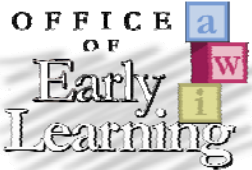
	AGENCY FOR WORKFORCE INNOVATION <b>Office of Early Learning</b>		
	SUBJECT FILE: 206.04	POLICY NUMBER: OEL-IM-0018-05	
	UNIT: Program	STAFF CONTACT: Michael Fisher, (850) 921-3211	
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**Subject:** Appointment to early learning coalitions of representatives of programs for children with disabilities

**References:** