



# The Future Project Listening Tour Findings

**April to November, 2022**

# Table of Contents

<b>Overview</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Let’s Talk Listening Session Participation</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Participant Demographics .....	7
Parent Survey Respondents .....	7
Educator Survey Respondents .....	8
<b>Key Findings</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Dreams and Aspirations</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Satisfaction</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Developmental Growth .....	13
Parent-Teacher Relationships .....	15
<b>Barriers for Families</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Access .....	20
Eligibility .....	24
<b>The Early Learning Workforce</b> .....	<b>27</b>
Workforce Stability and Compensation .....	27
Program Requirements .....	31
Workforce Commitment and Quality .....	34
Teacher Preparation .....	35
<b>Defining Quality</b> .....	<b>38</b>
Assessments to Measure Quality .....	38
Parent Perceptions of Quality .....	44
<b>Proposed Changes</b> .....	<b>49</b>
Parent Connections to Resources .....	49
Treating Teachers as Professionals .....	54
<b>Appendix A: Let’s Talk Listening Sessions Facilitator’s Guide</b> .....	<b>58</b>
<b>Appendix B: Parent Survey Open-Ended Question Responses</b> .....	<b>60</b>
<b>Appendix C: Educator Survey Open-Ended Question Responses</b> .....	<b>63</b>

# Overview

The Children’s Movement of Florida launched The Future Project to bring together parents, educators, early childhood directors and owners with advocates to reimagine the future for Florida’s youngest learners. The foundation for the project was the Let’s Talk Listening Tour, which engaged owners and directors of early care and education centers (owners/directors), educators who are in the classroom teaching children ages birth through four-years-old every day, and the parents who trust these educators with their children. This document provides a summary of themes from the Let’s Talk Listening Tour.

This work is made possible by:



Additional support from:



The Future Project reimagines the future for Florida’s youngest learners.



# Let's Talk Listening Session Participation

The Future Project team conducted 40 Let's Talk listening sessions with a total of 393 participants: 234 parents (60% of all participants), 38 owners/directors (10% of participants), 105 educators (27% of participants), and 16 home visitors (4% of participants). The listening sessions were held across 22 Florida counties, representing both urban and rural communities, and included three virtual sessions. One session was hosted at a statewide educator conference to allow diverse participation from conference attendees. Nine of the 40 sessions were conducted in Spanish.

Participants came from a variety of programs and settings, including public school programs, private and faith-based centers, Voluntary Pre Kindergarten (VPK) programs, programs for children with diagnosed disabilities, and family childcare homes. These sessions took place between April 20, 2022 and November 3, 2022.

Each session lasted between one and three hours, depending on the size and format of the session. We asked parents about their experiences with the early care and education system, what resources they need to be successful, and what their aspirations are for themselves and/or their children. We asked educators about their satisfaction with the current state of early learning, their preparation as educators, and how they best partner with families. We asked owners and directors about staffing, quality, and what supports they need to be successful. The Facilitator's Guide for the listening sessions is included in Appendix A.



**234** PARENTS

**159** EDUCATORS...  
ACROSS

**22** FLORIDA COUNTIES



## Let's Talk Listening Session Participants by Community

City, County or Group	Sessions	Parents	Educators	Owners/ Directors
Alachua	2	13		
Arcadia	1	11		
Bay County	2		4	2
Collier/Immokalee	2	24	11	
Daytona Beach	2	8	8	
Flagler	1	6		
Indiantown	1	13		
Jacksonville	3	23	8	
Lake County	1	24		
Lakeland (Polk Co.)	2	6	7	
Largo (Pinellas Co.)	2		4	4
Marianna (Jackson Co.)	1	6		
Martin County	1			6
Miami	4	34	33	
One Goal Conference	1		11	
Orlando	1	10		
Palm Beach	1	11		
Pensacola	2		8	7
Stuart	2	25		
Tallahassee	3	5	11	7
Tampa	2	6		12
Virtual	1	8		
Virtual (The Keys / Marathon)	1	1		
Virtual (Home Visitors)	1		16	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>38</b>

# Participant Demographics

Let's Talk listening session participants who were parents and educators were asked to complete a short survey following each session. A total of 325 surveys were completed: 232 parents (71%) and 93 educators (29%). The results of these surveys provide additional information about the demographics of listening session participants, which are highlighted below.

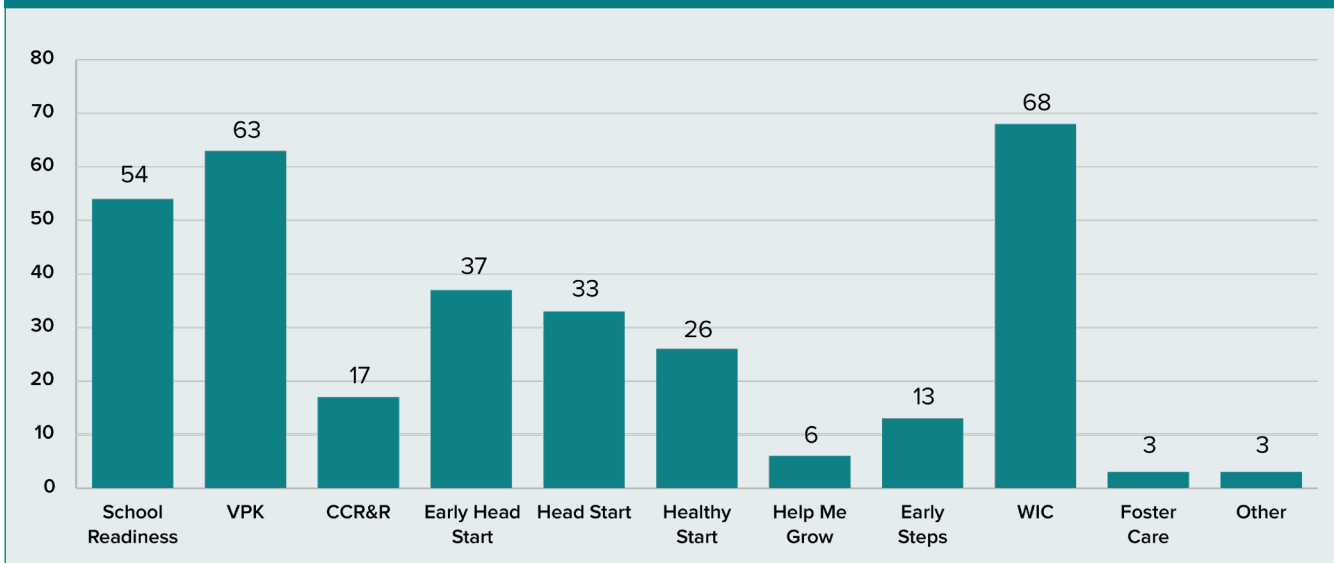
## HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF PARENT SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Annual Household Income	% of Survey Respondents
Less than \$20,000	28%
\$20,000 - \$34,999	26%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	18%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	7%
\$75,000 and above	5%
Did Not Answer	16%

## Parent Survey Respondents

Of the 232 parents who completed the survey, 80% were mothers, 9% were fathers, and the remainder identified themselves as grandparents, indicated multiple roles, or selected other or not applicable. 53% of parent survey respondents identify as married, 38% as single, and the remainder said they were divorced, separated, widowed or not applicable. Of parent survey respondents, 42% identified as Hispanic, 29% as Black, 16% as White, 8% as other, and less than 5% each as multiracial, Native Hawaiian or Asian. Parents had used a variety of state-funded services relate to the early learning and development of children as shown below.

## HAVE YOU USED ANY STATE FUNDED SERVICES FOR EARLY LEARNING?



### HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF EDUCATOR SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Annual Household Income	% of Survey Respondents
Less than \$20,000	12%
\$20,000 - \$34,999	29%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	19%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	21%
\$75,000 and above	12%
Did Not Answer	7%

## Educator Survey Respondents

Of the 93 educators who completed the survey, 56% identified as Black, 22% as white, 10% as Hispanic, 8% as multiracial, and the remaining as Asian or other. In terms of educational attainment, 14% of respondents reported they had only completed their 45 Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) training hours; 20% said they had completed their 45 DCF training hours and earned a Florida Child Care Professional Credential (FCCPC) or Child Development Associate (CDA); 26% said they had only a FCCPC or CDA; 9% had an associate's degree; 18% a bachelor's degree; and 13% a master's degree. Responses to open-ended survey questions for parents and educators are included in Appendix B and C, respectively.

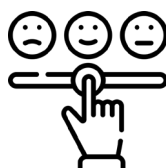
# Key Findings

Several key themes emerged across groups from the Let’s Talk Listening Tour. The transcripts and survey responses have been analyzed and organized into themes and subthemes along with numerous direct quotations from participants to illustrate each theme. These themes include the following:



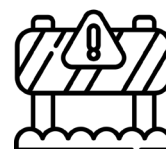
## Dreams and Aspirations

What participants said they want for themselves, their children, and early care and education in Florida.



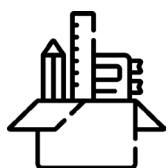
## Satisfaction

What participants enjoy or describe as working well for them related to early care and education.



## Barriers for Families

Challenges or frustrations participants identified based on their experiences with early care and education in Florida.



## Early Learning Workforce

What participants had to say about the perceptions of – and challenges facing – Florida’s early learning workforce, including the teacher preparation process.



## Defining Quality

How participants define quality and their perspectives on the state’s quality rating and improvement system.



## Proposed Changes

What participants suggested could be improved in early care and education in Florida.

# Dreams and Aspirations



When asked what dreams they have for their children, parents responded with passion and enthusiasm. What parents talked about wanting for their children was consistent: happiness, health, good character, stability, financial security, access and opportunity, success, resilience, following their passions, and achieving their dreams. Three primary themes emerged across groups: education, economic success, and carving their own paths. A fourth theme emerged for some parents who are recent immigrants: citizenship.

“I want for her and her older brothers and sisters to receive citizenship, and for [her younger brother] to be the best he can be and able to be helpful with this family.”

— Tampa parent

“If they want to go to college, we want to be able to help pay for college so that they don’t have to have the stress of having to work through college.”

— Alachua parent

“I have taught my children that there’s two things in life that must be done. And the first one is they must have a job. The better their education, the more options they have. And the second thing is that they have to get to heaven. So those are the two things that are the rules in our household.”

