

## Comparison of Universal Prekindergarten Recommendations: Research, UPK Advisory Committee, State Board of Education, Draft Legislation and House Bill 821

Publication #2004-S002

March 2004

**Amendment to the State Constitution.** Florida's Constitution Section 1: Public Education, paragraph (b) reads: *"Every four-year-old child in Florida shall be provided by the State of Florida a high quality pre-kindergarten learning opportunity in the form of an early childhood development and education program which shall be voluntary, high quality, free, and delivered according to professionally accepted standards. An early childhood development program means an organized program designed to address and enhance each child's ability to make age appropriate progress in an appropriate range of settings in the development of language and cognitive capabilities and emotional, social, regulatory, and moral capacities through education in basic skills and such other skills as the Legislature may determine appropriate."*

### UPK – Recommendations for High Quality Learning Opportunity

Research-based Recommendations	UPK Advisory Committee Recommendations	State Board of Education Recommendations	Early Learning Draft Legislation (Governor's Draft 3.3)	House Bill 821
<b>High Quality Learning Opportunity</b> <i>"Quality standards that provide children a high-quality prekindergarten learning opportunity. These quality standards must include specific recommendations or options for the expected outcomes of the voluntary universal prekindergarten education program" (SB 1334 (2)(b))</i>				
Cognitive, social, emotional, and motor development are complementary, mutually supportive areas of growth all requiring active attention during the preschool years. Early learning in these interrelated domains of development, none operating in isolation, lays the foundation for later achievement and success. Responsive, interpersonal relationships with teachers nurture young children's dispositions to learn and their emerging abilities, and early child development can be seriously compromised by social, regulatory, and emotional impairments.	Developmentally appropriate practices should be emphasized through a balance of teacher-directed and child-directed learning opportunities addressing and enhancing children's literacy and language, cognitive, emotional, social, self-regulatory and moral capabilities. Meaningful and authentic experiences should build on children's interests and skills, and curriculum choices should be age-appropriate, research-based, designed to promote all domains, consistent with Florida Statutes, affordable, and address indoor and outdoor space.	The Department of Education (DOE) should work with the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) to review the <i>Florida School Readiness Performance Standards for Three-, Four-, and Five-Year-Old Children 2002</i> to propose additional content to emphasize early literacy and oral language skills. These revised standards should be adopted for use in Florida's UPK program.	The UPK program should address and enhance each child's ability to make age-appropriate progress, provide development of language and cognitive capabilities, and provide education in basic and other appropriate skills through high-quality learning experiences that build upon children's interests and skills. [Sec.] 28 (1) Curricula should be age-appropriate, literacy-focused, and responsive to the needs of children with special needs including those with disabilities, and children whose first language is other than English. [Sec. 28(2)]	To be eligible, provider must offer a scientifically research-based reading and numbers foundation curriculum based on standards developed or approved by the State Board of Education. [Sec. 1(2)(a)]  There is no mention about accommodating children with special needs or those whose first language is something other than English.
No single curriculum or pedagogical approach has been identified as best. Children who attend well-planned, high-quality early childhood programs in which curriculum aims are specified and integrated across domains tend to learn more and are better prepared to master the complex demands of formal schooling.	The State should certify curriculum choices for programs to select plus provide a mechanism for UPK providers to request certification of alternative curricula.	Curricula used in UPK programs should be aligned with the expected child outcomes (standards). The DOE should work with FCRR and other experts to develop and identify curricula that meet these standards.	To define age-appropriate expectations that will enable children to be ready for school, the DOE shall work with the FCRR to review the <i>Florida School Readiness Performance Standards for Three-, Four-, and Five-Year-Old Children 2002</i> to revise and propose additional or revised standards that emphasize early literacy and oral language skills, including vocabulary development. [Sec. 28 (1) (a)] The SBOE shall identify curricula that meet adopted standards, provide a mechanism for the review and approval of additional curricula, and ensure that all UPK programs use curricula that meet the adopted standards. [Sec 28 (2) (a)]	Curriculum will be based on standards developed and approved by the State Board of Education. [Sec. 1(2)(a)]
An appropriate assessment system includes different assessments for different categories of purpose, such as assessments to support learning, assessments for identification of special needs, assessments for program evaluation, and assessments for high-stakes accountability. Careful decisions need to be made about the purpose of "ready for school" indicators to avoid misuse of data.	Statewide expectations of accountability should be established, and programs should measure a continuum of performance in all domains with progress evaluated against child and program baseline data. Programs should be measured on quality of the learning environment and interactions between children and staff.	The Legislature should provide the State Board of Education the necessary authority to adopt rules identifying the indicators for when children are "ready for school". These indicators, at a minimum, should include knowledge of print, oral language ability, and phonemic awareness.	DOE shall develop a screening system that includes measures to screen emerging phonemic awareness and phonics skills that are valid and reliable predictors for later reading performance. [Sec. 29 (2) (b)]	No mention of baseline or periodic assessments of child's performance or skills.

