



Children's Forum Legislative Agenda

This year's legislative session is in full swing and appears to be a promising one for Florida's families and early childhood educators. Our state's legislative leadership believes that investments in early care and education (ECE) create an environment for children to succeed in school and in life.

In partnership with the Early Learning Consortium, the Forum's 2019 legislative priorities include the following ECE initiatives:

- Implement HB 1091 to ensure that differential (premium) payments and professional development opportunities are available to early childhood educators.
- Implement House Bill 1193 that aims to overhaul Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) evaluations by adequately measuring learning gains and readiness across all appropriate domains.
- Increase investments in the VPK Base Student Allocation, which would allow child care program directors to afford the resources necessary for high-quality programming.
- Appropriate \$4.5 million in funding to current Help Me Grow[®] Florida (HMG) Affiliates and expand the program that provides developmental screenings, care coordination, and outreach to address health and behavioral concerns among children ages 0-8.
- Appropriate \$10 million in funding to the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood[®] Scholarship Program. This funding would provide approximately 8,000 scholarships for early childhood educators to earn degrees or credentials. T.E.A.C.H. is included in both the House and Senate budgets.
- Unfortunately, a bill that would have appropriated \$525,000 in funding for early learning coalitions to opt-in to the Child Care WAGE\$[®] FLORIDA Program did not pass. We will work on getting it passed during next year's legislative session.



Program Spotlight



Child Care WAGE\$[®] FLORIDA

Because you asked, issues of Forum Focus will now spotlight one of our programs or services. In doing so, other Forum departments will better understand the important role we all play in fulfilling our mission. This issue's spotlight features the Child Care WAGE\$[®] FLORIDA program.

The Child Care WAGE\$[®] FLORIDA program (WAGE\$) rewards early childhood educators with salary supplements based on their education and retention with their employer. Designed to increase the quality of child care programs, WAGE\$ addresses marketplace competition for better salaries, supports the professional growth of teachers, and reduces teacher turnover to create stable learning environments for children. Operated by the Forum, WAGE\$ participants can earn \$200-\$3,000 more per year.

We are excited to announce that the Child Care WAGE\$[®] FLORIDA Program (WAGE\$) is now available in Hillsborough and Pinellas counties! This will allow us to provide salary supplements to thousands of early childhood educators. The program is also available in Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

Meet the WAGE\$ Team!



Kiki Peters
WAGE\$ Coordinator



Erika Williams
Senior WAGE\$ Counselor



Nikita Allen
WAGE\$ Counselor



Melissa Quinnell
WAGE\$ Counselor



Alexis Shoemaker
WAGE\$ Counselor



Teresa Valentin
WAGE\$ Counselor



Julia Edwards
WAGE\$ Assistant



Samantha Mullins
WAGE\$ Assistant



Cristian Oliva
WAGE\$ Assistant



Conference Time!



It's conference season at the Children's Forum! Check out all of the conferences we've attended! Upcoming conferences include the T.E.A.C.H. Symposium, the ELC of Osceola, and One Goal. Conferences attended but not pictured: College of Central Florida and ELC of Pinellas County.



★ **AELC**



★ **Broward Early Childhood Conference**



★ **Hillsborough Provider Meeting**



★ **United for Children Conference**



★ **Head Start**



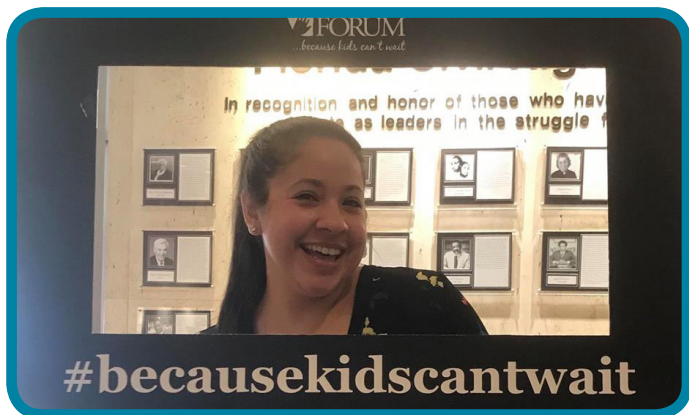
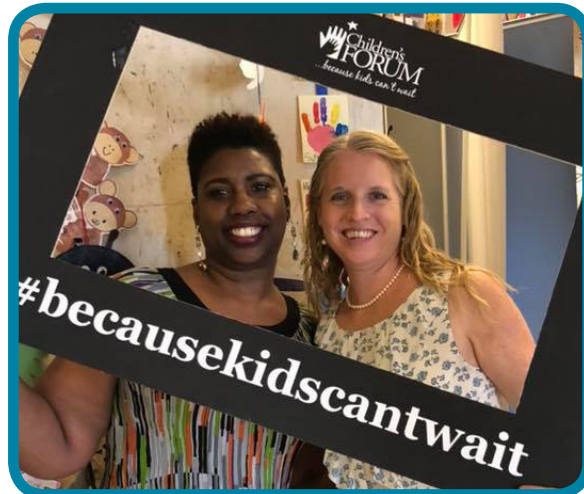
★ **ELC of Flagler/Volusia**