— Tampa parent



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“I want them to be able to follow their dreams. But at the same time, I want them to be able to get the opportunities... You know because they’re Black boys... I want things to be different for them. I want them to be able to be like. ‘Oh, I want to do this and I’m going to do it!’ I just want them to be happy and follow their dreams, like we all want for our kids. And I want to work hard to give them that.”

– Palm Beach parent

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“My dream is that my daughters accomplish what I wasn’t able to accomplish. I want them to have a professional career. If I support and help them, I’m sure they will accomplish it. With a strong support system and a united family, everything is possible.”

– Indiantown parent

“I just really want them to be happy, healthy, enjoy life, and grow up and do what they want to do.”

– Palm Beach parent



“Something that worries me is my son’s safety when he goes to school. I have problems being in this country and knowing that my kid isn’t safe at school. In my country of origin there’s violence but there aren’t shootings. I shouldn’t have to worry about this. My dream is that he can develop without being afraid of a shooting happening.”

– Gainesville parent

“I want her to be better than her mother.”

– Miami parent

# Satisfaction

When asked about what brings them the most joy about their current or previous early learning experience, parents reflected on their experiences with their children's early care and education, discussed the various advantages of their chosen child care arrangement, and considered the value the experiences brought to them and their children. Educators added things that they particularly enjoy about teaching in the early care and education sector.

**“They have such a broad vocabulary now. They turn around and say things to me that I’m hearing for the first time come out of their mouth and I’m like, ‘Wait. Hold on. What did you just say?’ They are so articulate for being two and a half and have so many emotions and have no problem expressing them.”**

**– Flagler parent**

**“And the center that she’s in right now, she’s two [and] she’s reading. And I’m like, her vocabulary is [amazing] and the things she is doing and saying, she’s just developing really good. [It has been a] great experience!”**

**– Daytona parent**



## Developmental Growth

Parents and educators enjoy seeing their children thrive, grow, and learn. Two major themes developed as parents discussed their satisfaction with their early learning experience: (1) learning key concepts and socialization, and (2) structure leading to potty training. Many parents felt that their early care and education programs helped their children prepare academically, physically, and socially for kindergarten. Parents appreciate the socialization that their children received and the opportunities for their children to positively engage with other children. They spoke about the curriculum and instructional tools teachers used across age groups and developmental phases. Parents were pleased and often surprised by their children's advances in language and vocabulary. Meanwhile, educators talked about the magic of the when a child grasps something for the first time. Parents also appreciated that their early learning programs helped establish routines, schedules, and consistency. Parents recognized that the structured environment of the early learning program made potty training their children seem easier than they thought it would be. They saw this as a real advantage of the early learning experience.

**“Just seeing how colorful everything is and seeing their tiny little furniture and how they listen to you and how they want to do everything - that brought me joy. And just whenever they learn stuff and you see those little faces light up. It’s amazing.”**  
– Immokalee educator



**“My son started talking when he first started daycare. The first two weeks, they just thought he was a mute. He would say maybe two words, and that’s it. Since he started, they’ve gotten him fully potty trained, which we battled for over a year for. He’s started speaking now in full sentences. He’s stuttering and has issues still with it, but he’s started talking, and he’s only three, but he was not talking before.”**  
– Lake County parent

**“I love their guided reading program. I love their ELA program. They have Eureka math. I love it. I love the way they train their teachers to teach it.”**  
– Jacksonville parent



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“But I liked it [the family child care program]. I felt like it was kind of like staying at home with them... just not so much like you’re following a schedule or a curriculum. It’s more so like going on... their pace. And then also... as a baby, they didn’t have him in diapers. They would take him to use the potty. I really thought that was cool.”

– Flagler parent

“When they have the ‘aha’ moment, like when we’ve been showing them something and they finally realize it, and you can just tell. They’re like, ‘Huh! I got it.’ And they’re so proud of themselves, running around, ‘I did it! I did it! I did it!’ Well, yeah, you did go potty. You did.”

– Pinellas educator

“They have an excellent academic program. They start teaching the children at a very young age, so from the age of one, they’re already at the age where they are identifying their colors and shapes. They’re getting them into the habit of saying their ABC’s. They do potty training, which is really, really good.

– Palm Beach parent

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“I like [when] that light bulb comes on. That’s probably my favorite part. I’m so animated when they get the point. We’re dancing. It’s a full-blown pep rally. I’m the VPK teacher and it’s like, look, you got to know this. So, I think that is probably the best part. I love when you teach a concept, or you introduce something, and they get it.”

– Jacksonville educator

## Parent-Teacher Relationships

Parents and educators enjoy the positive relationships they build. Parents appreciated open and honest communication and the expertise that the educators bring to their jobs. Participants discussed various types of relationships as: (1) personal/ familial, (2) professional/expert, or (3) supportive/ connective. For many participants, the decision to place their children in the care of an early learning center was difficult. Finding a loving, trusting, and safe place was often challenging, but many parents found an early learning center that fit their needs and felt “like family” to them and their children. Knowing that their children were in a loving environment brought them joy. Educators also understand the importance of open and honest communication. In the listening sessions, educators discussed their role as a child advocate and hoped that parents see them as a partner working on behalf of the children and families they serve.



**“I think the most positive thing that I enjoy about this learning center is the staff, the teachers. I really feel like they understand my daughter, because you always worry about that because you’re the parent, but my daughter can have big emotions, and they know when she’s off or when she’s not acting like herself, and it really feels like they’re almost like a family to her.”**

**– Lake County Parent**

**“She knows every child by name. She knows all the parents. She’s a blessing. And like you said, it was a time where I couldn’t afford daycare either. My job – previously before I had her – had let me go. But I needed her to go back to daycare, start daycare, so I can go to work.”**

**– Tallahassee Parent**



“One thing I appreciate is the openness. If you have an issue or you have a concern, you can actually reach out to them personally, onto personal cell phones, and say, ‘Hey, I need to talk to you about this.’ Or if there’s something that you need clarification on, you can actually reach out and have somebody right there that you’re easily able to access if there is a concern.”

– Lake County Parent

“You get the parent involved. Yes, in the beginning, they’re very iffy, especially if you get a mom that has eight kids. ‘Oh, I got eight kids. You can’t tell me nothing new.’ That is when you really got to get through to them, but it all goes based on how she was saying, you got to get to their level. You have to get to know them: How are you doing this? Where are you doing this? Where are you coming from? Once you have that involvement, things go smooth.”

– Educator

“My [favorite thing] is building a relationship with the families. I’ve built relationships where I still get invited to all their major achievements. Even from elementary to college and those who are now having kids, they’re bringing their kids back to me [to] find out where I’m at [be]cause they want their kids to be in the same center around the people that they grew up learning from. So, it’s those relationships that I enjoy most.”

– Jacksonville Educator

“They [parents] need to know that we are not the enemy and it’s not a personal attack. We are here to help you and take care of your baby.”

– Bay County Educator

“I know the number one thing is communication is key. Just getting out to the parents, reaching out to the parents as much as we can.”

– Immokalee Educator

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Many parents expressed appreciation for the knowledge of educators, their ability to recognize potential developmental or learning delays, and their sensitivity when communicating their concerns. Many educators articulated their responsibility to share knowledge and expertise with parents.



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“So, I put him in the daycare at 10 weeks. I started to feel like he was a test bunny. Every week it was like, ‘He’s not raising his hand.’ I’m like, ‘He’s 12 weeks.’ ‘He’s not lifting up his toe.’ He’s 10 weeks, you know? All of these things, they started to make me feel bad. It started to make me question my parenting.... So, to take him to school and feel like, okay, he’s delayed and he’s not talking.... I said, if there is something wrong with Elijah, praise God, he’s getting all the resource. I know. Ain’t nothing wrong with it. But thank you for all of this free one-on-one time that you’re giving him in occupational therapy. Thank you, Jesus, for all this free physical therapy that he’s getting, because the minute they said he couldn’t walk, my baby just stood up and started walking.”

– Orlando parent

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“They [parents] don’t have to be experts or you know, they just have to know that there’s so many things, there’s so many stages in their child’s life that they have to engage into and that’s just going to be opening the doors to just positive and just growth. It’s good for the children, it’s good for the parents to understand, not be a master of the knowledge but at least acknowledge that it’s important.”

– Immokalee educator

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“And she was telling me, ‘This month you need to do this for your baby.’ She was telling me to put a light here so the baby can start moving, things like that for him to connect with me. And this social worker was also telling me, ‘You need to talk to your baby.’ Things like that. I didn’t know. She told me that she cannot diagnose but she said that it looks like something called autism she said but I cannot diagnose it. You need to take him to the [clinic]. And she gave me the number and spoke to the neurologist and then diagnosed what’s going on with him because I’m trying to do activities with him, like things he needs to do for his age and he’s just not responding. And he was just sitting there. He was not eating on his own or at least playing with the food, things like that. And I thought maybe she’s just not patient. That was my first thought. But I just decided I’m going to do what she’s telling me. She’s the expert. So, I took my son, and it was good to believe her because I think it was in the early stage of the spectrum.”

– Key West parent

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Many parents also viewed their early learning program as a great resource and connection to social services for their families.

“They’ve been really nice people. I have loved this program and I have a strong connection with them. I didn’t know I was under depression post-partum and that’s where they explained it to me. Having three kids is very tiring and exhausting. Another thing I like about the program is that they provide educational material for my children. Whenever there’s an opportunity for training, they let me know at the program.”

– Gainesville parent



“I suffered from migraines, and I couldn’t pay for the service, but they helped me find a psychologist for free. They helped me a lot with my mental health. I was very unhappy for a long time. They helped with all my meds and therapies. Now I have another psychologist who sees me Sunday of each week. I’ve received a lot of help.”

– Indiantown parent

“They give you books, they help you, they read with the kids and play, so I really like them. I’m trying to be in everything that’s going to help them. First of all, the English is not my first language, so I’m trying. I’m learning too. That’s why I love when they, if I have time and I’m not working, I’m not doing anything and I’m going to something to learn more English myself.”

– Palm Beach parent



# Barriers for Families

Let's Talk listening session participants identified many barriers associated with high quality early care and education in their communities.

