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DATE: April 2, 1998

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AS FURTHER REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS
BILL RESEARCH & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

BILL #: CS/CS/HB 683 & 2131

RELATING TO: School Readiness

SPONSOR(S): Committee on Children and Family Empowerment, Representative Chestnut, Warner, and Murman

COMPANION BILL(S): CS/S 180, CS/CS/S 182 [Compare]

ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:

- (1) Education K-12 (W/D)
- (2) Children and Family Empowerment YEAS 6 NAYS 3
- (3) EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS YEAS 10 NAYS 6
- (4)
- (5)

I. SUMMARY:

CS/CS/HB 683 & 2131 creates the "Children First Act" in chapter 411, F.S., to establish a new governance framework for the administration and operation of subsidized child care programs and the prekindergarten early intervention program incorporating many of the recommendations of the Readiness Committee of the Governor's Commission on Education. This new governance framework eliminates the involvement of the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Education in administering these programs. The bill creates the following administrative structure:

- Children's First Governing Board. The board is charged with setting statewide direction and establishing programmatic, administrative, and fiscal policies.
- The Florida Partnership for Children First, Inc., as a nonprofit corporation with statewide responsibilities for implementing policies developed by the governing board, monitoring progress toward achievement of goals, setting standards, approving Children First plans, facilitating the implementation of the local plans. The bill requires that the governing board recommend the feasibility of combining funding streams for school readiness programs into a Children First School Readiness Trust Fund.
- The Children First Coalitions (in each county or county combination). The coalitions are private nonprofit organizations or a partnership of nonprofit organizations, and individuals with demonstrated interest and leadership, including parents. The coalitions are the brokers for readiness programs in the community. The coalitions secure service providers and assist families in finding an appropriate readiness program. The coalitions maintain management and program data necessary to accomplish its functions and activities.
- Fiscal agents are designated by the coalitions to provide all administrative and direct funding services as determined by the coalition.

Children First programs must comply with parental choice and payment arrangement provisions. Each coalition is responsible for recommendations phasing out duplicative programs. The bill phases out the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services and requires the submission of a final report by December 1, 1998. Beyond this date, the council ceases to exist. Sections of Florida Statute relating to child care and PreK and other early intervention programs are transferred to chapter 411.

The bill appropriates \$1,675,000 to fund the \$25,000 initiation grant to support Children First Coalitions in developing the plan and appropriates \$500,000 to fund the Florida Parents as Teachers Program.

II. SUBSTANTIVE RESEARCH:

A. PRESENT SITUATION:

Currently there are three major publicly funded early child care and education programs: the subsidized child care program, administered by the Department of Children and Families; the prekindergarten early intervention program, administered by the Department of Education; and, the Head Start program, administered through various local agencies by contract with the federal government.

Subsidized Child Care

Florida has operated a subsidized child care program for approximately 20 years. The purpose of the current subsidized child care program, administered by the Department of Children and Families, as described at s. 402.3015, F.S., is "to provide quality child care to enhance the development, including language, cognitive, motor, social, and self-help skills of children who are at risk of abuse or neglect and children of low-income families." The goal is to promote financial self-sufficiency and life skills for the families of these children. Priority for participation in the subsidized child care program is accorded to children under 13 years of age who are determined to be at risk of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and who are currently clients of the Department's Children and Families Services Program Office; children at risk of welfare dependency, including children of participants in the WAGES Program, children of migrant farm workers, children of teen parents, and children of other families at risk of welfare dependency; and, children of working poor families. Performance measures approved for this program in FY 98/99 states that 80 percent of children age four placed with contracted providers who have been in care for nine months, will enter kindergarten ready to learn as determined through DOE or local school systems' readiness assessment.

Prekindergarten Program

The prekindergarten program is established pursuant to s. 230.2305, F.S., and is designed to serve economically disadvantaged 3- and 4-year-olds, the majority of whom shall be 4 years of age, in educational programs administered by Florida's school districts. This program is funded by a direct appropriation of lottery dollars. School districts may spend the funds they receive to implement and conduct a prekindergarten program or to contract with public or non-public entities to serve eligible children.

Each school district's prekindergarten plan is developed by the school board in coordination with the local interagency coordinating council on early childhood services. Each coordinating council must include private and subsidized child care program representatives as well as representatives from the federally funded Head Start program.

Head Start

Head Start is a federally funded program. The funds come directly from the federal government to the local grantee, usually private non-profits located in the school district. Though the federal government does provide performance standards which each local grantee must meet, each local grantee is given significant autonomy in planning its curriculum.

Coordination across these and other early education programs and services at the local level is reportedly varied.

