprehensive alignment.</p> <p>^c Percentages were not available because the number of early childhood educators listed is total number of individuals that have completed the credential requirements, whether working in early learning currently or not. Steps to Success Registry, once launched statewide, will allow determination of current numbers in the classroom.</p> <p>^d The baseline number of college certificates reflects the actual number of certificates awarded by the one State College that has integrated Core Competencies into all coursework. Six additional State Colleges award certificates. During RTT-ELC, efforts will be made to encourage all State Colleges to utilize the certificate options and to integrate Core Competencies into coursework.</p> <p>^e Data collected prior to system enhancements categorized all degrees as ‘Education’ and did not differentiate between degrees</p> <p>^f Data on graduate degrees is not currently collected and tracked; Steps to Success Registry will collect this information.</p> <p><i>Additional notes:</i> Baseline data are actual, data available in the Department of Children and Families Child Care Program Office database of license and license-exempt early learning practitioners.</p>				

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators

List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year	Does the entity align its programs with the State’s current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? (Yes/No/Not Available)
Barry University	10	No
Brevard Community College	140	No
Broward College	27	No
Central Florida Community College	20	No
Charlotte Technical Center	2	No
Child Care Education Institute	75	No
Child Care of Southwest Florida, Inc.	21	No
Child Development Education Alliance (CDEA)	100	No
Childhood Development Services, Inc.	65	No
Chipola College	3	No
College of Central Florida	15	No
Community Development Institute serving Brevard County	22	No
Daytona State College	6	No
Edison State College	13	No
Florida A&M University	4	No
Family Central Training Academy Inc.	70	No
Florida CDAE Training Program	21	No
Florida Gateway College	46	No
Florida Gulf Coast University	6	No
Florida International University	36	Yes ^{vi}
Florida League of Christian Schools	37	No
Florida State College	14	No
Florida State College at Jacksonville	28	No
Florida State University	26	No
Gulf Coast State College	19	No
Hillsborough Community College	12	No
Indian River State College	68	No
Jose Maria Vargas University	22	No
Lake-Sumter Community College	13	No
Learey Technical Center	56	No
Miami-Dade College Kendall Campus	108	No
Miami-Dade College – North	69	No
Miami Dade College School of Community Education	8	No
Miami Dade College, School of Education	370	No
Miami Dade College-Wolfson Campus	16	No

Miami Jackson Adult & Community Ed.	1	No
North Florida Community College	10	No
Northwest Florida State College	32	No
Nova Southeastern University Mailman Segal Inst. for Early Childhood Studies	26	No
Palm Beach Atlantic University	1	No
Palm Beach State College	43	Yes
Pensacola State College	29	No
Pinellas Technical Educational Center	12	No
Polk State College	34	No
Santa Fe College	14	No
Sarasota County Technical Institute	14	No
Seminole State College	11	No
State College of Florida	47	No
South Florida Community College	38	No
South Florida Literacy Institute, Inc.	55	No
Southwest Florida College	14	No
St. Petersburg College	15	No
Tallahassee Community College	129	No
University of Central Florida	99	No
University of Florida	21	No
University of North Florida	46	No
University of South Florida – Tampa	20	No
University of West Florida	1	No
Wesley House Family Services, Inc.	15	No

Sources:
Florida Department of Children and Families Florida Child Care Provider Credential database (2010-2011); Florida Department of Education Community Colleges and Technical Centers Management Information Systems (2010-2011); Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Educator Recruitment, Development, and Retention, state-approved program completers

Note: University degree data only includes state-approved programs.

Table (A)(1)-12: Current status of the State’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment					
State’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Essential Domains of School Readiness				
	Language and literacy	Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)	Approaches toward learning	Physical well-being and motor development	Social and emotional development
Domain covered? (Y/N)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Domain aligned to Early Learning and Development Standards? (Y/N)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Table (A)(1)-12: Current status of the State’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment					
State’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Essential Domains of School Readiness				
	Language and literacy	Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)	Approaches toward learning	Physical well-being and motor development	Social and emotional development
Instrument(s) used? <i>(Specify)</i> <i>ECHOS™ = Early Childhood Observation System</i> <i>FAIR = Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading</i>	ECHOS FAIR	ECHOS	ECHOS	ECHOS	ECHOS
Evidence of validity and reliability? (Y/N)	Yes for both	Y	Y	Y	Y
Evidence of validity for English learners? (Y/N)	Yes for both	Y	Y	Y	Y
Evidence of validity for children with disabilities? (Y/N)	Yes for both	Y	Y	Y	Y
How broadly administered? <i>(If not administered statewide, include date for reaching statewide administration)</i>	statewide	statewide	statewide	statewide	statewide
Results included in Statewide Longitudinal Data System? (Y/N)	Y	Y ^a	Y ^a	Y ^a	Y ^a
<p><i>Sources:</i></p> <p><i>Florida Department of Education (2009-2010). Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading Technical Manual Kindergarten - Grade 2.</i></p> <p><i>Florida Department of Education (2011). Kindergarten Assessment: History and Legislative Authority.</i></p> <p><i>Harcourt. (2006). Early Childhood Observation System.™ Technical Report. Pearson.</i></p> <p>^a Data is merged into the system.</p>					

Table (A)(1)-13: Profile of all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State	
List each data system currently in use	Essential Data Elements <i>Place an “X” for each Essential Data Element (refer to the definition) included in each of the State’s data systems</i>

in the State that includes early learning and development data	Unique child identifier	Unique Early Childhood Educator identifier	Unique program site identifier	Child and family demographic information	Early Childhood Educator demographic information	Data on program structure and quality	Child-level program participation and attendance
Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)	X	X	X	X	X		X
Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child Care Training application data system (CCTA)		X			X		
Florida DCF Childcare Licensing Application (CCLA)		X	X				
Early Learning Data System	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Enhanced Field System (EFS)	X		X	X	X		X
PLATINUM						X	
UF Early Steps Family Data Center system				X			

SLDS: Florida Department of Education's Bureau of Education Information and Accountability Services (EIAS)

CCTA: Includes educational attainment, State credentials, and licenses held.

CCLA: Includes Social Security Number, training, State credentials, educational attainment, and employment history.

Early Learning Data System: Includes information related to Early Childhood Educators and Program Structure for the subset of providers participating in the State's Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK). Information may include Instructor Information: credential, employment history, compensation, education level; Quality Information: accreditation, VPK Readiness Rate, and programmatic monitoring results; and Program Structure Information: curricula, special services, and program schedule.

EFS: Includes unique child identifier for those clients that provide the Social Security Number. IT does not include instructor demographic information but does include the instructor's highest degree and credential for VPK programs.

PLATINUM: Quality data is rigorously collected in eight counties as a result of local QRIS initiatives, which also includes data system support. Lessons learned from their experience are being incorporated in the establishment of a statewide TQRIS, which will be supported by data generated, analyzed, and maintained in the PLATINUM application.

UF Early Steps Family Data System: Includes child demographic information, service authorizations and intervention and payment information.

(A)(2) Articulating the State’s rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals. (20 points)

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State’s progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

(a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;

(b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and

(c) A specific rationale that justifies the State’s choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(2)

- The State’s goals for improving program quality statewide over the period of this grant.
 - The State’s goals for improving child outcomes statewide over the period of this grant.
 - The State’s goals for closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers at kindergarten entry.
 - Identification of the two or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (C).
 - Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (D).
 - Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (E).
 - For each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), a description of the State’s rationale for choosing to address the selected criteria in that Focused Investment Area, including how the State’s choices build on its progress to date in each Focused Investment Area (as outlined in Tables (A)(1)6-13 and in the narrative under (A)(1)) and why these selected criteria will best achieve the State’s ambitious yet achievable goals for improving

program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers.