## Access

Two major themes emerged across sessions and stakeholder groups regarding access to quality early care and education: (1) availability, and (2) affordability. Parents in many communities, regardless of whether they were urban, suburban, or rural, felt like there weren't options available to them, especially for infants. Educators echoed these concerns. When programs did have openings, they were often inaccessible due to price, geography, or other factors. Schedule (hours of operation) was a major barrier for many parents. More than just extended hours, some parents said they have jobs with shift work that required 24-hour child care. As a result of these challenges, many parents said they just chose to keep their child at home or in the care of a family member, friend, or neighbor instead, despite their concerns about not having what they need to promote the early learning and development of their child.



“School is starting. I got to go back to work, and a lot of people are having issues finding [a spot]. Even if they're willing to pay, there's just not the spots. There's just not the spots.”

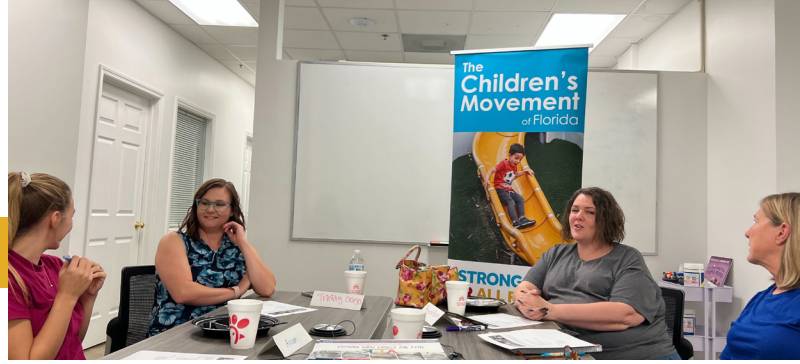
– Tampa parent



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“I didn’t realize that the wait list would be so long after having my child. Some will have a six-month to eight-month waiting list to get into an infant spot. I wish that I would’ve known that because I had to rely a lot on my family to pick up for those first few weeks after going back to work before the facility that I had enrolled him in was available.”

– Alachua parent



“School started Monday. The week before that, she went to the school to enroll her daughter but at the open house they told her there wasn’t space for her and she couldn’t assist. This made her really upset. They then found a spot at the YMCA and then she went to another center.”

– Indiantown parent

“Me and my husband, we didn’t necessarily fight over it, but it did come down to where we had to make a decision [about] whether we were going to continue. My whole paycheck was going to paying the child care. So, I was like, ‘What am I doing?’ There’s no point in working here if I’m not personally seeing any of the money. So, I just decided that I was going to stay home with her, which really kind of put us tight with our budget.”

– Lakeland parent

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“It is very hard for women and families to get out and get a job because there’s not the adequate child care. There is no infant care. We were one of the last ones. [If] you’ve got a newborn, you can’t go back to work because there is nowhere to leave [her].”

– Pensacola educator

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“I’m working full time, 40-hour weeks. I make decent money, but... whenever more than half of my paycheck goes to the child care, and the other option is spending my whole day with my kid, not paying child care, and keeping my paychecks? I’m going to do that. But I’m working. She’s right in front of me in a playpen watching Cocomelon. And on my lunch, I take her for walks and try to interact with her. But I wish she had more stimulation during the day when she’s sitting in the pen, when I’m stuck doing what I have to do for the next two hours.”

– Tallahassee parent

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“Many jobs start earlier than when the daycare opens. So, many people have to help moms to take the kids there at the time that they open. For example, I leave my house at 6 am for work and they open at 8 am.”

– Arcadia parent

“In my case, we decided to sacrifice part of our income for me to stay home and generate projects at home where I can be with the kids all the time.”

– Jacksonville parent

“In my family, we decided I would care for the baby. Due to the difficulty in finding a spot in a daycare. There are very few spots for the younger age.”

– Arcadia parent

“Nobody can afford to have kids. Nobody.” – Orlando parent

“I live in a very rural area. So, there’s lack of resources and things like that. We only have two daycares to choose from and they’re full all the time anyways. But it’s like where we live, there’s not a lot of resources. There’s inability to get to those things.”

– Alachua parent

“I was able to find one [daycare center] that was 24 hours, but I only was able to find one.”

– Alachua parent

Parents across settings talked about having to sacrifice quality for affordability.

“They [the early care and education options] are pretty good in some ways and in others I’m like, I’m not really all that happy about it. But I can’t afford the center that I wanted them to go to, that they went to for a short period of time. So, they’re where I can afford it.”

– Alachua parent

“The price is just outrageous to me. And it’s not just me. It’s everyone I know that struggles with this. Thank God I have a scholarship. I wouldn’t be able to function if I didn’t have it. And a lot of my friends don’t have that, and they’re left with no options.”

– Tallahassee parent

“I was just trying to keep my voucher. And so, I sent her there and it was dirty. I did not like it. It was always dark in there. And honestly, it was just a placeholder until one of the other places I applied to got them.”

– Daytona parent



“I don’t feel like a working parent who’s already struggling in this world that is not set up for working parents should have to choose between feeling like they’re getting less than standard quality for their child because they can’t afford quality.”

– Tallahassee parent

“I’m about to lose my daycare assistance, coming the middle of next month, because my husband and I are working on starting our company. So, he’s not making a paycheck. It’s putting money into the business account so that we can continue going. And they look at that as he’s not working, so they won’t take that as any income, and are refusing to continue our child care assistance.”

– Lake County parent

## Eligibility

Numerous parents spoke of the eligibility structure for benefits as a complicating factor that perpetuated the inaccessibility and unaffordability of early care and education for them. Either they made too much money to qualify but still struggled, had difficulty accessing benefits, or lost benefits when they still needed them. Several owner/directors noted the need to change eligibility requirements.

**“The biggest thing for us is that we technically make too much money to be able to qualify for anything, but we’re pretty broke, so we can’t actually afford a lot of stuff. So, we’re right in that middle ground where you’re just like... sorry.”**  
– Alachua Parent

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**“I love my child care. My child is happy when he goes, and everyone is very nice. One thing I don’t like is the financial help rules. They’re very strict. Inflation in this country makes it difficult. There are certain ranks for certain benefits. We don’t qualify for the help. It makes me mad because we both pay taxes. I stay at the center because of their good service and because it’s on my way to work. I applied at three centers in December and the boy was born in April. Everything has to be done with ample time because there are limited spots, and the waiting list is eternal.”**  
– Gainesville parent

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**“When they talk about income priorities at the center, do they mean for people with low income? I didn’t understand fully. I think we all work and have the same rights. We should all have the same conditions when trying to enroll at the center. My daughter was rejected. A lot of people lie and say they’re single and don’t work. The government should have a center for those who earn a bit more. The other thing I don’t like is that they only help with a spot if you have someone you know or a family member there. Does this mean things have to be done by bribing? I think it’s poorly done on the government’s part.”**  
– Indiantown parent

“I want to go into something more like a parent support because I have so many stories of parents that they need child care. They don’t qualify for the ELC, and they cannot bring their kid because they don’t qualify... and they have other expenses. I had a little girl who, unfortunately, we cannot take care of her because her mom was getting a very high debt and she wasn’t [eligible]... But the reason why she couldn’t afford it is because she had to pay for her daughter’s medicine. It would be something beneficial to see parents like her that need that extra help [get it].”

– Tampa owner/director

“It was... heartbreaking. But I was really close with one of them [administrators] and she would say, ‘Oh I already know this application for this family is going to get denied.’ Or like, ‘Oh, I wish this person wouldn’t have put the other parent on the [application], because now [they don’t qualify].’ And it’s like, you shouldn’t have to do that. You shouldn’t have to wish that a parent wouldn’t have put the other parent on there. Now because they put dad on there and said dad is involved, which is a good thing, [they cannot access child care subsidies]. That’s what we’re here for. That’s what we’re supposed to be fostering and nurturing. To have to say, ‘Oh well, because dad is in the picture now, the income is not [eligible].’ And then they can’t afford child care. There’s too big of a gap where they’re just needs aren’t being met.”

– Daytona Beach educator

“Even the financial assistance that women are getting with children, they’re cutting it down. It’s like I don’t get nothing. They told me I make too much.”

– Miami parent

“Government help is lost when both parents work.”

– Gainesville parent





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“[We need] to create a more holistic approach to child care funding and efforts to help the families to grow all the way around. You have some families that may be a husband and a wife team that have three kids, but they can’t receive ELC funding because they’re right on the cusp. Whereas that funding may help them save for a home or save for a new vehicle or something like that, but they have to funnel all this money into child care. Whereas you may have someone else who receives funding on a technicality or receives funding because they have way more kids than this person based on the criteria. But I think that the criterion for that funding needs to be examined more to see if the benefits are truly helping society as a whole versus just individuals based on their current situation.”

– Tallahassee owner/director

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“I work two jobs as is, so I was getting to the point where I could go down to one job and be able to financially support myself. Now I’m at two and struggling. I know Lake County offers the program to be able to get discounts with daycare, but the processes to go through, to get food stamps, to get Medicaid, to get that WIC, it is so troublesome. I was making really good money, but I had to [quit my job] so I would be able to have time off [to complete and manage benefits applications]. The processes to get assistance for anything in the state of Florida I think should be simplified a lot.”

– Lake County parent

# The Early Workforce

Listening session participants recognized that a strong, effective early learning workforce is essential for sustaining the community's early care and education sector. Owners/directors spoke with endearment about the dedication and passion of their educators. Whether experienced or novice educators, the owner/directors viewed their teachers as family and recognized the value they add to their organizations and especially to the children and their families.

## Workforce Stability and Compensation

Parents, educators, and owners/directors alike recognized the critical role teachers play in ensuring a quality early learning experience for young children. They agreed that high teacher turnover and low teacher compensation are significant challenges that further complicate the challenges with access and affordability outlined above.

According to many participants, low wages and the lack of benefits keep many qualified teaching candidates away from the early care and education sector. Particularly with the shift toward additional accountability and emphasis on academic outcomes, owner/directors are finding that they compete against elementary schools for teachers. They found that elementary schools can offer their teachers higher wages, a comprehensive benefits package, and more desirable working hours. Because of their size and the nature of their funding, early learning programs don't typically have the resources to offer similar and competitive wages and benefits.