The following chart shows requirements, funding levels, and eligibility for the three programs.

Major Early Care and Education Programs For Children Under The Age Of Five

	Child Care	Prekindergarten E.I.	Head Start
Total Funding	\$332 million	\$97 million	\$152 million
Avg. Expenditure Per Child Per Year	\$3,750	\$3,200	\$4,968 (for comprehensive services)
Hours of Service	10 hours per day, 249 days per year	6 hours per day, 180 days per year	6-12 hours per day, 180-260 days per year
Avg. Expenditure Per Child Per Hour	\$1.44	\$2.96	\$4.20-\$4.50
Children Served	72,750 (under age 5)	27,000	30,614
Maximum Family Income	150% of federal poverty level	130% of federal poverty level	100% of federal poverty level
Parent Fees Charged	Yes; sliding scale	No	No
Staff Requirements	Centers have 1 CDA or equivalent per 20 children Family day care homes complete 3- hour course. No requirements for informal providers.	DOE-certified teacher or CDA with supervision from certified teacher; others complete a 30-hour training	Teacher must have CDA or equivalent. Aide must have diploma and be enrolled in CDA program.
Staff: Child Ratios Birth-12 Months 12-24 Months Two-year-olds Three-year-olds Four-year-olds	1:4 1:6 1:11 1:15 1:20	1:10 1:10	Birth through 3 1:4 1:7.5 1:10

Child Care Licensing

The Department of Children and Families Services also licenses child care facilities and some family day care homes and maintains a registry of other family day care homes that are not subject to licensure. All child care facilities must have their licenses renewed annually and must meet specified licensing standards delineated in s. 402.305, F.S., including minimum staff credentials, sanitation and safety, and child discipline. Child care centers and certain homes are subject to periodic inspections to ensure compliance with state requirements. Inspectors have the right to enter and inspect places seeking a license or a license renewal; they may enter places suspected of being unlicensed child care facilities with the permission of the owner or upon presentation of a court warrant.

Chapter 411 and The State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services

Chapter 411, F.S., requires collaboration between DOE and CFS to provide early assistance to children who are handicapped or at risk of developmental delay in order to help the children achieve optimum growth and development. This chapter creates the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services which advises the Governor, the Legislature, and state agencies regarding the coordination of the various programs serving preschool children. The council members represent the various public and private programs and services for preschool children and their families. The council is not assigned to a single agency, but rather floats back and forth between DOE and C&F in alternate years. In some years the council was without support staff in its assigned agency, a situation which contributed to an unevenness in the council's effectiveness. The Readiness Committee recommended reexamining the role of this council.

The Readiness Committee Recommendations

The Governor's Commission on Education was created by executive order on September 20, 1996, to conduct a wholesale review of Florida's public schools from prekindergarten through college. The commission was specifically asked to address the objective of improving readiness for school, and an appointed Readiness Committee made recommendations that were adopted by the commission on December 15, 1997. The recommendations are as follows:

1. Elevate health care, child care, and early education for children 0-5, and their families, to the top of Florida's agenda, statewide and in every county.
2. Recognizing the primacy of parental responsibility, enhance all parents' understanding of child development. Maximize their involvement in publicly funded care and education programs.
3. Reform state and local governance and organization structures.
 - A. To elevate the well-being of children from birth to five to a top priority at the state level, the Legislature should create a Florida Children's Policy Council.
 - B. The state should create a Children's Cabinet, reporting to the Florida Children's Policy Council . . .
 - C. The role of the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services . . . should be reexamined.

- D. Each county should be encouraged, with significant incentive funding and waiver authority, to create or designate local children's services councils or their equivalents . . .
- 4. Ensure that every program or service for children before kindergarten is recognized as part of Florida's readiness system.
 - A. Blend early childhood funding streams over which the state and local governments have control to maximize services from existing funding.
 - B. Increase the quality of early childhood programs, particularly child care.
 - 1. Review regulatory requirements and licensing and registration standards.
 - 2. Improve professional development to improve the quality of care giving, to provide opportunities for increased pay, and to reduce turnover.
 - 3. Encourage accreditation.
 - 4. Link program training and delivery at the local level.
 - 5. Use new federal funding and tobacco liability funds to pay for early childhood health enhancements to increase readiness for school.
 - 6. Make a multi-year commitment to fully fund comprehensive child care and quality early education, as developed in local coalitions, through a combination of federal, state, local, and private resources.
 - 7. Enhance the role of public schools in the provision of coordinated early childhood services.
 - 8. Increase private sector involvement.
 - 9. Improve performance measures and evaluations of early childhood care and education programs.
 - A. Competitive outside evaluation of all state-funded children's readiness programs, including subsidized child care should be resumed.
 - B. The DOE should complete its refinement of the kindergarten readiness system to gather more useful information regarding the background of all children assessed in kindergarten for performance budgeting purposes.
 - C. The standards (required of the DOE and DCF by the 1996 Legislature) should be finalized and become the basis for performance based budgeting and any other accountability reporting by early childhood care and education programs.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