(A)(2) Articulating the State’s rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State’s progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes –

(a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;

(b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and

(c) A specific rationale that justifies the State’s choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

As demonstrated in Section A, Florida has a unique, respected and rich history of developing innovative strategies to meet the needs of its youngest citizens and their families. The State has a clear and articulated vision that has been adopted by many stakeholders throughout the State, our Partners and the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet. The State intends to build upon that history and vision to improve school readiness for children with high needs. Our goals are:

- To improve the quality of early learning settings so that children with high needs have more access to and are more frequently served within these settings**
- To increase the expertise of early childhood educators who serve high needs children**
- To integrate and align services so that the early learning experience of the high needs child is positive, consistently meets his/her needs and results in improved kindergarten readiness scores**

Florida’s plan for realizing these goals relies upon the involvement of many Partners, including our licensed child care providers, Early Start and Head Start, Early Steps (Part C of IDEA), Healthy Families, Healthy Start, Early Learning Coalitions and Children’s Services Councils. Together, we intend to ensure that the experience of every young child in Florida

who “touches the system” will find it inviting and welcoming, self-actualizing, and virtually seamless. Our goals may be ambitious, but Florida’s young children deserve our ambition. Even the Florida Chamber of Commerce Foundation is on board, counting kindergarten readiness as an indicator of progress toward securing Florida’s future. And the Foundation’s Strategic Plan for 2030 includes the following goals: increase program quality of VPK programs, implement an assessment system for VPK aligned with the National Research Council, expand wage supplement and scholarship programs, implement a high-quality QRIS statewide in conjunction with the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, and more.

Florida is ready to enhance our children’s readiness. Our plan to do that follows.

Goal: To improve the quality of out-of-home settings so that children with high needs have more access to and are more frequently served within these settings

The quality of child care and early education and, in particular, the quality of the daily transactions between providers and the children for whom they are responsible, carry the weight of the influence of child care/early education on children’s development. The positive relationship between child care/early education quality and virtually every facet of children’s development that has been studied is one of the most consistent findings of developmental science.^{vii}

High-quality early childhood settings offer economic benefits, as well. The economic development impacts of quality early childhood settings include effects on regional economies (in terms of jobs, income and purchase of commodities in other economic sectors), effects on parents (supporting workers and their employers), and effects on children (building human capital).^{viii}

One way to promote high-quality settings is to implement a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). Florida has been working toward statewide TQRIS with pilots in seven regions of the state and extensive investment in TQRIS infrastructure over the last three years, to include systems for program assessment, professional development and data. Through Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) funding Florida will become the first state to apply a high standard of scientific rigor to the evaluation of a statewide TQRIS to ensure that standards and levels are meaningfully tied to children’s outcomes. Florida’s TQRIS also will integrate innovative technology strategies to reduce overhead; having validated assessment strategies; adopt highly effective quality assurance policies and

procedures; support the whole TQRIS with proven data solutions to enhance quality improvement work and investments; and employ innovative, effective quality improvement strategies that target children with high needs. Incentives will be available for providers who serve children with high needs.

Goal: To increase the expertise of childcare providers who serve high needs children

Staff qualifications are the strongest predictor of program quality and child outcomes.^{ix} Florida has intentionally and methodically built a comprehensive professional development system, Steps to Success, with the major objective of making accessible high quality professional development for every early childhood educator statewide to facilitate optimal child learning and developmental outcomes. The foundation and framework of this state-of-the-art professional development system, the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and a progression of credentials is fully implemented. With the RTT-ELC investment, Florida is poised to launch the nation's foremost professional development system that will serve as a model for improving the accessibility, affordability, availability and quality of early childhood educator professional development while advancing student learning and healthy child development outcomes. Florida's plan will do this by embedding core competencies for early care and education practitioners into Florida's entire early childhood educator training and education offering; building a robust quality assurance system to ensure the promotion of children's learning and development; evaluating Florida's professional development system for linkage to child outcomes; expanding Florida's Steps to Success Career Pathway to ensure each step's alignment with the Core Competencies, its appropriateness for serving children with high needs, and its availability in English and Spanish; and continuing Florida's successful stakeholder engagement strategies.

Goal: To integrate and align services so that the early learning experience of the high needs child is positive, consistently meets his/her needs and results in improved kindergarten readiness scores

Improving outcomes for high-need children requires that programs "begin with the end in mind." Florida's Early Learning and Developmental standards consist of two documents that form a continuum of development and learning from birth to age five across multiple domains of development. The state's recently revised standards are world-class, and outline high expectations for the state's youngest children. They are research-based; developmentally,

culturally, and linguistically appropriate; horizontally aligned to the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework and vertically aligned to the state's K-12 standards; and, appropriate and inclusive for children with disabilities.

Florida standards provide the learning and development goals for children to which every program should aspire. Therefore, Florida's plan is to train all early childhood educators and program administrators on the new standards. In order to improve instruction and promote program quality, particularly for high-need children, early childhood administrators and educators must understand the expectations for children set forth in the standards, why they are important, and how they should be used. The standards guide how program administrators conduct planning for their programs and how teachers will plan for and provide instruction for their children.

The State also will implement reforms that more closely align system components to the revised standards. Workforce development policies and the state's career ladder will be aligned to the standards to ensure the state is promoting teacher competencies that help them work with children to meet the standards.

Then, the State will reform its assessment and data systems to better monitor children's progress toward the standards, and finally, the State will engage in a revision of the standards using a statutory requirement for "periodic revision." While the State believes that its current early learning standards are state-of-the-art and reflect the latest thinking in child development and learning, it is important that the standards be revised at periodic intervals to incorporate new research in the field.

Improving kindergarten readiness scores also will incorporate work toward a comprehensive assessment system that is grounded in the state's early learning standards; reliable and valid; aligned to the other components of the state's early childhood system; well funded; and, financially supported to ensure appropriate implementation. Florida will plan for a high-quality assessment system builds on the current infrastructure to create a comprehensive assessment system that contains the characteristics outlined above.

At the heart of Florida's work in this area is the goal of ensuring that all assessment information collected on children, and the teachers and the programs that serve them, is accurate, and has a clear purpose and use, either in guiding pedagogical decisions, informing

program improvement, or guiding systemic change. To be accurate, assessment instruments must be designed for their intended use, have strong psychometric properties, and have individuals who are trained to use them. To be useful, assessment data has to be collected with a clear purpose or set of questions in mind, and have individuals who are available to analyze and respond appropriately to the findings that are revealed.

The importance of the kindergarten readiness data to improving the school readiness of high-need children in the state cannot be overstated, so the plan moving forward involves reviewing the kindergarten readiness assessment system Florida has built in the state with an eye to the continued improvement of the quality of data that is collected, particularly for high-need children, as well as improvements in how the data are used to assess program effectiveness.

The State will draw upon the latest research in assessment practices, psychometrics and innovations in technology to ensure alignment to the Standards for Four-Year-Olds. Particularly, the State wants to obtain more predictive assessment of later school success, particularly for high needs children. This will be facilitated by issuing an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) for a new assessment instrument that is developed specifically for the purpose of measuring the extent to which Florida's children have met the expectations set forth in the standards upon entering kindergarten. The new tool will be developed and tested in the state, and its success as an instrument will be measured based on its alignment to the standards, as well as whether it has good assessment properties for all children especially those with high-needs, and its predictive validity.

Florida also will work toward a high quality early childhood longitudinal data system that allows parents, programs, and policymakers to answer key questions about the overall quality and functioning of a state early childhood system, as well as the outcomes that are achieved at the child, program, and system levels. In order to truly move the needle on child outcomes, it is critical to be able to understand all of the factors acting on a child in the early childhood system, the quality of those factors, and the impact they are having on child outcomes. Florida's high-quality plan will allow the state to complete an already initiated data system that consolidates program administration and data collection into one system, and allows flexible, understandable, real-time reporting on both process and outcome measures. These reports are designed for multiple audiences including parents, programs, and state

administrators, and will allow those working with the children in the state to make informed, data-driven decisions about how best to improve outcomes.

Identification of the two or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (C):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (D) the State is choosing to address

- (C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.
- (C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.
- (C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.
- (C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (D):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (D) the State is choosing to address

- (D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.
- (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (E):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (E) the State is choosing to address

- (E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.
- (E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.

(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State. (10 points)

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (*e.g.*, policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (A)(3)(a) and (b):

- For (A)(3)(a)(1): An organizational chart that shows how the grant will be governed and managed.
- The completed table that lists governance-related roles and responsibilities (see Table (A)(3)-1).
- A copy of all fully executed MOUs or other binding agreements that cover each Participating State Agency. (MOUs or other binding agreements should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix to the application).

Evidence for (A)(3)(c)(1):

- The completed table that includes a list of every Early Learning Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State and indicates which organizations and councils have submitted letters of intent or support (see Table (A)(3)-2).
- A copy of every letter of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils. (Letters should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix with a table.)

Evidence for (A)(3)(c)(2):

- A copy of every letter of intent or support from other stakeholders. (Letters should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix with a table.)