Owners/directors also named delays in background checks as a barrier to hiring qualified staff. With the time to process the results of the background screening can be more than 30 days, the delays mean that potential new hires





must wait for the results of the screening before they can begin teaching. To retain the new hire, owner/directors talked about having to either pay the new teacher while they wait and before they can begin teaching, pay them for tasks other than teaching, or hope that the new teacher will wait until the background screening results have been approved.



**“We have lots of centers that have closed their doors and primarily it’s because they don’t have a teacher.” – Tampa owner/director**

**“It kills me when you have people that work in early childhood education, and then have to go apply for benefits and be on the system. That makes no sense to me that someone who has such an important and vital job has to sit there and worry about whether or not they can pay their bills or they can feed their own [family].”  
– Jacksonville educator**

**“When I first graduated, I graduated from USF, and I actually worked at that preschool and it only took me a summer to realize, nope, wasn’t worth the pay. [It just] wasn’t worth it.”  
– Lakeland parent**

**“You really have to be passionate about children to work at a child care. If your heart’s not in it, or you’re just there to make a quick paycheck... you’re going to realize that, even in the infant room, when you got all five, six babies crying their head off at you all at the same time, ‘Wow, I’m not cut out for this.’ They just have such a high turnover rate that that’s why they’re closing infant rooms, because they can’t handle it. They’re not bringing in enough revenue, and their employees aren’t getting paid crap.”  
– Lakeland parent**

**“I cannot tell you how many times that, just being a man in this field, I get asked when I am I going to find a real job, because ‘that’s women’s work’.”  
– Daytona educator**

“Unfortunately, Florida is one of the lowest in how they pay educators. Teachers get no assistance. I do think that at some point, you have people who are in it for the right reasons, and they try. They keep trying.”

– Mariana parent

“Even when you do find the workers, the people who come in either they won’t show up for interviews or call and say, ‘I can’t pass the drug test.’ So, I don’t know what to do.”

– Pensacola educator

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“My teachers say, ‘If you expect us to teach elementary, we should do the same benefits as elementary school teachers.’ And I’ve lost two good teachers because of those benefits of insurance, and things of that nature, and extra paid time off that I can’t afford to get them.”

– Pensacola owner/director

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“The teachers who teach VPK require the most education, the most qualifications, but you pay us way less for the VPK students. They should be paid at the highest level versus the lowest level because these teachers require more money. We’re going to have to pay these teachers way more.”

– Tallahassee owner/  
director

“I will say, the one thing that sucks is all of us parents are sitting here who have our kids here, we all say our kids love their teachers. My son, my oldest, lost three teachers in his first year being there, and they were his favorite teachers. My youngest just lost his... Well, our youngest just lost their two-year-old teacher because she texted me, and she went and found a better job, paying more.”

– Lake County parent



“I know it’s a weird balance... in order for them to pay these teachers properly to give quality care, they have to charge a certain amount. But it’s just the cost in general [that] has become so high.”  
– Tallahassee parent



“I feel like that's where it brings it back to the wages, to the pay. Bonuses and supplementals are great, but that is not going to allow any teacher or director to change their way of living.... And that's what we need to wrap our head around.”  
– Tampa owner/director

“We only serve 44 kids max right now. We’re only serving half because of low staffing. I know there’s interns in college that want to get into the business, but there’s nobody to call them and say, ‘Hey, come here. We are hiring.’ There’s nobody to do these things because I am in the classroom.”  
– Tampa owner/director

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“Right now, we’re in a hiring crisis. It’s hard to find staff. So, when you find somebody and you interview them, they are qualified. And then, per regulation, you have to have the background clearance first. At this point, that’s the automatic two to three weeks. This person has a family. So now you either have to let them go and tell them to sit home and wait three weeks without any pay or you retain them as staff and pay them to do something that they can do... within the ramifications of DCF until it comes back. So, now you’re paying pretty much an invisible person just to retain them for three weeks. That’s coming out of your budget.”  
– Tallahassee owner/director

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## Program Requirements

Providers from all sessions talked about the rigorous and time-consuming requirements of programs such as voluntary pre-kindergarten (VPK) and School Readiness. They recognize the burdens and stress these requirements and regulations place on their teachers and on the administrators, even the owner/directors themselves. Although many see great value in such programs for children, they expressed concerns that the requirements are so prohibitive that many choose not to participate.



**“So, for an example, I’m going to, VPK, since we all know about the 15-hour emergent literacy. There’s additional classes and stuff now that you want educators to take, and that’s also including like the Duval County School Board teachers who actually are already certified teachers, or actually already have bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Just because they’re placed in these VPK classrooms, they still have to go back and have that additional 15-hour emerging literacy component. There’s no compensation for that. And yes, we’re rewarded emotionally from what the children give us, but it doesn’t pay our bills.”**

**– Jacksonville educator**

**“I’ve had some people come fresh out of college being trained by the 65-year-old lady that’s been in this for 25 years [without a college degree]. And she works circles around them in understanding the children, in understanding the parents, in understanding how daycare flows. Whereas when you’re at a classroom and you got that book in front of you, that’s not real life. Real life is completely different.”**

**– Tampa owner/director**

**“The requirements and qualifications that are placed upon people are unrealistic.” – Pensacola owner/director**



“I am incorporating it [School Readiness] again this year. I took a step back from VPK because to me it was just, you're in it and then it just keeps shoveling stuff at you.... I'm not putting my teachers through that. Maybe they've kind of leveled out a little. And if that's the case, I'm ready to hop on board.”

– Tallahassee owner/director

“We have 90% in School Readiness.... I would say it's not just the paperwork, but the requirements that they're putting on the teachers now. They just don't want to do it. They don't want to go through the training that's required. They don't want to go through having to sit through when they come in and do the observations, the assessments. It's one thing to tell a teacher that she's not doing a great job and not help her.... And it's really hard to get them [as teachers] to commit to taking all the courses because you are already coming to work all day long, and now you want them to come on the weekends and sit four or five hours in the class.”

– Pensacola owner/director

“Our daycare, they don't allow you time to get your hours. And I think putting that back in, give them a 90-day [training period]... because some people don't know. They may like child care and start working there and just need some time to get their hours, but they're requiring you to have them before starting the job. Give them a 90-day period to complete their training so they can stay in that job.”

– Tallahassee educator

“I put in an application because [a center] was looking for teachers. I went from room to room to room to room. And then, they put me in VPK. I was like, ‘I don't know if I could do that,’ because I was scared of that. That is a lot to me. I felt like that was a lot of teaching, intentional. We all do intentional teaching, but that was so much more. I felt like if the kids didn't hit the mark that they needed to, I failed. But in my mind, I was totally terrified.”

– Bay County educator



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“The scores have not changed based on the requirements that they're putting on the teachers. I think that is an unnecessary stress on VPK teachers. If we went back to how it was five years ago – where yes, you need your VPK credential, and you need certain things – but the continuously adding to them is just causing stress, and then we're going to lose good teachers.”  
– Pensacola owner/director



“I don't refer any of my teachers to TEACH anymore. Because it is too much paperwork and not enough security. The TEACH scholarship Okay. So, too much paperwork for the directors. But then, not enough security and I know exactly what you're talking about because there's nothing in the contract that states that we should stay.”  
– Lakeland educator



Is there anything you would like us to know about your role as an early childhood educator?

74 educators responded to this survey question. Responses ranged from expressing how much they enjoy and love their work to feelings of being undervalued, underappreciated, and overlooked by the state. All responses can be found in Appendix C.



## Workforce Commitment and Quality

Numerous parents, educators, and owners/directors talked about the connection between a trained, well-compensated, and stable teaching workforce and quality. Educators expressed concerns about the lack of understanding of the commitment required for quality. Several parents expressed concern about early care and education businesses that seemed to be more interested in profit than ensuring quality.

“We have lots of people that come into the center, and they think we’re just watching kids. No, you’re not. You are not just watching these kids. You are being paid to teach them, to show them what it’s like to live in the world, so they can go on and succeed.”  
– Bay County educator



“Then you have some of them [child care businesses] that’s really there for the paycheck. But when you find a good one, you hold onto it. You hold on tight, and you don’t let go and you praise those teachers too.”  
– Jacksonville parent

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“If the teachers are coming to work every day and loving their job.... If teachers aren’t being invested in, then your children are not getting enough from the people they see every single day. And your child deserves to see a teacher that’s happy and wants to be there with them. Every day.”  
– Lake County parent

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“And with the [teacher] turnover, then you have a lack of trust.”  
– Lakeland parent

## Teacher Preparation

When asked about how they would transform the preparation of early educators in Florida, educators reflected on their own preparation programs and how well-prepared they felt when they started teaching. Most educators agreed that 45 hours of training alone was not enough to prepare them for the classroom. Most educators felt that spending time in the classroom shadowing teachers, student teaching, or working with a teacher mentor would have been extremely valuable. Some educators expressed a need for more training to engage parents in identifying and addressing developmental concerns.



“I didn't take the classes. I went, signed up for the classes, passed them. So, I can imagine that there are other people ... I mean, some of it is just like general education. If you know like common sense – no, don't give a two-year-old honey – just things like that. You can Google the answers to the [test]... I think it's a great foundation, but from what I hear in some of the child care groups on social media, Florida has some of the minimum standard requirements as other states. Because... that 45 hours we do, it's like nothing. It's just a drop in the bucket for other states.”  
– Jacksonville educator

“I've taken care of kids my whole life, but there were things that were required of me to know how to do and to do in an official learning capacity that I was not ready for.”  
– Bay County educator

“We're short, but the thing that doesn't help is they just throw the teacher in the classroom with no experience, and they don't even train them. When I started 10 years ago, I was thrown in as a substitute. I was thrown in a room with 20 children by myself and I didn't even have my 45 hours.” – Daytona educator

“No [I didn't feel prepared] because learning from a book isn't giving you experience. It's not cookie cutter children. You don't have one mold that fits all of those. So no, not after college.... To be honest with you, we lack in that training department.”  
– Pensacola educator

“Before I was able to get my CDA, we had our first and second period where we could go out and see real classrooms and be in there for an hour or two. That really helped me see it in real life before I had to do the paper stuff. So that really helped me.”

– Pensacola educator

“Well, you see with iTech I had the hands-on feeling. There were two classrooms and then we had our own space to do all of our work. We had, I think it was two three-year-olds and then four five-year-olds. It was like a preschool and our VPK room. And I got the chance to go in both rooms and they were completely different. Was I ready? No. I was scared. You don't know what to expect. You just slowly accommodate into the rooms.”

