



EARLY LEARNING

COALITION OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

February 2021



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Who We Are —	3
Why Early Learning Matters —	4
Our County —	5
Local Data in Real Life —	10
COVID-19 Impacts —	11
Who We Serve —	12
Impact of Local Funding —	18
The Early Childhood Community —	19
Early Learning Disparities in Hillsborough County —	22
Our Recommendations —	30
Attachments —	33
References —	37

WHO WE ARE

THE EARLY LEARNING COALITION OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY...

is a 501-C3 organization that specializes in the funding and delivery of quality early child care, education, after-school programs and services to the children and families of Hillsborough County. We believe all children should have a quality early learning experience, which is essential in building a successful future. The mission of the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County (ELCHC) is to provide children, birth to 5 years, high quality, equitable and inclusive early learning experiences preparing them for success in school and life through the collaboration of families, educators and the community. Our vision is that all Hillsborough County children will grow up in a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment where their physical, social, emotional and intellectual health is a primary focus of attention at home and in the community; their families are supported in ways that promote good parenting; and their families and caregivers are supported in promoting each individual child's well-being and readiness to succeed in school and life.

PURPOSE

The ELCHC will use the community needs assessment to determine local priorities related to eligibility for the School Readiness Program, which is a program that offers subsidized child care to working families for children birth to 13 years old. The community needs assessment will also be used to determine the optional need for contracted slots for child care in high-poverty areas and waivers to child care providers. Specifically, the team will use the community needs assessment to:

- Assess the demographic make-up of children/families who are eligible for subsidized childcare, as well as unique populations within the county
- Review data regarding the education and social service needs of eligible children and their families
- Review data regarding the education and social service needs of children with disabilities and special needs
- Assess resources in the county that could be used to address the needs of children and their families including assessment of their access to these resources
- Determine the use of contracted slots for eligible children and families within the county
- Provide recommendations for prioritizing school readiness eligibility
- Provide data to develop criteria for waivers to child care providers whose composite score fall below the contract minimum, but who provide care to children in high-needs areas.
- Assess the need for enhanced quality child care infrastructure in high-needs areas
- Assess county demographics as related to kindergarten readiness

In May 2018, a team of community agencies was formed to discuss the local resources needed to compile the prior community needs report. Those agencies are as follows: Bay Area Legal Services, Champions for Children, Children's Board of Hillsborough County, Early Childhood Council, ELCHC, Healthy Start Coalition Hillsborough, Hillsborough Community College, Hillsborough County Head Start/Early Head Start and Hillsborough County Public Schools. This report is an update of the 2018 assessment of available data within the community. Data resources used in this report have been updated as more current data has been made available.

WHY EARLY LEARNING MATTERS

Why does early learning matter, and how does it affect our community?

We know from national studies and research that high-quality early education experiences can profoundly increase a child's development and trajectory in life. Children from disadvantaged families are less likely to have access to high quality early education programs. This limited access directly impacts future education and career success. A positive experience in the first 5 years can help reduce the opportunity gaps that many children of disadvantaged families encounter. High-quality early education is not just increasing the rate at which children experience school success, it is also a major return on investment for society. James J. Heckman, Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago, conducted research that determined there is a 13% return on investment on high quality early education for birth to 5-year-olds. Investment in early education continues to be one of the highest-reaping benefits to a community.

In order to reduce or eliminate barriers of access to quality early education programs, systemic changes in the way we utilize resources should occur. Research has validated the call to action regarding utilization of resources, however, we continue to see children from disadvantaged situations attending low quality early education programs, which may adversely impact their opportunities in life. The narrative to our community is clear, we must act to use our resources to increase the quality of child care in Hillsborough County so that all children have the same access to future success.

Source: Heckman: The Economics of Human Potential



OUR COUNTY

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

Hillsborough is growing — a lot.

Hillsborough County is on Florida’s west coast midway down the peninsula and home to 1.4 million people, with 6% of residents under 5 years old. Hillsborough County covers a geographic area larger than Rhode Island and is home to the seventh largest school district in the nation. Hillsborough County is diverse. The largest racial/ethnic groups are White (48%) followed by Hispanic (29.7%), Black/African American (18%), and Asian (4%), according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Approximately 2.9% identify as two or more races. Of the more than 160,000 homes with children, 28% have a single female as head of the household. The gender breakdown shows slightly more females (51.2%) than males (48.8%). Hillsborough County is largely urban and suburban, but also has rural citrus, cattle, and produce farm areas. The county lacks sophisticated public transportation, with local buses being the only option for families without their own vehicle. The population of children ages birth through 12 years old mirrors the general demographics, however, available data reveals that this population group are exposed to risk factors such as poverty, homelessness.

Figure 1: Population Growth of Hillsborough County, Florida

Base: April 1, 2010	Estimates between 10-year Census	
Census	2015	2019
1,229,226	1,350,904	1,471,968

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts 2019 est.

Figure 2: Hillsborough County Cities Population

Location	Population Estimate 2019
Tampa	399,700
Plant City	39,744
Temple Terrace	26,639

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, QuickFacts 2019 est.

Income and Employment

The American Community Survey for 2014-2018 estimates 665,406 people are employed in Hillsborough County. A further breakdown can be seen in Figure 3. Specializations in employment include finance and insurance, agriculture, real estate and administrative and support services. The most common industries in Hillsborough County are healthcare and social assistance (93,014), retail trade (82,167), and professional, scientific, tech services (63,236). The highest paying industries are utilities (\$75,431), management of companies & enterprises (\$61,691), and professional, scientific & tech services (\$57,802). The median household income in Hillsborough County is \$58,480, which is less than the median annual income of \$61,937 in the United States (2018) but more than the Florida state median income (\$55,660). However, Hillsborough County pays the highest average salaries in the state, according to the Tampa Bay Economic Development Council.

Figure 3: Hillsborough County Employment Status

Location	Total
Civilian Labor Force 16 years and older	1,099,131
Employed	665,406
Male	346,152
Female	319,254
Unemployed	43,489

Source: 2018: ACS 5-Year Estimate 2014-2018

Local Workforce

According to research conducted by CareerSource Tampa Bay in its 2020-2024 Local Workforce Services Plan, the Tampa Bay area is seeing a shift in the kinds of industry most in-demand for employees. Growth is occurring for high-skilled industry such as tech and STEM related fields. According to the report, Hillsborough County reached its lowest unemployment rate in more than 20 years at 2.7% in November 2019.

Despite the demand for employees in STEM and tech-related work, the top three industries in 2019 were restaurants and dining, education and hospitals, and local government. However this demand for STEM and tech skills could lead to an increase in workers seeking higher education for those industries.

The Regional Competitiveness Report (RCR) is a document created by the Tampa Bay Partnership Foundation that analyzes the Tampa Bay Region's standing in comparison to other like communities. The 2020 report mirrored similar statistics to the CareerSource Plan.

However, according to the RCR report, the average annual wage in the Tampa Bay area may be closer to \$48,304. In addition, the RCR report breaks down average wage even more. With the service sector being the third largest employment industry — including accommodation and food services as well as administrative services — the average annual wages for employees in this industry is closer to \$27,588. The average annual income of the lowest 20% of household earnings is \$13,124; all are lower than the national averages.

Sources: 2020-2024 Local Workforce Services Plan; Regional Competitiveness Report

Families in Poverty

According to the 2020 Florida Child Well-Being Index for Hillsborough County, 20.1% of children under 18 years old live at or below the federal poverty line. Of these children, 36.9% live in a single parent home and 13.5% of these children live in high poverty areas. Of the 3-year-old and 4-year-old children, 51.6% are not enrolled in school or early education program. Figure 4 shows Hillsborough County's highest poverty ZIP codes, according to the American Community Survey, as well as the number of the estimated populations under 18 years old and the number of school Readiness children served in those counties. Overall, we serve 9,016 children in these ZIP codes; this represents 48% of our overall children served.

Figure 4: Families and Child Data

Zip Codes with highest percentage poverty level	Estimated Population 0-18 years	Percentage of children below poverty level 0-18 years	Number of children receiving School Readiness 0-13 years
33605	4,171	51.62%	440
33610	13,384	44.08%	1,859
33607	4,461	42.23%	484
33603	4,461	40.51%	580
33612	11,906	39.01%	1,622
33613	5,443	35.99%	310
33604	7,753	33.99%	818
33617	10,402	32.49%	1,082
33619	9,345	32.10%	949
33527	3,616	31.66%	68

Source: 2018: ACS 5-Year Estimate 2014-2018, ELCHC June 2020

Living in Hillsborough County

According to DataUSA, the median property value is \$232,500, 1.01 times higher than the national average, but the homeownership rate is 58.1%, which is nearly 5% lower than the national average. The Comprehensive Housing Market Analysis for the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater Area was completed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in March 2018. This study examined in detail different factors related to housing in the Tampa Bay region, called the Housing Market Area (HMA). This study says the overall vacancy rate is 6.8% for the HMA. In the Tampa area, the average highest rent in 2017 was \$1,625 per month, which included the downtown area. The lowest average was \$910 in the University area, but that was a 3% increase for that area since 2016. The overall average rate was \$1,125 per month. These monthly rent averages do not include utilities or concessions.

DataUSA also estimates that the average commute time to work is 26.3 minutes, and that a majority of the workforce commute in a single car alone to work. An estimated 45% of the Hillsborough households own two cars; 28.3% own one car and less than 3% do not own a car, meaning that many people in our community have the added expenses of car payments, insurance, gas and maintenance due to a lack of alternative public transportation options.

Child Care in Hillsborough County

As of Dec. 28, 2020, Hillsborough County had a total of 1,318 child care providers: 756 child care centers and 562 family child care homes. The ELCHC contracts with 868 providers. Attachment A on Page 33 lists ELCHC contracted School Readiness providers by ZIP code and type.

Between July 2019 and June 2020, 39 Class I violations were issued by local child care licensing.

Hillsborough County Child Care Licensing, Dec. 2020

Cost of Child Care in Hillsborough County

The annual average cost of child care in Hillsborough County greatly impacts the type and quality of care received. Each Coalition reports to the Office of Early Learning on local market rate for child care costs within that area. The following four charts offer a look at the **2020 daily market rate** for center-based and family child care homes within Hillsborough County.

Definitions of the charts are as follows:

- Gold Seal — indicates a provider has voluntarily joined a program that designates quality standards higher than required minimum licensing standards
- Mean or Average — the sum of the total rates divided by the total number of rates collected.
- Maximum — the highest rate in the set of rates.
- Minimum — the lowest rate in the set of rates.
- Median — the middle rate in the set of rates.
- Most Frequent — the most frequently occurring rate in the set of rates.
- Percentile is a rate where a certain percentage of rates fall below that rate. For example, the 75th Percentile rate is \$40.75 for an Infant at a Non-Gold Seal Center, that means, it was higher than 75 percent of other rates.

