

## Children's Movement of Florida, Keeping You Current

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Keeping you current on The Children's Movement of Florida...

Let's focus this week on Florida's prekindergarten program. (A story this week in the [Orlando Sentinel](#) carried the good news that the 4 year olds who completed the program last year were significantly more ready for kindergarten than the children who did not attend.)

But there are moves afoot at the Capitol that could affect that program (which is still not anywhere near as good as it needs to be, but nonetheless of real value to the more than 160,000 children in the program). Last week I wrote of the legislative discussion about moving this program from the Agency for Workforce Innovation to either the Department of Children and Families or the Department of Education. This week I testified on this issue before a group of state senators, led by Don Gaetz, a former school superintendent and a public servant who "gets it" on the subject of high-quality early learning as an investment in children's futures. (You can watch my several minutes of testimony by [clicking here](#)). I offered three basic recommendations:

1. Pre-K and other "school readiness" programs need to be housed together - and must be about quality because only quality leads to positive outcomes for children.
2. Education must be seen as a lifelong continuum - with a caring, knowledgeable parent at the core of everything, and accompanied by quality prenatal care, quality child care, quality pre-K and quality through all the years of education (elementary, secondary, higher education and beyond).
3. The best home, the most natural home is the Department of Education (which must have full respect and collaboration with private and faith-based providers).

Some still think of pre-K as "babysitting." It is not. Giving our children - all of Florida's children - the fullest opportunity to succeed in school and in life is the single wisest investment we could make. For them and for Florida.

Your belief in the cause of children energizes me. Thank you.

David Lawrence Jr.

Chair

The Children's Movement of Florida