



## PRESS RELEASE

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### INVESTING IN FLORIDA'S YOUNG CHILDREN BRINGS LONG-TERM ECONOMIC GAINS *#becausekidsdontwait* campaign to raise awareness on improving outcomes for at-risk children

**TALLAHASSEE, FL** (January 26, 2016) Studies prove that investing in the first five years, the most formative years of a child's life, benefits our society through long-term economic gains such as a reduced crime rate, a more stable economy, and a more competent workforce. Critical formations in the brain begin prenatally and the experiences of our infants and toddlers are foundational for their ability to learn. In addition, research proves that high-quality early learning begins with a knowledgeable and competent workforce.

To raise awareness of the formative windows of opportunity for young children, the Children's Forum, a nonprofit organization dedicated to investing in the future of all children by providing advocacy and research to promote high-quality early learning programs, has launched *#becausekidsdontwait*, a campaign which addresses the struggles that Florida's young children face every day and how to increase their chances for success in school and in life.

Based on the most recent data regarding Florida's children and child care workforce:

- 28 percent of children are at risk for developmental problems and only two percent of them receive intervention in Florida
- More than 24,000 children ages 0-5 suffer maltreatment
- 30 percent of pregnant women receive no prenatal care
- No high school diploma/GED is required to become a child care provider
- Early care and education graduates receive the lowest life time earnings of any college major

"The first 1,000 days of a child's life is the most effective and least expensive time to promote their development," said Phyllis Kalifeh, Ed.D, president and CEO of the Children's Forum. "We can't wait until kids are three or four years old. Today's children have only once chance to develop needed cognitive, social, and emotional skills in the window of the early childhood years."

Economists project that every \$1 invested in early learning programs saves up to \$17 in the long term as children who receive high-quality early learning experiences are more likely to graduate from high school and become productive citizens and less likely to repeat grades or rely on government assistance.

For more information about the Children's Forum or the *#becausekidsdontwait* campaign, please contact Jenna Brown, communications director, at 850-487-6344 or [jjbrown@thechildrensforum.com](mailto:jjbrown@thechildrensforum.com)

### About the Children's Forum

The Children's Forum is a statewide, nonprofit organization with an uncompromising vision to make Florida a state where children grow and thrive in quality environments and where families have access to information, resources, and options to assist them in their parenting roles. Through a broad array of programs, services, research and advocacy, the Forum is committed to achieving our vision and expanding opportunities for success.

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