(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State. (10 points)

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by—

Florida has a long history of establishing highly-effective early learning governance structures for uniting like-minded organizations in the accomplishment of worthy goals. The management of the RTT-ELC grant award will build upon that experience and maximize the use of existing councils and other partnerships wherever possible.

Over the last several years, Florida has witnessed the implementation of Public-Private Partnerships with governance structures that cultivate involvement of business and civic leaders to get involved in early childhood work encouraging these individuals to bring new insight into how to best meet the needs of children and families.

This infrastructure uniquely positions Florida to propel this work to the next level by better coordinating and maximizing investments and services across systems and funding streams. While leadership across agencies and organizations prioritize collaboration and coordination, there are not dedicated resources to ensure this occurs.

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

Establishment of the RTT-ELC Coordinating Council

Florida benefits from a statutorily established Children and Youth Cabinet (Cabinet). Created in July 2007 (402.56, F.S.), the vision of the Cabinet is that all children in Florida grow up safe, healthy, educated and prepared to meet their full potential. Since this date, several Florida early learning stakeholder groups have aligned strategic and legislative efforts to the Cabinet's vision. For example, the Florida's Framework for Children (2006), referenced earlier in this section, comprehensively aligned conceptual goals to the Cabinet's vision to move closer to the accomplishment of shared outcomes for young children.

By design, the membership of the Cabinet consists of a powerhouse of policy- and decision-makers on behalf of programs and services for children ages birth to 18. Florida's First Lady, Ann Scott, serves as the state's Chief Child Advocate and holds a position on the Cabinet as the Governor's designee.

Her participation connects her passion and dedication to issues directly impacting the health and success of children to the goals of the Cabinet. Further, of all Florida state agencies, 9 have direct responsibilities to provide services to children and youth – each of which, serve as a required member including partners in Florida’s application and others such as the Department of Juvenile Justice and the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection. In addition, 5 ex-officio members serve including the designee of the Florida Senate President, Speaker of the House, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Attorney General and Chief Financial Officer. The remaining 5 seats include Governor appointees such as the President of the Early Childhood Initiative Foundation and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Miami.

For more than 4 years, the Cabinet has worked to establish a dedicated focus on Florida’s children, youth and families. The Cabinet created a strategic plan and implemented several initiatives which have improved the coordination of services for the state’s children and youth. Through the leadership of the Cabinet, Florida has established a priority focus on 13 key child well-being indicators and has specifically targeted its efforts and resources in these areas in order to improve outcomes for children and youth.

The Children’s Summit Workgroup provided the Cabinet with the State of Florida’s Child Report (2009, <https://flcyc.cyciss.org/sites/default/files/cyciss/flcyc/stateofflchild.pdf>) from which the identified indicators originated. The report provides an objective knowledge base that supports the Cabinet in its mission and provides data and information from which the Cabinet can move toward its stated goal of promoting increased efficiency and improved service delivery by all governmental agencies that provide services for children and their families in Florida. The baseline data in the report closely relates to outcomes shown by research to signify child well-being or improvement in child well-being. These outcomes may be used to form a “results based” framework leading to shared goals and a cohesive vision for child and youth outcomes.

Cabinet’s Outcomes for Children and Youth--

Goal 1: Every child is health. Outcome: All children have health insurance.

Goal 2: Every child is ready to learn and succeed. Outcome: Children whose kindergarten entry assessment scores show they are ready for school.

Goal 3: Every child has a stable and nurturing family. Outcome: Reduce child abuse and neglect.

Goal 4: Every child lives in a safe and supportive community. Outcome: Reduce the number of homeless children.

Through the Cabinet's leadership, Florida continues to make marked progress in each of the identified goal areas. Recently, the Chair of the Cabinet requested that the State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (Advisory Council) take lead on the creation of action reports in each goal area to ensure continued and coordinated efforts toward true change in the lives of children, youth and their families. Florida benefits from a highly functioning Advisory Council established with one-time grant start up funds in September of 2010 from ACF. The Advisory Council was designated an advisory body to the Cabinet to ensure coordination and to avoid duplication. The Advisory Council serves as an expert work group with membership closely aligning with the federal recommendations in addition to members reflecting Florida's system diversity.

The Advisory Council, administratively supported by the Office of Early Learning, will serve as the RTT-ELC coordinating body and shall conduct a RTT-ELC meeting within 30 days of the notice of award. The Advisory Council will continue to promote and facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision-making, effectively allocate resources (both staff and funding), and create long-term sustainability of products, services, and results attained using the grant award. The Advisory Council will address activities related to the management of RTT-ELC grant activities as a whole and interagency coordination in particular. The existing Advisory Council staff support will also be responsible for ensuring that actions and reports specified in the RTT-ELC grant agreement are completed satisfactory and on time. Florida's plan to capitalize on existing advisory and expert coordinating councils is a plan to realistically accomplish system collaboration and coordination.

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

The following organizational chart, **Table A-1**, describes the governance structure Florida will use to govern and manage the RTT-ELC grant.

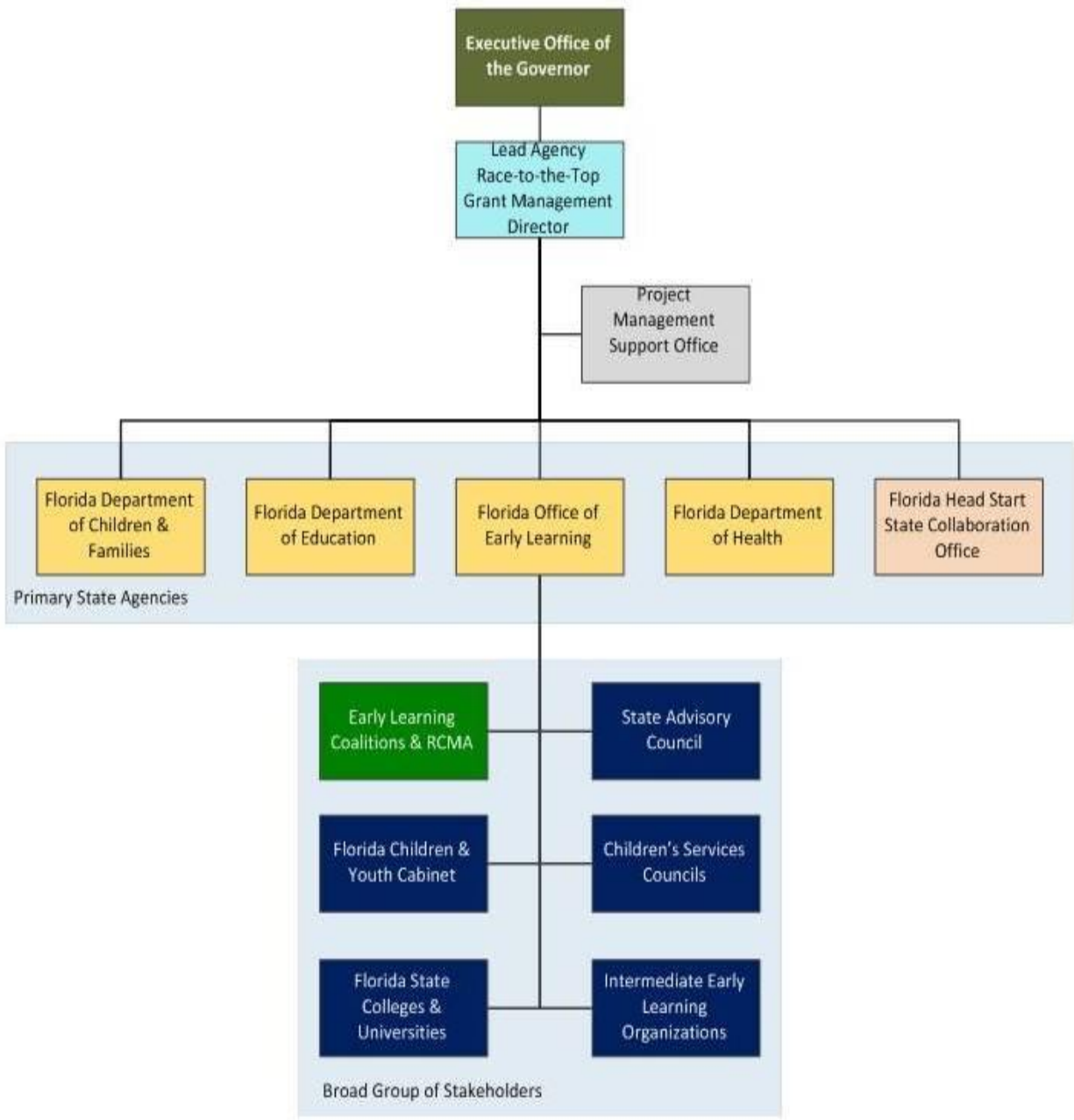


Table A-1 - RTT-ELC (A)(3)(a)(1) Organizational Chart

This chart reflects the collaboration which will continue upon existing interagency agreements. This chart also reflects the contracted staff who will work side by side with the Office of Early Learning, agencies and partners to manage based upon the key reform areas. The organizational structure will build off of existing interagency governance structures which exist today and are described as follows:

