

Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County

Scope of Work

The Early Learning Coalition of Pinellas County (Coalition) is looking to better understand family experiences in applying for the two state-funded child care programs implemented at their organization: Florida School Readiness Program (SR) and the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK). Currently, the Coalition knows very little about families who begin an application but do not complete the process to enroll in child care and the reasons behind this behavior. In an effort to better understand and improve families' application experiences, the Coalition contracted the Early Childhood Policy Research Group (ECPRG) at the University of Florida Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies to conduct an analysis on application processes and fall-off rates among families. This assessment uses both administrative data from the Coalition and survey data collected by speaking with families to learn more about their application experiences. Specific research questions have been developed in collaboration with the Coalition and may be adjusted based on data availability. Please find the two analyses that the ECPRG plans to conduct, data permitting.

1. **Application Rates:** This analysis will describe the demographic and geographic characteristics of families who have applied to the Coalition for child care subsidy support and/or VPK. Analyses of the application data will be conducted to determine how the characteristics of applicants have fluctuated over time and how the fluctuations are related to other community economic and demographic shifts that have occurred during the past several years.
2. **Family Success in Connecting to Services:** This will be a mixed-methods study designed to understand family perspectives who showed tendencies to initiate an SR applications and not complete, and/or to apply for VPK access and not enroll. We will use administrative data to describe where in the application process families often "fall off" and do not connect to child care. Then, the research team will solicit information from families who completed their initial applications but never connected to care to better understand why they made this decision.