★ **Child Development Education Alliance**

Children's Week

We had so much fun at the Children's Week Awards Dinner and Reception and at Children's Day at the Capitol March 25 and 26! Children's Week brings thousands of parents, children, elected officials, professionals, community leaders, and concerned citizens together to share valuable knowledge and information about children's issues across the state. A true grassroots event since its inception, Children's Week culminates at the state Capitol and is supported by more than 100 different corporate, non-profit, philanthropic, and faith-based organizations.





Events and Adventures!



The Forum's Tallahassee office enjoyed Tropical Smoothies as a special Valentine's Day treat. Many thanks to **Phyllis Kalifeh**, President and CEO, **Denise Bishop**, Vice President and Chief Outreach, Innovation and Training Officer, and **Lori Stegmeyer**, Director of Workforce Initiatives, for purchasing the smoothies!



The Forum's Tallahassee employees honored **Liz Randall**, HMG Data and Research Manager, and the upcoming arrival of her baby girl! Leona Mae Randall was born on March 10 at 2:02 PM (four days after Liz's baby shower). She weighed 4 pounds 5 ounces and was 18 inches long. Leona is Liz's first child, and both mom and baby are doing well! Best wishes, Liz!



On February 11, the Forum's Tallahassee employees celebrated **Courtney Hutcheson**, Registry Coach, and her upcoming nuptials to Jarrod Lee! They were married on March 1, 2019 at Pebble Hill Plantation in Thomasville, Georgia. Congratulations, Courtney!



The Forum's **Early Learning Career Center** celebrated St. Patrick's Day March 15 by wearing green attire and accessories to work!

★ Events and Adventures! ★



Tamela Nelloms, Human Resources Coordinator and Executive Assistant, accepted an award from United Way on behalf the Forum's Tallahassee office. We were presented with the 2018 Presidential Award for raising over \$10,000 dollars during our employee fundraising campaign last year.



Lisa Roberts, Assessment and Coaching Services Project Manager, and her children had a great time exploring the quaint town of Plains, Georgia, which is the hometown of President Jimmy Carter! Her kids both became Presidential Passport holders and National Park Junior Rangers during their adventure, as well.



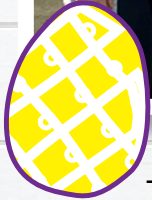
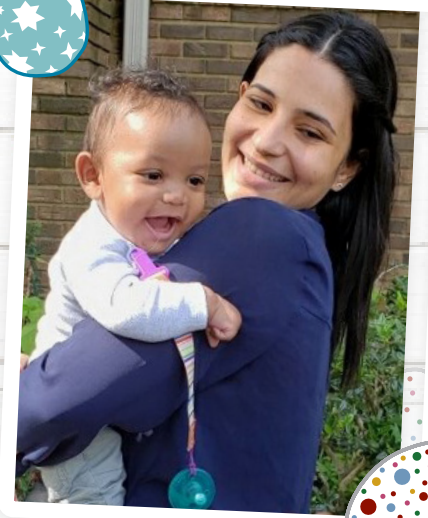
Dasiely Cruz, ELCC Director, traveled to Puerto Rico to celebrate her birthday week. Her husband is from Puerto Rico, and they enjoyed staying with his family. They visited old San Juan and a beautiful beach called Playa Sucia (Dirty Beach), which was one of Dasiely's favorite parts of their island getaway!



Jenna Jacobsen-Brown, Communications Director, and her family enjoyed Spring Break in Helen, Georgia! They toured the downtown area of Helen, witnessed the birth of a Cabbage Patch Kid, and hiked to Anna Ruby Falls. Jenna also attended the Players Club golf tournament in Jacksonville and spent time with family and friends.



Forum Happenings



The Forum's Tallahassee-based employees had a great time at the annual Spring Egg Hunt on April 17! Staff enjoyed looking for yummy treats and fun prizes!

Congratulations to those who found prize eggs and a big thank you to our **Morale Committee** for coordinating this event!