– Immokalee educator

“When you go to college and you get your degree, you're learning. Everything's in the book. You learn all these strategies and you learn about different disabilities, and classroom management skills and everything that you're going to do on your first day when you get your classroom, that first classroom. And so, you have a plan in place but not until you step foot in that door is [it] that you realize... it takes creativity, it takes a lot of thinking outside the box. So, we may have that education but once [you're in the classroom], you have to be hands-on. So, you have the background knowledge, but I think it's different once you step foot in the door. Once you get the day-to-day routine and you have everything in place, then your strategies come in, everything that you've learned.”

– Miami educator

“[New teachers] should be chaperoned for a certain amount of hours. Even if it's 45 hours, somebody needs to be with them so that they know, ‘Yes, have a checklist. Yes, they can do that. They're capable of doing that. They're doing good,’ because just throwing somebody in there is not good.”

– Bay County educator



“That would be a really good training to offer to educators – like a sensitivity training on how to break that news [about a developmental delay] to parents. Because that’s always one of the most anxious ridden I felt in my life when I have to sit in front of the parent and be like, ‘Hey, something might be a little bit not quite right here.’”  
– Pensacola educator

“It would be beneficial if they could do an on-the-job training in addition to those 40 hours.”  
– Pinellas educator





# Defining Quality

When asked about how to define quality in early learning settings, educators, owners, and directors acknowledged their familiarity with the state's indicators for quality and the need for accountability. They expressed concern about the emphasis placed on assessments, the lack of adequate support for teachers, and the lack of quality indicators that are seen as important but difficult to quantify or measure. Owners and directors also voiced concern about the high stakes associated with Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) evaluations and the impact the scores have on their programs. Parents, meanwhile, talked about how they define quality, which often differs from these measures.

## Assessments to Measure Quality

During the listening sessions, many participants discussed the merits of the CLASS, an observational tool to assess teaching and instructional quality by linking teacher behaviors to student learning. Although they acknowledged the rationale for using an assessment tool, few believed it truly measured teaching quality. Most providers were quick to point out what they saw as its flaws, particularly noting the stress it places on students and teachers. Others questioned its accuracy to measure the quality of teaching without considering the influence of external factors that have an impact on student learning.

Despite the state's reliance on CLASS as an evaluation tool, several teachers, owners, and directors talked about there being too great a focus on assessment without enough support for teachers.





“It’s the low ratios. It’s the interaction. The CLASS assessment, I think is one of the best things that has happened to early childhood. Yes. By far, but yeah, you’re right. It’s that interaction. It’s those relationships. There’re so many things.”  
– Tampa owner/director



“What I’ve noticed is that there’s been more changes within the laws... on implementation of what they expect to see in the classroom and it’s benefiting the children. But there’s not really much being given to the teachers that is actually supporting them.”  
– Jacksonville educator

“Yeah, because we had a staff meeting and the director said to us, ‘This year, I want to see y’all not playing with the children no more. You need to teach them.’ And I’m like, ‘That’s how they learn, through play.’ And I’m an infant toddler teacher. I work from zero to two.”  
– Daytona educator

“Let me say this: there’s nothing wrong with doing assessments. That’s letting you know where the child is and how much they’re growing and what they’re learning. But when it gets to be overwhelming, if that’s the majority of your time assessing the children versus working with the children, that’s what I don’t like. I really get frustrated, and I say, ‘I’m not doing that.’”  
– Educator

“The guidelines that are passed down become a ball of yarn that you have to figure out how to navigate without true direction from one party. So, to get a clear answer, you have to call around two or three different places and nobody ever wants to give you a solid answer. So, you have to make educated guesses. And when you make those educated guesses and they’re not the right ones, you get penalized for it. And there’s no wiggle room for teachers. There’s no wiggle room for us, but everybody else around us has wiggle room.”  
– Lakeland educator

“We spend so much time assessing and worrying about the assessment. We need more training in this. Sometimes I feel like that’s all I am doing [are assessments].”  
– Pensacola educator

“I think our problem really goes back to the children. We’re not making them our priority any longer. Honestly, [we] are not and that is what’s sad. They’re no longer the priority.”  
– Daytona educator

“They want to assess the children quarterly. You don’t have time to be assessing a child every day, every other day, especially if you are in a VPK class and you have 11 children, and then you have another teacher that’s in there, because now it’s 22 kids. So, you have to have two [teachers]. You need those four eyes plus some more to be monitoring those kids at all times. For someone to have to go and be assessing now, assessing there, and assessing here, and then not only that, you have the children that’s on School Readiness, so you’re already assessing for VPK, and now you have to do the ages and stages for this one [or] that one. Where do you have the time? That’s a lot of stress on the teachers.”  
– Educator

“We go to trainings, and we’re told, ‘This is what’s developmentally appropriate.’ We’ve done education, we studied... what’s developmentally appropriate. But then, we are asked to give the children evaluations. And what they are being evaluated on, isn’t in line with the age development things that we’re learning.”  
– Pensacola educator

“It’s just causing more stress on them as well as the kids because they tell us, ‘Don’t teach them the test.’ But if we don’t teach them the test, then we get a low score, and then we get on a... low performing provider list. Then we’ve got extra training to do if we get on that list, so you don’t want to be on that list. So, they’re putting all this pressure on us to teach them this stuff, but they’re just learning the same stuff in kindergarten. So why not let them be kids while they’re in pre-K? Teach them the fundamentals, of course, what they need for kindergarten, [but] not get ahead of kindergarten, because I feel like that’s what we’re doing.”  
– Pensacola owner/director

“It's not fair to the kids. And as adults, we get annoyed. We get frustrated. We get short tempered. And it's not because of the children. It's because the pressure that we're receiving. And we have to put that pressure on the kids, but it's not fair because every day you go to work and you see something that you don't like, you can't say anything about it because there's your job.”  
– Daytona educator

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“We have a lot of knowledge and research that says how important early childhood is, how important early childhood education is, and the schools don't reflect that. You talk about how important social and emotional skills are, yet you don't focus on that. You talk about how important it is to talk about trauma, yet you don't want to focus on that. You don't want to talk about it. You don't want to do what's necessary to focus on that.”  
– Educator

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Although there was debate on the ability of CLASS to measure teaching quality, many owners and directors agreed that early care and education programs should not be held accountable for the CLASS scores of their teachers because of high turn-over rates. They believe that the scores should follow the teachers and not be linked to the centers.



“The person and the assessments are... The teachers run from the assessments. If they score lower at your center, you may get a notice that they're leaving or just a popup that they're leaving. They'll leave your center, go to her center, and if they score high there, they may stay there. But if they score low there, then they'll move on, and they'll come to your center. It's like a bounce around.”  
– Pensacola owner/director



“So now that teacher may not even be at your center anymore for turnover or something, but the next teacher is placed in that spot and is responsible for the score that the other teacher gave you. And I’m like, ‘How are we scoring teachers, but the burden is on the provider?’ That score should go to that teacher because now that teacher can come in and score lower at my center and leave, and go and work for her center and score high, and leave... I’ve had that happen. I’ve had one girl that I know that’s been and done a CLASS assessment at four different centers.... How is this not being addressed? That is just not fair to people that everything is placed upon the provider and not a person.”  
– Tampa owner/director

“Our doors could be closed because of one bad decision that a teacher makes of no fault of our own. We fire them. We lose our contracts. We could be closed down and they go down the street and get rehired. That’s an issue. There should be some kind of licensing piece for the teacher. If there’s a culture in this center, then that’s one thing. But if the center has a good record and shows that they’ve done the training and everything and a teacher makes a bad choice, it just seems backwards. That doesn’t happen in the public school system.”  
– Tallahassee owner/director

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“So that's not really fair for us as providers either. So maybe if scores follow the instructors and then it would be your overall score could change month to month, depending on the average of the scores of teachers. So, if I interview a new teacher, I know when I hire her on, that I have to take the risk of her previous score or her current score. Do I think I can grow her to be a level five or six, or do I think, well, she's the two, she's going to stay at two. But that also gives us something to know who we're hiring and be able to work with those things as well.”  
– Tampa owner/director

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Different expectations parents, educators, and owners/directors have of each other contributes to some of these challenges with accountability. Educators and owners/directors talked about how teachers and early care and education programs are held accountable in the state's accountability system, but parents aren't.



“It’s not really a true partnership and that’s the thing. They have all these requirements, the state, for educators and stuff like that, but part of being an educator is also being able to educate parents. So, if we’re going to have requirements for teachers and stuff, you need to have requirements for the parents, especially if they’re going to be participating in these VPK programs that we’re responsible for preparing and making sure their children are ready for kindergarten. And any and everything that we’re doing in the classroom, if there’s going to be some type of dollar attached to it, parents need to be held just as much as accountable as the teachers.”

– Jacksonville educator

“I’m like, they can’t be that bad, but if I come to pick up [my child] and they’re [the teachers are] on their phone, that’s an issue for me. Versus they’re on the floor playing with my kid, or even just on the floor.... I’ve walked by the nursery and someone’s rocking a baby who’s holding their own bottle, and you’re scrolling Instagram.”

– Lakeland parent

“A lot of the daycares now do have the cameras and stuff where you can look at. They’ll turn them off sometimes, which I don’t really like, but I get very paranoid. My child’s nonverbal. There was a woman [teacher] that was grabbing my son in the daycare, and then he had a mark on him. And she said, ‘I just grabbed him away because the other child was trying to fight back and forth.’ But she put a lot of force [into it] and he was bruised. I said, right away, ‘I’m going to tell the county to look into this’.”

– Tampa parent

“Another thing that we come across are parents that just think it’s our problem. They don’t really want to work with us, and they’re not interested. Well, oh yeah, his behaviors, that’s what daycare is for.”

– Immokalee educator

“Since the parents are using state-funded money to send their kids to VPK, you should require all the parents to come to a monthly parenting class to earn that state money, essentially.”

– Pensacola educator

“It’s horrible because the parent just wants to shove the child off on you and leave. They don’t even want to say goodbye. And the child is like screaming at the top of their lungs.”