Figure 5: Average Cost of Full Time Child Care for Non Gold Seal Private Centers in Hillsborough County – 2020 (Provider Reported)

Care Level	Market Rate (Private Pay Rates)						School Readiness Reimbursement Rate	
	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Most Frequent	75th Percentile Rate	Average SR Reimbursement Rate	% of 75th Percentile Rate
INF	37.25	28.00	57.20	36.50	35.00	40.75	31.19	76.53%
TOD	33.61	19.80	60.00	33.50	30.00	36.35	26.42	72.68%
2YR	31.00	17.00	54.00	30.00	26.00	33.29	20.19	60.65%
PR3	28.57	17.00	50.00	27.50	27.00	31.00	18.74	60.44%
PR4	26.15	17.00	50.00	25.82	22.00	30.00	19.10	63.65%
PR5	26.82	17.00	50.00	28.00	20.00	30.75	19.08	62.03%
SCH	19.95	10.00	40.00	20.00	16.00	27.00	15.92	58.95%

Figure 6: Average Cost of Full Time Child Care for Non Gold Seal Family Child Care Homes in Hillsborough County – 2020 (Provider Reported)

Care Level	Market Rate (Private Pay Rates)						School Readiness Reimbursement Rate	
	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Most Frequent	75th Percentile Rate	Average SR Reimbursement Rate	% of 75th Percentile Rate
INF	31.62	23.00	55.00	31.00	30.00	33.75	26.51	78.53%
TOD	29.11	21.85	50.00	29.00	30.00	31.50	25.54	81.08%
2YR	27.46	19.80	45.00	27.00	26.00	29.75	20.22	67.95%
PR3	26.45	18.60	40.00	26.00	26.00	28.75	19.03	66.19%
PR4	25.84	18.00	40.00	26.00	26.00	28.00	19.32	68.98%
PR5	25.06	16.00	40.00	25.00	20.00	27.00	19.20	71.11%
SCH	22.41	13.00	56.00	21.50	24.00	25.00	16.77	67.08%

Figure 7: Average Cost of Full Time Child Care for Gold Seal Private Centers in Hillsborough County – 2020 (Provider Reported)

Care Level	Market Rate (Private Pay Rates)						School Readiness Reimbursement Rate	
	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Most Frequent	75th Percentile Rate	Average SR Reimbursement Rate	% of 75th Percentile Rate
INF	47.34	35.00	60.00	48.60	44.00	52.00	36.69	70.56%
TOD	41.24	30.00	58.24	40.80	33.00	46.00	31.42	68.30%
2YR	37.91	23.76	56.80	36.00	27.00	43.88	24.15	55.04%
PR3	35.07	22.08	52.00	35.00	25.00	40.00	22.45	56.13%
PR4	34.38	22.00	52.00	34.00	25.00	40.00	22.91	57.28%
PR5	33.92	22.00	52.00	32.00	25.00	39.69	22.93	57.77%
SCH	28.57	13.00	43.00	29.00	20.00	33.00	19.43	58.88%

Figure 8: Average Cost of Full Time Child Care for Gold Seal Family Child Care Homes in Hillsborough County – 2020 (Provider Reported)

Care Level	Market Rate (Private Pay Rates)						School Readiness Reimbursement Rate	
	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Most Frequent	75th Percentile Rate	Average SR Reimbursement Rate	% of 75th Percentile Rate
INF	35.45	26.00	44.00	33.56	35.00	39.25	32.64	83.16%
TOD	32.65	22.00	39.00	33.00	32.00	35.25	30.79	87.35%
2YR	30.42	20.00	39.00	30.00	30.00	33.50	25.17	75.12%
PR3	29.40	18.00	39.00	29.00	29.00	33.00	23.25	70.45%
PR4	28.34	17.00	39.00	28.50	29.00	31.50	23.13	73.41%
PR5	27.45	17.00	39.00	27.50	28.00	31.00	24.16	77.92%
SCH	23.53	12.40	33.00	22.50	24.00	25.00	20.57	82.26%

Source: ELCHC, June 2020



LOCAL DATA IN REAL LIFE

What do all these numbers really feel like for Hillsborough County families?

Median household income — **\$ 58,480**

39% households earn an income at or less than — **\$ 45,000**

Average annual cost of rent without utilities — **\$ 13,500**

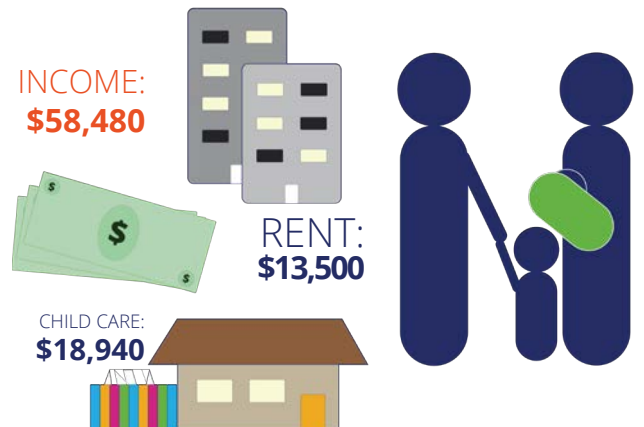
Working days in 2020 (excluding weekends) — **262**

Percentage of households with at least one car — **74%**

Minimum wage — **\$ 8.46**



A single parent of two children making \$12.50 per hour and working full time would make \$22,737 after taxes. If the children were 2 and 4 years old, and the minimum daily rate of care was chosen at a non-Gold Seal center, the parent would pay \$8,908 annually, and rent would cost \$10,920 annually (if rent was \$910) — leaving less than \$3,000 to distribute amongst utilities, food, transportation, taxes and other expenses for a household of three.



A two working-parent household making the median income of \$58,480 with children aged 2 and 4 years old, paying the average cost for child care at a Gold Seal center would spend around \$18,940 annually on child care. If they paid the average in rent, they would spend \$13,500 in rent annually, without utilities. That would leave less than \$27,000 to distribute amongst utilities, food, transportation, taxes and other expenses for a household of five.

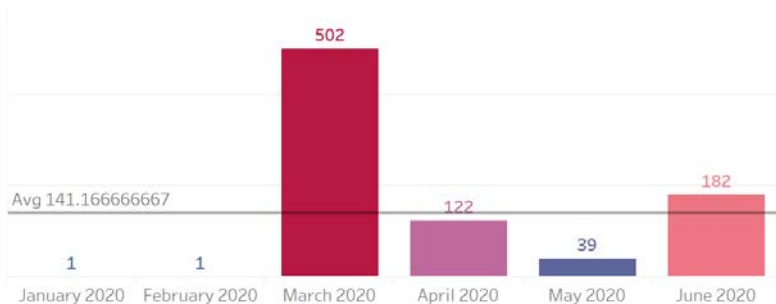
It is clear that for many individuals living in Hillsborough County, the cost of living is financially unsustainable, considering the average employment opportunities and household demographics presented.

COVID-19 IMPACTS

Spring 2020 was an unprecedented time at every level of life due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Because of both local and state declarations of emergency, the ELCHC closed its physical locations to the public on March 18, 2020, through the end of the 2019-2020 fiscal year. However, with the adaptation of IT services and programs, the ELCHC continued providing service during this period and moved to virtual assistance to both families and providers during traditional work hours. Training and coaching moved

to virtual platforms during the pandemic to provide professional development to child care teachers and directors.

Providers Effectuated

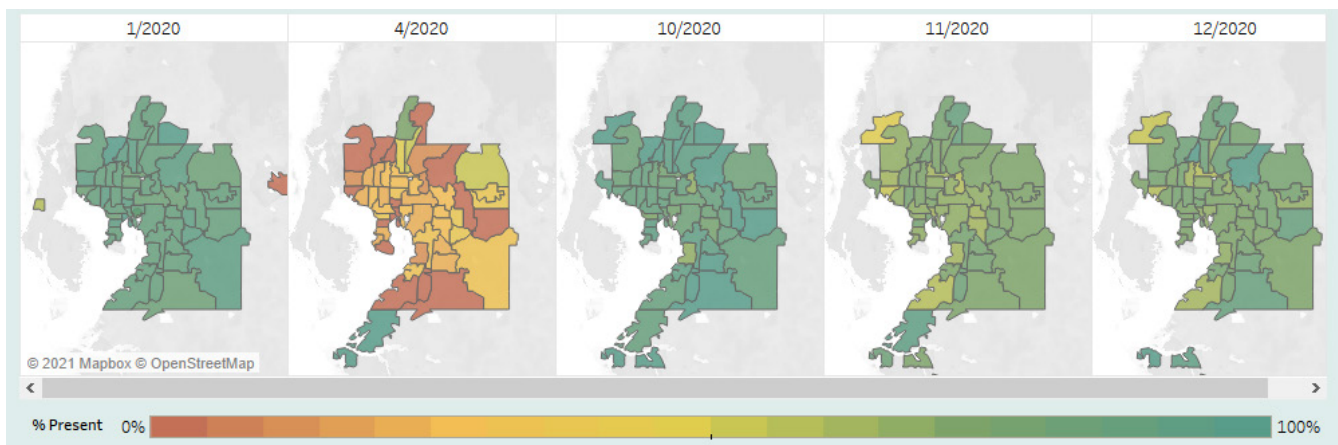


The ELCHC also participated in the First Responder and Health Care Workers Initiative, which opened up School Readiness funding to the children of essential workers. As of June 30, more than 735 children were enrolled through this initiative.

The ELCHC conducted live webinars on a monthly or as-needed basis for child care providers to assist providers with new policies and changes related to COVID-19. The ELCHC distributed \$3,580,000 as of June 2020 of child care provider grants made possible through the CARES Act Emergency Funding Grants. As of December 2020, the ELCHC had distributed an additional \$2,918,774.

During Spring 2020, the ELCHC experienced 808 provider temporary closures. The closures are shown in the graph above.

During this time, contracted providers were paid the School Readiness rate based on enrollment, not attendance, as providers saw a steep drop in children attending their programs. Below is a series of maps showing children in attendance vs children enrolled. As seen in April 2020, School Readiness children in attendance hit the lowest rate thus far during the pandemic.



WHO WE SERVE

The ELCHC facilitates two main programs, which are funded through the Florida Office of Early Learning. Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) is an early learning program available to 4-year-old Florida children, regardless of family income. It is free to parents. The ELCHC also supports supplemental programs aimed at addressing other needs in the community.

School Readiness is the second program; it reimburses child care providers who contract with the Early Learning Coalition for children it enrolls in the program. Parents can apply for School Readiness financial assistance, but eligibility is restrictive. A parent must be working but earning at a level that is 150% or less below the poverty line; be enrolled in school at the high school or secondary level; or be receiving disability assistance. Parents still pay a reduced co-payment at most facilities.

Within the School Readiness program, Early Learning Coalitions are required to prioritize funding to ensure at-risk populations are receiving assistance to increase their chances of success.