CS/CS/HB 683 & 2131 creates the "Children First Act" in chapter 411, F.S., to establish a new governance framework for the administration and operation of the subsidized child care and prekindergarten early intervention programs. This new governance framework eliminates the involvement of the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Education in administering these programs. The bill creates the following administrative structure:

- Children's First Governing Board. The board is charged with setting statewide direction and establishing programmatic, administrative, and fiscal policies.
- The Florida Partnership of Children First, Inc., as a nonprofit corporation with statewide responsibilities for implementing policies developed by the governing board.
- The Children First Coalitions (in each county or county combination). The coalitions are private nonprofit organizations or a partnership of nonprofit organizations, and individuals with demonstrated interest and leadership, including parents. The coalitions are the brokers for readiness programs in the community. The coalitions secure service providers and assist families in finding an appropriate readiness programs.

Sections of Florida Statutes relating to child care and PreK and other early intervention programs are transferred to chapter 411.

C. APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES:

1. Less Government:

- a. Does the bill create, increase or reduce, either directly or indirectly:

The bill reduces government by creating a governance framework for readiness programs that eliminates the involvement of two departments and establishes a single administrative structure for the administration of readiness programs.

- (1) any authority to make rules or adjudicate disputes?

Yes. The bill establishes the partnership to achieve collaboration.

- (2) any new responsibilities, obligations or work for other governmental or private organizations or individuals?

Yes. The bill creates a nonprofit organization and its subsidiaries for the administration of school readiness programs.

- (3) any entitlement to a government service or benefit?

No.

- b. If an agency or program is eliminated or reduced:

- (1) what responsibilities, costs and powers are passed on to another program, agency, level of government, or private entity?

The administration of the subsidized child care program by the Department of Children and Families and the administration of Pre K programs by the Department of Education is transferred to the new nonprofit governance structure.

(2) what is the cost of such responsibility at the new level/agency?

See fiscal comments.

(3) how is the new agency accountable to the people governed?

Various mechanisms for local control of the Children First Coalitions are delineated in the bill. In addition, the bill calls for evaluations and development of performance measures to assess the effectiveness of programs.

2. Lower Taxes:

a. Does the bill increase anyone's taxes?

No.

b. Does the bill require or authorize an increase in any fees?

No.

c. Does the bill reduce total taxes, both rates and revenues?

No.

d. Does the bill reduce total fees, both rates and revenues?

No.

e. Does the bill authorize any fee or tax increase by any local government?

No.

3. Personal Responsibility:

a. Does the bill reduce or eliminate an entitlement to government services or subsidy?

No.

b. Do the beneficiaries of the legislation directly pay any portion of the cost of implementation and operation?

Yes. The bill requires a sliding scale fee structure for school readiness programs.

4. Individual Freedom:

- a. Does the bill increase the allowable options of individuals or private organizations/associations to conduct their own affairs?

Yes. The bill allows parental choice in determining a school readiness provider.

- b. Does the bill prohibit, or create new government interference with, any presently lawful activity?

No.

5. Family Empowerment:

- a. If the bill purports to provide services to families or children:

- (1) Who evaluates the family's needs?

Coalitions screen children at various ages to determine readiness for school.

- (2) Who makes the decisions?

Parents.

- (3) Are private alternatives permitted?

Yes.

- (4) Are families required to participate in a program?

No.

- (5) Are families penalized for not participating in a program?

No, unless they are WAGES participants. Child care is a support service in the WAGES program and provides program participants the opportunity to participate in WAGES activities.

- b. Does the bill directly affect the legal rights and obligations between family members?

No.

- c. If the bill creates or changes a program providing services to families or children, in which of the following does the bill vest control of the program, either through direct participation or appointment authority:

(1) parents and guardians?

Parent.

(2) service providers?

No.

(3) government employees/agencies?

No.

D. STATUTE(S) AFFECTED:

Chapter 411, chapter 402, and other sections of Florida Statutes.

E. SECTION-BY-SECTION RESEARCH:

Section 1. Cites act as the Children's First Act of 1998 and declares that nothing in the act is intended to impede or curtail the state's efforts to draw down federal funds.

