

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Fiscal Policy

BILL: SB 1022

INTRODUCER: Senator Polsky

SUBJECT: Children's Initiatives

DATE: February 17, 2026

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Rao</u>	<u>Tuszynski</u>	<u>CF</u>	Favorable
2.	<u>Sneed</u>	<u>McKnight</u>	<u>AHS</u>	Favorable
3.	<u>Rao</u>	<u>Siples</u>	<u>FP</u>	Favorable

I. Summary:

SB 1022 provides for the creation of the Bay County 32401 Children's Initiative within Bay County and the Pompano RYZE (Resilient Youth with Zeal to Excel) Children's Initiative within Broward County. Florida Children's Initiatives are community-based service networks located in disadvantaged areas of the state that are created to improve the educational, economic, and health outcomes for residents in the area.

The bill requires both Children's Initiatives to be managed by a not-for-profit corporation that complies with the requirements for not-for-profit corporations in ch. 617, F.S. The areas the Children's Initiatives serve must be large enough to include all the necessary components of community life, yet small enough to serve all members of the community who wish to participate in the project.

Both Children's Initiatives are operating currently and have completed the requirements to be designated as a Children's Initiatives according to the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, the organization responsible for designating an area as a Children's Initiative.

The bill has no fiscal impact on state expenditures. **See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.**

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

II. Present Situation:

Florida Children's Initiatives

In 2008, the Legislature created Children's Initiatives.¹ Acknowledging the lack of infrastructure and opportunities that is present in some communities in the state, Children's Initiatives are intended to assist disadvantaged areas within the state in creating a community-based service network that develops, coordinates, and provides quality education, accessible health care, youth development programs, opportunities for employment, and safe and affordable housing for children and families living within that area.²

The state leverages investments that are intended to encourage community partners to commit financial resources to disadvantaged areas. Section 409.147, F.S., outlines the process for a county or municipality (or a county and one or more municipalities together) to apply to the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida to designate an area as a Florida Children's Initiative. Generally, the governing body of the county or municipality must first adopt a resolution finding the area has issues related to poverty, that changes are necessary for the area to improve, and that resources are necessary for the revitalization of the area.³ Following the adoption of the resolution, the county or municipality must establish a children's initiative planning team and develop and adopt a strategic community plan. Once a county or municipality has completed these steps, it must create a not-for-profit corporation.⁴

Florida Children's Initiative Planning Team

The Children's Initiative planning team is responsible for developing a planning process that builds a commitment to achieving the vision of the Florida Children's Initiative concept.⁵ The planning team must identify the opportunities, strengths, challenges, and problems in the Florida Children's Initiatives, and develop a vision of what the Florida Children's Initiative will look like when such issues are addressed. Additionally, the planning team must develop a strategic community plan that consists of goals, objectives, tasks, the designation of responsible parties, the identification of necessary resources, implementation timelines, and monitoring procedures.⁶

There is no statutory requirement for the number of individuals that must be on a planning team; however, at least half of the members must be residents of the area. The other half of the planning team may include representatives from community-based organizations and other community institutions.

Planning teams are required to designate working groups that address each of the following focus areas:

- Early development and care of children.
- Education of children and youth.

¹ Children's Initiatives were originally referred to as "Children's Zones" in 2008; in 2009, the Legislature changed the name to "Children's Initiatives." See ch. 2008-96, L.O.F. and ch. 2009-43, L.O.F.

² Section 409.147(1), F.S.

³ Section 409.147(4), F.S.

⁴ Section 409.147(4), F.S.

⁵ Section 409.147(5), F.S.

⁶ *Id.*

- Health and wellness.
- Youth support.
- Parent and guardian support.
- Adult education, training, and jobs.
- Community safety.
- Housing and community development.⁷

Florida Children’s Initiatives Strategic Community Plan

Each working group created by the planning team must develop objectives and identify strategies for each focus area.⁸ The following table outlines the objectives for each working group focus area:

Objectives for Each Working Group Focus Area	
Focus Area	Objectives for Working Group
Early Development and Care of Children	Providing resources to enable every child to be adequately nurtured during the first 3 years of life.
	Ensuring that all schools are ready for children and all children are ready for school by the time they reach kindergarten.
	Facilitating enrollment in half-day or full-day prekindergarten for all 3-year-old and 4-year-old children.
	Strengthening parent and guardian relationships with care providers.
	Providing support and education for families and child care providers.
Education of children and youth	Increasing the level and degree of knowledge and accountability of persons who are responsible for the development and well-being of all children in each Florida Children’s Initiative.
	Transforming the structure and function of schools to increase the quality and amount of time spent on instruction and increase programmatic options and offerings.
	Creating a safe and respectful environment for student learning.
	Identifying and supporting points of alignment between a Florida Children’s Initiative community plan and the school district’s strategic plan.
Health and Wellness	Facilitating enrollment of all eligible children in the Florida KidCare program and providing full access to high-quality drug and alcohol treatment services.
	Eliminating health disparities between racial and cultural groups, including improving outcomes and increasing interventions.
	Providing fresh, good quality, affordable, and nutritious food within a Children’s Initiative.
	Providing all children in a Florida Children’s Initiative with access to safe structured and unstructured recreation.
Youth support	Increasing the high school graduation, postsecondary enrollment, and postsecondary completion rates among neighborhood youth.
	Increasing leadership development and employment opportunities for neighborhood youth.
Parent and guardian support	Increasing parent and adult literacy.
	Expanding access for parents to critical resources, such as jobs, transportation, day care, and after-school care.
	Improving the effectiveness of how support systems communicate and collaborate with parents and how parents communicate and collaborate with support systems.

⁷ Section 409.147(5), F.S.

⁸ Section 409.147(6), F.S.

Objectives for Each Working Group Focus Area	
Focus Area	Objectives for Working Group
	Making the services of the Healthy Families Florida program available to provide multiyear support to expectant parents and people caring for infants and toddlers.
Adult education, training, and jobs	Creating job opportunities for adults that lead to career development.
	Establish a career and technical school, or a satellite of such a school within a Florida Children’s Initiative, which includes a one-stop career center.
Community safety	Providing a safe environment for all children at home, in school, and in the community.
	Eliminating the economic, political, and social forces that lead to a lack of safety within the family, the community, schools, and institutional structures.
	Assessing policies and practices, including sentencing, incarceration, detention, and data reporting, to reduce youth incarceration, violence, crime, and recidivism.
Housing and community development	Strengthening the residential real estate market.
	Building on existing efforts to promote socioeconomic diversity when developing a comprehensive land use strategic plan.
	Promoting neighborhood beautification strategies.

Florida Children’s Initiatives Corporation

Each Florida Children’s Initiative must identify an existing, qualified not-for-profit corporation or create a not-for-profit corporation that is registered, incorporated, organized, and operated in compliance with ch. 617, F.S.⁹ The corporation is expected to facilitate fundraising and secure broad community ownership of the initiative and assume the responsibility for planning from the planning team and begin the implementation and governance of the strategic community plan.¹⁰

Current Florida Children’s Initiatives

Currently, there are five recognized Florida Children’s Initiatives, as follows:

- Miami Children’s Initiative.
- The New Town Success Zone.
- The Orlando Kidz Zones.
- The Tampa Sulphur Springs Neighborhood of Promise (SSNOP).
- The Overtown Children and Youth Coalition.¹¹

Each Florida Children’s Initiative must update the strategic community plan every 5 years to reflect, at a minimum, all of the following:

- The current status of the area served by the Children’s Initiative.
- The goals, objectives, and strategies for each focus area.
- The tasks required to implement the strategies for the upcoming year.¹²

The Ounce of Prevention is required to provide technical assistance to the Children’s Initiative corporation to facilitate the implementation of the strategic community plan.¹³

⁹ Section 409.147(7), F.S. and Ch. 617, F.S.

¹⁰ Section 409.147(7), F.S.

¹¹ Section 409.147, F.S.

¹² Section 409.147(7), F.S.

¹³ *Id.*

Exemptions and Requirements for Florida Children’s Initiatives

Florida Children’s Initiatives are designed to encompass an area large enough to include all of the necessary components of community life, including, but not limited to, schools, places of worship, recreational facilities, commercial areas, and common space, yet small enough to allow programs and services to reach every member of the neighborhood who is willing to participate in the project.¹⁴ Not-for-profit corporations designated as Children’s Initiatives are not subject to the control, supervision, or direction by any department of the state.¹⁵ However, the corporations are subject to ch. 119, F.S., relating to public records; ch. 286, F.S. relating to public meetings and records; and ch. 287, F.S., relating to procurement of commodities or contractual services. Corporations must comply with these requirements to operate in the “most open and accessible manner” consistent with its public purpose.¹⁶

The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida

The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida (Ounce) is a private, nonprofit corporation dedicated to shaping prevention policy and investing in innovative prevention programs that provide measurable benefits to Florida’s children, families, and communities.¹⁷ The Ounce identifies, funds, supports, and tests programs to improve the life outcomes of children, preserve and strengthen families, and promote health behavior and functioning in society.¹⁸ The Ounce is identified in statute as the organization that is able to designate areas in Florida as Children’s Initiatives.¹⁹ Funds were appropriated in Fiscal Year 2022-2023 for the Ounce to develop a strategic business plan for each Children’s Initiatives.²⁰

Bay County 32401 Children’s Initiative

Bay County is located in the Panhandle region of Northwest Florida, spanning 1,033.3 square miles.²¹ As of July 1, 2024, the county population was estimated at 199,718, with the median household income from 2019-2023 of \$70,188.²² In Bay County, 11.6 percent of individuals are reported to live in poverty.²³

Goshen Community Resource and Recovery Center (Goshen) is the not-for-profit corporation associated with the Bay County 32401 Children’s Initiative.²⁴ Established in 2019, Goshen strives to provide educational, economic, and social assistance to those in the community that are

¹⁴ See Section 409.147, F.S.