Governance: State Agency Leadership

Florida benefits from a unique early childhood governance structure which involves four state agencies. As the designated lead agency for early learning (s. 411.01(4)(c), F.S.), the Office of Early Learning is required to submit a biennial Child Care and Development Fund plan to serve as the blueprint that coordinates early learning and child care services for Florida's families (45 CFR 98). Furthermore, Office of Early Learning is statutorily responsible for the School Readiness Education program (subsidy program), VPK, and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network and houses the state Child Care Resource and Referral Network Office.

The Florida Department of Education (DOE) is statutorily responsible for standards, curricula and accountability related to the VPK program. DOE is statutorily responsible for the administration of the accountability requirements, approval of the Director Credential, adoption and administration of the screening procedures, and calculation of the readiness rate. DOE is also responsible for the administration of the Part B, section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) services for eligible children ages 3 to 5 with disabilities.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is statutorily responsible for administration of child care licensing and regulation, administers Florida's Gold Seal Quality Care Program, and issues credentials. The purpose of DCF services is to ensure that children are well cared for in a safe, healthy, positive and educational environment by trained, qualified staff.

The Department of Health (DOH) is statutorily responsible for the administration of Part C of the IDEA services, through the ESSO, for children younger than 3 with established conditions or developmental delays and their families. The DOH also administers services for maternal and child well-being including infant mental health services

Governance: Local Organizational Leadership

Florida families also benefit from a grassroots approach to the administration of early learning services. OEL works closely with 31 independent 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organizations, called early learning coalitions, which serve each of the state's 67 counties. OEL allocates Child Care Development Block Grant funds to each early learning coalition through a grant agreement making each responsible for service delivery locally of the School Readiness program, VPK Education program, Child Care Resource and Referral services, and quality initiatives including those targeting infant and toddlers and children with special health care needs.

Eleven of the state's counties benefit from Children's Services Councils (CSC) which receives funding to ensure a dedicated funding source in those counties for children's programs and services. Where applicable, the early learning coalitions and CSCs partner to maximize resources and enhance services, most notably in the implementation of local Quality Rating improvement Systems.

High needs children of migrant farm workers have a resource in the Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA), which provided early learning services to more than 3,500 children through 97 providers in 22 counties. The RCMA is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization that works in partnership with a variety of public and private entities to serve the families of migrant farm workers and other low-income, rural families.

The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida (Ounce) was established 20 years ago with a vision of creating a private, non-profit organization dedicated to funding research and demonstration projects to help Florida's children with high needs and their families. The Ounce is a public-private partnership, blending state and private dollars and investing in innovative, community-based programs. In prevention and early intervention services, collaboration is essential to maximize effective use of resources and eliminate duplication of efforts. This collaboration provides the Ounce with a means to share information on evidenced-based and effective programs and strategies for prevention and early intervention with Florida's communities.

Governance: Coordinating Council Leadership

To promote coordination across several state agencies that serve young children and youth, the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet (Cabinet) was created in 2007. Legislation governing the Children and Youth Cabinet establishes a vision that all children in Florida grow up safe, healthy, educated and prepared to meet their full potential as described above. The Children and Youth Cabinet is a council within the Executive Office of the Governor. The Governor and the Florida Legislature receive an annual report detailing the Cabinet's progress.

For purposes of establishing a comprehensive statewide approach for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect, the Office of Adoption and Child Protection (OACP) was created within the Executive Office of the Governor in 2007. Governor Charlie Crist appointed Chief Child Advocate serves within OACP and is bound by statute to consult with the Governor on matters that relate to the

prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect, the promotion of adoption, and the support of adoptive families.

Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council (CAPP). The CAPP Advisory Council was established by Governor Crist in 2007 and consists of 33 members representing child serving and advocating agencies, organizations and parents across Florida. As a council the members review, monitor and develop state and local planning efforts to empower communities to address the promotion of adoption and the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect. The local planning efforts are achieved by local planning teams who represent the 20 circuits throughout Florida.

The local planning teams are typically known as the Local Councils for Abuse Prevention and Adoption Promotion (LCAPP) and membership consists of local leaders representing community agencies and organizations whose work touches the lives of children and families in their communities. The culmination of their planning consists of their local (Circuit) five year plan which is submitted to the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection where it is evaluated by the Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council.

Florida benefits from another Advisory Council, the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC), which works to support workforce development with local solutions for quality care for working families and universally available education for young children. The ELAC was statutorily established in 2005 and is comprised of 33 appointed individuals across the state. The membership of ELAC consists of the chair (who is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor), the chair of each of the 31 early learning coalitions (which oversee child care subsidy funding, VPK and CCR&R), a member who serves at the pleasure of the President of the Senate, and a member who serves at the pleasure of the Speaker of the House. The ELAC meets quarterly as arranged by OEL.

The Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers (FICCIT) is authorized and required by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as amended by Public Law 105-17. The role of FICCIT is to assist public and private agencies in implementing a statewide system of coordinated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, interagency programs providing appropriate early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and risk conditions and their families. The FICCIT is to advise and assist the lead agency in providing policy and definitions for the minimum components of Part C of the IDEA

as amended by P.L. 105-17, particularly the identification of the sources of the fiscal and other support services for early intervention programs, assignment of financial responsibility to the appropriate agency and the promotion of interagency agreements. FICCIT is composed of governor appointed members who are representative of the state's population including parents, members of the legislature, early intervention, preschool services, health insurance, Head Start.

Expanding Opportunities is a national-level interagency early childhood inclusion initiative that began in 2005 and is supported by federal partners including the Child Care Bureau, the Office of Head Start, the Administration on Developmental Disabilities and the Office of Special Education Programs. Florida was part of the first cohort of states chosen to participate in this cross-agency initiative to promote inclusive options for young children with disabilities and their families. State partners who participate in Florida's Expanding Opportunities Initiative include the Department of Education (both Section 619 and VPK), OEL, Department of Health Children's Medical Services – Part C, Florida's Head Start State Collaboration Office, the Children's Forum, Parent/Family Organizations, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, institutions of higher education, family members, and representatives from local programs.

Florida's Expanding Opportunities initiative continues to support federal and state law by bringing together policy makers to promote high quality inclusive opportunities for all children and families. Florida's Expanding Opportunities partners work to inform policy and policymakers to increase the numbers of young children served in high quality inclusive settings, align professional development for practitioners working with children with disabilities to the state early childhood professional development system, develop strong public awareness priorities to promote early childhood inclusion. For the past two years, Florida's Expanding Opportunities initiative has collaborated with OEL's Professional Development Initiative (PDI).

The Early Childhood Comprehensive Services (ECCS) initiative is a national and statewide effort to involve a broad range of public and private agencies and organizations, parents, and communities who share the goal of promoting the health and well-being of children from ages birth to age five. Florida's ECCS initiative is housed in the DOH. The State Advisory Council works closely with ECCS to ensure coordination of efforts.

The RTT-ELC Lead Agency will use contracted staff for the duration of the grant including a project management support office lead, business analysts to provide project support

and supporting staff assigned specific functions to manage scope, deliverables, budget and other activities as needed. The objective of the contractors is to provide the structure needed to standardize project management practices, facilitate RTT-ELC project portfolio and determine approaches for repeatable processes. This will provide a central agent to keep a close watch on project progress and budgets, report on project status, and will enable us to complete more projects on time and on budget with fewer resources.

