

## Florida's School Readiness Program Fact Sheet for Families

### Overview

Florida's School Readiness Program (SR) offers financial assistance to help children from low-income families receive high-quality childcare and education so their parents can work or participate in job training.

The program gives children who might be at a disadvantage access to an early learning environment and supports parents with information about child development and family well-being.

The program recognizes parents and caregivers as their child's first teacher.



### What does the SR program do?

Children learn more quickly during their early years than any other time in life. In the first few years of life, more than one million new neural connections form every second.

The program takes into account a child's physical, social, emotional and intellectual development and provides resources and assistance to families, so they are able to give their children the nurturing relationships and experiences that promote school readiness.

### What are the benefits?

Florida's School Readiness Program works to

- Prepare young children to start kindergarten ready to learn.
- Help working families afford quality early learning services.
- Keep parents in the workforce and/or participating in educational or training activities.
- Help families become financially independent.
- Provide parents information about child development and family well-being.

### What child care providers offer the School Readiness Program?

Parents can choose from private centers and schools, public schools and family childcare homes.

All providers must meet certain quality standards established by the Division of Early Learning as well as state and federal health and safety requirements.

**6,760**

**School Readiness providers in Florida in 2020-2021**

## Which children are eligible?

There are three primary eligibility requirements:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) must be working or participating in an educational activity such as attending college or trade school at least 20 hours per week.
- Gross income must be at or below 150 percent of federal poverty level for family size.
- Families must pay a copayment for child care based on income and family size.

Other children may be eligible if they have special needs or are at risk of abuse, neglect or abandonment, or if their parents are homeless, victims of domestic violence or are low-income migrant families or farm workers.

## How do I apply for School Readiness Program?

You can [apply online](#) from a computer, laptop, tablet or cellphone.

If you have questions about the program, contact your local early learning coalition. You will find a map of the 30 coalitions in Florida and the Redlands Christian Migrant Association on the [Division of Early Learning website](#).

You can also receive more information about the School Readiness Program and how to apply by calling the toll-free family line at the Division of Early Learning at 1-866-357-3239 (TTY: 711).



## Did You Know?



In the year 2020 –21, there were 209,801 children enrolled in School Readiness Programs in Florida.



Early education helps lessen educational disparities between children from families with low income and their peers.



High-quality early learning environments make a difference in children's lifelong academic and social success.



In the first few years of life, more than one million new neural connections are formed every second.

**Source:** *The Division of Early Learning and the National Association for the Education of Young Children*