The vision of *The Policy Group for Florida's Families and Children* is that, together, we will ensure a generation of young people who grow up to be responsible adults – ready, willing and able to contribute to self, to family and to their community.

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<p>Child and family well-being is best supported through an integrated service delivery system that recognizes and supports home and work responsibilities. Current school readiness funding for income-eligible four-year olds will be needed for wrap around, extended day, and other support services.</p>	<p>UPK funding should support up to a six-hour day of which a minimum of four hours must be high quality instruction. Minimum of 1080 hours a year with at least 720 contact hours of quality learning experiences. All funding that currently supports early learning for four-year-old children should be used to the maximum degree possible including wrap-around and extended day services with local communities collaborating through public/private partnerships to increase capacity and resources. A one-time per-child allocation for start-up costs should be considered.</p>	<p>The Legislature should fund the UPK program for a four-hour per day program for a total of 180 days. Payments for UPK programs should be consistent across the state and provide for an incentive to achieve positive outcomes.</p>	<p>The UPK program provider must offer a program that is 180 days in length and 4 hours per day or 720 hours per year. [Sec. 30 ( 12)] The UPK program provider must establish an information and referral process for wrap-around services for children who need support beyond what is provided within the voluntary UPK program. [Sec.30 (8)]</p>	<p>Curriculum shall be taught for four hours per day, five days per week and 180 days per year. [Sec.1 (2)(b)]</p> <p>No mention of a referral process for wrap-around services.</p>
<p>Local community input and decision-making is a core component of an integrated and sustainable service delivery system.</p>	<p>A diverse provider system to support parental choice and maximize use of existing program capacity and community resources is required, and there must be a concerted effort to build physical and program capacity through partnerships with local governments, community and faith-based organizations, and businesses.</p>	<p>The State Board of Education should assess the state's capacity to provide high quality universal prekindergarten education programs by 2005 and thereafter, addressing capacity needs of each county and developed in partnership with local governments, businesses, community and faith-based organizations, and postsecondary institutions.</p>	<p>Physical, behavioral, and developmental needs of children enrolled in the voluntary UPK program will be addressed through coordination with and referral to other local and state agencies or community-based partnerships. Each provider must implement processes for referring children who need additional supports to appropriate community service providers including, but not limited to, public health departments, providers of early intervention services, and publicly-funded providers of behavioral or developmental services. [Sec. 26 (1) (2)]</p>	<p>No mention of a concerted effort to develop program capacity. Bill notes that eligible providers must be public, private or faith-based. [Sec.1 (2)(a)]</p>
<p>The National Association for the Education of Young Children recommends maximum class sizes of 16 to 20 for four-year old children with a 1:8 to 1:10 minimum staff to child ratio.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Both class size and adult-child ratios are correlated with greater program effects.</li> <li>▪ Low adult-child ratios are associated with more extensive teacher-child interactions, more individualization, and less restrictive and controlling teacher behavior.</li> <li>▪ Smaller group size is associated with greater child initiations, opportunities to work on extending language, mediation of children's social interactions, and support for exploration and problem-solving.</li> </ul> <p>Preschool teachers with four-year college degrees are the most effective. Better-educated teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ have more responsive, sensitive, and positive interactions with children;</li> <li>▪ are less authoritarian, punitive, and detached; and</li> <li>▪ provide richer language and cognitive experiences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maximum of 20 children in a single class with a minimum class size of 5 (with exceptions for unique community or child needs).</li> <li>▪ A 1:10 minimum staff to child ratio.</li> <li>▪ Regardless of setting, programs must meet Gold Seal Standards or Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation within one year of UPK program implementation.</li> <li>▪ Require at least two staff for every 20 children to have a minimum of a national Child Development Association (CDA) certificate or a Florida CDA Equivalent certificate (with a possible time-limited waiver for the second CDA) with a multi-level reimbursement system based on staff qualifications.</li> <li>▪ Establish a phased implementation to have at least one staff member in each classroom with an associate's degree in early childhood education within 5 years and at least one staff member in each classroom with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education within 8 years.</li> <li>▪ Provide incentives for high performance in achieving positive outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>The Legislature should provide the State Board of Education with the necessary authority to adopt rules establishing licensing standards for providers of UPK programs. These standards must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Applicable state and federal requirements related to health, sanitation, safety, and physical surroundings</li> <li>▪ Meeting the Gold Seal Standards by 2006-07 provided that there is capacity to meet the state's needs</li> <li>▪ A minimum instructional staff to child ratio of 1:10 beginning in 2005-06, with the minimum credential requirement for such staff being a national Child Development Associate (CDA) or a Florida Equivalent CDA; a second staff member is required for classes of 11-20 children with the same credential requirements.</li> </ul>	<p>Voluntary UPK Program Providers must by the school year 2005-06, meet Gold Seal standards pursuant to s. 387.24, have a minimum staff ratio of 1:10 and serve at least 5 children, beginning in 2005-2006, ensure that one instruction staff for every ten children has a minimum staff credential of a CDA or a credential that is equivalent to or greater than the credential required, and beginning in 2006-07, a second staff member meeting the minimum staff credential is required for classes of eleven to twenty children 387.24. [Sec.30]</p> <p>To improve educational outcomes, it is the goal of the Legislature that all early learning staff continually improve their skill and preparation through education and training so that in five years, at least one staff member in each classroom will have an associate's degree in the field of early childhood education or child development and in eight years, at least one staff member in each classroom will have a bachelor's degree in the field of early childhood education or child development. [Sec. 22 (5)]</p>	<p>No mention of staff to child ratios.</p> <p>No mention of staff qualifications or training requirements.</p> <p>To be an eligible provider in the UPK Program, the provider must be a public, private, or faith-based provider that is accredited under Gold Seal, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or the Florida Association of Nonpublic Schools.</p>

