



Florida Association for the Education of Young Children

A Call for Excellence in Early Childhood Education

Early Years Are Learning Years

The demand for early childhood care and education programs continues to increase not only in response to the growing demand for out-of-home child care but also in recognition of the critical importance of educational experiences during the early years. Several decades of research clearly demonstrate that high-quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood programs produce short- and long-term positive effects on children's cognitive and social development.

FLAEYC, as an affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, believes that our nation is at a crossroads. We must develop an integrated system of early childhood care and education that includes comprehensive approaches that directly involve families and communities in program design, implementation, and evaluation. We can invest now in our children and families and enjoy long-term savings, with a more vibrant nation of healthy, achieving children and more stable families. Or, we can fail to make the investment and pay the price: increased delinquency, greater educational failures, lowered productivity, less economic competitiveness, and fewer adults prepared to be effective, loving parents to the next generation of children. Federal, state and local government, communities, parents, and the private sector must share in the responsibility of ensuring the well-being of children and families.

Our state can and must do better to create opportunities that help all children and families succeed. The time for action is now.

A Vision for Excellence

Florida must develop a system of early childhood care and education with appropriate regulatory, governance, finance, and accountability mechanisms so that --

- **All Children** have access to a safe and accessible, high quality early childhood education that includes a developmentally appropriate curriculum, knowledgeable and well-trained program staff and educators, comprehensive services that support their health, nutrition, and social well-being, in an environment that respects and supports diversity.
- **All Early Childhood Professionals** are supported as professionals with a career ladder, ongoing professional development opportunities, and compensation that will attract and retain high quality educators.
- **All Families** have access to early care and education programs that are affordable and of high quality, and are participants in the education and well being of their children through family involvement in programs and schools, as well as opportunities to increase their educational attainment.
- **All Communities** are accountable for the quality of early childhood programs provided to all children, backed by the local, state, and federal funding needed to deliver quality programs and services.
