

# Family First expo offers kids health screenings, fun



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(Photo: Democrat files)

The second annual Family First Week, which has offered a snapshot of available services local agencies provide the community, will culminate on Saturday with an expo showcasing the importance of health awareness with practical measures, such as free medical screenings, and interactive, kids-centered activities.

The initiative, [heralded by City of Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum](#), will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. downtown at the Kleman Plaza. Children can receive vision exams, dental checks and physicals, as well as electrocardiograms if they are 10 years or older. Parents also will have the opportunity to access additional health information and learn how to overcome common barriers to care, including transportation.

“We believe strongly that our work to locally improve the quality, access, and culture around early childhood development will serve as a model for the state of Florida,” said Gillum, who partnered with The Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend, Bond Community Health Center, Whole Child Leon and Who We Play For in the event. “We are hopeful for the steps we are taking to build our community into a more dynamic place for children and families to grow strong.”



The momentum behind Family First Week does not end with the expo, Gillum added, and will remain at the “forefront of (his) administration” during his tenure in office. The mayor hosted a Summit on Children in March echoing the same message — early investment in children is key.

Officials also employed the project as an opportunity to spotlight how decisive a child’s development is in those beginning years.

During the “[Race 4 Readiness](#),” a 1-mile/5K race that kicked off the initiative and raised at least \$10,000 for the coalition, representatives from an array of community organizations provided hundreds of parents resources on how they could become positively involved with their child’s education and development.

During a conference led by the Autism Institute at Florida State University on Wednesday, experts addressed how the detection of autism lags among low-income and minority populations. In response, the institute, joined by the National Black Church Initiative, created the [Autism Navigator](#), free web-based tutorials on distinguishing early signs of autism.



An expo on Saturday will wrap up the Family First Week, which aims to increase health literacy in the community. (Photo: Mike Ewen/Democrat files)

“From birth to age 5 is so, so important,” said Matthew Guse, CEO of Early Learning Coalition. “The outreach has been tremendous. It’s great for the community to start to see how early childhood fits into the big picture.”

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