– Daytona educator

“I went inside several classrooms and they’re playing all day. This is VPK, but it’s not structured at all. They’re not following a lesson plan.... They’re just letting them have a free for all. And I’m like, but what are they learning?”

– Jacksonville parent

## Parent Perceptions of Quality

Listening session participants talked about other aspects of what they considered to be quality in early care and education programs. Participants in all sessions recognized that there are many dimensions to quality early care and education. Many parents defined quality as a focus on early learning, engaging activities, positive settings, a place their child liked going, referrals from people they trust, and educators and owners/directors they trust. Owners and directors look for quality in ways that can’t necessarily be measured, such as in interactions and relationships, in the passion of the teachers, and in the love that they show to their children. They also considered teacher-to-students ratios, safety, and facilities when referring to quality.



“I think the classroom setting, too, is really nice to have, just because it’s bright. It’s colorful. There is music. There are all kinds of activities, stuff we don’t particularly have at home [like the] music machine. I have a bubble machine now, but I’m saying, all of the activities, the painting, everything.”

– Tampa parent

“I know I wasn’t going to put her in daycare if I couldn’t find something that was affordable. I knew someone that had their child there before that could really give me the ins and outs of it. With my job, I couldn’t afford to be going to the daycare every single day trying to get on to them about my child. So, that is something, affording and picking the right centers is very, very important.”  
– Tallahassee parent

“The leadership, the staff, the facility, those would be my three anchors that I would look for when I began to define quality.”  
– Tampa owner/director

“I tell my staff, ‘Quality comes in when you’re doing what you love,’ and that goes the same for the kids as well. When kids are doing fun things that they like to do, and that’s why VPK. I said, ‘It’s social and emotional skills that we need to teach them.’ When they’re doing things that they really like hands on, and you are loving what you’re doing, that’s where quality comes in.”  
– Pensacola owner/provider

“As a parent, I will say I am more attracted to a center if it has the word ‘preschool’ in it. If it says ‘daycare’ or ‘child care,’ I am not as drawn to those as I would be a preschool. [If] the word ‘school’ is in it, I’m thinking you’re going to be teaching my kid... because it is early learning.”  
– Lakeland parent

“They teach them stuff here [like] how to do letters. She’s three. She’s starting to do letters in the daycare. I’m very appreciative of them. [My daughter] always says, ‘I want to go to daycare.’ So, if your child is happy to go somewhere, it’s ok.... If they’re scared [to go], that means something is wrong.”  
– Palm Beach parent

“[I want] a home away from home. A family dynamic of someone that you can trust, and you can count on them to be there for you, not just your kid, but just to be there for your family, that they’re there to help you in any way they can.”  
– Lakeland parent



“From the moment you enter [the early care and education center], everyone knows you. It’s something small, united. I like it a lot. The second thing, the classrooms contain all the educational materials and I really care about that. My child is more advanced than the standard, which is why I was so interested in finding a place like this one. I’ve found it. I don’t live nearby. I live in North Miami Beach, but I don’t care how far it is.”

– Miami parent

“Trust was my big thing. Yeah. Look interviewing. And I told my cousin, well, if you felt so strongly, then you should have interviewed them for me because I’m not good. My husband can tell when someone’s not good. I’m like give them a chance.”

– Flagler parent



“It definitely makes a difference, the facility, the quality of the facility. A lot of that comes from the owners and the management putting the right people in the right positions, and not hiring the person that’s going to take the job for the lowest pay to leave the most profit in their pocket. Because it doesn’t matter what they’re paying the instructor, you’re paying the same price every week. It’s how much they’re profiting.”

– Lake County parent

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Parents and teachers also talked about challenges with building strong supportive relationships, pointing to a lack of trust and positive interactions between parents and teachers. Numerous teachers expressed disappointment in the lack of openness and knowledge among parents while several parents expressed concerns with educators whom they don’t feel are adequately looking out for their child.



“They don’t engage us. The parent involvement in the classroom is like zero.”  
– Daytona educator

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“If you [as a parent] got a contract, you should have parent training. If not, you don’t get the contract. If they had some training that they had to commit to, it would make them appreciate that contract a whole lot more. It’s not a community anymore to me. There used to be a time where we would work with child care providers to help parents, and I had a parent don’t even know how to fix her baby’s bottle. I remember a time that we used to work together. It’s just all different agencies now, and I just feel like if we could support each other a little bit more, it’d be great.”

– Pensacola owner/director

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“When you bring up something [with a parent], it’s an instant ‘You are teaching wrong. You’re not watching my kid. You’re doing something wrong.’ They need to know that we are not the enemy and it’s not a personal attack. We are here to help you and take care of your baby.”

– Bay County educator

“I can point you to meetings that I’ve had with professionals in the school system where I voice a concern and it gets shut down. That’s why we home schooled [some] of our children.”

– Mariana parent

“You don’t have enough educators that are passionate about kids, period.”

– Jacksonville parent

“I don’t think parents have a clear understanding, even as a child care provider and a teacher, that what you do for their children is what’s going to help them develop.... They think of us as the babysitter here. They don’t see when we’re spending time with their child on the floor, at the table, that we are building a relationship with your child. We are stepping in where you’re not. I’m going to say that clearly, ‘Where you’re not!’ Because there’s parents that don’t participate or throw them in the car seat, drive them home, feed them, give them a tablet, and put them in bed, [and then] send them back to school [the next morning].”

– Pensacola educator



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Parents of children with disabilities spoke about having to be more proactive to ensure their children get what they need.

“Her teacher always sent her home on red. Never any explanation. Nothing. I had to set up meetings to figure out why. Then I brought up possible autism and stuff. They’re like, ‘No. I don’t think so.’ Then [the psychologist] proceeds to tell me, ‘Well, we can’t really diagnose her yet. It looks like she’s just a baby.’ I’m like, ‘That’s not the case.’ Then they wanted to keep her behind in pre-K, [but] she got moved up to kindergarten not knowing anything. She had one year in kindergarten with [a teacher whom] I love. She was really good with her. She helped me push to get [an assessment] and nothing was getting done through the school. My mom was actually the one to take her back and forth to Tallahassee so we could get [a diagnosis].”

– Mariana parent



# Proposed Changes



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Parents, educators, owners, and directors identified a variety of services and supports that could improve early learning outcomes and quality of life for families.

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## Parent Connections to Resources

Parents talked about needing more information and connections to resources, access to mental health services, more multi-lingual support, extended hours of public spaces like the library to accommodate varied schedules, and more flexible workplaces. Parents appreciated the opportunity to participate in the listening sessions, talk with other parents, to share their experiences, and learn from one another.

**“[We need] better education on health issues with children.”**  
– Daytona parent

**“Transportation, but I think it would be a really good idea if they can start getting buses, maybe get some government funded buses, maybe the old school buses that the school district does not use any more. Maybe donate some of those to the daycare for the ones that can’t afford to get a bus, that way they can help the parents out by doing pick-ups in the morning. And then drop off in the evening.”**  
– Palm Beach parent





“In my dream world, I would know about more things and more things to look for myself in my kid or know where to go if I needed resources.”

– Mariana parent

“I think that we need [is] more access to resources in rural communities. I live in a rural area, and it might be cheaper, but there’s no resources.”

– Alachua parent

“There should be more resources for the fathers, so they feel like they’re just as important. I know that... a strong male presence makes a humongous difference.”

– Lakeland parent

“Nobody’s telling me what to do. That’s what I’m finding difficult. So that’s the good experience and not so good, because I really feel that the teachers should give me feedback.”

– Flagler parent

“I’m surprised about the lack of support for people who don’t have strong English. There are no resources.... The work that is being given to bilingual people does not meet their standards. I know the teacher salaries are terrible. There aren’t enough prepared personnel to do this job.”

– Jacksonville parent

“The fear many people have when it comes to asking for help when, for example they need it for: legal purposes, economic purposes, health purposes, etc. There are many of us that don’t know that we can get what we need. We don’t know that they exist because there isn’t someone who can help with this.”

– Miami parent

“The daycares tend to have a lot of conditions in order to receive the kids. I think they’re too standardized and I think each person is different. Something they ask for English as a requirement and for a Latino parent, it’s difficult. They lack psychological and emotional support.”

– Jacksonville parent

## Is there anything on your mind after today's conversation that you didn't have time to share?

96 parents submitted a response to this open ended survey question. Most expressed their deep appreciation and gratitude for the opportunity to gather and share with each other. They enjoyed the event and found it to be extraordinarily helpful. Other parents offered suggestions or acknowledged needs such as:

- **Lack of mental health access in their community**
- **Early care and education services for disabled or part-time workers**
- **Expanded access to early care and education to address waiting lists**
- **Additional funding to attract quality**

Many educators agreed that parents would benefit from parenting classes and other supports, especially new parents.

“I would love for them to take the money that they pay for all of these extra people to come and do all these things at our center and give it to parents who would benefit from parenting classes. And so, we are going to pay additional money because your child.... Anything to help the family, because ultimately, they are the first educator. If they are busy trying to get food on the table and keep a roof over their heads, they are not going to do what they are called to do – and that's to be a parent first.”  
– Pensacola owner/director



“The parents need parenting classes where they need to understand this is where kids need to be. Not only parenting but also nutrition. What are these kids eating? We have a lot of dyes. We have a lot of foods that weren't given to these kids back then. Now we're starting to see a lot of autism, a lot of ADHD which is coming from our food. So, parents need nutrition classes, also parenting classes.”  
– Immokalee educator

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Parents discussed their challenges and the value in having a “support group” available to them on a regular basis.

“A group like this once a week for all the parents that feel depressed or stressed – somewhere to go. Some things you are going through you don’t have to tell your mom or your man. Yeah, a support group.”  
– Palm Beach parent

“My vision is to have monthly or biweekly family events where parents and kids are getting together. It could be after work [at] six o’clock for an hour, hour and a half [while] the children are out playing.”  
– Lakeland parent



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“Not all workplaces are flexible with time and the time we can spend with our kids. Many places look at results but even then, they don’t give you time to spend at home. Being a father and working isn’t easy. The more money you make, the bigger the sacrifice you’re expected to make at work.”  
– Gainesville parent

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“Prioritizing these mental health discussions, which I think the world is starting to get to a better place with. But there are still so many people that just push it down like, ‘Oh. Seeing a therapist, that’s a bad thing. That’s something wrong with me.’”  
– Mariana parent



“And I think that there is such a culture shift needed around what it means to be a family where divorce has happened and then how there should really be things in place so that kids don’t have to suffer through it. And so that families can still be families without you having to be in a relationship. You can always still support your kids. And that’s also, interestingly enough, something that has not been brought up in other listening sessions... that I’ve been a part of. But really thinking about supports that families can have as they’re going through divorce and getting this awareness of how families can work through, which is always hard, but always keeping the kids as the most important thing and protecting them and providing them with a sense of family even though mom and dad are not together anymore.”