Voluntary Prekindergarten Program (VPK)

VPK was implemented in 2002 to give all of Florida’s 4-year-olds access to a quality prekindergarten experience. VPK is designed for children entering kindergarten through school-year program that consists of 540 instructional hours, or a summer program, consisting of 300 instructional hours. VPK includes quality standards, approved curricula, advancement requirements for personnel and lower classroom ratios during VPK instructional hours. VPK programs are also available for children with special needs through the Specialized Instructional Services (SIS). The ELCHC administers and monitors the VPK program for Hillsborough County.

Figure 9 illustrates the VPK enrollment for Hillsborough County in the past three years.

Figure 9: VPK Enrollment By Year

July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018	July 1, 2018- June 30, 2019	July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020
13,712	12,906	13,323

Source: ELCHC, 2019-2020



School Readiness (SR)

The ELCHC's School Readiness Program can help working parents with the cost of child care (frequently called a child care subsidy). These services include extended-day, extended-year, and school age care for children to support parents in becoming financially self-sufficient. A family's gross income (income before taxes, insurance, and any other deductions are subtracted) is used to determine eligibility. Depending on the family income, the family will pay a fee for each child who receives financial assistance. The co-payment is based on family income and family size. Parents are expected to make their co-payment directly to the child care provider.

For a list of children served in School Readiness by ZIP and provider type, see Attachment B, page 34.

Figure 10: 2019-2020 School Readiness Children Served by Provider Type

Center	Charter	Family Child Care Home	Large Family Child Care Home	Private School	Public School	Total
16,028	25	983	347	51	1,481	18,915

Figure 11: 2019-2020 School Readiness Children Served by Care Level

Infant	Toddler	2 Yr.	3 Yr.	4 Yr.	5 Yr.	School Age	Special Needs	Total
732	1,712	2,353	2,607	2,491	1,850	7,161	9	18,915

Source: ELCHC, 2019-2020

School Readiness Eligibility Priority Categories

TANF Recipients	A child younger than 13 years old from a family that includes a parent who is receiving temporary cash assistance under chapter 414 and subject to the federal work requirements.
At-Risk	An at-risk child younger than 9 years old.
Economically Disadvantaged	A child from birth to the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2. who is from a working family that is economically disadvantaged, and may include such child's eligible siblings, beginning with the school year in which the sibling is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2. until the beginning of the school year in which the sibling is eligible to begin 6th grade, provided that the first priority for funding an eligible sibling is local revenues available to the coalition for funding direct services.
Transitional	Priority shall be given next to a child of a parent who transitions from the work program into employment as described in s. 445.032 from birth to the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2.
At-Risk (School Age)	An at-risk child who is at least 9 years old but younger than 13 years old. An at-risk child whose sibling is enrolled in the School Readiness program within an eligibility priority category listed in paragraphs (a) and (b) and subparagraph 1. shall be given priority over other children who are eligible under this paragraph.
Economically Disadvantaged (School Age)	A child who is younger than 13 years old from a working family that is economically disadvantaged.
Transitional (School Age)	Priority shall be given next to a child of a parent who transitions from the work program into employment as described in s. 445.032 who is younger than 13 years old.
Special Needs	A child who has special needs, has been determined eligible as a student with a disability, has a current individual education plan with a Florida school district, and is not younger than 3 years old. A special needs child eligible under this paragraph remains eligible until the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s.1003.21(1)(a)2.
Enrolled in Head Start & VPK	A child who otherwise meets one of the eligibility criteria in paragraphs (a) and (b) and subparagraphs 1. and 2. but who is also enrolled concurrently in the federal Head Start Program and the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.
Local Funding	Added in July 2019, this category is not an eligibility priority but funding from local partners for the School Readiness program.

Looking Deeper into the Categories

Risk Factors

Florida Kids Count monitors the well-being of children and families throughout the state and at the county level. Some risk factors include high poverty, maltreatment, and more. This data helps to inform policy makers about the quality of life for Florida’s children under 18 years old.

Figure 12: Children with Risk Factors in Hillsborough County

Risk Factor	Number	Percent
Children in single parent families	101,916	36.9%
Children living in high poverty areas	42,719	13.5%
Children with verified maltreatment	2,379	6.8%

Source: 2020 Florida Child Well-Being Index, Hillsborough

Families Receiving TANF/SNAP Benefits

According to the Office of Family Assistance (June 2020), statewide there were 66,261 TANF child recipients in June 2020. Approximately 15.2% of all Hillsborough County households, or about 217,817 people, received food stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) during 2020. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF, formerly known as “welfare”) is another source to assist children and families in need.

Figure 13: School Readiness Children receiving TANF by Age Group in Hillsborough County

INF	TOD	2YR	PR3	PR4	PR5	SCH	Total
32	31	32	29	28	12	106	270

Source: ELCHC 2019-2020

The program goals for TANF/Welfare Transition (WT) emphasizes work, self-sufficiency and personal responsibility in a program structured to enable participants to move from welfare to economic self-sufficiency. To accomplish this, the Florida Legislature, using federal and state funds as well as statutory requirements, developed a comprehensive program structured to meet the following goals:

- a) Provide assistance to families in need so that children may be cared for in their own home or in the homes of relatives.
- b) Develop opportunities for families to provide for their own needs, enhance their wellbeing, and preserve the integrity of the family free of impediments to self-reliance.
- c) End the dependence of families in need on government assistance by emphasizing work, self-sufficiency and personal responsibility while meeting the transitional needs of program participants who need support to achieve independent, productive lives and gain the responsibility that comes with attaining self-sufficiency.
- d) Take full advantage of the flexibility provided under state and federal law that allows for providing job preparation and intervention programs to enable welfare applicants and recipients and transitional participants to move from welfare to work.
- e) Provide oversight and policy direction to the program and to ensure cooperation and accountability among state agencies and service providers to deliver needed services

Statutory rules require that Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) Services recipients participate in work or alternative plan activities. The state limits recipients to a lifetime cumulative total of 48 months as an adult and may be eligible for child care services. The following categories of work activities, based on federal law and regulations, may be used individually or in combination to satisfy the work requirement for a participant in the Welfare Transition program.

- a) Unsubsidized employment.
- b) Subsidized private sector employment.

- c) Subsidized public sector employment.
- d) On-the-job training.
- e) Community service programs.
- f) Work experience.
- g) Job search and job readiness assistance.
- h) Vocational educational training.
- i) Job skills training directly related to employment.
- j) Education directly related to employment.
- k) Satisfactory attendance at a secondary school or in a course of study leading to a graduate equivalency diploma.

The Welfare Transition program places great emphasis on transitional benefits and recognizes them as the cornerstone of Florida's efforts to support families as they move toward full self-sufficiency. Transitional clients are former recipients of TCA who are working or actively seeking employment are eligible to receive employment-related education, training and related support services, such as child care, to continue working and training or to upgrade skills for up to two years after the family no longer receives assistance.

The Regional Workforce Board provider authorizes child care for the hours of work activity or employment plus a reasonable time to travel to and from the child care facility and the place of work activity/employment and return. Each family must contribute to the cost of child care through a parent co-payment, using the fee schedule established by the local School Readiness Programs or Early Learning Coalitions.

According to CareerSource, between July 2019 and June 2020 there were approximately of 1,822 cases that received TANF, and 218 became Transitional. Out of the 1,822 cases:

- 1,930 cases closed
- 1,090 cases were reopened.

Source for Narrative: TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES STATE PLAN RENEWAL October 1, 2017 -September 30, 2020, Economic Self-Sufficiency Program Office; CareerSource, 2019-2020

Children with Special Needs

The ELCHC and partnering agencies identify and/or serve children with special needs through a variety of methods:

- **Early Childhood Council (ECC)** – ECC is contracted to provide inclusion supports for VPK children and non-SR children served by the ELCHC. In fiscal year 2019-2020, ECC provided five inclusion trainings to child care providers. Ninety-three early childhood settings received technical assistance and consultation to ensure children with special needs could be maintained in their child care setting. ECC received 101 Warm Line calls.
- **Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) School Readiness Inclusion and Intervention** – In the 2019-2020 year, HCPS provided oversight of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) tool that is administered by individual childcare providers for the SR children at their sites. Staff from HCPS follows up with any provider for children whose ASQ falls outside typical development scores. In fiscal year 2019-2020, HCPS staff provides follow-up services for 2,055. Fifty-four of those children were referred to Child Find for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). *Beginning July 1, 2020, the ELCHC took on Screening & Assessment Services for School Readiness.*
- **Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS)**- The Local Education Agency (LEA) for Hillsborough County is HCPS. Under the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA), the LEA is recognized as the administrative agency for purposes related to the provision of special education and all other related services. HCPS works with the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS) to deliver child and parent services. This coordination aids in identifying and initiating services to all children

with disabilities, who are not enrolled in public school. FDLRS works in partnership with HCPS and ECC to provide free developmental screenings for children 0 to 5 years old.

- **The Primary Exceptional Education Program Services (PEEPS) and Community Primary Exception Education Program Services (C-PEEPS)** are programs that service children 3 years old to kindergarten entry. Under IDEA, the HCPS offers early intervention to children that have a current IEP through PEEPS and C-PEEPS. C-PEEPS programs are traditionally served in child care programs, with a HCPS interventionist visiting the child care center weekly to facilitate special needs services in the least restrictive environment for the child. Figure 15 represents the five most common categories of disability or delay in children 3 to 5 years old documented in an IEP for fiscal years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 within HCPS.

Figure 14: HCPS Categories of Disability or Delay

Top 5 Disability or Delay Categories	FY 17-18	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21*
Developmentally delayed	1,218	296	1,529	1,346
Speech impaired	560	534	435	185
Language impaired	509	419	359	167
Austim Spectrum Disorder	214	204	82	24
Intellectual disability	53	55	20	2
Grand total	2,554	1,508	2,425	1,724

Source: ELCHC/HCPS, FY 2019-2020, *FY 2020-2021 estimates

Unemployment and Homelessness

The unemployment rate for the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater Region in June 2020 was 9.0%, however this was largely due to the economic impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic. In January and February 2020 the rate was between 3 and 4%, before the virus had its greatest economic impact; by October 2020, the rate was showing signs of reduction at an estimated 5.6%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This region was slightly higher than statewide the unemployment rate for January and February 2020, which was 2.8%; but lower than the state's October 2020 estimate of 6.5%. Additionally, affordable housing is in short supply.

According to the 2020 Council on Homelessness Annual Report, Hillsborough County Public Schools identified more than 4,000 students who met the definition of homeless in the 2018-2019 school year.

As of June 30, 2020 there were 24 children that have been identified as homeless and receiving School Readiness funding, however there may have been more who transitioned out of homelessness before the end of the fiscal year.



Families with Domestic Violence

In 2019, a report from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement stated that Hillsborough County had 6,730 reported cases of domestic violence or a rate of 465.8 per 100,000 population. This compared to a state-wide average rate of 496.5 cases per 100,000. Hillsborough's rate is a decrease of 3.1% from the 2018 report of 6,775 cases. In these reports, offenses classified as domestic violence include murder, manslaughter, rape and attempted rape, assault, stalking, threat or intimidation, and forcible fondling.

