

# 2010 Legislative Priorities



**Early Learning Coalitions**

The Association of Early Learning Coalitions (AELC) is an organization consisting of the Executive Directors of the 31 Early Learning Coalitions, providing services in all counties and communities across Florida.

***We provide leadership for the early learning community, sharing best practices, strengthening early learning management systems, and advising the Agency for Workforce Innovation regarding early learning issues and policies from a local perspective.***

Questions regarding these legislative priorities should be directed to Dave McGerald, Chair, Association of Early Learning Coalitions at [dmcgerald@elchc.org](mailto:dmcgerald@elchc.org).

## **Fully Fund Early Learning Programs**

- 856,634 children (age 0-12) were living at or below 150% of the federal poverty level in 2007, meeting eligibility requirements for school readiness services. Only 247,349 children (less than 30%) received services in 2008-09 due to funding limitations.
- \$37M in General Revenue must be reinstated to maintain services to the children currently participating in school readiness.
- \$38M is required to replace non-recurring federal funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act utilized in 2009-10 for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program.
- \$28.6M must be added to address 2008-09 and 2009-10 deficits and maintain services to the children currently participating in the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program.
- \$42.8M must be added to address anticipated growth in the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program.
- Quality early learning services are critical components of economic development, enabling families to work while their children are prepared to enter school ready to learn, have fewer special education placements, read at or above grade level by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, graduate high school on time, and be employed with higher earnings.

## **Authorize AWI as the Responsible State-level Entity for All VPK Services**

- Create a unified early care and education system with efficiencies in staffing, infrastructure, and resources across the three state agencies.
- Support a seamless early care and education system that simplifies access for parents.
- Establish one accountability system statewide that will ease confusion regarding state approved standards and clearly defines entities responsible for compliance issues.