



CHILDREN'S TRUST
OF ALACHUA COUNTY

Item:

Early Childhood Learning Collaborative Workgroup Update

Requested Action:

The Board is asked to receive this update.

Workgroup Update:

Thriving Parents Workgroup

- **Workgroup Leaders:** Yolanda Hagley, Lisa Heath, and Stacey Williams
- **Meeting Date:** April 3, 2026 | 10:00 AM and April 24, 2026 | 10:00 AM

The Thriving Parents Workgroup convened via Zoom on April 24, 2026, to review initial survey findings and discuss next steps to inform framework development. The next meeting is scheduled for May 8, 2026. They are working on the following priority.

Priority 1: To equip and empower parents and caregivers to lead, collaborate, and implement community-driven solutions that improve outcomes for children and families.

Family Voice Survey Update

The workgroup reviewed early data from the Family Voice Survey, an anonymous tool designed to gather input from caregivers of children ages 0–5. The survey has been distributed through partner organizations providing direct services to this population.

- To date, 44 responses have been received, with 35 respondents identifying as parents.
- The workgroup's target was a minimum of 200 responses to ensure a more representative data set.

Recommendations and Upcoming Actions

To strengthen participation and data quality, the survey will remain open for an additional week. The workgroup will reconvene on May 8, 2026, to review final results and begin developing recommendations and a framework informed by caregiver feedback.

Early Learning Educator Workforce and Supports

- **Workgroup Leaders:** Elizabeth Woods, Heather Dole, and Arlene Lambert
- **Meeting Date:** April 7, 2026 | 6:00 PM and April 28, 2026 | 6:00 PM

The workgroup convened in person on April 28, 2026, to review progress and next steps across two primary priorities.

Priority 1: Strengthening Classroom Supports

Focus: Strengthen early learning classrooms through evidence-based behavioral and social-emotional supports to improve child outcomes, increase educator and family confidence, and eliminate expulsion practices.

- Exploration of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and blended behavioral support models
- Emphasis on reducing and ultimately eliminating expulsion in early learning settings

Priority 2: Early Educator Compensation

Focus: Improve compensation to recruit, retain, and sustain a high-quality early learning workforce.

- Establish a baseline wage of at least \$20 per hour
- Align early educator salaries more closely with public school teacher compensation
- Explore advocacy strategies, including potential increases to School Readiness (SR) reimbursement rates

Key Discussion Highlights and Next Steps

- **Behavioral Health Framework:** The workgroup engaged a subject matter expert to define ABA and behavioral health supports and review a potential implementation framework.
- **Data Gaps:** Expulsion data is not currently collected by the Early Learning Coalition (ELC), leaving a gap in understanding the scope of the issue locally.
- **Systems Alignment:** While no current initiative was identified as fully addressing this priority, elements of behavioral health supports are reflected within the Systems Coordination and Resources Workgroup's draft logic model.

Recommendations and Upcoming Actions

- The workgroup will meet on May 6, 2026, with Dr. Bishop (Anita Zucker Center) and Ms. Anhalt (Santa Fe College) to explore:
 - The Tools for Teachers Embedded Instruction Model

- The Early Childhood Support System Chart
 - Based on findings, the workgroup may recommend integrating behavioral health modalities into the Systems Coordination and Resources Workgroup's logic model to support a comprehensive, full-spectrum approach.
 - For educator compensation, the workgroup identified this priority as primarily advocacy- and policy-driven. Workgroup leaders (all APPLE-accredited) are coordinating with Robyn Perlman (BLI) to engage FACCM/APPLE in discussions related to legislative and advocacy strategies.
 - The workgroup also initiated exploration of an additional priority focused on strengthening the early educator pipeline and credentialing pathways. Dr. Mallous (Santa Fe College) has been invited to support discussions on developing sustainable pathways for early educators in Alachua County.
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Systems Coordination and Resources Workgroup

- **Workgroup Leaders:** Bonnie Bowman, Terri Robinson, and Dorothy Thomas
- **Meeting Date:** April 21, 2026 | 3:00 PM

The Systems Coordination and Resources Workgroup convened via Zoom on April 21, 2026, to review survey feedback, refine the developing logic model, and begin shaping a corresponding funding proposal.

Workgroup Objective: Build capacity within early learning programs across Alachua County to deliver high-quality supports and services for children with suspected or identified developmental delays.

Survey Update

The workgroup reviewed responses from a follow-up survey distributed after the March 24 meeting, which focused on gathering feedback on the proposed logic model.

- A total of 6 responses have been received to date
- 67% of respondents agreed and 33% strongly agreed that the objective aligns with community needs and the workgroup's purpose

Recommendations and Upcoming Actions

The refined logic model will be presented to the full Early Childhood Learning Collaborative during the May 12, 2026 meeting for broader input and alignment.

Programmatic Impact:

Goal 1- Children and youth are healthy and have nurturing caregivers and relationships.
Goal 2- Children and youth can learn what they need to be successful.

Fiscal Impact:

N/A

Recommendation:

Receive the information