The ELCHC offers School Readiness for children under Protective Services, which falls under the At-Risk category.

Source: Florida's Uniform Crime Reports, Domestic Violence, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, 2019

Figure 15: School Readiness Children in Protective Services

INF	TOD	2YR	PR3	PR4	PR5	SCH	Total
279	481	549	554	507	291	1,145	3,806

Source: ELCHC 2019-2020

Economically-Disadvantaged Families

In addition to other categories, the ELCHC's largest population served is within the economically-disadvantaged categories. Families can be eligible to receive child care assistance through the School Readiness program under the economically-disadvantaged priority if they are at or below 150% of the federal poverty line or making less than 85% of the State Median Income. A single parent must be employed at least 20 hours per week or pursuing eligible education; two-parent households must work 40 hours combined per week or pursuing eligible education. Exceptions include exemption from work requirements due to age or disability. Children of these families are eligible birth through 12 years old, however the prioritization of School Readiness eligibility is further broken down by the child's age.

Figure 16: Economically-Disadvantaged Category by Care Level

INF	TOD	2YR	PR3	PR4	PR5	SCH	Total
366	1,088	1,632	1,888	1,812	1,411	5,583	13,780

Source: ELCHC 2019-2020



IMPACT OF LOCAL FUNDING

Local Funding and State Match

Through our community partnerships the ELCHC receives local funding to serve families and children below 200% of FPL. Local funds have the potential to be matched 1:1 by state dollars which helps to reduce the number of children on the School Readiness waitlist. Children served under this program are accounted for both in the economically disadvantaged and local funding category.

Families 150% Above the Federal Poverty Line

ALICE is a United Way acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE represents those who work and are above the federal poverty level, but due to high costs of living expenses and factors often beyond their control, must live paycheck to paycheck. For many, a small emergency can quickly become a major financial crisis for families, such as car repairs and health care emergencies that may drive these working families into poverty and financial challenges. When this happens, families, employers, and our economy suffer. In response to this need, the ELCHC created the ALICE > 150 Local Initiative to help families enter the School Readiness program to receive quality subsidized childcare at a cost that does not place them deeper into poverty when financial crises arise.

Using local funds and matching state funds, the ALICE > 150 Local Initiative allows entry to the School Readiness program for the population marginally >150% of the federal poverty line. Children ages infant up to age 13 are eligible.

In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the ELCHC served 1,215 School Readiness children in this local funding initiative.

Children are transferred into another funding priority when eligible. Figure 17 shows our local funding partnerships through the July 2019-June 2020 Fiscal Year and children served through the year.

Figure 17: Local Funding and School Readiness children served in 2019-2020

Local Funding	Served FY 19-20
Caspers Company Match & Local	60
Children's Board of Hillsborough County 4 Plus, Local, Match & Metropolitan Ministries	3,256
City of Tampa Match	425
Hillsborough County BOCC Match	1,046
Hurricane Maria United Way Local	46
Hurricane Maria Community Foundation Local	42
Robles THA Match & Local	16
SouthShore Community Foundation Match & Local	209
United Way Match & Local	166

Source: ELCHC 2019-2020

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY

Hillsborough County has many community partners working together for children and families in our community. The following summaries of these other organizations captures each scope and area of service.

Head Start/Early Head Start

The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) of Hillsborough County operates Head Start/Early Head Start programs for Hillsborough County. Head Start enrollment is based on eligibility.

Head Start families must be 100% below the federal poverty level, but don't have to be employed. There are additional program requirements for eligibility.

The 2018-2019 enrollment eligibility breakdown is shown in the pie chart.

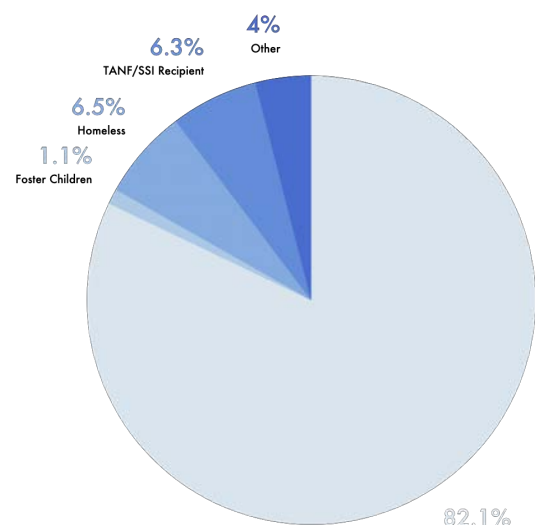
Hillsborough County's Head Start program is one of the largest in the southeastern United States. In fiscal year 2018-2019, Hillsborough County Head Start was funded to serve 3,474 children and pregnant women. This includes 3,071 Head Start children, 343 Early Head Start infants and toddlers, and 24 pregnant women.

Several program options were offered:

- Full-day (10.5 hours)/full-year center-based Head Start for parents who are working or enrolled in an education or job training program in 19 county-operated facilities and four contracted child care partners (Easter Seals, R' Club, Kings Kids, and Bible-Based) throughout Hillsborough County. This option served 1,295 children.
- Full-day (6 hours)/part-year center-based Head Start for 1,812 children in a delegate agency, Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS), in 60 elementary school sites.
- Full-day (10.5 hours)/full-year center-based Early Head Start for 167 children in five County operated facilities and two contracted child care partners, Bible-Based and King's Kids Academy.
- Full-day (10.5 hours)/full-year family child care home-based Early Head Start for 200 children in two delegate agencies (Lutheran Services Florida and Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA).
- Expectant Parent Program.

Purpose:

Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners Head Start/Early Head Start is an exemplary childhood program that partners with families and the community to build a foundation for self-reliance. We provide quality educational opportunities for ALL children and their families in a safe and nurturing environment. We employ qualified and caring staff committed to the social, emotional, and physical well-being of all children.



Champions for Children

Purpose:
to build stronger families in the Tampa Bay region through its child abuse prevention and family education programs.

Champions for Children is a nonprofit agency that serves families and children in the Hillsborough County community. Their mission is to build stronger families in the Tampa Bay region through its child abuse prevention and family education programs. They carry out their mission through family education and prevention programs, such as home visiting, training and networking courses. The Champions for Children 2019-2020 Impact Report details the scope of the agencies reach in the county. During the 2019-2020 year, 11,658 children and adults were served in classes and individualized support; 4,641 individuals participated in parent-child educational programs; and 2,048 family members received child development home visiting services. Also, 25,661 community members received education on child abuse and bullying prevention. Champions for Children offers a variety of support program for families and children. Some of their programs include:

- Talk Read Sing Tampa Bay — Community awareness campaign focused on educating Tampa Bay residents, especially parents, about the importance of developing a child's brain by talking, reading, and singing beginning at birth
- Positive Parenting Partnership (P3) — classes for parents designed to positively influence marriage and couple stability, healthy relationships, financial health, and parenting confidence.
- Nurturing Dads — a program offered to fathers and soon-to-be fathers to get crucial parenting skills needed to nurture and care for their first baby.

Source: 2019-2020 Champions for Children Impact Report <https://cfctb.org/need/community-impact/>

Children's Board of Hillsborough County

Purpose:
to grant funding to programs so they may provide high quality services to children and families in Hillsborough.

The Children's Board of Hillsborough County was established in 1988 by voter referendum. According to the 2019 Children's Board Annual Report, the organization awarded \$32 million in grants to 113 programs during the fiscal year. From that, 183,000 individuals received services through the Children's Board and other agencies funded by its grant programs.

Source: Children's Board of Hillsborough County 2019 Annual Report

Healthy Start Coalition of Hillsborough County

Purpose:
to improve the health and well-being of pregnant women, children and families in Hillsborough.

The mission of The Healthy Start Coalition Hillsborough County is to improve the health and well-being of pregnant women, children and families in Hillsborough County. The agency does this through several key programs. Some of the highlights of its programs are featured within its 2020 Annual Report. Those highlights include the Healthy Start Program delivered services to 8,287 women and 11,957 newborns; the Safe Baby Plus program trained 750 professionals in Safe Baby Training; the Nurse Family Partnership conducted 4,139 home visits; and Healthy Families Hillsborough served 1,938 children during 2020.

Source: Healthy Start Coalition of Hillsborough County 2020 Annual Report

Elementary Education

Hillsborough County Transformation Schools & Graduation Rate Goals

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the national graduation rate for public high schools in the 2017-2018 school year was 85%, up from 79% in 2010-2011. Former President Barack Obama's administration set a goal of a 90% graduation rate by 2020; In 2015, Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) set the same goal for its high schools for 2020. In the 2018-2019 year, HCPS reported a 86.2% rate.

Since 2018, HCPS re-organized a plan that was once called Achievement Schools, now called Transformation Schools. The goal of the Transformation Network is to close the achievement gap through concentrated, high quality instruction at 28 schools which have scored under a C rating. These schools are Title 1: 23 elementary, three middle and two K-8 Schools. They serve a cumulative 14,000 students. Figure 18 identifies the Transformation Schools and ZIP Codes.

Figure 18: Transformation Schools

School Name	ZIP Code
Adams Middle	33612
Broward Elementary	33603
Burney Elementary	33563
Cleveland Elementary	33604
DeSoto Elementary	33605
Dunbar Elementary Magnet	33607
Folsom Elementary	33592
Foster Elementary	33610
Giunta Middle	33578
James Elementary	33610
Jennings Middle	33584
Kenly Elementary	33619
Kimbell Elementary	33617
Lockhart Elementary Magnet	33610
Mango Elementary	33584
McDonald Elementary	33584
Miles Elementary	33612
Mort Elementary	33613
Oak Park Elementary	33605
Pizzo K-8	33617
Potter Elementary	33610
Robles Elementary	33610
Shaw Elementary	33612
Sulphur Springs K-8	33604
Tampa Heights Elementary Magnet	33610
Temple Terrace Elementary	33617
Thonotosassa Elementary	33592
Witter Elementary	33612

Source: HCPS; National Center for Education Statistics



EARLY LEARNING DISPARITIES IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY



INTRODUCTION

Over the past year, the ELCHC has been studying the early education landscape of the county, through work titled “Early Education Disparities in Hillsborough County.” This work was undertaken with the help of the research team at the University of Florida Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies. The impetus for this work was a revision to Rule 6M-4.741, F.A.C., which became effective in May 2020. This revision increased the contract minimum threshold composite score that providers must achieve in order to be a part of the School Readiness program. This minimum score to contract increased from a 2.51 to a 3.50 in the 2020-2021 year and to a 4.0 in the 2021-2022 year. An exception the 2020-2021 threshold was given to existing providers who scored between a 3.00 and 3.49. If a provider scored between a 3.0 and a 3.99 in the 2020-2021 year, they will be placed on a quality improvement plan. As of February 2021, this rule is being revised by the Office of Early Learning.