Section 2. Renames chapter 411 the Children's First Partnership and provides an effective date of July 1, 1998.

Section 3 Creates s. 411.01, Florida Partnership for Children First, Inc.: Children First Coalitions.

Legislative Intent

Provides legislative intent that:

- States early childhood health care, child care, and education of children from birth to five or until the child attains school readiness become a top priority of state policy
- States that all children in Florida, until they are ready for school, should have access to quality early childhood health care, child care, and education.
- Recognizes that parents are responsible for the early childhood, health care, child care and education of children and declares that Florida must improve the assistance to families and children in this area.
- Declares that high quality early childhood experiences should be provided with a minimum of governmental interference.

- Recognizes the importance of early childhood health care, child care, and education of children for families to move to and maintain economic self sufficiency.
- States that all childhood health care, child care and education are considered school readiness programs.
- Recognizes that despite the efforts of hundreds of thousands for Floridians, an increase of collaboration of service providers, services to young children remain uncoordinated, uneven in quality and inaccessible to many.
- Recognizes the importance of new brain development research and its implication to programs and services to children from birth to five years of age.

Defines the terms child care, health care, and education.

The term "child care" includes formal and informal arrangements, including but not limited to, child care centers, day care homes, private providers, and relative care.

The term "health care" includes immunization, screening, well-baby care, and other preventive health care measures.

The term "education" includes private and public kindergarten and other education programs.

School Readiness Programs

Provides that all early childhood health care, child care and education programs funded with any funds and which provides services to children from birth to five, or until the child attains school readiness shall be recognized as school readiness programs and part of the goal of children entering schools with healthy bodies and healthy minds and ready to succeed in schools.

Children First Governing Board

Creates the Children First Governing Board to operate as the Board of Directors of the Florida Partnership for Children First. The board is charged with the following responsibilities:

- creating and maintaining coordinated programmatic, administrative, and fiscal policies.
- establishing and maintaining education standards for all school readiness programs.
- determining guidelines for granting programmatic waivers to any of its policies and standards.
- establishing goals leading to school readiness.
- providing oversight.
- developing a strategic plan.

The members of the Children First Governing Board include the Governor, the Commissioner of Education, the Secretary of Children and Family Services, the

chair of the WAGES State Board of Directors, and the chair of the Florida Council of 100 who shall be voting ex-officio members and shall constitute the executive committee of the board; six voting members, none of whom shall be legislators, two appointed by the Governor, two by the President of the Senate, and two by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Members shall have expertise in early childhood health care, child care, or education. Members must serve four-year staggered terms.

Requires that the governing board be chaired by the Governor. Members of the governing board participate without proxy and meetings must be held at least quarterly. The governing board must appoint an executive director who is responsible for other staff authorized by the board. Members are entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses and other reasonable, necessary, and actual expenses.

Provides for vacancies and removal of appointive members of the governing board, and makes members of the governing board subject to the ethics provisions of part III of ch. 112, F.S.

Provides that the Governor shall chair the quarterly meetings and the member designated by the Governor shall chair the monthly meetings, clarifies the purpose of the meetings, and specifies quorums.

Provides that no liability on the part of, and no cause of action, shall rise against any member of the governing board or its employees or agents for any action they take in performance of the powers and duties of this section.

Gives the governing board full fiduciary responsibilities for the Florida Children First and for all corporate operations.

Makes the governing board responsible for prudent use of all public and private funds and for aggressively providing leadership for school readiness in the state.

Makes the Partnership subject to open meetings and open records laws, except for identifying information about children served.

Provides for corporate offices and the transitioning/privatization of agency staff from DOE and DCF; clarifies functions of the executive director.

The board is assigned to recommend the feasibility of combining funding streams for school readiness programs.

Florida Partnership for Children First, Inc.

Creates the Florida Partnership for Children First, Inc., as a nonprofit corporation with responsibilities for:

- implementing policies developed by the governing board
- monitoring progress toward achievement of goals
- assessing gaps in early childhood health care, child care, education and
- recommending quality standards and monitoring their implementation

- approving Children First plans
 - facilitating local implementation
 - providing technical assistance
 - recommending common eligibility requirements for similar programs
-
- helping to secure needed programmatic waivers from Federal requirements

Requires that the Children First Partnership make recommendations to the governing board regarding needed changes in state law, rule, or agency policy.

It requires that the Children First Partnership submit to the governing board a report concerning the feasibility of combining funding streams for school readiness programs into a Children First School Readiness Trust Fund.