¹⁵ Section 409.147(7), F.S.

¹⁶ See Section 409.147, F.S.

¹⁷ The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, available at: <https://www.ounce.org/index.asp> (last visited 1/28/26).

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ Section 409.147(4), F.S.

²⁰ Chapter 2022-156, L.O.F., specific appropriation 318.

²¹ Bay County Florida, *Geography & Climate*, available at: <https://www.baycountyfl.gov/340/Geography-Climate> (last visited 1/28/26).

²² *Id.*

²³ United States Census Bureau, *Bay County, Florida*, available at: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/baycountyflorida/PST045225> (last visited 1/28/26).

²⁴ E-mail with Winifred Heggins, Vice President of the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida (on file with the Senate Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs).

abused, neglected, abandoned, and disenfranchised.²⁵ The organization facilitates food donation distributions, provides referral services to other community organizations, and operates a recovery center that provides counseling, education, and financial literacy supports to disenfranchised individuals in the community.²⁶

The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida reports that the Bay County 32401 has met the statutory requirements and was designated as a Children's Initiative in March 2025.²⁷

Pompano RYZE Children's Initiative

Broward County is a county located in Southeast Florida with 31 cities.²⁸ The county has an estimated 2,037,472 residents, with 11.7 percent of residents living in poverty.²⁹

The Community Foundation of Broward (Community Foundation) is the not-for-profit corporation associated with the Pompano RYZE Children's Initiative.³⁰ The Community Foundation is a grantmaking public charity that supports individuals, families, and local organizations as they create personalized charitable funds to assist Broward County.³¹ The Community Foundation has six focus areas that it emphasizes in grantmaking to improve the area, as follows:

- Education & Youth Enrichment;
- Social & Economic Mobility;
- Healthy & Thriving Communities;
- Art & Culture;
- Building Community and Opportunity; and
- Strong Nonprofit Community.³²

The Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida reports that Pompano RYZE has met all statutory requirements and was designated as a Children's Initiative in February 2025.³³

²⁵ Goshen Community Resource and Recovery Center, Inc, *Experience Goshen Community Resource and Recovery Center*, available at: <https://www.goshencommunitypc.com/> (last visited 1/29/26).

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ E-mail with Winifred Heggins, Vice President of the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida (on file with the Senate Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs).

²⁸ World Population Review, *Broward County, Florida*, available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/florida/by-county/broward-county> (last visited 1/28/26).

²⁹ United States Census Bureau, *Broward County, Florida*, available at: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/browardcountyflorida/PST045225> (last visited 1/28/26).

³⁰ *Supra* 29.

³¹ Community Foundation of Broward, *What We Do*, available at: <https://www.cfbroward.org/about-us/our-story> (last visited 1/29/26).

³² Community Foundation of Broward, *Mission, Vision, & Values*, available at: <https://www.cfbroward.org/about-us/mission-vision-values> (last visited 1/29/26).

³³ E-mail with Winifred Heggins, Vice President of the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida (on file with the Senate Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs).

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 409.147, F.S., to create the Bay County 32401 Children's Initiative within Bay County and the Pompano RYZE (Resilient Youth with Zeal to Excel) Children's Initiative within Broward County.

The bill requires both Children's Initiatives to be managed by a not-for-profit corporation that is registered, incorporated, organized, and operated in compliance with ch. 617, F.S. The Initiatives must operate in the most open and accessible manner consistent with its public purpose and are subject to the following:

- Chapter 119, relating to public records;
- Chapter 286, relating to public meetings and records; and
- Chapter 287, relating to the procurement of commodities or contractual services.

The bill provides that both Bay County 32401 Children's Initiative and Pompano RYZE Children's Initiative are designed to encompass an area large enough to include all of the necessary components of community life, including, but not limited to, schools, places of worship, recreational facilities, commercial areas, and common spaces, yet small enough to allow programs and services to reach every member of the neighborhood who is willing to participate in the project.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

IV. Constitutional Issues:**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill has no fiscal impact on state expenditures.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 409.147 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.