IMPACT TO HILLSBOROUGH’S SCHOOL READINESS COMMUNITY

Composite scores can change on a daily basis as providers receive their annual observations. However, based on current numbers, the ELCHC has approximately 88 providers below a 3.5 and 116 below a 4.0 — affecting a potential 2,731 children or 6,464 children, respectively. It would also negatively impact child care employment. With so many providers potentially falling below the minimum threshold, the ELCHC was concerned that the rule change could create “child care deserts” for School Readiness families as well as disrupt the continuity of care for at-risk children.

SUMMARY

To look further into the needs of our community both related to the rule change and other areas of need, the ELCHC entered into an agreement with the University of Florida to collaborate on an analysis. Lead Research Scientist Herman Knopf analyzed School Readiness providers at all composite CLASS score levels along with other socioeconomic demographics.

The ELCHC and UF teams’ research results are highlighted in the following tables, maps and graphs with the purpose of informing the ELCHC leadership team of the potential impacts of increased contract score requirements and guide discussion on what, if any, accommodations should be made to maintain or increase access to child care services throughout Hillsborough County. In addition, ELCHC staff developed an additional series of maps to overlay socioeconomic conditions in Hillsborough County to more clearly show the communities in the county which will be hit the hardest from the restriction of access to early learning programs.

THE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT SCORING SYSTEM

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool by Teachstone was chosen by the state to assess programs. CLASS measures the quality of teacher-child interactions, including emotional and behavioral support, engaged support for learning, classroom organization, and instructional support for children ages birth to Kindergarten entry. CLASS observations are conducted in half of the classrooms of each age group (Infant/Toddler/Preschool). A Composite Score is given to each provider. Scores can range between a 1.00 and a 7.00.

READING THE FLICCA MAPS

The follow sets of maps represent multiple Florida Index of Child Care Access (FLICCA) data points in one map. The colors represent different scenarios in Hillsborough County:

Scenario 1 (S1) —Positive Selection and Positive Infrastructure

Given the School Readiness (SR) care available to parents, a greater proportion of parents are choosing high quality care. There are a greater number of high quality child care slots than there are children receiving subsidies in these areas. *This is the preferred scenario.*

Scenario 2 (S2) —Negative Selection and Positive Infrastructure

Given the SR care available to parents, a greater proportion of parents are choosing low quality care There are a greater number of high quality child care slots than there are children receiving subsidies. *This indicates a need to improve parent selection.*

Scenario 3 (S3) —Positive Selection and Negative Infrastructure

Given the SR care available to parents, a greater proportion of parents are choosing to use high quality care However, there are a greater number of children receiving subsidies than there are high quality slots. *This indicates a need for more high quality slots.*

Scenario 4 (S4) —Negative Selection and Negative Infrastructure

Given the SR care available to parents, a greater proportion of parents are choosing low quality care. There are a greater number of children receiving subsidies than there are high quality child care slots. *This indicates a need for more high quality slots and a need to improve parent selection.*

	Selection	
Infrastructure	Positive (+)	Negative(-)
Positive (+)	Dark Blue	Light Green
Negative (-)	Yellow	Red

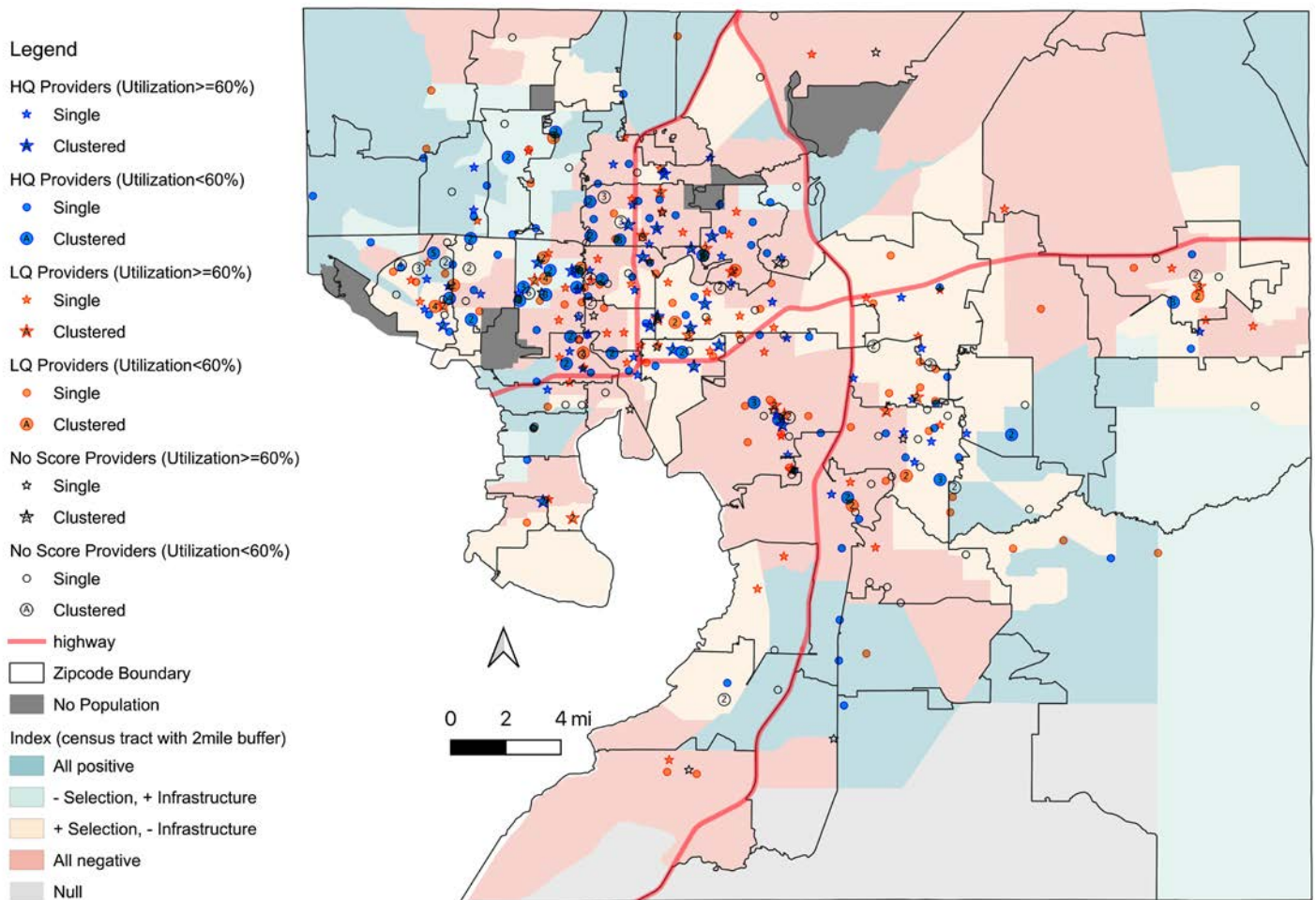


CHILD CARE CHOICES IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Distribution of High Quality/Low Quality Providers

This map shows the distribution of High Quality (HQ) and Low Quality (LQ) providers using CLASS Scores of 4.0 as the threshold for quality overlaid with the physical locations of child care providers plotted using a detailed legend. Quality sites are plotted in blue, while lower quality sites plotted in orange. Stars represent child care sites that serve a large proportion of school readiness children compared to the number of private pay children served; specifically, greater than or equal to 60% school readiness children. Circles represent child care sites that serve less than to 60% school readiness children. When it comes to capacity of quality child care slots for school readiness families, blue stars representing high quality/high utilization sites would be ideal.

Map 1: Distribution of HQ/LQ Providers & Index (Score ≥ 4.0)



Map created by the research team at the University of Florida Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies

S1 Preferred scenario

S3 Need for more high quality slots

S2 Need to improve parent selection

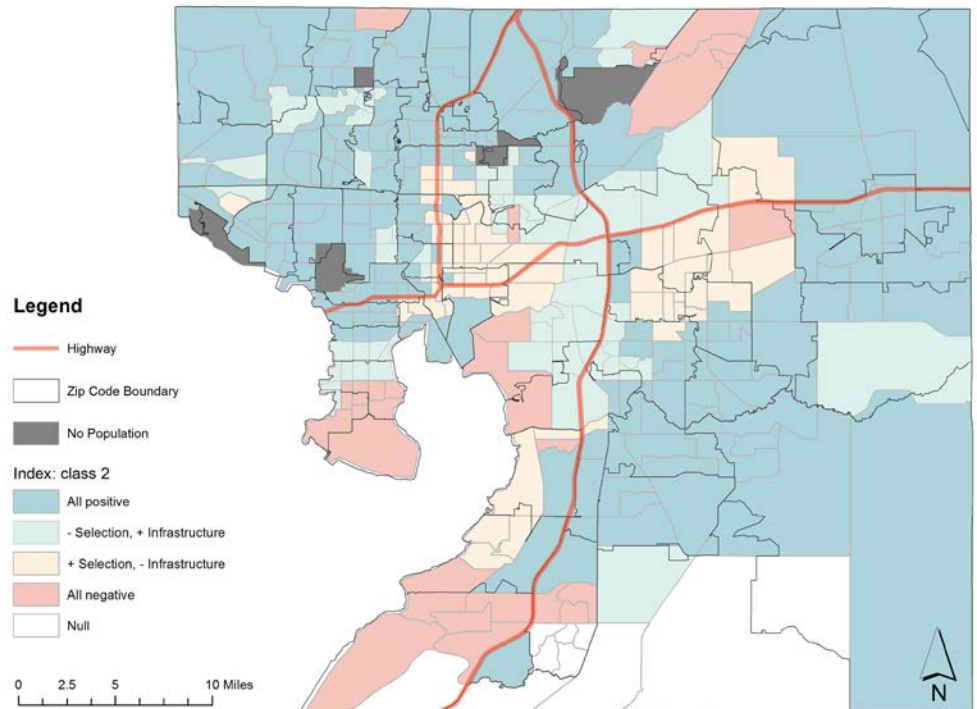
S4 Need for more high quality slots and a need to improve parent selection.

Infrastructure and parent choices, CLASS Scores 3.5 & 4.0

Maps 2 and 3 show the geographic distribution of High Quality (HQ) and Low Quality (LQ) providers within Hillsborough County. The FLICCA Matrix helps illustrate that when the quality threshold moves from a 3.50 to a 4.00 CLASS Composite Score, the infrastructure of high-quality child care in the county significantly declines. Areas that were once dark and light teal (S1 & S2) representing a preferred scenario for quality infrastructure, turn into yellow and pink (S3 & S4) which indicates a need for more high-quality slots. Areas of light teal and pink (S2 & S4) also indicate a need to improve parent selection of high quality child care programs.