The bill directs the Children First Partnership to phase in a program to:

- Facilitate the provision of early childhood health care, child care, and education
- Provide eligibility criteria for a single sliding fee scale for all school readiness programs
- Provide for a priority listing of target populations for school readiness programs. This list prioritizes the following groups of children:
 - ▶ Children that participate in the WAGES program--only children eligible for services funded through the federal assistance for needy families.
 - ▶ Children under five years of age who are: children determined to be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation and who are currently clients of the Department of Children and Family Services
 - ▶ Children at risk of welfare dependency
 - ▶ Children of working families whose family income is equal to 100 percent of poverty but does not exceed 150 percent of poverty.
 - ▶ Children who meet the eligibility requirements of pre-kindergarten.
- Establish screening instruments to provide data to measure school readiness. Prepare a plan for publicizing system for measuring school readiness children have the opportunity to be screened at 3 ½, 4 ½ and again after entering Kindergarten. The plan must include a strategy to train private and public providers in the use of the instrument and include a way to utilize the Florida Parents as Teachers Program for children who do not participate in school readiness programs.
- Provide screenings at 31/2 and 41/2 years to children served in children first programs and to children not served but whose parents pay a nominal fee.
- Develop a method for the utilization of the screening data.
- Establish a single or simplified point of entry and a unified waiting list within the framework of parental choice and other program arrangement options.
- Contract with local coalitions comprised of public entities, nonprofit organizations and individuals, including parents, to provide by direct

service agreement, contract agreement, or voucher school readiness services. Clarifies provisions relating to program point of entry and waiting lists, and authorizes contracts with child care resource and referral agencies

- Make available the Florida Parents as Teachers Program whenever feasible and as early as possible.
- Develop a publicity plan for the Children First Partnership
- Secure staff to properly administer the Children First Partnership. The governing board determines staff and may also recommend the current agency staff be transitioned to the Partnership if the child care licensure is administered by the partnership. Provides for corporate offices and the transitioning/privatization of agency staff from DOE and DCF; clarifies functions of the executive director.
- Enter into contract with other agencies, including child care resource and referral agencies, to provide information and referral and other services.
- Provide a program point of entry and waiting lists, and authorizes contracts with child care resource and referral agencies.
- Provide an annual report to the Governing Board, Florida Healthy Kids Cooperation, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House, and the minority leaders of the House and Senate.

It requires that the Florida Partnership for Children First be a not for profit organization pursuant to chapter 617 and provides broad powers necessary to operate the organization to achieve stated goals. Meetings of the Florida Partnership for Children First shall be open to the public. Provides that the Florida Partnership for Children First be independent and nonpartisan, have a budget, and be financed in the General Appropriateness Act.

Staffing

The bill requires the governing board and the Florida Partnership for Children First to be staffed by an executive director and support staff, and requires the executive director to contract for technical assistance and support during FY 98/99 and 99/00 to assist counties in developing coalitions and local plans.

Children First Coalitions

The bill creates Children First Coalitions in each county or county combination. The coalitions must be private nonprofit organizations or a partnership of nonprofit organizations, and individuals, including parents, with demonstrated interest and leadership. Requires the strongest obtainable coalition, which should include consideration of the central agency and the school district. The CS requires that one coalition be established in each county but allows two or more counties to join under one coalition.

Coalitions must provide the following services:

- A resource file of all readiness programs in the area
- A referral process

- Maintenance of request for services and other related data
- Assistance to families and employers in applying for readiness programs
- Assistance to state agencies to determine market rate
- Assistance in negotiating discounts and other arrangement with program providers
- Basic statistical analysis of programs and performance on outcomes

Requires coalitions to select and designate a fiscal agent to ensure that coalition funds are expended appropriately. The fiscal agent may be public or private, for-profit or not-for-profit, but may not be a provider. The fiscal agent is required to provide all administrative and direct funding services as determined by the coalition. Requires the coalitions to monitor all providers and that no provider may receive funds unless it agrees to be monitored by the coalition. Coalitions select their fiscal agents as part of their children first plans to be approved by the Partnership, and the coalitions operate as part of the partnership.

Requires the Children First Plan to comply with parental choice and payment arrangement provisions. Each coalition is responsible for recommending phasing out duplicative coordinating bodies and increasing collaboration between service providers. In addition the coalitions are charged with increasing program quality and accessibility. Performance standards require serving at least as many children as were served before the children first plan was approved.

The bill allows funds budgeted for county prekindergarten, subsidized child care, or other readiness programs to be transferred to the Children First Children Readiness Trust Fund on the county's behalf. Each coalition will receive block grant funding and waiver authority conditioned on the submission of an approved plan designed to increase the number of children ready for kindergarten.

