



CHILDREN'S
CAMPAIGN,
INC.

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Debunking the Pre-K Teacher Capacity Myth *New Review Proves Capacity Goals Will Be Met*

Tallahassee – Fact based analysis of actual teacher availability numbers by the FSU Center for Prevention and Early Intervention clearly shows that Florida can easily reach teacher capacity levels required for pre-kindergarten to be taught by a degreed teacher by the year 2013.

Current pre-k enrollment is approximately 120,000 four-year-olds served in 8,846 classrooms. Based on a three-hour per day program, this requires between 4,423 and 5,000 teachers. There are already 2,770 degreed pre-k teachers in the system. Based on those figures, it is projected by FSU that only 1,653 – 2,230 new teachers will be needed over the next five years.

“The FSU analysis uses actual pre-k enrollment figures and is based on real needs for quality pre-k classrooms and teachers,” said Martha Barnett, Children’s Campaign Citizen Leader. “The infrastructure exists to add more degreed teachers in Florida’s pre-k classrooms.”

Opposition to degreed teachers has come from some quarters of the early learning industry in the form of resistance to higher standards and credentials. They have claimed it would be nearly impossible to find enough degreed teachers and to retain them.

“They have misled both the legislative and executive branches with inflated numbers intended to prop up a flawed argument against degreed teachers,” says Roy Miller, president of Children’s Campaign, Inc.

The review and analysis by the Florida State University (FSU) Center for Prevention & Early Intervention Policy was based on actual data – real numbers from the Department of Education. “Our fact based approach has found that there will be an abundance of degreed teachers to fill the need,” said Dr. Mimi Graham, director, FSU Center for Prevention and Early Intervention.

Given current trends, more than 14,500 teachers are expected to graduate from Florida’s colleges and universities in advance of the year 2013. One-third of Florida’s elementary teachers come from out-of-state adding another 4,000 to the pool. In addition, Florida can expect an additional 3,200 by recruiting just 10% of teachers who retire or leave the field but who would be attracted to teaching young children in a three-hour-per day morning and afternoon program.

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The pool of available degreed teachers would exceed 22,000. Only 1,653 to 2,230 from that pool would be needed to reach capacity goals for Florida’s pre-k program.

Despite Florida’s constitutional amendment where voters assured every four-year-old and their parents of a “high quality pre-kindergarten”, the quality of Florida’s pre-k program remains among the lowest nationwide, with only four of 10 quality benchmarks met according to the latest annual report from the National Institute for Early Education Research. Degreed teachers in Florida’s pre-k classrooms will reverse a trend that finds Florida losing ground nationally in the education of young children.

Florida’s budget woes could be addressed simultaneously. A Florida TaxWatch study revealed that taxpayers could save as much as \$5.3 billion annually if Florida implemented a high-quality pre-k program.

For more information, please visit www.qualityprek.org.

About the Children’s Campaign

Children’s Campaign, Inc. is a cutting-edge and groundbreaking advocacy organization devoted to making children’s issues a public policy priority. The organization’s platforms are a result of consensus building over a broad spectrum of interests and viewpoints and supported by state of the art research, best practices and public opinion research. For more information, visit www.iamforkids.org and www.qualityprek.org.

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