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Preparing children to succeed in school requires a holistic approach involving children, families, communities, and local and state resources and must begin prenatally and continue throughout the early childhood years.	A statewide performance measure should be established requiring that at least 90% of children who complete UPK are assessed as "ready" upon entering kindergarten.	The outcome for Florida's UPK program should be that 100% of all children enter kindergarten ready for school by 2012.	It is the goal of the Legislature that 100% of the children that participate in the voluntary universal prekindergarten program are assessed as "ready" upon entering kindergarten. [Sec. 22(3)]	As a condition of participation in the program the provider shall guarantee that 90 percent of the students completing the program will be assessed ready for kindergarten or will be assessed as having made a learning gain of at least one year toward school readiness while in the program as demonstrated by other objective measures. [Sec. 1 (2)(d)]
Formal early childhood education and specialized training is consistently linked to positive teacher behaviors.	Establish a continuing education requirement for the Florida CDA Equivalent, as required by the national CDA, which includes effective practices for parental involvement.	The Department of Education should conduct a review of all currently approved CDA equivalent programs and any corresponding state requirements. The Legislature should provide the State Board of Education with the necessary authority to adopt rules identifying the standards for the approval of such programs and for the renewal of the CDA credential.	The State Board of Education shall establish rules identifying curriculum standards for the approval of the CDA and CDA equivalent programs, and for the renewal of the CDA or CDA equivalent credential. The curriculum standards for the CDA equivalent shall include a requirement for successful completion of a competency based examination for which a professional certificate will be awarded. The curriculum standards and the renewal requirement for the equivalent state-approved CDA credential shall include literacy education, effective practices for increasing parental involvement, and strategies to meet the needs of non-English-speaking children and children with disabilities. Universities, community colleges, school districts, and private providers are authorized to deliver training for professional development. [Sec. 12 (2)]	No mention of staff qualifications or continuing training requirements.  No mention of special training for staff to meet the needs of non-English-speaking children and children with disabilities.
Formal early childhood education and specialized training is consistently linked to positive teacher behaviors.	Provide funding for resource teachers to provide coaching and development of programs for UPK staff, including assistance to meet the needs of non-English speaking children and children with disabilities.  Establish a ratio of resource teachers to classrooms that reflects the qualifications of UPK staff.  Require a continuing education requirement for UPK staff and administrators, including meeting the needs of non-English-speaking children and children with disabilities.  Require individual professional development plans/supports for UPK staff.  Provide career ladder opportunities.	The State Board of Education should assess the capacity of the state's trained workforce for the provision of high quality instruction in UPK programs in collaboration with the Agency for Workforce Innovation, community colleges, and vocational/technical centers, and should include opportunities for current providers to earn the appropriate credential.	The State Board of Education shall annually assess the state's capacity to provide high quality voluntary UPK programs. This assessment shall include: the capacity of the early learning services providers to serve the projected 4-year-old population and the capacity of educational institutions and other training providers to prepare highly qualified personnel for early learning, pursuant to s. 1014.06. The assessment shall specifically include the capacity needs of each county and be developed in partnership with local governments, businesses, community and faith-based organizations, and postsecondary educational institutions. The State Board of Education shall report the findings of this assessment and recommendations to improve the state's capacity to provide high quality voluntary UPK programs to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House on or before September 30 of each year. [Sec. 34]	No mention of professional development strategies for UPK staff.