The use of programmatic waivers is available to coalitions to improve health outcomes for all children birth to five years of age, to provide family support and education including but not limited to the Florida Parents as Teachers Program and to increase the quality and accessibility of school readiness programs for children with disabilities and developmental delays.

Incentives for Children First Plans

The bill provides a mechanism to coalitions for the development and approval of plans. The Florida Children First Partnership Inc., shall approve children First plans submitted by a coalition. Requires each plan submitted to include the following:

- An assessment of county resources for children birth to five.
- An assessment of unmet school readiness program needs.
- An assessment of school readiness program needs for children five years of age and older.
- An assessment of kindergarten readiness.
- A method for integrating programs and services including the needs of:
 - ▶ Migrant children.

- ▶ Children with special needs.
- ▶ Minorities.

Plans submitted by a coalition must adhere to the standards established by the governing board and must address improvements in programs including:

- Components for providing developmentally appropriate curriculum.
- Small group size.
- Increased staff training.
- Lower staff turnover rates.
- Ratios

Children First coalitions must phase in the integration of early childhood health care, child care, and education in their plans.

Coalition initiated grants—block grant funding

Provides that Children First coalitions are eligible for a \$25,000 initiation grant to support the planning effort. Provides that a coalition that submits a plan approved by the Partnership for Children First will receive block grant funding beginning the following July 1, to begin the implementation of the plan. Provides for cash incentive bonuses for plans that enhance quality without diminishing the number of children served.

Beginning in January 1999 the Partnership for Children First shall issue a call for coalition initiation grants every six months until all counties have responded. Block grant funding for coalitions will continue from year to year consistent with funding consistent with the General Appropriations Act.

Parental Choice—Payment Arrangement

The bill requires parental choice and allows a parent to choose a voucher, contract, or direct service provider to secure the child's readiness program. Provides authentication provisions to avoid fraud. In consultation with the Comptroller, the Partnership for Children First shall establish an electronic disbursement system for payment of funds and vouchers. Fiscal agents must fully implement the electronic transfer system within three years after plan approval unless a waiver is obtained. Allows a fiscal agent to charge an administrative fee not to exceed 1½ percent for each voucher to offset the cost of administering the program.

Evaluation and Performance Measures

The Partnership for Children First has the responsibility for designing the evaluation and performance measures to track the effectiveness of block grant and other funding in meeting the goals of the program and increasing quality and accessibility of readiness programs.

The bill requires that each coalition utilize the school readiness screening instruments developed by the Partnership. The governing board must report to

the Legislature on the implementation and performance of the coalitions by March 1 of each year.

Responsibility for Implementation

The bill requires that the appointive voting members of the Florida Partnership for Children First, must be selected no later than July 15, 1998, and the staff of the Children First Partnership shall be selected and placed no later than August 15, 1998. The first full meeting of the Children First Partnership must be held no later than October 1, 1998

Phase-out of State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services

The bill phases out the coordinating council and the districts interagency council and requires submission of a final report by December 1, 1998. Beyond this date, the council ceases to exist.

Section 4

Creates s. 411.02, F.S., effective July 1, 1998, establishes the Children First appropriation allocation conference and delineates the conference principles. The conference will develop budget allocation proposals and ensure that the requirements of the funding sources are met.

Section 5

Creates a paragraph (a) of subsection(6) of s. 216.136, F.S., July 1, 1998, amending the Social Service Estimating process to include a school readiness program estimating conference. The estimating conference shall develop estimates and forecasts of unduplicated counts of children eligible for school readiness programs. The Partnership for Children First must provide needs and waiting list information in a timely manner as requested by the estimating conference. The principals of the estimating conferences are delineated.

Section 6

Renumbers the Florida First Start Program as Section s. 411.03 F.S., effective July 1, 1999. Authorizes the program to include the Florida Parents as Teachers program training and be conducted pursuant to the Children First plan.

Children First coalitions are required to evaluate the effectiveness of Florida First Start programs in achieving Children First performance outcomes. Requires that the Florida First Start program submit an annual report to the Children First coalition. The bill states that Florida First Start program is under the jurisdiction of the Florida Partnership for Children First.

Section 7

Renumbers the prekindergarten statutes as s. 411.04 F.S., effective July 1, 1999, integrating the prekindergarten education program with the Florida Partnership for Children First. Provides intent that encourages Pre K programs to be submitted by the Children First Coalitions as part of the children first plans

and comply with performance measures established by the Florida Partnership for Children First.

