

Legislative Session 2025

This is Week Four of **Legislative** Session 2025

*This email contains a roundup of early childhood policy advancing through the Florida House and Senate during Florida's 127th Regular **Legislative** Session.*

Breaking Down the Bills: A Look at HB 591/SB 112: Children with Developmental Disabilities

This year, two similar bills in the House and Senate recognize that prioritizing early intervention leads to better outcomes for children with autism and other developmental disabilities. House Bill 591 by the Student Academic Success Subcommittee and Rep. Randy Maggard (R-Dade City) and Senate Bill 112 by Sen. Gayle Harrell (R-Stuart) would create a new Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment at the University of Florida. The Center would be responsible for collaborating with state agencies and other organizations on best practices, training, awareness, and resources on autism care and education; promoting early screening and intervention; and developing professional learning for health care, child welfare, and educational professionals. Most important for the youngest Floridians, the bill also creates the Early Steps Extended Option for 3-year olds with autism to remain in the Early Steps Program until kindergarten. Families who choose to stay must qualify for IDEA Part B support, and they cannot re-enter the program if they leave. Those who opt in will then be transitioned into school-age education through their local school district via a conference outlining their support plan. SB 112 already passed off the floor of the Senate and was sent to the House in messages, where it was picked up by the Student Academic Success Committee.

[You can learn more about Florida's **Legislative Session and our priorities on our webpage.](#)**

Bill Tracker

During **legislative** session we will update you on bills related to early childhood, courtesy of the [Florida Alliance of Children's Councils & Trusts](#).

Below is a selection of bills we are following. On the left, you will find the bill number (hyperlinked to the bill text) and the sponsor for each. On the right, the series of numbers represents the committees of reference for each bill and voting history. Below each, you'll find a brief description of the proposed legislation.



Voted Favorably by Committee



Temporarily Postponed in Committee



Did Not Pass Committee Vote



Referred to Committee But Not Yet Heard



Bill Has Not Yet Been Referred to Committees

Healthy Development

[HB 1089 - Newborn Screenings](#)

Rep. Booth



[SB 0524 - Newborn Screenings](#)

Sen. Harrell



These **identical bills** require that the Department of Health's rules require that newborns be screened for Duchenne muscular dystrophy at the appropriate age.

[HB 0591 - Children with Developmental Disabilities](#)

Rep. Maggard



[SB 0112 - Children with Developmental Disabilities](#)

Sen. Harrell



These **similar bills** revise the scope of the Dr. and Mrs. Alfonse and Kathleen Cinotti Health Care Screening and Services Grant Program to allow grant funds to be used for screenings, referrals for treatment, and related services for autism; revise requirements for the annual grant application submitted by the Department of Health for the Early Steps Program to conform to changes made by the act; provide a purpose for the Early Steps Extended Option; authorize the department to implement the Early Steps Extended Option regardless of certain federal funding; require the University of Florida Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment to fund specialized summer programs for children with autism spectrum disorder.

Early Learning

[HB 0047 - Child Care and Early Learning Providers](#)

Rep. McFarland

1

2

3

[SB 0738 - Child Care and Early Learning Providers](#)

Sen. Burton

1

2

3

These **similar bills** revise licensing standards for licensed child care facilities & minimum standards & training requirements for child care personnel; require DCF to conduct specified screenings of child care personnel & issue provisional approval of such personnel under certain conditions; revise minimum standards for sanitation & safety of child care facilities; remove provisions relating to educating parents & children about specified topics; remove provisions relating to specialized child care facilities for care of mildly ill children; expand types of providers to be considered when developing & implementing plan to eliminate duplicative & unnecessary inspections; revise requirements for abbreviated inspection plan for certain child care facilities; provide that certain child care facilities are exempt from specified requirements; authorize certain exempt child care facilities to submit application for licensure to department or local licensing agency; requires department & local licensing agency to adopt rules.

[HB 0061 - Use of Campaign Funds for Child Care Expenses](#)

Rep. Skidmore

1

2

[SB 0072 - Use of Campaign Funds for Child Care Expenses](#)

Sen. Berman

1

2

3

These **similar bills** authorize candidates to use funds on deposit in his or her campaign account to pay for child care expenses under specified conditions; require candidates to maintain specified records for specified timeframe; and require candidates to disclose certain child care expenses in campaign finance reports.

[HB 0191 - Instructional Hours for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program](#)

Rep. Edmonds

1

2

3

[SB 0070 - Instructional Hours for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program](#)

Sen. Berman

1

2

3

These **identical bills** revise the instructional hours required to be delivered in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program for school-year and summer programs.

[HB 0531 - Child Care Facility and Program Background Screening Requirements](#)

Rep. Hunschofsky

1

2

3

4

[SB 0614 - Child Care Facility and Program Background Screening Requirements](#)

Sen. Polsky

1

2

3

These **similar bills** define "recreational enrichment program"; provide such programs are not required to obtain license from DCF; revise remedies DCF may pursue for failure to comply with screening requirements; revise penalty provisions; require DCF, in conjunction with AHCA & FDLE, to develop & maintain statewide background screening public awareness campaign.

[HB 0859 - School Readiness Program](#)

Rep. Tramont

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2

3