



FLORIDA TEACHER SALARIES

The Children's Forum applauds Governor DeSantis and Commissioner Corcoran for their efforts to increase teacher salaries for those employed in K-12 public education settings.

- This policy direction signals the important role that educators play in preparing Florida's future and acknowledges that we must be more competitive in attracting and retaining talented and competent educators.

Similarly, we appreciate the increased focus on the early learning of Florida's children from birth to kindergarten. As Governor DeSantis noted, we must improve the readiness rate of Florida's children.

- The research is replete with evidence on the importance of the first five years and the developing brain in ameliorating educational, health, and social challenges that many children experience.¹
- Learning begins at birth and early experiences for children prior to kindergarten are critically important in preparing children for success in school and life.²
- Competent, engaged, and responsive early childhood teachers who collaborate with parents are fundamental in ensuring that young children have the strong foundation they need to thrive.
- The quality of teaching practice is the best indicator of child outcomes--including early literacy and math, as well as creative, problem solving and inquiry.

The Department of Education has acknowledged these facts in better integrating the Office of Early Learning within the Department, and envisioning an "early learning-20" system. We strongly urge the Department and the Legislature to consider the entire system when thinking about recruiting teachers.

- **Teachers employed in early learning settings earn on average, slightly more than \$10 per hour statewide with few benefits. Approximately 63% actually qualify for public assistance.**³
- Turnover is high among early learning educators, and among the 17% of the early learning workforce that holds degrees, there is movement to the K-12 system where earning potential is much higher.
- When the average salary for a preschool teacher falls even further behind those of kindergarten teachers, this will worsen the recruitment and retention of teachers in early learning.

In order to ensure that children are better prepared for kindergarten, we strongly urge the Legislature to consider:

- Expanding the Early Childhood Educator INCENTIVE\$ program, an evidence-based strategy to attract and retain competent and trained educators in early learning. INCENTIVE\$ rewards early childhood educators based on their education and retention in the early learning setting to recognize competent educators for their commitment and dedication to Florida's youngest citizens. <http://incentives-fl.org/>

The Children's Forum is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to improving outcomes for Florida's youngest citizens through its programs, services, and commitment to quality. For more information, visit: <http://www.flchild.com>

¹Campbell, F., Conti, G., Heckman, J. J., Moon, S. H., Pinto, R., Pungello, E., et al. (2014). Early childhood investments substantially boost adult health. *Science*, 343 (6178), 1478–1485. <https://doi.org/10.1126/1248429>

²McCoy, D. C., Yoshikawa, H., Ziol-Guest, K. M., Duncan, G. J., Schindler, H. S., Magnuson, K., ... Shonkoff, J. P. (2017). Impacts of Early Childhood Education on Medium- and Long-Term Educational Outcomes. *Educational Researcher*, 46 (8), 474–487.

³Arteaga, I., Humpage, S., Reynolds, A.J. & Temple, J.A. (2014). [One Year of Preschool or Two—Is It Important for Adult Outcomes? Results from the Chicago Longitudinal Study of the Child-Parent Centers](http://oneyearofpreschool.org/), *Economics of Education Review*, 40, 221-237.

²Campbell, F. A., Pungello, E. P., Burchinal, M., Kainz, K., Pan, Y., Wasik, B. H., et al. (2012). Adult outcomes as a function of early childhood educational intervention: An Abecedarian Project follow-up. *Developmental Psychology*, 48 (4), 1033–1043.

³Whitebook, M., McLean, C., Austin, L.J.E., & Edwards, B. (2018). *Early Childhood Workforce Index – 2018*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley. Retrieved from <https://csce.berkeley.edu/topic/early-childhood-workforce-index/2018/>.