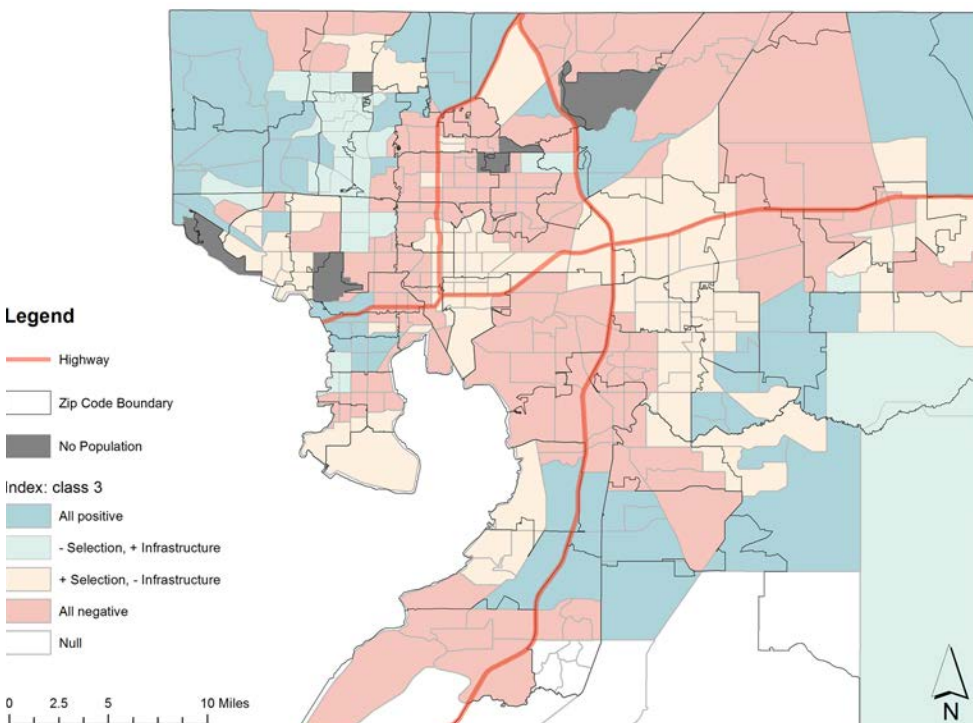
Map 2: Hillsborough FLICCA*, Score ≥ 3.5

- S1** Preferred scenario
- S2** Need to improve parent selection
- S3** Need for more high quality slots
- S4** Need for more high quality slots and a need to improve parent selection.



* Calculated at census tract level with 2 mile buffers.

Map 3: Hillsborough FLICCA*, Score ≥ 4.0



* Calculated at census tract level with 2 mile buffers.

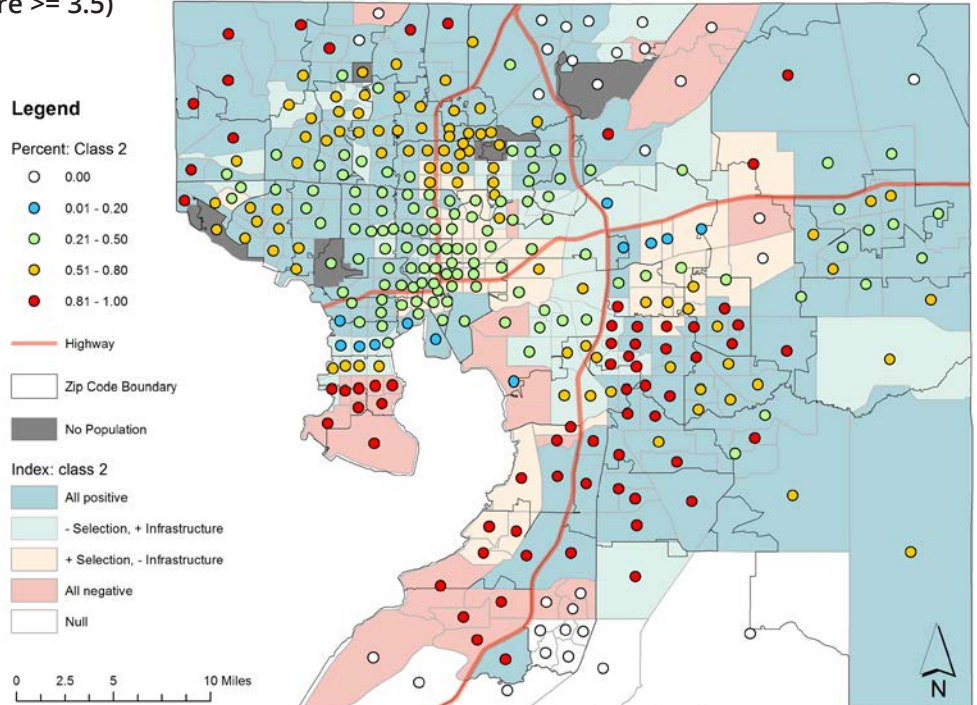
Maps created by the research team at the University of Florida Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies

Child care costs and parent choices, CLASS Scores 3.5 & 4.0

These maps show the percentage of children enrolled in high quality child care services at CLASS Score 3.5 (Map 4) and 4.0 (Map 5) within each Census Tract in Hillsborough County that are paying a differential at price higher than the median price in Hillsborough County. By differential, we mean the cost difference between the private pay rate and the rate paid for the subsidized School Readiness services. The maps show parents are paying a higher differential in certain geographical areas of the county regardless of the high-quality infrastructure in the region. The market rate for child care services in certain geographical areas in the county are the driving force behind private pay rates.

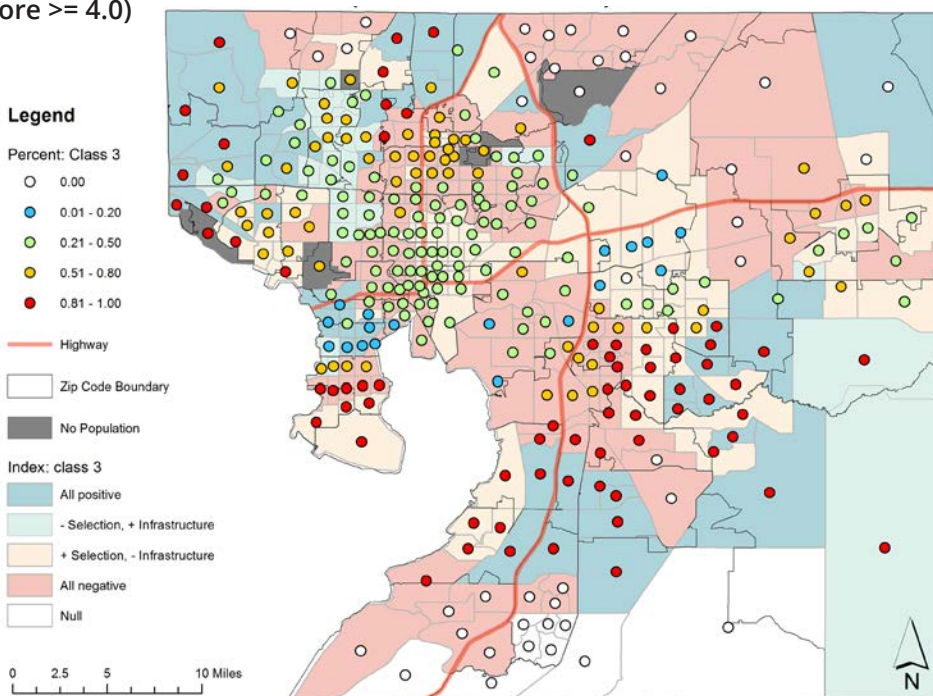
Map 4: Percent of SR Children that Pay Differential & Price Above/Equal Median (Score >= 3.5)**

- S1** Preferred scenario
- S2** Need to improve parent selection
- S3** Need for more high quality slots
- S4** Need for more high quality slots and a need to improve parent selection.



* Aggregated at census tract level with 2 mile buffers for HQ Providers Only.
 ** Number of kids (HQ, pay differential and price above median) / Number of HQ SR enrollment.

Map 5: Percent of SR Children that Pay Differential & Price Above/Equal Median (Score >= 4.0)**



* Aggregated at census tract level with 2 mile buffers for HQ Providers Only.
 ** Number of kids (HQ, pay differential and price above median) / Number of HQ SR enrollment.

Maps created by the research team at the University of Florida Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies

POVERTY AND CHILD CARE IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Poverty + Kindergarten Readiness Rates

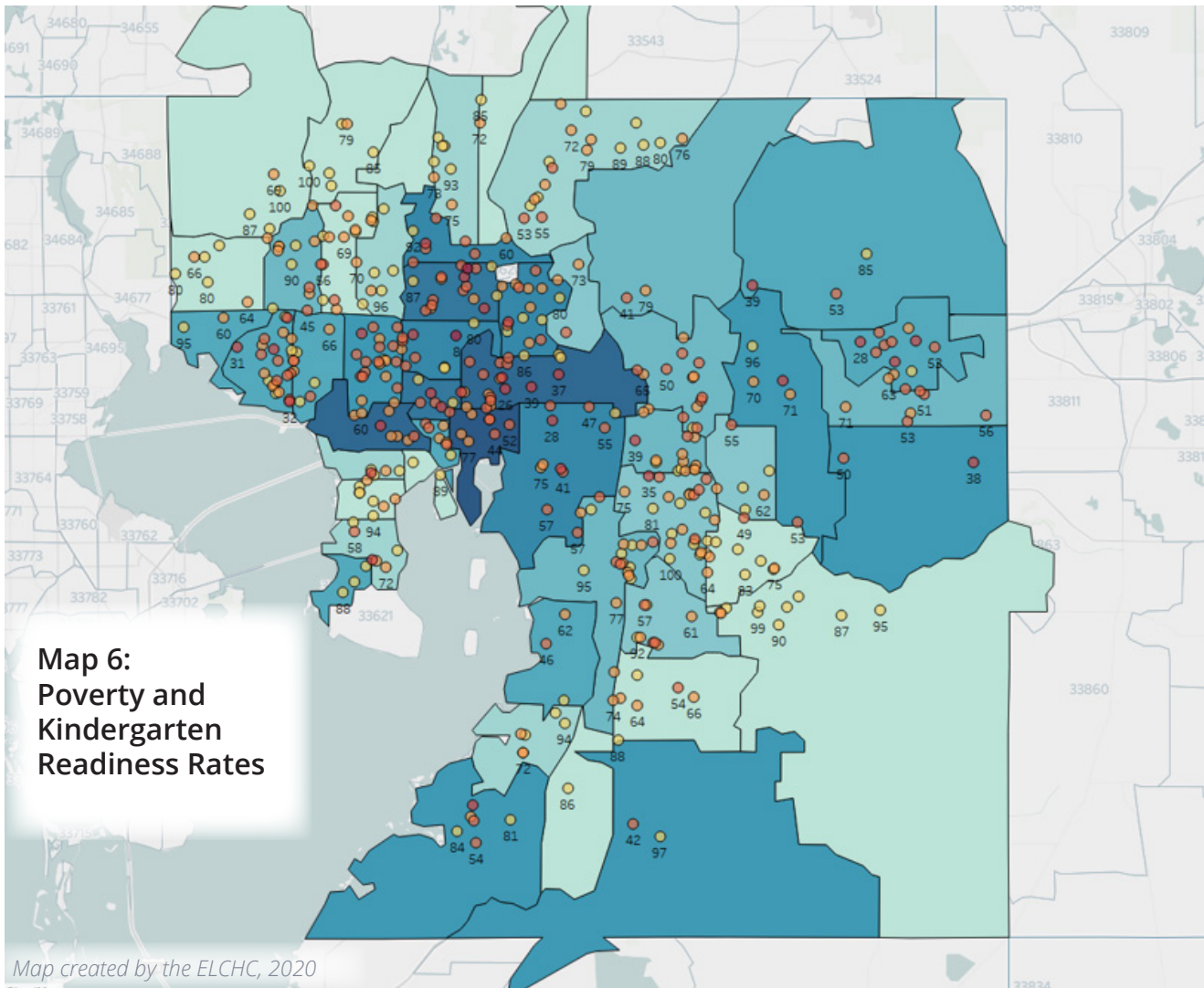
Map 6 illustrates poverty rates in Hillsborough County overlaid with VPK Providers and their performance based on the VPK Program Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate. Specifically, the darker the shade of blue, the higher poverty rate of children under 18 years of age (2018 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau). Each plot on the map represents a VPK provider, the color of the plot & the adjacent number represents the provider's performance on their Readiness Rate for the 18-19 program year, which is a rating up to 100. The darker shades of orange to red are the lower performing VPK providers.