The bill requires that each prekindergarten early intervention program administer the screening instruments for school readiness developed by the Children First coalitions. Allows the prekindergarten program in a district to be administered by a school board or a Children First coalition provider. Eligibility for program participation is established by the Partnership. No changes are made in the criteria for eligibility for the prekindergarten program.

Requires that a single point of entry be established for all prekindergarten, child care, and other readiness programs.

Requires that the school district and other Children First coalition providers use a sliding fee scale developed by the Florida Partnership for Children First to determine the fee program participants will pay. Provides that the ratio between staff and children is the ratio shall be recommended by the Florida Partnership for Children First.

Provides that the staff meet minimum requirements recommended by the Florida Partnership for Children First.

Requires that parents must be provided with a choice of payment arrangements. Parents must be provided a voucher or option regarding a child's participation at a school-based site or other Children First coalition contracted site. Allows the placement of a child at another site, other than the one first assigned by the coalition, provided the parent pays the cost of transportation to the site of the parent's choice.

Requires each school district or First coalition provider to conduct an evaluation and include in the evaluation other information concerning performance on measures.

Makes technical changes in the funding of prekindergarten programs to reflect the presence of the Children First coalitions.

Clearly delineates that the Children First coalitions are responsible for the prekindergarten programs in their county or counties of jurisdiction.

The bill eliminates the district interagency coordinating councils on early childhood services.

Requires the Florida Partnership for Children First to create a program to promote school readiness for children over 5 years of age measured as not ready for school.

Section 8

Creates s. 411.05, F.S., effective July 1, 1998

Requires the Department of Education to adopt the school readiness screening instruments developed by the Florida Partnership for Children First and requires that:

- ▶ All school districts administer the kindergarten screening instrument to each kindergarten student in the district school system
- ▶ All school districts that operate preschool programs administer the age-appropriate screening instrument to each preschool student in the district's preschool programs.

Section 9

Creates s. 411.06, F.S., placing the Florida Parents as Teachers program as an integral part of Florida's framework for readiness programs. The program is placed under the jurisdiction of the Florida Partnership for Children First. The purpose of the program is to provide parents with the information on the latest brain development research and its implications for child development and to become an agent for the screening of children for school readiness. The Florida Parents as Teachers program requires personal home visits by certified parent educators trained in child development.

Section 10

Renumbers s. 402.281, F.S., as s. 411.08, F.S., effective July 1, 1998, making technical and conforming changes to the Gold Seal Quality Care Program to reflect the new governance structure created by the Florida Partnership for Children First.

Section 11

Amends various subsections of s. 411.202, F. S., effective July 1, 1998, to reflect the elimination of the strategic plan requirements of the State Coordinating Council.

Section 12

Amends s. 411.203, F. S., effective July 1, 1998. Technical and conforming changes are made to reflect the new governance structure created by the Florida Partnership for Children First.

Section 13

Makes technical changes in the Florida Education Now and Babies Later Program in s. 411.24, F.S.

Section 14

Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of s. 411.242, F.S., is amended, effective July 1, 1998. Technical and conforming changes are made to reflect the new governance structure created by the Florida Partnership for Children First.

Section 15

Renumbers s. 402.305, F.S., as s. 411.305, F.S., effective July 1, 1999. Transfers the licensing framework and child care standards to chapter 411 and makes technical changes to reflect the new governance structure created by the Florida Partnership for Children First. The Child Care Technical Review Panel is eliminated.

Section 16

Renumbers s. 402.3052, F.S., as s. 411.3052, F.S., effective July 1999. moving the child development associate training program to chapter 411 and making technical changes to reflect the new governance structure created by the Florida Partnership for Children First. Deletes all references to the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services.

Section 17

Amends s. 20.19, F.S., to reflect the new governance structure created by the Florida Partnership for Children First.

Section 18

Amend s. 229.591, F.S., effective July 1, 1999, education goals to establish the readiness-to-start-school goal as a partnership among communities, schools, and the Florida Partnership for Children First coalitions and the Florida Partnership for Children First.

Section 19

Amends s. 232.01, F. S., effective July 1, 1999, to reflect technical and conforming changes of the new governance structure created by the Florida Partnership for Children First.

Section 20

Amends subsection 8 of s. 288.962, F.S., workforce development board provision, to allow submission of reports to the Florida Partnership for Children First.

Section 21

Amends s. 383.14, F. S. effective July 1, 1998, the screening requirements, so that the Florida Partnership for Children First is consulted regarding tests and screening information.

Section 22

Amends s. 397.90, F.S., effective July 1, 1998, removing all references to section 411.204.

