



## **Child Care as a Critical Support in Osceola County**

- In Osceola County, there are 131 child care programs providing care for families that income qualify for School Readiness financial assistance, serving 2,860 children in 2018/19. There are also 124 Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) providers serving 3,135 children in 2019/20.
- The Early Learning Coalition contracts with early learning programs to offer School Readiness and VPK services. The Coalition is committed to helping programs who serve the essential workforce remain open, wherever possible, to ensure children have healthy and safe environments while parents who hold critical jobs are working.
- Effective 03/29/2020, there are 69 Coalition contracted programs currently open and operating in Osceola County as a result of COVID-19 impacts and the County Emergency Stay at Home Order. This number decreases daily.
- There is still funding available for essential employees who income qualify for school readiness supports and need quality child care.
- The Coalition can help essential employees who need child care find a program that is currently open and plans on remaining open though this crisis.
- The Coalition can also help employees create an emergency back up child care plan in the event their child care arrangement falls through.
- The Early Learning Coalition provides these services to providers and families in partnership with Community Coordinated Care for Children, Inc. (4C)
- Our early learning providers and teachers are also first responders in this crisis, assuming great risk to keep their doors open. Programs are losing revenue quickly, with major drops in enrollment numbers, and are beginning to experience a shortage critical health and safety supplies needed to ensure the health and safety of staff, children, and families. The Coalition is working with state and local agencies, community partners and vendors to ensure this critical community service remains a viable option for Osceola County's workforce. Osceola County's support and partnership is valued and needed.