The Readiness Rate given to VPK Providers is based on how VPK students perform on two measures:

- The Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener, which is currently the Renaissance Star Early Literacy assessment during the first 30 days of Kindergarten
- The VPK Assessment to show learning gains which is administered at the beginning & end of VPK by the teacher (accounts for up to 10% of the rate)
- The minimum rate is set at 60% by the Office of Early Learning. Providers under this rate are considered low performing providers.

Takeaways:

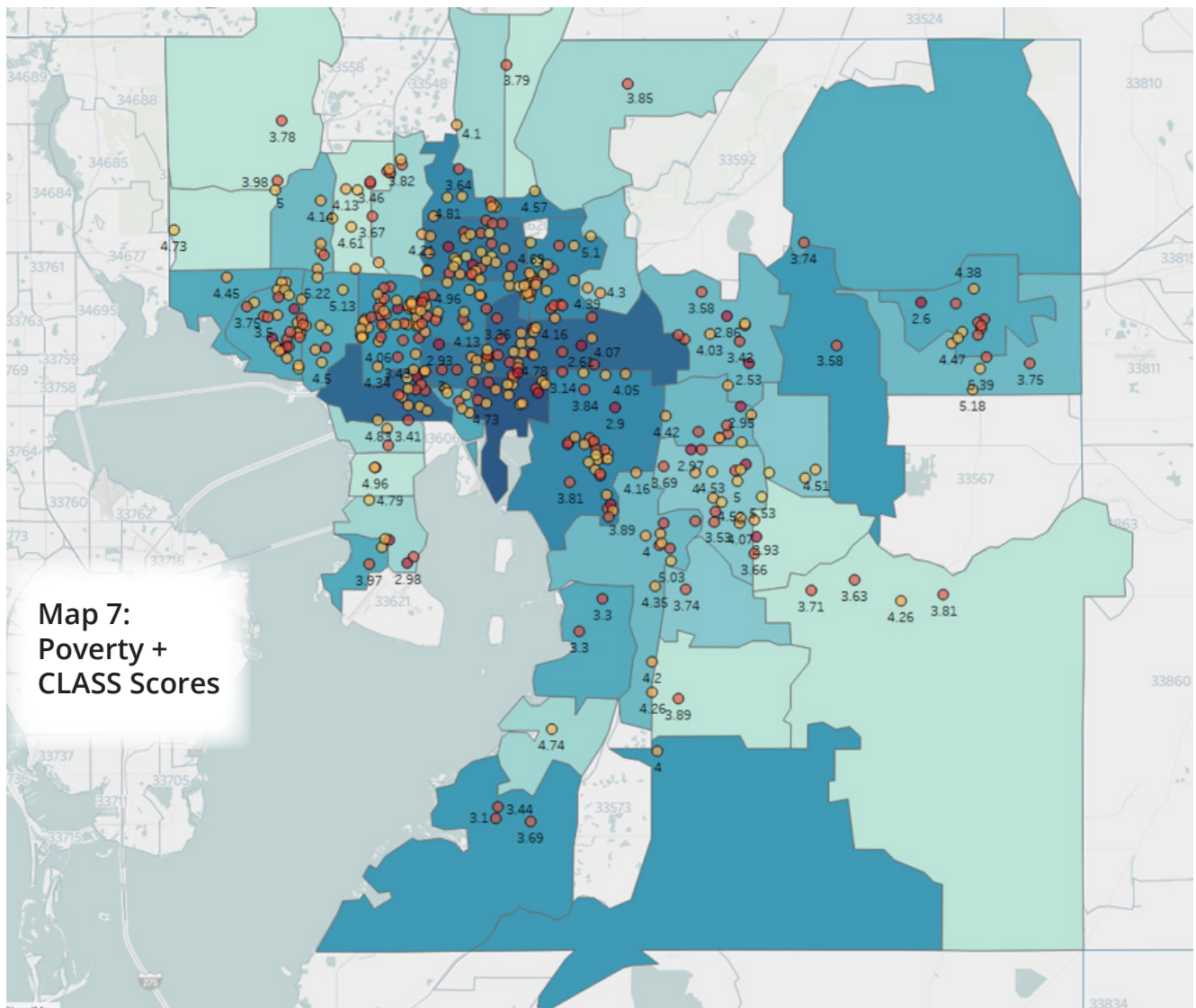
Notice how the higher poverty areas, typically have lower performing providers. This is a trend that is also reflected with public schools and their 3rd-grade reading levels. This data shows the opportunity gap that children from disadvantaged families experience in Hillsborough County, specifically when it comes to access to quality VPK child care providers. Investing in more resources and instructional support for VPK programs in higher poverty area could potential help minimize this gap.



CLASS Scores + Poverty Rates

Map 7 illustrates poverty rates in Hillsborough County overlaid with School Readiness providers and their performance based on how they performed on observations using the CLASS tool by Teachstone. This tool measures the quality of teacher-child interactions, including emotional and behavioral support, engaged support for learning, classroom organization, and instructional support for children ages birth to Kindergarten entry. CLASS observations are conducted in half of the classrooms of each age group (Infant/Toddler/Preschool). A Composite Score is given to each provider. Scores can range between a 1.00 and a 7.00. Each plot on the map represents a School Readiness provider, the color of the plot & the adjacent number represents the provider's Composite Score (most recent score as of March 2020). The darker shades of orange to red are the lower performing School Readiness providers. Poverty is represented by the shades of blue: the darker the shade of blue, the higher poverty rate of children under 18 years of age (2018 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau).

Takeaways: Unlike the map of VPK Providers with Readiness Rates, this shows that low performing School Readiness Providers are dispersed across different levels of poverty. This might be because the demographic of children/families served is much different in School Readiness compared to VPK. While VPK is free for all Hillsborough 4-year old children, most families who are eligible to receive School Readiness have a household income is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level or below 85% of the State Median Income. Additionally, there is a fundamental difference in the tool that is used to measure performance– Readiness Rates are determined by child outcomes, and CLASS is determined by teacher-child interactions.



Map created by the ELCHC, 2020



CONCLUSION

As our state moves forward in introducing initiatives that aim to improve the readiness of a child entering kindergarten, raising the standards without creating foundational quality will negatively impact the access that families have to affordable quality child care. There is an urgency to increase the quality without impacting the capacity to serve working families that need child care options. This analysis shows that well-intended changes aiming to increase the quality of early childhood may come at a cost to capacity. Without child care options, our county will see a decline in the local economy. As we move forward with assisting providers with increasing quality, using data to make these decisions is a priority.

A Closer Look

To view Maps 1-7 in more detail, scan the QR code with your smart phone or follow the link below.



<https://www.elchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2021CNAMaps.pdf>



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

School Readiness Eligibility Priorities

Pursuant to section 1002.87(1)(c) of the Florida Statutes (F.S.), the ELCHC may reorder School Readiness Priorities 3 through 9 based on the need in the community as illustrated by the data in the community assessment. Based on the information presented in this report we recommend the priorities remain as altered through the 2018 assessment to address the need to support families transitioning from TANF Cash Assistance to the workforce. Offering child care keeps children in consistent care, while helping families maintain employment and become self-sufficient. Additionally, the data in this report shows that there are a significant number of children with IEPs in the county. Although the School District offers educational services to children with special needs, the School Readiness Program can offer additional support to these families. The figure below illustrates our 2018 recommended changes to the School Readiness Eligibility Priorities in Hillsborough County. Priorities 1 and 2 are established by section 1002.87(1)(a) & (b), F.S. Priorities 3 through 9 are the local priorities the ELCHC may reorder.

Given the local, regional and state data available, the ELCHC recommends to maintain the current priorities as listed in the following order.

RECOMMENDED SCHOOL READINESS ELIGIBILITY PRIORITIES	
1	A child younger than 13 years old from a family that includes a parent who is receiving temporary cash assistance under chapter 414 and subject to the federal work requirements.
2	An at-risk child younger than 9 years old.
3	A child of a parent who transitions from the work program into employment as described in s. 445.032 from birth to the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2.
4	A child from birth to the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2. who is from a working family that is economically disadvantaged, and may include such child's eligible siblings, beginning with the school year in which the sibling is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2. until the beginning of the school year in which the sibling is eligible to begin 6th grade, provided that the first priority for funding an eligible sibling is local revenues available to the coalition for funding direct services.
5	A child who has special needs, has been determined eligible as a student with a disability, has a current individual education plan with a Florida school district, and is not younger than 3 years old. A special needs child eligible under this paragraph remains eligible until the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2.
6	An at-risk child who is at least 9 years old but younger than 13 years old. An at-risk child whose sibling is enrolled in the school readiness program within an eligibility priority category listed in paragraphs (a) and (b) and subparagraph 1. shall be given priority over other children who are eligible under this paragraph.
7	A child of a parent who transitions from the work program into employment as described in s.445.032 who is younger than 13 years old.
8	A child who is younger than 13 years old from a working family that is economically disadvantaged.
9	A child who otherwise meets one of the eligibility criteria in paragraphs (a) and (b) and subparagraphs 1. and 2. but who is also enrolled concurrently in the federal Head Start Program and the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.

Figure 19 represents the children we served from fiscal years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, in order of our funding priorities. Historically, children had not been served in Priority 9 because a lack of funding has not permitted the ELCHC to serve all priorities. Priority 5 includes special needs children 3 to 5 years old with Individual Education Plan (IEP) and does not require that the guardian be working or in school. Providers serving children in Priority 5 would be paid a Special Needs Rate, which is higher than the typical School Readiness Reimbursement Rate and varies depending on the accommodations made for that child.

