



Striving for High-Quality Early Learning



High-quality early learning experiences have been shown to benefit children's school readiness and later life success. While these experiences positively affect all children, the greatest impact has consistently been associated with less advantaged children, resulting in a narrowing of the readiness gap at kindergarten entry. One of the most important outcomes of a quality early learning program is its ability to prepare children for kindergarten, which includes developing basic skills in literacy, math and science, as well as social and emotional health and behavior.

With the inception of Quality Counts in 2007, Miami was among the first communities in the nation to implement an early learning quality improvement system. Now, 11 years later, every state is on board and Miami-Dade County is once again at the forefront with an innovative new model. Through an intensive review of our data and multiple Quality Counts evaluations, we've learned that programs need financial assistance to afford the high cost of quality care.

In our community, low school-readiness payments, under enrollment due to an oversaturated child care market and parents not demanding higher-quality programs act as major barriers in increasing the quality of care. Miami's new early learning quality improvement system (QIS) aims to overcome these barriers. In addition to supporting improved program quality and teacher practices, The Children's Trust provides strategic financial investments to incentivize programs to improve and sustain their delivery of high-quality early learning services. This innovative model aims to level the playing field to access high-quality infant and toddler care in low-income neighborhoods.

Early Learning Career Center and Teacher Scholarships

Directors and teaching staff, regardless of participation in the QIS, will have access to career advising services and educational scholarships aimed at furthering their education and professional development. Scholarships may be used for child care credentials, document translation and professional development opportunities. There are a wide range of bilingual opportunities available including college credit-earning courses and continuing education unit (CEU) bearing trainings.

WAGE\$ Salary Supplements Eligible teachers, regardless of participation in the QIS, have access to semiannual wage supplements issued through The Child Care WAGE\$[®] FLORIDA Project. They are intended to increase the education of the early childhood workforce and reduce staff turnover. Annual wage supplements ranging from \$200 to \$3,000 are available depending on level of education qualifications.

On-Site Technical Assistance and Coaching Programs benefit from on-demand technical assistance and coaching aimed at helping teachers implement what they have learned by way of various education and professional development opportunities. This support will be provided directly by the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe (ELC).

Professional Development ELC's Professional Development Institute offers a wide array of trainings aimed at building teachers' and directors' knowledge of the best practices and latest developments in early childhood education. Trainings are delivered at no cost throughout the county and at a variety of days and times, so they are widely accessible.



Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Teachers will be supported by mental health professionals to build capacity around fostering healthy social-emotional development and addressing challenging behaviors. While supporting teachers makes for the widest-ranging impact for all children, additional services will also be available for those children and families requiring additional support.

Child Assessments Teachers will be supported as they implement ongoing child assessments in their classrooms to better individualize instruction for children based on their development. These assessments also provide a means by which to track the development of children and assess the impact of the education they receive.



Licensed child care programs that meet all of the following criteria qualify to participate; those meeting some criteria may qualify, depending on available resources:

1. Serve 30 percent or more young children (under age 6) receiving a school readiness subsidy
2. Located in a low-income neighborhood
3. Serve infants and toddlers

Additional priority is given to programs that have a Gold Seal designation.

How it Works

Participating early learning programs and teachers will have access to comprehensive opportunities to improve and sustain high-quality early learning programs. Available supports are:

High-Quality Payment Differential Programs meeting a threshold of quality, as defined by CLASS assessments measuring teacher-child interactions, will receive a payment differential on all children ages birth through 5 years old attending their program. Differential payments are tiered, from 3 to 15 percent, so that programs are incentivized to reach higher levels of quality and receive higher differentials.

Children's Trust Child Scholarships Awarded to parents who do not qualify for a School Readiness subsidy but still cannot afford the high cost of quality child care. While School Readiness eligibility covers families with incomes up to 150 percent of the federal poverty level, Trust scholarships will cover families with incomes up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Parents will be able to use the scholarships to enroll their children in high-quality programs, based on CLASS assessments, and those programs would benefit from increasing enrollment to financially sustain their high level of quality.

