



Legislative Session 2023 Recap

Florida's 2023 Regular Legislative Session adjourned on Friday, May 5, at 11:00 a.m. The Florida Head Start Association (FHSA) has reviewed the bills that passed this session and now awaits Governor Ron DeSantis's signature. The Governor has until May 31, 2023, to act on these bills. **Here's what you need to know.**

[CS/CS/HB 443 – Education.](#) The Education Bill identifies the Department of Children and Families by December 31, 2024, to submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives regarding Professional Development, Licensing, and regulation of child care facilities redundancy. This bill allows the integration of early learning programs into the online portal enabling parents to access early learning performance profiles. Also, a child care facility, large family child care home, or family day care home must not have had three or more of the same class II violations as defined by rules of D.C.F. within the two years termination of the designation as a Gold Seal Quality Care provider.

[SB 2502](#) Implementing the 2023-2024 General Appropriations Act. Sunset one-year CLASS impact V.P.K. accountability system CLASS level 4 next year before you lose your contract. Revises the requirements relating to the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program CLASS assessments. Beginning with the 2024-2025 program year, CLASS assessment impact on V.P.K. accountability.

[CS/HB 249 /SB 676:](#) Level 2 Background Screenings. Moves educational certification to be conducted through the Agency for Health Care Administration (A.H.C.A.). Maximizes portability of background screenings.

[HB 121:](#) Florida Kidcare Program Eligibility. This is a big win for children's healthcare in Florida's state-funded healthcare insurance program. This bi-partisan bill expanded eligibility to school-age children with a family income up to 300% of the current federal poverty level who do not qualify for Medicaid. Goes into effect January 1, 2024. This bill can potentially serve up to an additional 77,000 children based on census data.

What's included in Florida Budget for Early Learning

\$890 Million will be sent to Early Learning Coalitions, not including an additional \$77.5 Million to be utilized by the ELCs to ensure they do not disenroll children.

\$30 Million for the University of Florida Lastering Center Literary Micro-Credential helping instructors in SR and VPK. Upon complementation of the 60-hour credential, they receive a \$2,000 stipend.

\$10 Million for T.E.A.C.H scholarship, which was made as recurring funds to help support the ECE workforce obtain CDA, AA, and Bachelor's degrees.

\$315 Million for Early Learning Coalitions and childcare providers to apply to DOE/DEL used for childcare capacity, Professional Development, workforce training, and curriculum support. There is a grant application process.

SECTION 53. The nonrecurring sum of \$315,000,000 from the American Rescue Plan Child Care and Development Block Grant Trust Fund is appropriated to the Department of Education for the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 to implement the Discretionary Grant Program. Grantees include Early Learning Coalitions and School Readiness Providers. The Department of Education shall develop an application process. Grant funds may be used for the following purposes: increasing/building the supply of childcare, training and professional development activities, workforce initiatives, local initiatives/pilot projects to improve kindergarten readiness, community outreach and family engagement, mental health supports, and equipment, supplies, classroom/childcare materials, curriculum, business administration