Figure 19: Families and Child Data

SR Served by Priorities	Priority Description	2018-19	2019-20
Priority 1 (0 - <13)	TANF Recipients	420	270
Priority 2 (0 - 9)	At-Risk	4,313	3,524
Priority 3 (0 - 5)	Transitional Child Care	180	119
Priority 4 (0 - 5)	Economically Disadvantaged	7,829	8,197
Priority 5 (3 - 5)	Special Needs	4	9
Priority 6 (5 - <13)	At-Risk (School-Age)	202	282
Priority 7 (5 - <13)	Transitional (School-Age)	126	80
Priority 8 (5-<13)	Economically Disadvantaged (School Age)	5,021	5,583
Priority 9 (4)	Enrolled in Head Start & VPK	0	0
Local Funding Group	Local Funding	129	116
Temporary Program - COVID-19	Essential Service Workers	-	735
Total Unduplicated		18,224	18,915

Source: ELCHC, June 2020

The data in Figure 19 is taken from June 30, 2020. Throughout the year, children can be transferred from one funding priority to another based on eligibility. To see more information on how local funding has served children in our community, see page 18.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While the ELCHC is not recommending shifts to the order of our priorities, there are opportunities to improve access to quality care for Hillsborough families within the currently-established priorities.

Building Equitable Quality Infrastructure

One of the clear takeaways from the Early Learning Disparities analysis is the need for additional high quality child care options for School Readiness families in certain areas of Hillsborough County in which demand is present but infrastructure is lacking. In some regions, the cost of child care is significantly higher than others, regardless of quality infrastructure, which could lead to inequitable barriers for families. It is recommend that the ELCHC continues to encourage child care programs to achieve higher quality standards, recruit new quality sites, and construct initiatives that minimize barriers to quality early education.

Contracted Slots

In Fall of 2018, the ELCHC conducted a pilot program that offers infant care contracted slots for four School Readiness Providers in high-poverty ZIP codes 33605, 33602, 33607, 33610, and 33612. The providers that participated increased capacity for infant and toddler care and overall, reported favorable results. Unfortunately, the ELCHC has experienced several technological issues with the Statewide Information System that create barriers with implementing the program, including payment issues. As a result, we recommend phasing out the current contracted slots and not enrolling any new children in the program.

The data presented in this updated report supports the use of contracted slots for specific populations and various geographical areas within the county. For example, contracted slots could be beneficial if:

- Paired with an initiative that aims to increase the number of children served in under-served care-levels

- (i.e. infants or special needs)
- Assigned to providers that are located in geographical areas where a high percentage of families are paying a differential that is above or equal to the median cost
- Providers that are in high poverty zip-codes

It is recommended that when the technological issues with the Statewide Information System are resolved, the ELCHC should update the Coalition Plan to reflect a new contracted slots program serving one or more of the populations or geographic areas described above.

School Readiness Match Program

We are seeing increasing numbers in the areas of economically disadvantaged priorities. Based on community data, the working poor of our community will need more assistance, especially after the additional setback of the COVID-19 pandemic. The School Readiness Match Program is a potential tool that could help by leveraging local funding sources to serve more children. It provides funds to expand the provision of services to low-income families below federal poverty level. Funding is subject to availability so local matching funds can be derived from governments, employers, charitable foundations, and other sources to expand funds for direct services and increase the number of child care slots. An example a School Readiness Match Program is the ALICE > 150% initiative. It is recommended that the ELCHC continue to pursue funding opportunities through this program.

Supplemental Programs

Providing access to early education through the School Readiness and VPK programs is a great value in the county, however, additional resources can maximize the impact the Coalition can have on our community. The ELCHC has been fortunate to have the opportunity to leverage School Readiness and local funding to support a variety of supplemental programs that meet our community needs. We've invested in initiatives to support the early educator workforce through INCENTIVE\$ and Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.), increase the capacity and the quality of infant and toddler care through the Hillsborough Infant & Toddler initiative, promote family education through Anytime is 3Ts Time initiative and expand professional development opportunities for educators through the Hillsborough Early Learning Network. Supplemental programs bring a holistic approach to building quality child care infrastructure needed to serve families. It is recommended that the ELCHC continues to invest in such programs and use the information presented in this assessment to investigate prospective initiatives to support the ELCHC's mission.

Waivers for Child Care Capacity

Increasing access to quality child care can create a ripple effect in the Hillsborough County community. Our society can benefit from the long-lasting effects that a quality education can produce. Early education is more than caring for children while parents work, there is more at stake for our youngest learners. The initiatives and resources outlined in this document only scratch the surface of potential for Hillsborough County: for lifetime success, we must start early. For our community to maximize the return on economic investment that stems from a quality early childhood, a data driven approach to utilizing resources must be used in conjunction with a lens of equity. Data shows that Hillsborough County is a diverse community with a variety of cultures to celebrate. Moving forward as a community, we must always consider the following ideas — who will benefit from this service? Will the delivery of this service meet the needs of the community? For us to correctly answer these questions, we must first identify who we serve and how we serve them.

Based on the work in the Early Learning Disparities analysis, it is recommended that waivers be granted to providers who fall below the contact minimum threshold score who are serving School Readiness children in areas needing child care capacity. Waivers will allow for families to still access child care while the ELCHC and provider work towards improving quality. Data used in this report will guide the waiver process while continuing to promote family access to School Readiness Services.

Attachment A

ELCHC Contracted School Readiness Providers by Zip Code for 2019-2020

Zip	Center	Charter Public School	Family Child Care Home	Large Family Child Care Home	Private School	Public School	Totals
33510	9		4	2		3	18
33511	19		4	2		3	28
33527	2		1			3	6
33534	3					3	6
33544	1						1
33547	9					5	14
33548						1	1
33549	2					2	4
33556	2					2	4
33558	1					2	3
33559	1						1
33563	14		2			8	24
33565	1					2	3
33566	4		1			2	7
33567			1			3	4
33569	9					7	16
33570	5		1			2	8
33572	3					2	5
33573	1		1			2	4
33578	12		1	2		3	18
33579	4					2	6
33584	9			2	1	7	19
33592						2	2
33594	5			1		5	11
33596	6			1			7
33598				1		2	3
33602	7		1			4	12
33603	6	1	5			2	14
33604	15		20		1	4	40
33605	7		8			5	20
33606	2					1	3
33607	11		8			7	26
33609	5					1	6
33610	23		12		1	13	49
33611	5		1			3	9
33612	24		22			6	52
33613	4		2	1	2	3	12
33614	19		24	13		4	60
33615	16		18	7	1	5	47
33616	2		1			3	6
33617	12		13	1		5	31
33618	4		3			1	8

33619	16		17	8		7	48
33621						1	1
33624	11					4	15
33625	9		1	1		4	15
33626	2					5	7
33629	5					3	8
33634	6		7	4		1	18
33635	1					1	2
33637	4		3	1			8
33647	7		1			9	17
33675	1						1
Grand Total	346	1	183	47	6	175	758

Attachment B

Children Served in School Readiness and Local Funding in 2019-2020, by ZIP and provider type

Zip	Center	Charter School	Family Child Care Home	Large Family Child Care Home	Private School	Public School	Totals
33510	463		15	17		50	545
33511	578		8	23		53	662
33519	2						2
33527	137			3		26	166
33530	2						2
33534	193		10	4		28	235
33540	4						4
33543	11					1	12
33547	93			1		3	97
33548	19					2	21
33549	86		1	2		10	99
33556	39					1	40
33558	46		1	1		5	53
33559	80		5			6	91
33563	535		11			49	595
33565	118		1			4	123
33566	280		11			23	314
33567	150		3			13	166
33569	188		2	6		35	231
33570	343		19	4		55	421
33572	79		3			18	100
33573	90		13	3		19	125
33575	3						3
33578	662		28	19		48	757
33579	357	1	4	5		24	391
33584	349		19	9		44	421
33586	1						1
33592	131		4	4	2	18	159
33594	262		3	4		14	283
33596	159		3	4		5	171
33598	123	1	2	3		27	156
33601		2	1				3
33602	350		11	1		25	387
33603	310	1	22	7	1	38	379
33604	807	2	54	8	9	32	912
33605	459	3	41	2	1	42	548
33606	25				2		27
33607	248	1	43	4	1	39	336
33609	49		1			2	52

33610	1436	11	114	16	10	145	1732
33611	177		4		1	20	202
33612	1150		131	10	1	59	1351
33613	598		44	5		34	681
33614	646		59	47	6	69	827
33615	562		29	34		42	667
33616	202		21	1		16	240
33617	945	1	91	6	4	93	1140
33618	117		10	6	1	3	137
33619	674		59	43	2	80	858
33620	1						1
33621	3					1	4
33624	286		8	10	4	20	328
33625	258		7	11	2	21	299
33626	66		5			6	77
33629	39					5	44
33634	237		14	16	2	22	291
33635	100		9	3		2	114
33637	296	1	20	1	2	21	341
33647	298	1	10	3		59	371
33657	2						2
33659	2						2
33675	42		2			1	45
33680	8		1				9
33687	2						2
33840	1						1
33863	1						1
33919	1						1
34205	1						1
34208	5						5
34221	2						2
34639	3		4	1			8
34653	1						1
34655	6						6
34677	10						10
Shelter or Homeless	19		2			3	24
Grand Total	16028	25	983	347	51	1481	18915

REFERENCES

Heckman: *The Economics of Human Potential*, heckmanequation.org

U.S. Census Bureau, *American Community Survey, 2018 est.*

DataUSA <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/hillsborough-county-fl#about>

2020-2024 Local Workforce Services Plan: careersourcetampabay.com/news/2020-2024-cstb-r15-wioa-local-plan-draft;

Regional Competitiveness Report: issuu.com/tampabaypartnership/docs/rcr2020_final

OEL 2017 Market Rate Report <http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/providers/market-rate>

COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING MARKET ANALYSIS 2018 Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Florida
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/TampaFL-comp.pdf>

ELCHC, 2019-2020

Florida Kids Count, 2016, www.floridakidscount.org

Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/saipe_treemap/saipe_snap_treemap.html

Tampa Hillsborough Homelessness Initiative Point In Time Count Data 2020
<https://thhi.org/2020-point-in-time-count-data/>

Total Reported Domestic Violence Offenses by County, 2019 <https://www.fdle.state.fl.us/FSAC/Data-Statistics/UCR-Domestic-Violence.aspx>

Florida Department of Children and Families Child Welfare Dashboard <https://www.myflfamilies.com/programs/childwelfare/dashboard/c-in-ooh.shtml>

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES STATE PLAN RENEWAL October 1, 2017 -September 30, 2020, Economic Self-Sufficiency Program Office <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/access/docs/TANF-Plan.pdf>

Bureau of Labor Statistics

Hillsborough County Public Schools, <https://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/doc/2749>

National Center for Education Statistics: https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_coi.asp



EARLY LEARNING

COALITION OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

6302 E. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Suite 100
Tampa, FL 33619

•
813-515-2340

•
www.elchc.org

•