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State’s Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

Referring back to section (A) (3) (a) above, the RTT-ELC coordinating council, named as the existing State Advisory Council, will determine those governance-related roles and responsibilities of the named council participants. Further roles and responsibilities will include the following:

The State Advisory Council decisions that are not otherwise constrained by statute, rule, or requirements specified in the RTT-ELC grant agreement will be submitted to deliberation by the council membership and then determined by vote of the majority. The State Advisory Council shall provide oversight for all projects being conducted with RTT-ELC funds. The day-to-day management of these projects will be under the direction of Participating State Agency sponsor for the project. Where more than one state agency is actively involved, a single agency will be selected to serve as primary sponsor.

The planning, execution, monitoring and controlling of all early learning and development reform projects supported by RTT-ELC grant awards will be the responsibility of the sponsoring state agency with project sponsors responsible for execution, solicitation and contracting for services or products, the acceptance of contract deliverables, and the approval of invoices.

The status and progress of each project will be reported periodically to the State Advisory Council, including variances in planned scope, cost, and schedule and such other information that is required by the council in the performance of its duties. Further information on the related roles and responsibilities can be found in Table (A) (3) – 1.

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

As stated above, the RTT-ELC coordinating council, named the State Advisory Council, will to promote and facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources (both staff and funding), and create long-term sustainability of products, services, and results attained using the grant award. Contracted staff will assist in the development of policies and operational procedures as it relates to the RTT-ELC grant and high quality plans for all proposed projects. These decisions will be made by workgroups who represent the State Advisory Council. All final decisions will be made after review and agreement by members. Furthermore, resolving disputes will be part of the policies developed and all disputes will be reviewed and resolved by members.

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

The Coordinating Council, named the State Advisory Council, shall have the authority to establish and charter workgroups and committees composed of stakeholder volunteers and contracted support staff to perform studies, conduct research, examine challenges, and develop recommendations as required to further the goals and of the council and the RTT-ELC grant. This will include engaging parent and families of children with high needs.

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency—

State agencies will be committed to the State Plan and to conducting ongoing collaboration established within Florida in years past. This commitment is demonstrated in the fully executed MOU's which have been signed by each participating agency and can be found in **Appendix (A)(3)-1.**

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

The terms and conditions which demonstrate the strong commitment to the State Plan by each state agency, which includes those terms and conditions needed to align and leverage existing funds within the agencies can be found in the MOUs which are located in **Appendix (A)(3)-1.**

(2) “Scope-of-work” descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

Based on the OEL’s high quality plans and the proposed budget found in Section (A)(4) the scope-of-work for each state agency has been described at a high level and will be finalized during initial project planning of the RTT-ELC application. During this time, project charters and work breakdown structures will be completed to fully describe and agreed upon approach with all state agencies and within current statutory authority. The descriptions of the scope-of-work for the purposes of this response can be found in the MOU’s located in **Appendix (A)(3)-1**.

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

Signatures from an authorized representative of each state agency can be found in the MOU’s located in **Appendix (A)(3)-1**.

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining—

There are many industries, organizations, state agencies, and individuals in Florida who have “wrapped” their arms around Florida’s children and desire to support the Early Learning Programs and the needs Florida’s most vulnerable children. The biggest demonstration of this commitment was seen when Florida’s voters passed a constitutional amendment to create its VPK program. The letters of support can be found in **Appendix (A)(3)-2**.

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

The letters of support showing commitment by Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils can be found in **Appendix (A)(3)-2**. Furthermore, Table (A)(3)-2 lists those Early Learning and Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils who have submitted letters of support.

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State’s legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children’s museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

The letters of support showing commitment by the above named stakeholders can be found in **Appendix (A)(3)-2**.

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Florida Department of Children and Families	The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is statutorily responsible for administration of child care licensing and regulation, administers Florida's Gold Seal Quality care accreditation program, and issues credentials. The purpose of DCF services is to ensure that children are well cared for in a safe, healthy, positive and educational environment by trained, qualified staff.
Florida Department of Education	The Department of Education (DOE) is responsible for standards, curricula and accountability related to the VPK program. The DOE is statutorily responsible for the administration of the accountability requirements, approval of the Director Credential, adoption and administration of the screening procedures, and calculation of the readiness rate. Further, the DOE is responsible for the administration of the Part B, section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) services for eligible children ages three to five 5 with disabilities.
Florida Department of Health	The Department of Health (DOH) is responsible for the administration of Part C of the IDEA services, through the ESSO, for children younger than 3 with established conditions or developmental delays and their families. The DOH also administers services for maternal and child well-being including infant mental health services.
Florida's Office of Early Learning	Florida's Office of Early Learning (OEL) is required to submit a bi-annual Child Care and Development Fund plan to the federal government. This plan is the blueprint by which OEL coordinates early learning and child care services for Florida's families (45 CFR 98). OEL is responsible for the School Readiness Education program (subsidy program), Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education program, and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network. Moreover, OEL houses the state Child Care Resource and Referral Network Office.

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Other Entities	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Child Abuse Prevention and Permanency Advisory Council (CAPP)	CAPP was established by Governor Crist in 2007 and consists of 33 members representing child-serving and advocating agencies, organizations and parents across Florida. As a council the members review, monitor and develop state and local planning efforts to empower communities to address the promotion of adoption and the prevention of child abuse, abandonment and neglect. The local planning efforts are achieved by local planning teams who represent the 20 circuits throughout Florida.
Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)	ELAC works to support workforce development with local solutions for quality care for working families and universally available education for young children. The membership of ELAC consists of the chair (who is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Governor), the chair of each of the 31 early learning coalitions (which oversee child care subsidy funding, VPK and CCR&R), a member who serves at the pleasure of the President of the Senate, and a member who serves at the pleasure of the Speaker of the House.
Early Steps/Children's Medical Services	Early Steps is Florida's early intervention system that offers services to eligible infants and toddlers (birth to thirty-six months) with significant delays or a condition likely to result in a developmental delay. Early Intervention is provided to support families and caregivers in developing the competence and confidence to help their child learn and develop. Early Steps services are based on Early Steps evaluations and your family's concerns, resources, and goals. Early Steps uses a Team Based Primary Service Provider approach which aims to empower each eligible family by providing a comprehensive team of professionals from the beginning of services through transition.
Early Childhood Comprehensive Services (ECCS)	ECCS is a national and statewide effort to involve a broad range of public and private agencies and organizations, parents, and communities who share the goal of promoting the health and well-being of children from ages birth to age five. Florida's ECCS initiative is housed in the Department of Health.

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Other Entities	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Expanding Opportunities	Expanding Opportunities is a national-level interagency early childhood inclusion initiative that began in 2005 and is supported by federal partners including the Child Care Bureau, the Office of Head Start, the Administration on Developmental Disabilities and the Office of Special Education Programs. Florida was part of the first cohort of states chosen to participate in this cross-agency initiative to promote inclusive options for young children with disabilities and their families. State partners who participate in Florida's Expanding Opportunities Initiative include the Department of Education (both Section 619 and VPK), OEL, Department of Health Children's Medical Services – Part C, Florida's Head Start State Collaboration Office, the Children's Forum, Parent/Family Organizations, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, institutions of higher education, family members, and representatives from local programs.
Florida Children and Youth Cabinet (Cabinet)	The Cabinet was created to promote coordination across several state agencies that serve young children and youth. It is a council within the Executive Office of the Governor and includes 20 members including the eight state agencies responsible for services to children birth to eighteen. The Cabinet is charged with developing a strategic plan to promote collaboration, creativity, increased efficiency, information sharing, and improved service delivery between and within state agencies and organizations. The Governor and the Florida Legislature receive an annual report detailing the Cabinet's progress.
Florida KidCare	Through Florida KidCare, the state of Florida offers health insurance for children from birth through age 18, even if one or both parents are working. It includes four different parts. When you apply for the insurance, Florida KidCare will check which part your child may qualify for based on age and family income.
Head Start Collaboration	The Head Start State Collaboration Office is a federal-state partnership organized to support and encourage collaboration with Head Start and various other state and local stakeholders that serve low-income families with young children.
Healthy Families Florida	Healthy Families Florida is a nationally accredited home visiting program for expectant parents and parents of newborns experiencing stressful life situations. The program improves childhood outcomes and increases family self-sufficiency by empowering parents through education and community support. Parents voluntarily participate in Healthy Families so they can learn how to recognize and respond to their babies' changing developmental needs, use positive discipline techniques, cope with the day-to-day stress of parenting in healthy ways, and set and achieve short- and long-term goals.
Healthy Start Coalition	Healthy Start is dedicated to strengthening maternal and child health by ensuring that all Florida families have access to a continuum of affordable and quality health and related services and advocating for public policy initiatives to facilitate those services. Healthy Start provides universal risk screening for all pregnant women and infants and care coordination services for eligible participants. Through infant screening, the program identifies children in need of additional services and makes referrals to other programs.
Office of Adoption and Child Protection (OACP)	OACP was created within the Executive Office of the Governor in 2007 for purposes of establishing a comprehensive statewide approach for the promotion of adoption, support of adoptive families, and prevention of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect.
The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida (Ounce)	The Ounce is a public-private partnership, blending state and private dollars and investing them in innovative, community-based programs that serve at-risk children and their families. The organization has taken on the additional role of housing statewide initiatives, including the voluntary home visiting program, Healthy Families Florida, and the Florida Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America.
State Advisory Council on early childhood education and care	The State Advisory Council provides leadership across agencies and organizations to prioritize collaboration and coordination and assists Florida in facilitating a coordinated effort to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of services for families and children.
Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers (FICCIT)	The Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers (FICCIT) is authorized and required by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as amended by Public Law 105-17. The role of FICCIT is to assist public and private agencies in implementing a statewide system of coordinated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, interagency programs providing appropriate early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and risk conditions and their families. The FICCIT is to advise and assist the lead agency in providing policy and definitions for the minimum components of Part C of the IDEA as amended by P.L. 105-17, particularly the identification of the sources of the fiscal and other support services for early intervention programs, assignment of financial responsibility to the appropriate agency and the promotion of interagency agreements. FICCIT is composed of governor appointed members