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<p>Formal early childhood education and specialized training is consistently linked to positive teacher behaviors.</p>	<p>Establish a continuing education requirement for the Florida CDA Equivalent, as required by the national CDA, which includes effective practices for parental involvement.</p>	<p>The Department of Education should conduct a review of all currently approved CDA equivalent programs and any corresponding state requirements. The Legislature should provide the State Board of Education with the necessary authority to adopt rules identifying the standards for the approval of such programs and for the renewal of the CDA credential.</p>	<p>(1) The Department of Education shall conduct a program review of all currently approved child development associate and child development associate equivalent educational programs and any corresponding state requirements in order to assess the curriculum and testing requirements and to develop methods for the improvement of these requirements and procedures. The evaluation shall be conducted every 3 years. The evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the accessibility, quality, scope, and sources of current training; a determination of the need for specialty training; and a determination of ways to increase inservice training and ways to increase the accessibility, quality, and cost-effectiveness of current and proposed training.</p> <p>(2) The State Board of Education shall establish rules identifying curriculum standards for the approval of child development associate and child development associate equivalent programs, and for the renewal of the child development associate or child development associate equivalent credential. The curriculum standards for the child development associate equivalent shall include a requirement for successful completion of a competency based examination for which a professional certificate will be awarded. The curriculum standards and the renewal requirement for the equivalent state-approved child development associate credential shall include literacy education, effective practices for increasing parental involvement, and strategies to meet the needs of non-English-speaking children and children with disabilities. Universities, community colleges, school districts, and private providers are authorized to deliver training for professional development. [Sec. 12]</p>	<p>No mention of continuing education requirements or practices for parental involvement.</p>

## UPK – Assessment and Evaluation

Research-based Recommendations	UPK Advisory Committee Recommendations	State Board of Education Recommendations	Early Learning Draft Legislation (Governor's Draft 3.3)	House Bill 821
<p><i>Assessment and Evaluation</i></p> <p><i>"Methods for measuring the performance of the voluntary universal prekindergarten education program. These methods must include specific recommendations or options for each of the following elements: 1. Assessment of age-appropriate progress for each child; 2. Evaluation of outcome measures for each provider in each setting; and 3. Evaluation of school readiness coalitions." (SB 1334 (2)(e))</i></p>				
<p>An appropriate assessment system includes different assessments for different categories of purpose. Policymakers should strive to identify the purpose of assessment to avoid misuse of data.</p>	<p>Retain requirement for uniform screening for all children entering kindergarten and develop linkages for kindergarten transitions with sharing of assessment information.</p>	<p>The Legislature should retain the requirement for the screening of all students entering public kindergarten to determine their level of readiness for school.</p>	<p>Information related to the child's progress while in the voluntary UPK program shall be submitted to the child's parent on a regular basis and such information shall be provided, in the manner prescribed by the DOE, to the school at which the child enrolls for kindergarten. [Sec28 (3)] The uniform screening shall provide objective data regarding expectations for school readiness which shall include, at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child's compliance with rules, limitations, and routines.</li> <li>▪ The child's ability to perform tasks.</li> <li>▪ The child's interactions with peers and adults.</li> <li>▪ The child's problem-solving skills.</li> <li>▪ The child's ability to follow verbal directions.</li> <li>▪ The child's demonstration of curiosity, persistence, and exploratory behavior.</li> <li>▪ The child's knowledge of and interest in books and other printed materials [Sec 29 (2)].</li> </ul>	<p>No additional information about assessment instruments beyond mention of a student profile and the school readiness uniform screening in Section 1.</p>
<p>According to the National Education Goals Panel, the following principles should guide assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assessment should bring about benefits for children.</li> <li>▪ Assessments should be tailored to a specific purpose and should be reliable, valid, and fair for that purpose.</li> <li>▪ Assessment policies should be designed recognizing that reliability and validity of assessments increase with children's age.</li> <li>▪ Assessments should be age-appropriate in both content and the method of data collection.</li> <li>▪ Assessments should be linguistically appropriate, recognizing that to some extent all assessments are measures of language.</li> <li>▪ Parents should be a valued source of assessment information, as well as an audience for assessment results.</li> </ul>	<p>The State should define essential elements that assessment instruments should address, yet allow flexibility in selection from a limited, defined set of instruments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assessment instruments should include educational and developmental screening, be comparable and consistent in measurement, include a variety of data sources, be skill-focused and research-based, reflect progress toward a standard in addition to whether a standard was reached or not, and accommodate non-English-speaking children and children with disabilities.</li> <li>▪ Assessments should be conducted at the beginning and end of each year, and parents should receive periodic assessments of child progress.</li> </ul> <p>Assessments should use trend data and multiple observations and should not be too complicated, extensive, burdensome, time-consuming, or expensive. Local coalitions must be provided technical assistance and guidance, and the Chancellor should have authority to require corrective action by local coalitions.</p>	<p>The Legislature should provide the State Board of Education with the necessary authority to adopt rules requiring local coalitions to implement a consumer protection system that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identifies appropriate outcomes for purposes of accountability and funding local programs</li> <li>▪ Establishes meaningful consequences for poor performing programs</li> <li>▪ Provides information that can lead to program improvement</li> <li>▪ Provides information to parents on the progress of their child in meeting the expected child outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>To enhance each child's ability to make age-appropriate progress, each district school board shall also provide for ongoing formal and informal assessment of a child's social and emotional development. Information obtained through such assessments shall be shared with the child's parent and or used to guide instruction. [Sec. 29 (3)]</p> <p>Parents should receive periodic assessments of child progress and developmental and educational needs. When necessary and appropriate, parents should be offered assistance in interpreting assessment information and in accessing resources to address their child's needs. [Sec. 23(4)]</p>	<p>No additional information about assessment instruments beyond mention of a student profile and the school readiness uniform screening in Section 1.</p>

