



Florida State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care: Three Years of Accomplishment

Established in March 2010, the Florida State Advisory Council on Early Education and Care (SAC) was funded by a three-year grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and served as an advisory body to the Governor's Children and Youth Cabinet.

Over the three-year period, the SAC used the \$4,983,079 grant to initiate and complete projects that laid the groundwork for improvement in the early learning workforce, advanced research to benefit young learners in years to come and are leading to improvements in and out of early learning classrooms and care settings.

The SAC worked with recognized educational authorities including the Lastinger Center for Learning at the University of Florida, the University of North Florida Institute for Education, the American Institutes for Research, Palm Beach State College's Institute for Excellence in Early Care and Education, Florida State University's Center for Prevention and Early Intervention, the Children's Forum, the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Web-based Early Learning System (WELS) Systems Foundation and Teachstone Training, to accomplish the following:

Early Learning Workforce Study (\$110,000)

The SAC commissioned a **comprehensive statewide early care and education workforce study**. The study provides baseline data, such as compensation, tenure, educational level, ethnic and linguistic background that can be used for projects to improve professional development pathways and opportunities for teachers of young children. The data will inform efforts to address chronic challenges like low wages, high turnover and inadequate access to training and education.



Assessing Classroom Effectiveness (\$983,984 – Training, \$22,287 – Materials)

The SAC commissioned the **Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS™) training** to provide observer training, train-the-trainer training, in-depth CLASS assessment training with access to their video library for coaches and observer calibration services for a two-year period. CLASS assesses programs based on observation that measures teacher-child interactions in three domains – emotional support, classroom organization and instructional support. Adopting a statewide, systematized approach will ensure proper assessment of Florida's school readiness programs, identify areas needing technical assistance and result in better social and academic outcomes for Florida's children. To date 375 pre-K observers and 300 toddler observers have received training; 70 trainers have gotten *Making the Most of Classroom Interactions* training; 100 people have been trained to be train-the-trainers for

pre-k observers; and 50 people have been trained as train-the-trainers for toddler observer trainers.

Improving Classroom Effectiveness (\$345,000)

The SAC funded the **Early Learning Classroom Support System**, a statewide licensing agreement that will capture data from CLASS assessments, analyze the data and generate classroom support plans to inform professional development efforts and document quality investments made in early learning programs.

Professional Development (\$1,620,876)

Completed a comprehensive assessment of and developed a **strategic plan to improve Florida's early childhood professional development system** with detailed recommendations on how to strengthen it.

- Designed and developed **six online training modules** – three each in English and Spanish – to help implement the most current Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards (Birth to 5). Groups in Pinellas and Miami-Dade counties piloted modules and participants stated they understood the standards for the first time and were able to implement them in their classrooms and family day care homes.

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- Developed **statewide professional development system pilot** and coordinated statewide trainer network.
 - Delivered **Outcomes Driven Training (ODT) facilitator program** to 132 early learning and afterschool trainers statewide. ODT's training design model focuses on early learning and afterschool outcomes for practitioners that transfer to their workplace.

Assessing Florida's Early Education and Care Needs (\$368,113)

One of the federal priorities of the SAC grant funding was to conduct a **statewide needs assessment** of the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs and services for children from birth to school entry. The report included a gap analysis mapping the areas with the greatest need. An online database has demographics about Florida's children and families that allow users to navigate through the site to explore data by county, early learning coalition area and ZIP codes.

Training Parent Leaders to Increase Parent Engagement (\$78,750 – Training, \$10,632 – Materials)

The SAC approved funding for the **Parent Leadership Ambassador (PLAT) train-the-trainer initiative** to support a statewide model for parent engagement. The PLAT enhances existing family support services without duplication. PLAT curriculum mirrors goals the Office of Adoption and Prevention adopted in the Five Year Prevention and Permanency Plan. Supporting parental engagement, particularly with interventions designed to reduce the incidence of abuse and neglect, parental drug use and other detrimental behavior can have a profound impact on a child's school readiness. The contractor certified 34 individuals to provide local trainings throughout the state. Training participants developed action plans during the training and established the following goals

- Explain protective factors to parents and agency practitioners to increase knowledge. Protective factors are parental resilience, social connections, parenting and child/youth development knowledge, concrete support in times of need, children's social and emotional competence, and nurturing and attachment.
- Recruit additional parents and practitioners to increase local training resources and ensure sustainability.
- Increase community partners and provide parent leadership training for community partners.

Measuring School Readiness (\$263,294)

Currently, the state's early learning coalitions select and administer pre-and post-assessments to measure the impact of school readiness services; however, Florida law requires establishing a unified approach to enhancing school readiness. The SAC funded a **statewide pre-and-post assessment inventory project** as a basis to move toward that end. The project final report and analysis provides a statewide inventory of early care and education child pre-and-post assessment instruments currently in use statewide, determines if assessment instruments currently in use produce data that can be related to future student academic performance, and determines if the assessment instruments align to the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards.



The report will be a resource for a taskforce team of experts to identify a single instrument or multiple instruments to be used in the state in compliance with Florida Statute. The benefit to the early learning coalitions, Redlands Christian Migrant Association, and head start grantees will be a statewide contract for the purchase of the selected instrument or instruments.

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