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Other Entities	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
	who are representative of the state's population including parents, members of the legislature, early intervention, preschool services, health insurance, Head Start.

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Association of Early Learning Coalitions	Y
DOH, Division of Family Health Services (Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting and Maternal and Child Health Title V)	Y
Early Learning Advisory Council	Y
Early Steps – Part C IDEA	Y
Florida Association for the Education of Young Children	Y
Florida Children's Services Councils	Y
Florida Family Child Care Home Association	Y
Florida Head Start Association	Y
Redlands Christian Migrant Association	Y
State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care	Y

(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant. (15 points)

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (*e.g.*, CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under

Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

(1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;

(2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and

(3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

The State's response to (A)(4)(b) will be addressed in the Budget Section (section VIII of the application) and reviewers will evaluate the State's Budget Section response when scoring (A)(4). In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to (A)(4)(a) and (A)(4)(c) and may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Evidence for (A)(4)(a):

- The completed table listing the existing funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan (see Table (A)(4)-1).
- Description of how these existing funds will be used for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.

Evidence for (A)(4)(b):

- The State's budget (completed in section VIII).
- The narratives that accompany and explain the budget, and describes how it connects to the State Plan (also completed in section VIII).

(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant. (15 points)

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

Florida's investment in its early learning system through the Florida Office of Early Learning is over \$1 billion annually. The current budget request for 2012-13 includes \$636.6 million for School Readiness funded through CCDF and \$401 million for universal VPK funded through state general revenue. Florida's VPK is a state constitutionally mandated entitlement program voted in by the citizens of the Florida that allows any four year old in the state to attend a state-funded pre-k program. School Readiness and VPK programs combined to provide 386,426 children in Florida access to quality early learning experiences during the 2011 SFY. This level of funding support committed to Florida's early learning system is the foundation for improving and expanding the state's TQRIS system by ensuring Florida's most at risk families and children with high needs have access to affordable child care and quality early learning programs.

Through state-led collaborative reform efforts already underway, Florida has marshaled substantial financial resources from public and private funding partners to further the state's efforts in improving and expanding early learning quality initiatives in the state. (note: Florida calls funding through CCDF *School Readiness Funding*. This term is used throughout the descriptions below and is synonymous with CCDF).

School Readiness Funding (child care subsidies funded through CCDF) - Estimated annual budget is \$645,659,854 providing children with child care subsidies annually, for an estimated total of \$2.5 billion through the RTT-ELC grant period. Florida's school readiness program supports the goals of the State Plan through providing the children of low income working parents access to affordable child care at quality early learning providers. Florida also prioritizes

children in the child welfare system and other High Need Children to ensure they have access to child care.

School Readiness Quality Set Aside (CCDF) – The Florida Office of Early Learning quality set aside, included in the total CCDF School Readiness budget, is divided into two parts, an allocation set aside at the state program office for statewide strategic quality initiatives and an allocation awarded to Florida’s 31 Early Learning Coalitions as a quality earmark within their CCDF grant agreement. The state program office set aside for 2012 is \$2.8 million with an estimated total budget of \$4.8 million through the grant period ending in 2015. This funding is targeted for statewide training, materials and ongoing support services for ERS and CLASS program assessment instruments as well as expansion and enhancements to the statewide TQRIS data system. The quality set aside allotment awarded to the ELC is estimated at \$85.7 million annually and \$343 million through the grant period. These quality expenditures includes program monitoring, social services, case management, child care placement, provider recruitment, staff training, administration and Gold Seal quality program payment differential incentives (tiered reimbursement). These services support the state plan through quality improvement activities in early learning settings funded through the CCDF block grant and state general revenue.

Voluntary Prekindergarten (State General Revenue) - Estimated budget through the RTT-ELC grant period is \$400,000,000. Florida’s VPK is a state constitutionally mandated entitlement program voted in by the citizens of the Florida that allows any 4 year old in the state to attend a state-funded pre-k program. The state VPK program, administered through the Florida Office of Early Learning with support from the Florida Department of Education Office of Early Learning is projected to serve 165,341 four year olds annually, for a total of 661,364 during the RTT-ELC grant period. The total estimated number of VPK children of high needs served is 81,000 annually is for a total of 324,000 during the RTT-ELC grant period.

Florida’s Department of Education Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B (IDEA) – Estimated annual expenditures are \$4.6 million for a total estimated budget of \$18.4 million through the RTT-ELC grant period . Florida’s Department of Education IDEA Part B ensures that a free appropriate public education is available to preschool children with disabilities residing in the State. Children and youth (ages 3-5) with disabilities are evaluated and

receive special education and related services. An individualized education program, or an individualized family service plan is developed, reviewed and revised for each child identified with a disability.

Title I ESEA – Title I of ESEA – The estimated annual budget for 2011-12 is \$21million with a total estimated budget through the RTT-ELC grant period of \$81 million. This program supports the goals of the State Plan by supplying high quality supplemental instruction and support services for educationally disadvantaged children including service to local school districts, agencies, private schools and local neglected and delinquent institutions for Title I, Migrant, and Homeless Programs.

Head Start Collaboration Office – Estimated annual budget of \$225,000 with a total estimated budget of \$900,000 through the grant period. The Florida Office of Early Learning houses the Head Start Collaboration Office and will continue to coordinate efforts through the RTT-ELC grant to ensure collaboration and the accomplishment of State Plan goals. This includes collaboration on statewide training and the development of data sharing capabilities to further link Head Start and the state’s other early learning systems.

Head Start Advisory Council – The State Advisory Council 2012 grant budget supporting the State Plan activities is \$3.4 million with an addition \$1.4 million budgeted in 2013; the estimated budget through the RTT-ELC grant period is \$4.8 million. Florida’s State Advisory Council has deepened statewide coordination and collaboration among the wide array of early childhood education programs and services; this work would be furthered through a RTT-ELC award. With a focus on strengthening state-level coordination and collaboration, the State Advisory Council grant funds are being targeted at broad-level infrastructure improvement projects already in motion statewide. Beyond supporting council responsibilities such as conducting a needs assessment, the majority of the grant funds is being spent on system-changing quality improvement and infrastructure projects including the comprehensive and accessible workforce and professional development system; comprehensive assessment system; and unified information technology system.

Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Grant/Title V MCH Block Grant-

The estimated 2012 budget for this program is \$4.9 million with an anticipated total budget of \$27.9 million through the grant period. The Florida Department of Health's (DOH) Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) and Healthy Start Statewide Programs build on the life course approach to meeting a family's needs through collaboration and integration of services. The life course approach underscores the interplay of how risk and protective factors, such as socioeconomic status, health behaviors, environment, stress, and education, influence health and development throughout one's lifetime. Collaboration and integration of services are conducted at the state and local level across agencies, organizations, coalitions and with multiple programs. There are 32 Healthy Start coalitions (HSC) across the state that are partially funded through the Title V Maternal Child Health Block Grant who work to ensure every baby has a healthy start so they may begin their life course as healthy as possible; HSCs work with Healthy Families, Early Head Start, WIC, Children's Medical Services and others. The expectations of the local home visiting evidenced based models to be implemented is working with existing programs and the community to ensure that children are healthy, safe, nurtured, and live in stable homes and environments that promote well-being.

