EARLY LEARNING ACTION ALERT

We are at a critical time in session for one of our 2014 Florida United Way Consensus Legislative Agenda priority issues:

Florida's United Ways urge the 2014 Florida Legislature
to provide access to high quality early learning programs for all children.

The House and Senate have both voted out their respective budgets and appropriations conference committees will begin working next week to consolidate the budgets into the one budget that will be passed during the last week of session.

On our **Early Learning** issue, the **House bill (HB 5001) includes**:

- **$6 million increase for School Readiness** Program slots, so more children can attend school readiness programs.
  - The current SR waiting list is about 30,000 children.
  - Since 2001-02, the combined federal/state funding for School Readiness services has decreased by approximately $99 million.
- **$108 per child increase in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Program**
  - Florida students who completed the VPK Education Program were better prepared for kindergarten than those who didn't.
  - Florida ranks first in access for prekindergarten in the nation, but is the 5th lowest in per pupil spending.

Both the Senate (SB 2500) and House budgets support at **least $10 million for a provider incentive quality initiative** to improve the quality of the School Readiness Program

CALL TO ACTION:

Please call your legislators today!

- Ask Senators to **accept the House position** on School Readiness and VPK funding.
- Ask Representatives to **hold their position** on School Readiness and VPK funding.
- Thank Senators and Representatives for including funding for the **provider incentive quality initiative.**

Click here to Find Your Legislators.

Of particular importance are leadership from the House and Senate, the following Senate Education Conferees, and House Education Appropriations Committee members (House conferees have not yet been appointed):

Senator Don Gaetz
Senator Bill Galvano, Chair
Senator Joseph Abruzzo
Senator Dwight Bullard
Senator Nancy Detert
Senator John Legg
Senator Bill Montford
Senator Maria Sachs
Senator David Simmons
Senator John Thrasher

House Speaker Will Weatherford
Representative Seth McKeel
Representative Steve Crisafulli
Representative Erik Fresen
Representative Jake Raburn
Representative Dwayne Taylor
Representative Janet Adkins
Representative Marlene O'Toole
Representative Keith Perry
Representative Betty Reed
Representative Mia Jones
Representative Larry Ahern
Representative Karen Castor Dentel
Representative Heather Dawes Fitzenhagen
Representative Charlie Stone