– Key West parent

Parents also articulated the demand for fully funded expanded access to high-quality early care and education for all families.

“Why does the state of Florida not provide daycare while looking for jobs? Why can we not go to the job and get something from the manager, or the GM saying, ‘Oh, they were here for an hour?’ In New York, they do that. They pay for child care, for, I think it's like 15 weeks.”

– Tampa parent

“Ideally, I would like to see the state fund an early education program for all children, because I don’t feel like just because mom and dad can’t afford the high-end daycare, that kids have to go to... worse daycares.”

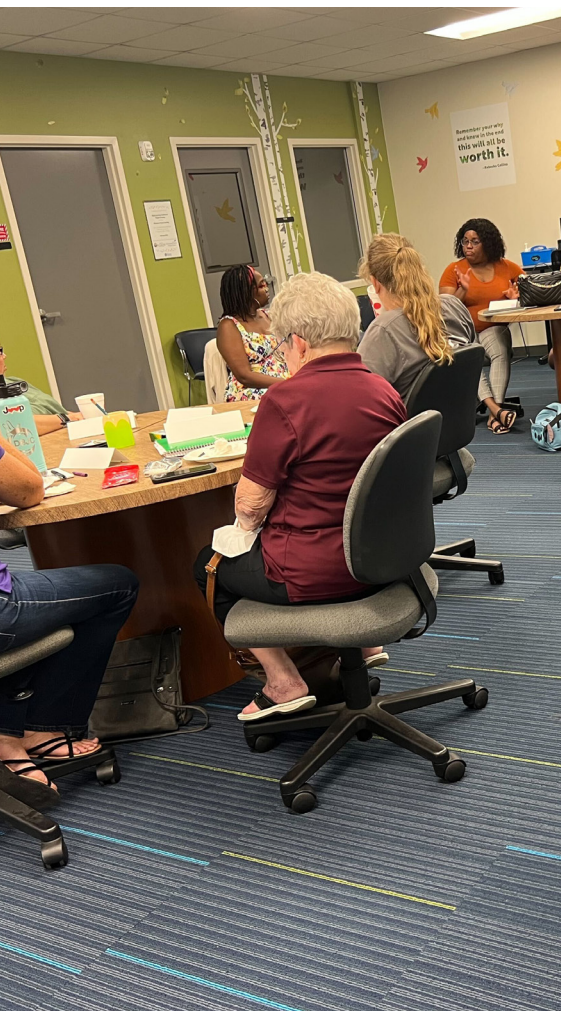
– Lake County parent





## Treating Teachers as Professionals

Educators and owner/directors identified several key changes they believe would improve the field. A major theme revolved around treating teachers like professionals. This included providing better compensation for teachers, giving greater respect for their work, lowering teacher to child ratios, and providing more teacher training, parent involvement, and responsive curricula.



**“I’m not treated like an educator or paid like an educator. So why am I even under the DOE? It’s pointless. We should be paid by the state. We should get benefits – all from the state. We should be considered teachers. I should be able to walk into Target and buy my little supplies on sale [like the other teachers can].”**

**– Pensacola educator**

**“Obviously, we don’t get paid enough... 45 hours, is that honestly enough? No, it’s not. People that are going into education need more. They need more than just 45 hours. I don’t know what type of more, but we can figure that out. [And then, we need] more people. The ratio needs to change. 1 to 13, 1 to 15, that’s not logical.”**

**– Daytona educator**

**“She knows every child by name. She knows all the parents. She’s a blessing. And like you said, it was a time where I couldn’t afford daycare either. My job – previously before I had her – had let me go. But I needed her to go back to daycare, start daycare, so I can go to work.”**

**– Tallahassee Parent**

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“For the state, you just have to have a pulse and not have killed anybody. Seriously, then they’ll put you in a classroom. But that’s for the younger group. When you get to kindergarten where it really matters – according to the rest of the world – then you have to have all of these credentials and the degrees and the whole nine. But, if we know that birth through age five is most important [developmentally], why is it that it’s the least amount of energy and effort put into this? I don’t understand that part.”

– Tallahassee owner/director



“Even if you are a VPK teacher in the school system, you are legally not considered a teacher in the state of Florida.”

– Lakeland educator

“The pay needs changes but also the foundation needs to go back to what it originally was intended for, which was focusing on the children. Letting the children’s best interests as our prime motivator, prime goal. Letting kids be kids, letting them play, letting them explore, and the rest will follow. We need to go back to allowing kids to be kids and just learn the way that they’re intended to – through their environment, through exploration, through discoveries – not focused on academics.”

– Daytona educator

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“[We have] got to solve this pay equity issue. Regardless of what else we do, as they have done with nursing, as they have done with some other segments of the industry, we have got to find a way to resolve this pay issue.”

– Tampa owner/director

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Educators and owners/directors considered resources and professional development opportunities that would improve teacher effectiveness, increase the quality of their early learning program, and create a more supportive work environment.

“[I would like more] professional development... being an example, being responsible, thinking about the health and safety of the kids, putting the kids first, and then continuing your education.”  
– Pinellas educator

“We should have a big ad campaign about how greater our field is. I would like to see that we are a profession and I’d like for people to know how great we are. And I think that needs to be advertised.”  
– Tampa owner/director



“I would like to see more observations that are more supportive and less intrusive, so my teachers are not feeling like they’re getting judged or we’re not getting judged as a school, but [are] being supported instead.”  
– Pensacola owner/director

“Bridging that, more of the academics part of it.... Just, partnering up with the early learning setting as well as K-12.... Basically, just coming together. Not just doing early learning, then K-12 [separately].”  
– Pinellas educator

“I would also like to work alongside someone to examine the mental health aspect of child care and efforts to decrease the workload for the teachers to maintain their sanity as they go through this profession. So, finding a way to restructure the schedule to give them a mental health break.”  
– Tallahassee owner/director



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Educators want to be understood. They want policy makers to understand the challenges, as well as the gratification they experience in the early care and education sector. They want the policies, rules, and regulations to reflect reality and to lead to real improvements in the sector.



“I would give anything for those people that are sitting and making these rules and these guidelines and regulations to just work in an infant room or toddler room, not just for five minutes, but you get a week with the infants and a week with the toddlers, all the way. Then you come back to the table, and you tell me those guidelines, those rules, those regulations, whatever you done put together, you tell me then, do you have time to do all of this?”

– Educator



“I would like to see policies and procedures that are implemented for early childhood being realistic, not something that somebody sat in an office and thought, ‘You know, the best-case scenario, I think this is how we should admit it.’ Obviously, you have never been in a pre-K classroom. Otherwise, you would know what you’re wanting us to do, and what is realistically going to happen are night and day.”

– Pensacola owner/director

“I would tell them [my Legislators] to come spend a day with me. Take your suit and tie off, take them car bottoms off, and come spend a day with me at [my center]. Let me see you change diapers and keep the other kids [under] control. We need more money.... And I think that there should be a program for all parents who receive School Readiness funding, because they need to be properly educated.”

– Daytona educator



# Appendix A: Let's Talk Listening Sessions Facilitator's Guide

## Questions for Parents

### By a show of hands:

- Is your child attending/have they attended an early learning center?
- Is your child in the care of a friend or family member?
- Is your child attending a certified home child care center?

### TOPIC 1: FAMILY SUPPORT

#### 1. What do you enjoy most (brings you the most joy) about your current or previous early learning experience?

##### Supportive questions:

1. Can you describe a time when you counseled a friend or family member about finding care for your child?
2. Why did you choose the early learning experience that you did?

### TOPIC 2: EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCES

#### 2. What resources or services would be most helpful to you as a parent of a young child?

##### Supportive questions:

1. Tell us a time when you felt supported.
2. Can you describe a time when you counseled a friend or family member about finding care for your child?
3. What do you need in the realm of early learning? (e.g., they may need brain development information and not just child care)

### TOPIC 3: DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS

#### 3. What dreams do you have for yourselves and what is standing in your way of achieving your dreams?

##### Supportive questions:

1. What are your family's biggest barriers to economic independence?
2. If you had no financial concerns, what would your children's education and work policies (e.g., family leave) look like and how can we be supportive as a state and a system?
3. What are your concerns for your child to be successful?

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## Questions for Educators

### TOPIC 1: SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT STATE OF CHILD CARE

1. Are you happy with the state of child care centers? What would you like to see changed?

### TOPIC 2: EDUCATOR PREPARATION

2. If you were able to transform the required education for an educator in Florida (e.g., 45-hours and your pre-service training, professional development, community college, Bachelors, Masters, etc.), what would you put in that wasn't there and in what sequence?

### TOPIC 3: PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

3. How can we be more connected with families, to work like a team (e.g., mental health and diversity and social emotional health of children)?

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## Questions for Center Owners and Directors

### TOPIC 1: STAFFING

1. What's going on with your staff? (Open question to let them raise whatever issues)

### TOPIC 2: QUALITY

2. How do you define "quality," a word the state has used so much in recent years?

### TOPIC 3: NEEDED SUPPORTS

3. What supports would be helpful to you right now?

# Appendix B: Parent Survey Open-Ended Question Responses

## Is there anything on your mind after today's conversation that you didn't have time to share? Tell us here:

Good information

This was very nice.

no great talk

These sessions need to be repeated

I loved it!

What a beautiful event

No. I enjoyed the conversations. A lot of things addressed, a lot of goals shared, a lot of connections made.

Thank you!! :)

Thank you!

This was great

More meetings :)

None. Thank you so much for this experience.

It is and was a lovely experience. Thank you so much!

No - great & thoughtful conversation

No, this was great!

I am very happy to have participated! Thank you so much!

Everything was wonderful and informative.

Thank you all for noticing that these conversations are essential for growth as a whole.

What a beautiful event.

A lot of great topics discussed and brought up. Love what's being done.