Section 23

Amends s. 414.027, F. S., July 1, 1999, adding to the parties that receive the WAGES program state plan, the Florida Partnership for Children First and including the partnership in several of the planning provisions required of the WAGES program.

Section 24

Amends section 414.028, F. S. , effective July 1,1999, to require local WAGES coalitions to coordinate with the Children First coalitions.

Section 25

Amends subsection(1) and (2) of s. 414.055, F. S., adding the Children First coalitions to the list of agencies involved in one-stop career centers and requiring the WAGES coalition in consultation with the Children First coalitions and the Florida Partnership for Children First to coordinate and plan the implementation of one-stop career centers.

Section 26

Amends subsection (2) of s. 414.22, F. S., effective July 1, 1999, requiring the Department of Labor and Employment Security to consult with the Florida Partnership for Children First in the development of child care services.

Section 27

Amends subsection (4) of s. 446.601, F. S., effective July 1, 1999, requiring that the recommendations of the Florida Partnership for Children First and the Children First coalitions regarding child care be considered in the development of one-stop career centers.

Section 28

Amends subsection (2) of s. 624.91, F. S., effective July 1, 1998, placing in the intent language for Florida Healthy Kids to work cooperatively with the Florida Partnership for Children First, Inc.

Section 29

Repeals the following sections effective July 1, 1998: ss. 228.061(1), s. 230.2306, 391.304, 402.26, 402.28, 411.201, 411.204, 411.205, 411.22, 411.221, 411.223, 411.224, 411.23, 411.231, and 411.232.

Section 30

Repeals section 402.47, 411.222, F.S., and subsection (9) of s. 411.3015, F.S., effective July 1, 1999.

Section 31

Renumbers sections in chapter 402 related to child care to chapter 411, effective July 1, 1998. Requires review and amendment of all sections in the new chapter 411 relating to child care effective July 1, 2000.

Section 32

Requires review of s. 402.27, F.S., relating to resource and referrals, by March 1, 1999.

Section 33

Appropriates \$1,675,000 to fund the \$25,000 initiation grant to support Children First Coalitions in developing the plan.

Section 34

Appropriates \$500,000 to fund the Florida Parents as Teachers Program.

Section 35

Except as otherwise provided herein, provides that the act take effect July 1, 1998, if House Bill , relating to the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation, and House Bill 4383, relating to the healthy opportunity for school readiness voucher program , are adopted, or similar legislation having substantially the same intent and purpose, is adopted in the same legislative session or an extension thereof.

I. FISCAL RESEARCH & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE AGENCIES/STATE FUNDS:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

N/A

2. Recurring Effects:

See Fiscal Comments

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

N/A

4. Total Revenues and Expenditures:

N/A

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AS A WHOLE:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

N/A

2. Recurring Effects:

N/A

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

N/A

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

1. Direct Private Sector Costs:

N/A

2. Direct Private Sector Benefits:

N/A

3. Effects on Competition, Private Enterprise and Employment Markets:

N/A

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The Health and Human Services Appropriations Bill, HB 4203, for FY 98-99 includes funding for child care in the Department of Children and Families. Funding of \$206 million is provided for wages childcare and \$212 million is provided for working poor childcare. These funds, as well as funding for other health and human services programs which affect school readiness, could potentially be distributed through The Florida Partnership for Children First, Inc. under the provisions of this bill.

The Education Appropriations Bill, HB 4201, for FY 1998-99 includes funding for the following services for children ages 0 to 5 that could potentially be distributed through the Florida Partnership for Children First Inc. under the provisions of this bill:

Prekindergarten Early Intervention Program	\$100,629,828
Florida First Start Program	3,000,000
Migrant 3 and 4 Year Old(s) Program	3,295,172
Pre-School Handicapped	124,912,517
Children of Teen Parents	18,563,329
Total	250,400,846

The combine funds of these “readiness programs” is \$668 million and could potentially be distributed through the Florida Partnership for Children First, Inc. under the provisions of this bill.

II. CONSEQUENCES OF ARTICLE VII, SECTION 18 OF THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION:

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

This bill does not require counties or municipalities to expend funds.

B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:

This bill does not reduce revenue raising authority.

C. REDUCTION OF STATE TAX SHARED WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES:

This bill does not reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

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DATE: April 2, 1998

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III. COMMENTS:

IV. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:

The Committee Substitute substantially rewrites HB 683 and HB 2131.

V. SIGNATURES:

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILY EMPOWERMENT:

Prepared by:

Legislative Research Director:

Bob Barrios

Bob Barrios

AS FURTHER REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
APPROPRIATIONS:

Prepared by:

Legislative Research Director:

Mark Armstrong

John Newman