**UPK – Funding**

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<p><i>Funding</i></p> <p><i>“Estimated cost per full-time-equivalent child of the recommended curriculum, design, and standards. This cost estimate must consider funding for each of the state board’s recommendations or options for each of the program elements described in this subsection.” (SB 1334 (2)(f))</i></p>				
<p>High quality is associated with stable funding, sufficient to provide livable wages and benefits for staff, implement lower staff-to-child ratios, maintain needed equipment and materials, and support ongoing education and training needs. <i>Poor pay and scant benefits prevent preschool programs from hiring and keeping highly effective teachers, lowering program quality and leading to poorer cognitive, social, and emotional outcomes for children.</i> Researchers have estimated that lowering the adult-to-child ratio by one is associated with increased costs of approximately 4.5% (approximately \$306 per child annually). A one-year increase in average education is estimated to increase wages by 5.8%.</p>		<p>The estimated cost of a high quality UPK program is approximately \$2,880 per year. This cost estimate is consistent with the funding allocated to current Gold Seal programs.</p>	<p>Each early learning council shall adopt a early childhood education plan that includes a schedule of payment rates adopted by the early learning council which encompasses all types of early childhood education and providers funded by the council. The early learning council must consider the prevailing market rate schedule adopted under s. 1014.31 when adopting the council’s payment schedule. The payment schedule must specify that an informal provider of unregulated early childhood education may not be paid at more than 50 percent of the payment rate for a family child care home. The payment schedule must not have the effect of limiting parental choice; however, the department may authorize early learning councils to use its funds to provide a rate differential or stipend to early childhood education providers that hold a current Gold Seal designation under s. 402.281. The differential may not exceed 20 percent of the payment rate for providers that do not hold the Gold Seal designation. The payment schedule must include a projection of the number of children to be served by the early learning council and must be submitted to the department for information. A sliding fee scale establishing a co-payment for parents based upon their ability to pay, that is uniform for all providers participating in the early learning program, and can be implemented and reflected in the program’s budget. [Sec 43 (3) (g-h) The Department of Education is responsible for the allocation of funds to early learning councils for implementation of voluntary universal prekindergarten programs. These funds shall be distributed in the most efficient and effective manner to ensure timely payment for services.</p> <p>In order to maximize parental choice, a voucher, in the amount determined by the Legislature in the General Appropriations Act shall be awarded to parents of children who are eligible to participate in a universal prekindergarten program. Payment for the voucher will be made to the parent for the voluntary universal prekindergarten provider of the parent’s choice, or if the parent so chooses, directly to the provider. [Sec32(1)a].</p>	<p>The parent may request and receive from the state a scholarship for the child to attend any eligible UPK program of the parent’s choice in the amount of \$2500 in 2005 and be annually adjusted for inflation based on the consumer price index. [Sec.1(1)] Scholarship shall be issued by individual warrant, in the name of the parent to the eligible provider of the parent’s choice upon verification of the child’s enrollment. [Sec.1 (c)] Scholarships will be administered by the Agency for Workforce Innovation. [Sec.1 (3)]</p>