It really pleases me that there are people and organizations who are interested in the community

Everything was brilliant!

Happy to have this opportunity

No, great conversation topics!

Food was awesome

amazing conversations, great time

Just to say thank you for the support

Thank you for listening to me!

I really enjoyed the conversation. I didn't know about the "every parent" app and that was helpful.

Hope Rural School VPK was very good

Not sure what to expect which service I am allowed.

I will do everything she said

No, we covered various topics and adversity of early child care.

Yes, seeking for more ways to participate in groups like this.

I really enjoyed the conversation. I didn't know about the "every parent"

I loved being able to talk about what I've needed to say for such a long time. I hope there will be more workshops to give us more valuable information.

I would like to know more about this organization

I loved the conversation that I could relate to. Looking forward to more family events in Polk County.

No, I think the biggest issue is funding and assistance

Affordable child care

affordable child care

I wish that we could ask for a hospital. Recently I got into a car accident, and it was a total loss. I had to travel to Fr. Myers frequently and my daughter who stopped walking I had to take her to Naples frequently and I spent much of my money. I worry because there is no emergency hospital in Immokalee. Especially when the children's temperatures would rise.

Lack of education we have of the resources available to us as a community

More benefits for families who make above the requirements

Lack of healthy communities in or around area. Mental health access

I would like if they put something for those with disabilities or part time work

It's good to know the history each mother or experience that their children have had. Thank you for coming to visit Indiantown.

Yes, seeking for more ways to participate in groups like this.

I would like some kind of help for education and entertainment for my son. For now, I have him in a day care that is very costly, and it is hard to afford.

Better opportunities for employment and some day to have my own house for my family. I dream of learning English.

No. I enjoyed the conversation. A lot of things addressed, a lot of goals shared, a lot of connections made.

Better access to assistance programs -Programs of free installation from home - Study programs

I would like to find extracurricular for disabled kids.

I would have liked to help with counseling adolescents

Response removed due to a sensitive personal matter

Scared to be what I had in my infancy (As a mother) Be the mother that I needed and have stability.

Lack of trust for centers. I keep my grandchildren home.

There is a program called "Navigators" that helps get health insurance.

Yes, it is very difficult to buy a home. They ask for too much money for a down payment and the homes are very expensive.

I feel very happy for sharing so much with other Hispanic mothers

The idea of celebrating families - needed programs for education and information, for pre-natal and post-partum self-care. A good future truly depends on early education.

I share the same feelings as the other mothers. We are undocumented and afraid to ask for help in general. My dream, like all of us - Migrant status and being able to hug my mom. I want to master my English and have [that] not be an obstacle and to have my own business.

I think the experience is unique and very sincere/ Between mothers who are the same - in fact, knowing how many of us have the same or worse problems than I do and yet they have the strength to keep moving forward.

I would love it if at some point they could give some kind of driver's license for undocumented persons

Information about English courses

I am grateful for the programs and the support I've had, the education and the patience that has been dedicated to me and my little girl. I would like more activities for children, swimming, reading, physical activities, at least once a month.

I would love to learn how to develop better learning for developing better handling of manual tasks, for example, learning how to make flowers.

After 10 years of being a caregiver, a parent to a newborn, and a full-time employee, I am now expanding my family to include being a foster parent to my 4-year-old granddaughter. Now a parent with 2 4-year-olds. Lord this has been so helpful.

Parents that are trying to do better deserve more help and less penalization from the programs.

To have English classes

Yes. That they give us the opportunity for means for single mothers like a permission to work so that we can have a salary that will live affordably and to be able to legalize ourselves in this country and to be able to be legal upon marriage

It would be very important to inform

Needs: better state assist for parents; If we are expecting more education etc. from teachers, pay them their worth. FL is a low payer especially county/gov. employees. Middle class/married dual income should still be able to qualify for help COL is high so should the help adjust.

We parents needs to educate ourselves so that we can educate our children.

Just more programs for children like swimming, ballet, football.

I am so ready to make sure my child gets everything they need from the early childhood system

That the Children's Movement will also be more open to the Hispanics in Jacksonville

My dream is to see my Hispanic community trained. To help their children have dreams and aspirations

I am a mother who conducts homeschool, but I would like to socialize more with other mothers with the same level importance they place on children and have to have an outlet to give my children more tools and to support them in their dreams.

Groups for mothers, Groups for information, Language therapy



I believe child care facilities should teach all kids the same no matter what area or cost the facility is. All kids should receive the same, whether that is material, a different language, etc.

I believe child care facilities should teach all kids the same no matter what area or cost the facility is. All kids should receive the same, whether that is material, a different language, etc.

Child care centers need additional funding to attract more qualified teachers.

Child care facilities (specifically ones that are gov't funded) are growing and expanding however they are still scarce. Many facilities have waitlist that don't allow the parents timely child care.

I can summarize by saying that society is not set up for the average working parent to be successful.

That Immokalee be given more allies that can make Collier, Naples and that they offer more help and more means

Pushing awareness of programs & educational resources is key to helping children. More support and education from parents is needed.

Child care facilities (specifically ones that are government funded) are growing & expanding however they are still scarce. Many facilities have waitlists that don't allow the parents timely child care.

How can I help with emotional learning for children and families

More programs for help w/ families, also needs to be easily accessible, experience and education req. for daycare, pay them more for it, a child care PTO for parents

Ability to send my kids to a more diverse educational center

Working more closely with my wife on taking better care of our children

Better consistent education/learning outline for 0–5-year-olds. Along w/ assistance for the middle class dual working household.

# Appendix C: Educator Survey Open-Ended Question Responses

## Is there anything you would like us to know about your role as an early childhood educator?

As a young educator I am ready to hear and learn everything there is to learn about the field.

As an educator, I truly believe that teaching the children help our community what they learn will either change the community or it will not. I pray that it will change our family and make things better.

Even though at times it can be stressful I enjoy and love walking into my classroom and seeing the progress my children are making.

Every child is different, and we have to treat each child as such

How important it is to me to see/make a child smile each day. Children are just so innocent.

I am a Master Teacher who goes into Pre-K classrooms every 25 days. I work with many wonderful educators who are dedicated to the children. I love what I do!!

I am in this profession because I truly look forward to educating the youth of the future.

I am new to the profession but am very interested in furthering my career in child care.

I believe that every child is special. I believe that we should be promoting early childhood more. I do love my job

I enjoy being around children and seeing them learn and develop new skills.

I enjoy my role as an early childhood educator, and I would like to have more support to get a better level as an educator. I enjoy what I do

I enjoy what I do, I don't look at working with young children as a job. But it's fun and exciting.

I love all kids, of all kids and colors. Would love less training classes, because I believe they're the same classes just reworded, and change the names of the classes.

I love it! I love seeing my infants accomplish many first huge milestones in their life!

I love this field so much and wish we were seen and valued.

This was a great opportunity for fellow educators to get together. I have never done anything like this. It needs to happen more!! :)

I love what I have done for 25 yrs. just want more support.

I love working with child. That is my passion

I love working with children and engaging with co-teachers. Sharing my experiences with the hopes bettering their experiences and abilities.

I love working with children that is my passion

I truly love working, growing, and learning more about early childhood education.

Love what I do!

Love what I do!

No, I just enjoy and love what I do!

I'm very happy

I enjoy what I do, and we are more than just watching the children. We do teach them new things daily even. As a childhood educator, I enjoy teaching and interacting with each child in my classroom.

As a childhood educator, I enjoy teaching and interacting with each child in my classroom.

Working with children is my passion. I love teaching & being part of their educational growth & development. This is my passion

We are here because we love what we do.

I love what I do.

I love working with children and educating community. Educating our youth is very important because they are our future. Poverty is not the future of our children and education is the way out, so no child is left behind.

I'm really proud of my work, although I have more to learn as a receptionist, I'm glad of the experience I'm gaining. I have to aspire to inspire before I expire! Keep hope alive!

I have to Aspire to Inspire before I EXPIRE! KEEP HOPE ALIVE!

I would like you to know that our teachers and staff are always looking for ways to provide the best quality care for our students. We ensure that our students get exposed to many experiences here at school such as art and music etc.

I'm a home visitor

I'm the owner/director and I play a very hands-on role at my center

My current role is to provide training for early childhood professionals

My role is a (unreadable) operator. I just opened a home day care resources are needed.

I work with moms that stay home with their child

I work with low-income families

More money for the child care centers

I would like more resources

Need more teachers and lower ratios

Promoting growth and will further my education in the near future to get back in college to get my degree in early childhood education

We are losing sight of the reason we are early childhood educators- the children! Focus more on the basics and what will have a direct benefit for the children.

New better training for new employees (in person). All agencies being on the same page.

I would like for you to know that our children need more one-one with parent teachers

I have and am continuing to keep up with the requirements needed to operate my facility as quality one. To maintain staff and give my students skills to be school ready.

I am a director/owner and I really feel the need to have better trained staff. Also, the requirement that is expected now of early educators need to support the pay that is provided

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While I love the children and families I serve, I am often overlooked as an educator in the state of Florida. I am not valued by the state.

I have been involved in taking care of those younger than me for ten years even though I'm the youngest in my immediate family. My background prepared me, but so does my environment I'm in and the effort I put in to grow!

While I love the children, I don't always love my job. I often feel over worked and underpaid. I would like to see more support on social and emotional learning. And more resources for evaluating and assessing students.

Teaching kids how to write in VPK is crazy, I love my job. It's tough to call it a job, but the early educators are under appreciated, under-valued, and passed over when it comes to the needs of our facilities.

We are important. We deserve more. We should be acknowledged and recognized for the role that we play

Encouraging and teaching parents' involvement of being their child's first teacher and advocating for their child and their development

I will like for us to receive health benefits and better pay

I play an important role in your children's lives as a "teacher" child care specialist.

Please do not forget the educators and the day-to-day struggles of dealing with parents, children, and the state requirements for education

Being a male in early childhood is different. For example, they would put 2 females in a class but not 2 males due to stereotyping. Infant-toddler teachers are not paid the same as VPK teachers as they are not mandated the same types of training.

I'm devoted and determined that no child is left behind

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It is very stressful, and some days do not seem worth the job. It is not all about the \$\$, but it would help be able to pay bills to take care of my children just like my parents @ my center.

We give so much love and dedication.



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