Paul Robinson, Web Developer and Video Production Specialist, purchased a new Ibanez SR2605 bass guitar. After only a week and a half of owning the guitar, Paul was nearly back up to speed, as it had been 19 years since he last played!



Erika Frisby and **Jessica Long**, T.E.A.C.H. Counseors, knew they had graduated from the same high school together. Eventually, they realized both of them were among a group of high school students that vacationed to Europe. While going through old photos, Erika came across a photo of her and Jessica on the airplane. Neither one of them remembered they sat right next to each other!



Forum Happenings



Shout Outs!

"A big shout out to the Forum Miami Team, **Kim McDonald**, Senior Registry Coach, **Denise Bishop**, Vice President and Chief Outreach, Innovation and Training Officer, **Laura Richardson**, T.E.A.C.H. Data Management Specialist, **Laura Cain**, Registry Coordinator, **Felicia Bonner**, Child Care Evaluation Services Director, **Viviana Avila**, Child Care Evaluation Services Specialist, **Courtney Lee**, Registry Coach, **Kate Nunez**, Contracts and Grants Coordinator, **Anita Bushnyakova**, Fiscal and Contract Specialist, and **Tamela Nelloms**, Human Resources and Executive Assistant, who have provided their knowledge, time, and support to the Assessment and Coaching Services Unit over the last month. We appreciate your efforts very much!"

-Melissa Clements and Lisa Roberts

"Special thanks to **Laura Cain**, Registry Coordinator, **Courtney Lee**, Registry Coach, **Ashley Casey**, T.E.A.C.H. Program Specialist, **Angela Nathan**, T.E.A.C.H. Counselor, **Lisa Adams**, T.E.A.C.H. Assistant Director, **Alex Goldberg**, HMG Statewide Program and Training Manager, **Cha'Coya Williams** and **Brittany Johnson**, HMG Interns, who facilitated the Children's Forum and Help Me Grow booths at Children's Day at the Capitol. You represented us well!"

- Jenna Brown

In Remembrance....



It is with a heavy heart that we share that our friend and advocate for Christian child care programs has passed away due to complications from open heart surgery. **Ellen McKinley** is the founder of the Child Development Education Alliance and was a staunch advocate for quality care and ensuring that policies and programs did not unfairly impact faith-based programs. We were with her at CDEA's annual conference recently and are grateful for the opportunity to share the time with her.

Welcome Newbies!



Eric Albury

T.E.A.C.H. Outreach Specialist



Samantha Mullins

WAGE\$ Assistant



Alexis Shoemaker

WAGE\$ Counselor



Cheslee Williamson

T.E.A.C.H. Counselor



Forum Happenings



Happy Birthday



February

- Dasiely Cruz, ELCC** Feb 02
- Ana Gamez, T.E.A.C.H.** Feb 02
- Samantha Mullins, WAGE\$** Feb 07
- Paula Grant, T.E.A.C.H** Feb 12
- Mary Terry, T.E.A.C.H.** Feb 12
- Emily Fulkerson, T.E.A.C.H.** Feb 15
- Erika Williams, WAGE\$** Feb 15
- Viviana Avila, CCES** Feb 18
- Jessica Long, T.E.A.C.H.** Feb 22

March

- Jinan As-Siddiq, Innovation and Outreach** Mar 10
- Tamela Nelloms, Admin** Mar 13
- Angela Nathan, T.E.A.C.H.** Mar 17
- Tamara Price, Help Me Grow** Mar 31

April

- Laura Cain, Registry** Apr 04
- Iesha Grinnell, Registry** Apr 05
- Flor Brito, ELCC** Apr 07
- Courtney Lee, Registry** Apr 11
- Brenda Romuald, T.E.A.C.H.** Apr 11
- Camisha Hodge, T.E.A.C.H** Apr 16
- Kathryn Brockett, T.E.A.C.H.** Apr 25
- Kelly Fountain, IT** Apr 25



The Early Learning Career Center team celebrated the birthday of **Dasiely Marrero**, ELCC Director! Happy birthday, Dasiely!

Happy Anniversary



February

- Kerri Cloud, Admin** 12 years
- Paul Robinson, IT** 6 years
- Alexandra Goldberg, Help Me Grow** 2 years
- Brenda Romuald, T.E.A.C.H.** 2 years
- Iesha Grinnell, Registry** 2 years

March

- Jenna Brown, Innovation and Outreach** 11 years

April

- Paula Grant, T.E.A.C.H.** 7 years
- Dasiley Cruz, ELCC** 7 years



Melissa Quinnell, WAGE\$ Counselor, celebrated the 18th birthday of her oldest son, Carlin, on March 12th! She is proud of the young man Carlin has become and knows he will achieve his goals due to his determination and talent.

