

# Local Early Learning Officials Call For More Funding, Tout Upcoming Projects

By [NICK EVANS \(/PEOPLE/NICK-EVANS\)](#) • 22 HOURS AGO



Tallahassee's League of Women Voters Wednesday got an update on local early learning initiatives.

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Many studies suggest investing in education for children before they enter kindergarten yields major long term results. Matt Guse, head of The Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend, says in Florida pre-K providers are reimbursed just over \$2,400 dollars for 540 hours of instruction.

“Which equates to just over four dollars an hour, per child. Anyone want to guess at whether or not that’s above or below the national average?” Guse asks. “It’s about half the national average.”

But Guse says even if Florida doesn’t contribute as much as some states, it is recognized nationally for ease of access. Every four-year-old who lives in Florida can attend pre-kindergarten for free.

Looking forward, Whole Child Leon Director Courtney Atkins says her organization is preparing a community health assessment in Tallahassee’s south-city.

“We will be working with FAMU Institute of Public Health students, FSU College of Medicine [and] the Leon County Health Department to do a boots-on-the-ground community health assessment that will be led by the neighborhood residents,” Atkins says. “Really trying to drill down and get some information about the health of the citizens that live in that neighborhood.”

The organization also offers free developmental screening days for children six months to five years old to identify areas of need and connect families with services.