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High quality is associated with stable funding, sufficient to provide livable wages and benefits for staff, support ongoing education and training needs, implement lower staff-to-child ratios, and purchase and maintain needed equipment and materials. <i>In state and national studies, typical preschool program quality has been found to be "poor to mediocre"; salaries are approximately \$7 per hour with few benefits in Florida; and current ratios and group sizes exceed best practice recommendations.</i>	No additional positions or funds should be provided for state-level administration of the UPK program than are used for state-level administration of the School Readiness program for FY 2004-2005.  All funding that currently supports early learning services for eligible four-year-old children should be used to the maximum degree possible in implementing Florida's UPK program, including wrap-around and extended day services, consistent with applicable laws and regulations.	The Legislature should consider appropriating funds in 2004-05 to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement a plan to assess the capacity of the state's private and public providers</li> <li>▪ Implement a plan to assess the capacity of the state's workforce for the provision of high quality instruction.</li> </ul>	(1) The State Board of Education shall annually assess the state's capacity to provide high quality voluntary universal prekindergarten programs. This assessment shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The capacity of the early childhood education providers to serve the projected 4-year-old population, and</li> <li>(b) The capacity of educational institutions and other training providers to prepare highly qualified personnel for early learning, pursuant to s. 1014.06.</li> </ul> (2) The assessment shall specifically include the capacity needs of each county and be developed in partnership with local governments, businesses, community and faith-based organizations, and postsecondary educational institutions.  (3) The SBOE shall report the findings of the assessment and recommendations to improve the state's capacity to provide high quality voluntary universal prekindergarten programs to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House on or before September 30 of each year. [Sec. 34].	

## UPK Recommendations – Best Practices

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<b>Best Practices to Improve the Outcomes of School Readiness Coalitions and Providers</b> <i>"The report must also include the state board's recommendations or options for best practices to improve the outcomes of school readiness coalitions and providers." (SB 1334 (3))</i>				
Local community decision-making is a core component of an integrated service delivery system to support optimal outcomes for Florida's children, families, and communities. It improves opportunities for community support and program sustainability due to the ability of communities to identify service needs and for providers to be responsive to those needs. Local decision-making is also an essential element for sustaining comprehensive initiatives.	Maintain a local governance structure with the following modifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consolidate administrative functions to minimize the number of local coalitions while assuring specific needs of each county are addressed.</li> <li>▪ Voting majority of local coalition members should not have financial interests in the design or delivery of school readiness services.</li> <li>▪ Ensure key stakeholders are represented in planning and service coordination discussions and decisions.</li> <li>▪ Reinforce existing statutory requirements on ethics and conflicts of interest.</li> <li>▪ Revise current membership requirements to reflect changes in role, including representation from post-secondary education providers, programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities under Part C, consumers/parents, and family child care homes.</li> </ul>	The Legislature should maintain a local governance structure with the following modifications to strengthen the local coalitions' efficiency and to address conflicts in membership and operation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consolidate administrative functions to minimize the number of local coalitions, while assuring that program planning, service coordination, and fund allocation address the specific needs of each county</li> <li>▪ Specify local coalition functions regarding financial and programmatic oversight and accountability to include general accounting principles, reporting of expenditures, statewide reporting, monitoring of provider's compliance with the UPK standards and with applicable state and federal requirements, accountability for the quality of the UPK program, and the provision of assistance to providers</li> <li>▪ Revise current membership requirements</li> </ul>	DOE should implement a local governance structure through early learning councils (replacing school readiness coalitions). Effective January 1, 2005, local governance shall be through no more than 28 early learning councils. Early learning councils shall be responsible for compliance with law and SBOE rules related to early childhood education at the local level. In performance of these duties, early learning councils must submit, in a timely manner, any information requested by the SBOE or the DOE relating to compliance accountability and consumer protection. Early learning councils shall provide oversight and accountability for early childhood education at the local level that shall include but not be limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain accurate records including those necessary to ensure fiscal and programmatic accountability and compliance with laws and DOE rules governing local providers of early childhood learning.</li> </ul>	Keep the Florida Partnership for School Readiness (FPSR) in place (under AWT). By March 1, 2005 the FPSR shall provide the Legislature a plan to consolidate the current 50 coalitions into 28 school readiness coalitions coinciding with the 28 community college districts. The bill does not mention how or if the coalitions will participate in the local delivery of the UPK program. [Sec. 2 (2)(b)]

