

Overview of Governor's 2014-15 Early Learning Budget Recommendations

At a Glance.

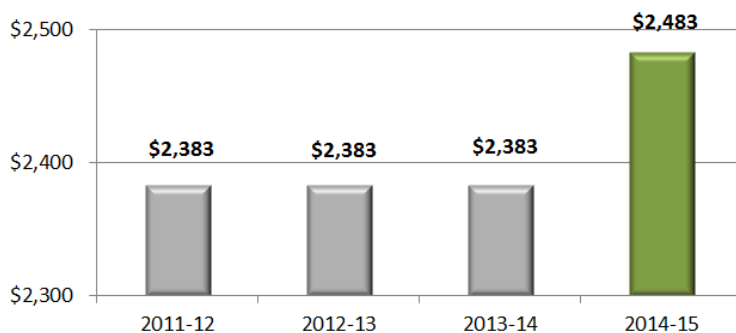
Governor Rick Scott's 2014-15 *It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget* recommendations for early learning represent the **highest increase in funding in the last decade**, underscoring the **link between high-quality early education and success** in school, career and life.

The governor is recommending \$1.1 billion in state funding—an **increase of \$59 million** over the base budget. Budget highlights include a **\$100 per student boost for VPK** funding, a one-time **\$30 million to serve additional children in Florida's school readiness program**, money for early childhood teacher scholarships and school readiness teacher improvement, and funding for technology and information systems to improve early learning functions statewide.

Investing in Early Learning.

The VPK base student allocation (BSA) for the school-year program has remained at \$2,383 for the past three years—down 11 percent from 2007-08. The governor is recommending an **increase of \$929,000 or \$100 per student**—the **largest increase in VPK funding in seven years**.

VPK BSA



The BSA for the summer program will also increase by \$100 per child, moving from \$2,026 to \$2,126.

The governor is recommending an additional \$30 million in non-recurring federal budget authority to serve 6,500 more children in the school readiness program, reducing waiting lists for the program that helps parents prepare for and return to the work force.

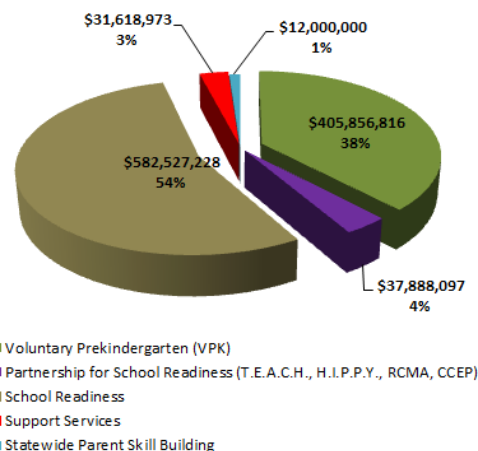
As a result of reorganization combining VPK program and accountability functions with school readiness in the Office of Early Learning (OEL), the budget would **eliminate seven positions**.

(over)

Early Learning Profile (2012-13)

- ➔ 222,817 children in school readiness
- ➔ 9,818 school readiness child care providers
- ➔ 174,200 4-year-olds in VPK
- ➔ 6,421 VPK providers
- ➔ 80 percent of Florida 4-year-olds attend VPK
- ➔ 79 percent of children who completed VPK are ready for kindergarten compared to 55 percent who did not attend

2014-15 Funding by Program \$1.07 Billion



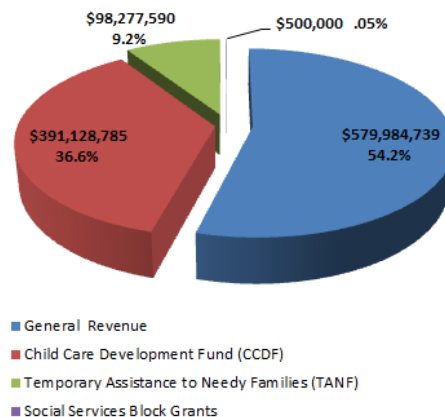
Increases

- Increases VPK base student allocation
- Authorizes one-time additional school readiness dollars
- Increases teacher scholarship funding
- Funds school readiness teacher improvement
- Authorizes money for education technology and information services
- Funds a statewide parent skill-building initiative

Savings

- Reduces seven positions

FY 2014-15 Funding \$1.07 Billion





About the Office of Early Learning

The Office of Early Learning supports families and ensures children have high-quality care and early learning opportunities.

OEL is the lead administrator of federal and state child care funds and partners with 30 local early learning coalitions and the Redlands Christian Migrant Association to deliver comprehensive statewide early learning services. The office is legislatively charged with developing and implementing the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program and oversight of federal and state funds for the School Readiness Program, which includes child care resource and referral services.

OEL governs day-to-day operations of statewide early learning programs, allocating federal and state funds to early learning coalitions and other statewide providers. The state's 30 regional early learning coalitions are responsible for delivering local services. As nonprofit organizations, coalitions also leverage local private and public partnerships to meet families' needs.

The School Readiness Program, financed with a combination of state and federal funds, helps low-income families at risk of needing temporary public assistance and those transitioning from public assistance to get child care so they can work or attend training or education programs. The Florida Legislature passed the School Readiness Act to improve children's chances of achieving future educational success and designated OEL to administer the state-level program. In 2013, the legislature passed House Bill 7165 replacing and strengthening the school readiness law.

The Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program prepares young learners for success in school and life. Mandated by the Florida Constitution, VPK originated from a 2002 ballot initiative. The program is a free, high-quality education program available to all 4-year-olds residing in Florida regardless of family income. OEL administers state-level VPK operations under 1002, F.S.

The Child Care Resource and Referral Program is a federal program to help families make informed choices and assist them in identifying and selecting quality early learning programs. As part of school readiness, OEL is charged with establishing a statewide network that provides unbiased referrals to families for child care per statutes (ss. 1002.82 and 1002.92, F.S.) and federal regulations (45 C.F.R., ss. 98 and 99).



Investing in Early Learning.

The governor's budget includes two key recommendations that focus on support and training for early childhood teachers.

The first calls for **\$1.5 million** additional Child Care Development Funds to **improve qualifications of early care educators and directors through T.E.A.C.H.** early childhood education scholarships.

The second is for \$5 million for school readiness teacher improvement. The funding would provide training for teachers in school readiness programs and a statewide system to measure teacher effectiveness and improvement.

To increase the efficiency of early learning data systems around the state, the governor is recommending **\$7 million to develop and implement a critical, statewide technology and information system for early learning.**

The governor's budget also includes **\$12 million for a statewide parent skill-building initiative** put forth by the Children and Youth Cabinet that would give parents 24-hour access to consistent, reliable "just-in-time" information on a wide range of topics to enhance their knowledge and skills related to parenting and the resources available to them.



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