State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) Kids 1-4 – Estimated annual expenditures for 2012 for children ages 1-4 are \$56.6 million increasing each year to an estimated \$69 million in 2015. Estimated total expenditures during the RTT-ELC grant period are \$254 million. Florida's SCHIP program supports the State Plan by aligning with the state's clear and united vision that Florida's children are physically, socially, emotionally, and mentally healthy and prepared to be successful. To meet these goals, children with high needs require access to low-cost health insurance.

Medicaid Children (AHCA) – An estimated annual budget of \$2.2 billion is dedicated to children 0-5, for a total estimated budget of \$8.9 billion through the RTT-ELC grant period. Overall Medicaid spending for children age 0-20 through the grant period is estimated at \$19 billion. Florida's Medicaid program for children is administered through the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration and the Department of Children and Families determines eligibility. The Medicaid Children budget supports the goals of the State Plan by aligning with the state's clear and united vision that Florida's children are physically, socially, emotionally, and mentally

healthy and prepared to be successful. To meet these goals, children with high needs require access to low-cost health care.

Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act/Child Welfare – Estimated annual budget for the RTT-ELC grant period is \$300,000,000 with an estimated total budget of \$1.2 billion for 2012-2015. These funds support the goals of the State Plan by supporting children of high needs through child welfare assistance, supports for safe and stable families, foster care, adoption assistance and other supports for at risk families.

The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) – The estimated budget for 2011-12 and 2012-13 is \$754,000 annually for a total of \$1,754,000. Florida has two CHIPRA outreach grants that were awarded in 2011. This program supports the State Plan by providing outreach to promote enrollment and retention in Medicaid and CHIP to eligible families. These outreach effort supports children with high needs.

Statewide Longitudinal Data System (DOE) – The estimated annual budget for the statewide longitudinal data system in the Florida Department of Education is \$552,981 annually through the grant period for an estimated four-year total of \$2,211,924. The SLDS is an integral part of the State Plan and is a key component to building a successful quality early learning system. Linking other early learning data including program assessment, child progress and developmental screening data to the SLDS as proposed in the State Plan will provide Florida the means to analyze early learning data over an unprecedented timeline and the ability to make data driven strategic system adjustments accordingly.

The Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infant and Toddlers (FICCIT) – Estimated annual budget for the RTT-ELC grant period is \$27,000 with an estimated total budget of \$108,000 from 2012-2015. These funds support the goals of the State Plan by assisting public and private agencies in implementing a statewide system of coordinated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, interagency programs providing appropriate early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and risk conditions and their families.

Florida Children's Services Council (CSC) – Estimated annual budget for the RTT-ELC grant period is \$437,821,563 with an estimated total budget of \$1.7 billion for 2012 – 2015. These funds are generated through local property taxes enabled through voter referenda for children and support the goals of the State Plan by focusing investments on prevention and early intervention strategies that produce measurable results for the children and families served in the eleven CSC counties. Eight of the eleven CSC's have independent taxing authority ensuring that a dedicated funding source is available for children's programs and services. The majority of CSC funding is dedicated to children birth to age 5.

WAGES - Developed in North Carolina by the Child Care Services Association, WAGES® aims to improve child care quality by reducing turnover and encouraging the continued education of early childhood teachers (including center staff and family child care providers). This program provides education-based salary supplements to early childhood teachers working with children ages birth to five. Funded at a level of \$2.3 million annually by local children's services councils in coordination with local early learning coalitions, WAGES is available in multiple counties in Florida; these communities plan to continue the program at this level. WAGES is designed to assist with retention of qualified practitioners, rewarding them for educational achievements, resulting in higher quality early learning programs and more stable relationships for children.

Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH) – The state of Florida invests \$3 million annually in TEACH scholarships and local communities invest an additional \$2.9 million annually. These investments are expected to continue at these levels, for a total of \$23.6 million through the grant period. TEACH scholarships support the goals of the State Plan by providing financial supports for early care educators and center directors to work towards earning an Associate's degree in early childhood education, Florida Staff Credentials and other training. The model involves a three-way partnership for the sharing of expenses by the caregiver receiving the scholarship, the sponsoring child care center or family child care home and T.E.A.C.H.

W. K. Kellogg Foundation – The estimated budget for 2012 state match is \$1 million. Building upon a \$3 million investment in a statewide professional development system in 2009, Florida

secured a \$2 million match grant in 2011 from the W.K.Kellogg Foundation through the University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning to deepen the early childhood professional development system work. This match is applied to a current professional development contract between the OEL and the University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning and supports the State Plan through the development of statewide blueprint for professional development, state-of-the-art training modules for early learning educators, a peer to peer coaching model and engaging institutions of higher education to develop a common course catalog for early care and education courses

Microsoft Corporation – Estimated 2012 budget for in-kind services is \$1.2 million increasing annually to \$1.5 million in 2015. Microsoft has agreed to provide Florida an estimated \$5.2 million in in-kind services over the next four years through the development of a Career Hub, which will provide an on-line mechanism for the coordination of professional development planning among faculty, coaches, career advisors, other technical assistance specialists, directors, and practitioners. Cloud and smart technology supports will be provided via an in-kind donation (estimated at \$5 per practitioner per month) from Microsoft Live@edu hosted, co-branded communication and collaboration services including email, email storage, calendars, document sharing, instant messaging, video chat, and mobile email. This service will continue after RTT-ELC at no charge to Florida’s early learning practitioners.

Publix Super Markets Charities of Florida – Total contribution of \$1 million for 2012 to be disbursed through the RTT-ELC grant period by the United Way of Florida and the Women’s Leadership Councils. This donation is targeted toward the implementation of a statewide early literacy initiative focusing on ensuring that more of Florida’s children are reading by third grade and supports the goals of the State Plan by providing supports to children of high needs.

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

(1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;

(2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and

(3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies,

localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

The State's response to (A)(4)(b) is addressed in the Budget Section.

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Florida has been incrementally strengthening its early learning system through targeted investments and a commitment to ensuring expanded access and improved quality for young children in the state. Many of these investments were designed to create efficiencies so existing funding could be invested directly in ensuring more High Need Children could access early learning and development programs. For example, a feasibility study for the early learning data system estimated a cost savings of over \$28 million a year from enhanced efficiencies in program operations; these saved funds can serve an additional 7,000 children annually with expanded access to child care subsidies.

RTT-ELC funding will further strengthen Florida's early learning and development system so it functions more efficiently and ensures the needs of High Need Children are better met. As a result of the work outlined in this application, Florida will be able to more effectively target and invest its early learning and development program funding thereby being able to quantifiably determine the impact from these investments. The funding requested through RTT-ELC is in three general categories: creating more efficient and effective systems; building capacity; and helping to implement more effective practice and invest resources.

There are many innovative investments outlined in the RTT-ELC proposal that will result in a more *efficient and effective systems*, thereby better supporting early learning and development programs. These investments include enhancing early learning data systems, expanding PLATINUM statewide and strengthening the professional development system by expanding professional development options. Since RTT-ELC funding will cover the start-up costs of these investments, the minimal ongoing maintenance can be paid for through realized cost benefits from created efficiencies.

RTT-ELC funding will allow the state to invest in scholarships, fully articulate formal and informal pathways of professional development and ensure a viable early childhood workforce. Through the supports provided by the 4 year grant funding Florida will work to finalize a comprehensive system of professional development that will serve as a model for improving the accessibility, affordability, availability and quality of early childhood educator professional development while advancing student learning and healthy child development outcomes. The costs to maintain this comprehensive professional development system after the liquidation of the grant funding will be based on course fees already collected by the Florida Department of Children and Families and already existing TEACH scholarship dollars (Section 411.0103, Florida Statutes) made available to date.