**UPK Recommendations – Best Practices**

Research-based Recommendations	UPK Advisory Committee Recommendations	State Board of Education Recommendations	Early Learning Draft Legislation (Governor's Draft 3.3)	House Bill 821
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At least 51% of voting members must be private sector, non-conflicted members, and the chair must be a private-sector, non-conflicted member.</li> </ul>	<p>to include representation from postsecondary education providers, programs for children with disability ages 3-5 and programs for infants and toddlers with disabilities under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, consumers/parents, and family child care homes; authorize local coalitions to submit nominations for membership for consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Require that financial decisions of local coalitions must be “non-conflicted”. A voting majority of local coalition members should be persons who do not have a substantial financial interest in the design or delivery of school readiness services in Florida.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide for representation of a fiscal agent, if necessary, in compliance with s. 1014.52.</li> <li>▪ Retain legal representation, as necessary, for the review and implementation of contracts.</li> <li>▪ Implement a system of consumer protection as provided in s. 1014.22.</li> <li>▪ Prepare an annual financial and compliance audit of all accounts and records conducted by an independent certified public accountant and in accordance with rules adopted by the Auditor General.</li> <li>▪ Each early learning council shall have as many members as may be required to include the following:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Department of Children and Family Services district administrator or his or her designee who is authorized to make decisions on behalf of the department.</li> <li>▪ A district superintendent of schools or his or her designee who is authorized to make decisions on behalf of the district.</li> <li>▪ A regional workforce development board director.</li> <li>▪ A county health department director or his or her designee.</li> <li>▪ A children's services council or juvenile welfare board chair or executive director, where applicable.</li> <li>▪ A local child care licensing agency head, where applicable</li> <li>▪ A community college president or designated representative.</li> <li>▪ A representative of a program for children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.</li> <li>▪ A parent or guardian of a child who participates in a publicly-funded early learning program.</li> <li>▪ A central childcare agency administrator.</li> <li>▪ A Head Start director.</li> <li>▪ A representative of private child care providers,</li> <li>▪ A representative of faith-based child care providers.</li> <li>▪ A representative of family day care home providers. [Sec. 38 (1)(a-c)]</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

## UPK Recommendations – Best Practices

Research-based Recommendations	UPK Advisory Committee Recommendations	State Board of Education Recommendations	Early Learning Draft Legislation (Governor's Draft 3.3)	House Bill 821
<p>Parental involvement is an essential indicator of preschool quality and increases opportunities for formal and informal linkages supportive of more positive outcomes for children, families, and communities. Parental involvement is associated with stronger and longer-term positive outcomes for children.</p>	<p>Opportunities for parental involvement should be provided, and standards should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Respect for the role of parents as their child's first and most vital teacher</li> <li>▪ Strong expectations of parental involvement</li> <li>▪ Requirements that the curriculum include a parental involvement component</li> <li>▪ Parental involvement opportunities and resources offered in the language most familiar to the parent</li> <li>▪ Requirements for parental education and enrichment opportunities</li> <li>▪ Linkages to literacy programs for parents who are not literate</li> <li>▪ Inclusion in the application/entry process for opportunities to get information regarding parental involvement and provide parents with supports</li> </ul>		<p>The voluntary UPK program is expected to assist and support parents in fulfilling their role as their child's first teachers. To that end, parental involvement in the program will be characterized by respectful partnerships between parents and staff and sensitivity to cultural diversity and language. Parents must be provided information necessary to make an informed choice among available prekindergarten program sites and providers. Each voluntary UPK service provider should have strong expectations of parental involvement and encourage parents to be involved in getting their children ready for school. Parents should receive periodic assessments of child progress and developmental and educational needs. When necessary and appropriate, parents should be offered assistance in interpreting assessment information and in accessing resources to address their child's needs. Parents have the responsibility to ensure that the child experiences a high-quality learning opportunity and should: be aware of the range of eligible programs, verify providers meet eligibility requirements, review performance data, verify current licensure, talk with other parents about their experiences, and select the provider most appropriate for their child based on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quality of the physical learning environment,</li> <li>▪ Regular periodic assessments of child progress and developmental and educational needs,</li> <li>▪ Literacy-focused curricula and learning experiences,</li> <li>▪ Sensitivity to cultural diversity,</li> <li>▪ Recognition of individual needs and learning styles</li> <li>▪ Parental visitation policy,</li> <li>▪ Meaningful opportunities for parental involvement, education and enrichment</li> <li>▪ Respect for the parent's role as the child's first and most vital teacher;</li> <li>▪ Establishment of a partnership between parents and staff in the child's program;</li> <li>▪ Opportunities for parents to grow with their child and develop parenting skills; and</li> <li>▪ Availability of a resources and services. [Sec. 23]</li> </ul>	<p>Recognizing that research shows the parent is the child's best first teacher, any parent of an age-eligible child may request and receive from the state in lieu of a scholarship the parent's choice of a web-based or book-based curriculum for the parent to teach the child. [Sec.1 (b)]</p> <p>The provider should maintain a school profile that includes information about the school, its staff, its curriculum and overall performance of the students. This information will be readily available and easy to access for parents. [Sec. 1(2)] AWI will maintain a clearinghouse of information that includes these provider profiles to help parents make informed choices. [Sec. 1(3)]*</p> <p><i>*This is the only mention that appears to address a resource and referral network.</i></p>

**UPK Recommendations – Governance**

Research-based Recommendations	UPK Advisory Committee Recommendations	State Board of Education Recommendations	Early Learning Draft Legislation (Governor's Draft 3.3)	House Bill 821
<i>State Governance</i>				
Strong, high-level leadership is a critical component for implementation of comprehensive initiatives.	Transfer school readiness programs to the Department of Education under separate Chancellor for Early Learning who will report to the Commissioner of Education.	The Legislature should transfer school readiness programs (for children ages birth to kindergarten entry age and after school programs), effective 2004-05, to the Department of Education under a separate Chancellor for Early Learning.	The DOE shall oversee the performance of early learning programs and ensure compliance with all laws and rules through the Division of Early Learning. [Sec. 5 (1) (a)] (There is no reference to a Chancellor for Early Learning as recommended by the UPK Advisory Council).	AWI to administer the program and existing school readiness programs will be administered by the FPSR if it meets certain requirements (outlined in Section 2 and 3) to the satisfaction of the 2005 Legislature. [Sec. 1(4) and Sec.2]
Leaders must be knowledgeable of systems and solutions; skilled at building consensus and resolving conflicts; adept at reaching across cultural, ethnic, and political boundaries; and able to communicate effectively.	The State Board of Education has final authority for rules. An Early Learning Board, with community representatives knowledgeable of early childhood programs, should be established to advise the State Board of Education and Chancellor and to develop a well-defined state implementation plan for UPK.	The Department of Education should organize a steering committee to guide the development of an implementation plan for the UPK program and to assist in the transition of school readiness programs to the Department. The Department should also ensure that providers of school readiness programs, local coalitions, agencies, and early childhood advocates are provided with frequent and consistent information regarding these activities and opportunities to provide input.	The Governor shall appoint a Early Learning Advisory Council (the Florida Partnership for School Readiness Board is eliminated) to be responsible for the parental involvement component of UPK. Sec. 5(2)] and to advise the Commissioner of Education concerning implementation of the voluntary UPK program, transition of school readiness programs to the DOE, and operation of early learning programs. The Early Learning Advisory Council shall include, at a minimum, the following members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A representative of private for-profit early learning service providers;</li> <li>▪ A representative of faith-based childhood education providers;</li> <li>▪ A Head Start service provider;</li> <li>▪ A representative of a program for pre-K programs for children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.</li> <li>▪ A representative of not-for-profit childhood education providers;</li> <li>▪ A public school superintendent;</li> <li>▪ The chair of an early learning council;</li> <li>▪ The chair of the Business Partnership for Early Learning;</li> <li>▪ The chair of a local Children's Services Council or its equivalent;</li> <li>▪ The chair of a local Children's Services Council or its equivalent;</li> <li>▪ A parent of a child who is enrolled in a publicly-funded early learning program;</li> <li>▪ A representative of family child care homes; and</li> <li>▪ A minimum of four representatives of the private business community who do not derive their income from the delivery of early learning services.</li> </ul> <p>The members must be geographically and demographically representative of the state. The Governor may appoint additional members to ensure balanced representation. [Sec. 12]</p>	Selection of an 11-member Early Learning Advisory Council to the FPSR comprised of a representative of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ State university presidents</li> <li>▪ Community College presidents</li> <li>▪ Private university presidents</li> <li>▪ Private postsecondary educational institution presidents</li> <li>▪ District school superintendents</li> <li>▪ School readiness coalition chairs</li> <li>▪ Regional work force board chairs</li> <li>▪ Faith-based child care providers</li> <li>▪ Private for-profit child care providers</li> <li>▪ The Child Care Executive Partnership board</li> <li>▪ Chambers of Commerce</li> </ul> <p>[Sec. 2(2)(d)]</p>

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## Credits

This document was developed by Alisa S. Ghazvini and Cathy Schroeder for The Policy Group for Florida's Families and Children with input from Barbara Foster, Phyllis Kalifeh and Jesse Leinfelder.

# THE POLICY GROUP

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The Policy Group is an independent, non-partisan policy research organization composed of local and state leaders who are working together to enhance the well-being of Florida's families and children. The vision of the Policy Group for Florida's Families & Children is that, together, we will ensure a generation of young people who grow up to be responsible adults — ready, willing and able to contribute to self, to family and to their community. For additional information about The Policy Group, this paper or other products, please visit our web site at [www.policygroup.org](http://www.policygroup.org).

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