



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

March 11, 2010

Carmen R. Nazario
Assistant Secretary for Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447.

Dear Assistant Secretary Nazario:

All too often, our child care, pre-kindergarten and special education services operate in separate policy silos, each with different objectives and funding streams. This uncoordinated approach to early childhood policy impedes access, quality and a decent return on investment for our children and their families.

It is my pleasure to designate a State Early Childhood Advisory Council to Florida's Children and Youth Cabinet to promote policy alignment and create a comprehensive and coordinated system of services for our young children aged birth to 5, and their families. The goal of the Advisory Council will be to develop and enact a plan that ensures all children in Florida are healthy, thriving, and ready to learn. These objectives are consistent with the vision and mission of the Children and Youth Cabinet as defined in its strategic plan. (Chapter 402.56(5)(b) Florida Statutes)

Pursuant to the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2007, the designation of this state-level Advisory Council will allow the state of Florida to apply for up to \$4.8 million of federal funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to launch efforts aimed at cross-system early childhood planning and implementation. This Advisory Council is also established and designed to collaborate with the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems initiative in building aligned systems of early childhood services.

Some of the responsibilities of the Advisory Council include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Conducting a periodic Needs Assessment concerning the quality and availability of early childhood education
- ◆ Identifying opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among Federally-funded and State-funded child development
- ◆ Developing recommendations for increasing participation of children in child care
- ◆ Developing recommendations for establishing a unified data collection system for early childhood education
- ◆ Developing recommendations regarding statewide professional development and career advancement plans
- ◆ Assessing the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4-year public and private institutions of higher education toward supporting early childhood education and
- ◆ Making recommendations for improvements in the State Early Learning Standards

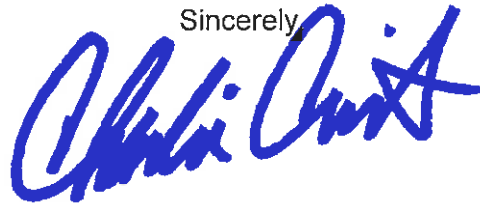
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Page Two

The designated agency responsible for the management of the Advisory Council is the Agency for Workforce Innovation, in conjunction with the Executive Office of the Governor. The individual designated to coordinate the activities of the Council is Jim Kallinger, Chief Child Advocate of the Executive Office of the Governor.

As you know, the creation of this Advisory Council will also permit the state of Florida to apply for the Early Learning Challenge Fund, a pending new federal funding opportunity designed to help states better coordinate and more comprehensively implement early childhood programs.

Our State Early Childhood Advisory Council will play a key role in planning better coordinated systems, facilitating working relationships among essential partners, and moving toward integrated delivery of services for Florida's young children and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charlie Crist". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.

Charlie Crist