RTT-ELC funding is also covering the cost of significant *capacity building* in the state. Florida will provide significant capacity building support to child care businesses, such as support to help more programs achieve Gold Seal Accreditation, scholarship assistance for professional development, access to tools such as those available through Teachstone, new resources to help integrate formative assessment and the early learning and developmental standards into the planning and implementation of daily work with young children. As a result, early learning and development programs will have more resources available to them to enhance their businesses. On boarding of trainers will occur through RTT-ELC funding, building significant local capacity related to the CLASS, ERS and ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE. These trainers will provide extensive training for providers during the RTT-ELC period and new tools through the creation of highly interactive, on-line trainings. The ongoing cost of this training following RTT-ELC funding will be absorbed through existing training budgets and provided by local trainers.

Through RTT-ELC funding there will also be assessment of early learning and development programs in year 4 of the grant on the new TQRIS standards. Materials to ensure programs understand the new tools used (e.g. CLASS, ERS) will be provided in multiple years of the grant so providers are fully equipped to implement the tools. Using the assessment schedule outlined in Section B, these ongoing costs for program assessment will be sufficiently spread over future years that they can be covered through existing program assessment funding from the Quality set-asides that are part of the Child Care and Development Block Grant. The RTT-ELC

funding will ensure assessments implemented after the RTT-ELC funding are of the highest quality and are targeted to measure program elements that impact the outcomes of High Need Children. Families will also have access to new tools and information that will enable them to make informed decisions. The creation of smart phone apps, high quality materials on website and other resources for families will be funded through RTT-ELC funding and then sustained through existing Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) and family outreach commitments.

RTT-ELC funding will allow the state to create a list of approved observation-based early childhood assessments that have been vetted to ensure that they are designed for formative assessment, have strong psychometric properties, align to the state's early learning standards, and have web-based data reporting capabilities. Furthermore training will be provided to ensure that every early childhood educator is appropriately trained in observation-based assessment in order to utilize the assessments results to inform their classroom practices. The state has, and will continue to, dedicate significant resources to working with early childhood programs to strengthen their understanding of the purposes and uses of different types of assessment in order to ensure appropriate child outcomes. This funding will be sustained by the Quality set-asides that are part of the Child Care and Development Block Grant. RTT-ELC funding will also help Florida determine more effective ways to *implement policies and invest resources* to best serve High Need Children. The pilot and validation studies and coordination of the research will inform the TQRIS standards and strategies to streamline oversight so programs are focused on ensuring positive outcomes for children. Oversight and monitoring are standard practices that were taking place prior to RTT-ELC. With RTT-ELC Florida will ensure monitoring, oversight and TQRIS standards are as effective, efficient and streamlined as possible. Through RTT-ELC funding Florida will also align existing investments so they are targeted more effectively. As stated in the Application RTT-ELC funding will allow Florida to work with stakeholders to ensure the state's quality investments are made in strategic ways proven to leverage quality and improve outcomes for Children with High Needs.

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.

Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
<i>CCDF School Readiness¹</i>	\$ 557,527,681	\$ 550,285,000	\$ 550,285,000	\$ 550,285,000	\$ 2,208,382,681
<i>CCDF Quality Set Aside OEL¹</i>	\$ 2,652,885	\$ 715,000	\$ 715,000	\$ 750,000	\$ 4,832,885
<i>CCDF Quality Set Aside ELC¹</i>	\$ 85,749,288	\$ 85,000,000	\$ 85,000,000	\$ 85,000,000	\$ 340,749,288
<i>CCDF Total¹</i>	\$ 645,929,854	\$ 636,000,000	\$ 636,000,000	\$ 636,035,000	\$ 2,553,964,854
<i>Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)-State General Revenue¹</i>	\$ 392,191,430	\$ 400,000,000	\$ 400,000,000	\$ 400,000,000	\$ 1,592,191,430
<i>Title I of ESEA²</i>	\$ 21,075,290	\$ 20,000,000	\$ 20,000,000	\$ 20,000,000	\$ 81,075,290
<i>IDEA Part B Preschool²</i>	\$ 4,600,000	\$ 4,600,000	\$ 4,600,000	\$ 4,600,000	\$ 18,400,000
<i>Head Start Collaboration Office²</i>	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 900,000
<i>HS State Advisory Council</i>	\$ 3,420,815	\$ 1,427,232			\$ 4,848,047
<i>Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Grant/Title V MCH Block Grant²</i>	\$ 4,900,000	\$ 7,000,000	\$ 8,000,000	\$ 8,000,000	\$ 27,900,000
<i>State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Kids 1-4³</i>	\$ 56,665,342	\$ 62,321,951	\$ 66,327,932	\$ 69,306,379	\$ 254,621,604
<i>Medicaid Children (AHCA)²</i>	\$ 2,245,837,772	\$ 2,245,837,772	\$ 2,245,837,772	\$ 2,245,837,772	\$ 8,983,351,088
<i>Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act⁴</i>	\$ 298,397,103	\$ 303,437,727	\$ 308,629,570	\$ 313,977,168	\$ 1,224,441,568
<i>The Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) Outreach Grants</i>	\$ 877,000	\$ 877,000			\$ 1,754,000

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.

Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
<i>Statewide Longitudinal Data System (DOE)¹</i>	\$ 552,981	\$ 552,981	\$ 552,981	\$ 552,981	\$ 2,211,924
<i>Florida Interagency Council for Infants and Toddlers (FICCIT)through Early Steps Part C</i>	\$ 27,000	\$ 27,000	\$ 27,000	\$ 27,000	\$ 108,000
<i>Florida Children Services Councils (CSC)⁵</i>	\$ 437,821,563	\$ 437,821,563	\$ 437,821,563	\$ 437,821,563	\$ 1,751,286,253
<i>TEACH⁶</i>	\$ 5,900,000	\$ 5,900,000	\$ 5,900,000	\$ 5,900,000	\$ 23,600,000
<i>TQRIS Collaborative²</i>	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 11,600,000
<i>WAGES²</i>	\$ 2,300,000	\$ 2,300,000	\$ 2,300,000	\$ 2,300,000	\$ 9,200,000
<i>Microsoft</i>	\$ 1,200,000	\$ 1,320,000	\$ 1,440,000	\$ 1,560,000	\$ 5,520,000
<i>Kellogg Foundation</i>	\$ 1,000,000				\$ 1,000,000
<i>Publix Supermarkets</i>	\$ 1,000,000				\$ 1,000,000
					\$ -
Totals	\$ 4,126,821,150	\$ 4,132,548,226	\$ 4,140,561,818	\$ 4,149,042,863	\$ 16,548,974,059

¹ Estimated based on 2011-12 budget and 2012-13 LBR. 2014 and 2015 budget estimates based on flat rate projections.
² Estimated based on 2011-12 budget.2013, 2014 and 2015 budget estimates based on flat rate projections.
³ Based on summaries from the Social Services Estimating Conference.
⁴ Based on 2011 expenditures from the Department of Children and Families and assumes a 3% increase each year.
⁵ Based on average total CSC funding from 2009-2011. Estimates for 2012-15 based on flat rate projections and are subject to change based on local millage rate adjustments.
⁶ Estimate includes \$3,000,000 annually of state general revenue and \$2,900,000 annually from local Children Services Council funding

ⁱ U.S. Census Bureau Poverty Status in the past 12 months by sex by age. 2010 American Community Survey.

ⁱⁱ The 2011 HHS poverty guidelines: One version of the [U.S.] federal poverty measure. Available: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/11poverty.shtml>.

ⁱⁱⁱ AWI-Office of Early Learning Fact Book <http://factbook.flawwi.com/>

^{iv} Policy Group on Florida's Families and Children (2009). The state of Florida's child: A report for the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet. Available: <http://www.policygroup.org/downloads/2009-03-07%20The%20State%20of%20Floridas%20Child%20Report.pdf>.

^v Policy Group on Florida's Families and Children (2009). The state of Florida's child: A report for the Florida Children and Youth Cabinet. Available: <http://www.policygroup.org/downloads/2009-03-07%20The%20State%20of%20Floridas%20Child%20Report.pdf>.

^{vi} applies to the Bachelor in Early Childhood Education

^{vii} National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, eds. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press

^{viii} Grunewald R., & Rolnick, A. (2006). *A proposal for achieving high returns on early childhood development*. Prepared for "Building the Economic Case for Investments in Preschool," Washington, D.C., December 3, 2004. Convened by the Committee for Economic Development, with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts and PNC Financial Services Group

^{ix} Mitchell, A. (2007). Improving and rating the quality of early care and education in Florida. Auburndale, FL: The Policy Group for Florida's Families and Children. Available online at www.policygroup.org/downloads/policy%20brief%20series/2007-Q001.pdf