



School Readiness Funding Requirements

Program Information

- School Readiness **supports Florida’s economic development and family self-sufficiency goals** while assisting low-income families in accessing quality child care options.
- Ensures **children enter school ready to learn**, while parents maintain employment.
- Currently the **waiting list** has grown to more than **80,000** children.
- **Only 30%** of all eligible, qualified children are **actually served**.
- The program **serves the most vulnerable** of the state’s children including those at-risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation and those from families who receive temporary cash assistance.
- A typical family participating uses about 7% of income to pay for child care. **Without this assistance, the cost of child care increases to 50% of income.**
- If families are unable to maintain employment due to lack of child care **it could cost state taxpayers 3 to 6 times as much in other assistance programs** such as Medicaid, food stamps, unemployment compensation, and temporary cash assistance. For Example if the School Readiness program is reduced by:

Amount of State Fund Reductions	Loss of Federal Funds	Impact on Children	Potential Increases for State Spending
\$10 million	\$12.2 million	5,555	\$33.2- \$63 million

Funding Information

- School Readiness is funded with a combination of state and federal dollars.
- **For every \$1 million of state funding, the program receives \$1.2 million of federal funding.**
- The School Readiness program **received \$105 million of federal ARRA funds.**
- **Since the 2008- 2009 Fiscal Year the School Readiness program has lost \$37 million in funding. The funds were replaced with non-recurring ARRA funds spread across 2 years.**
- For the upcoming fiscal year, the School Readiness program **needs \$2.5 million of non-recurring state trust funds to maintain** current level funding and to not jeopardize ARRA funding.

Recommendation

Maintain School Readiness funding at \$615.4 million - to ensure eligible families continue to receive quality child care, allowing parents to seek or maintain employment.

- **Replace \$2.5 million dollars of non-recurring funds** currently in the School Readiness budget to ensure that the state is able to maximize federal funds.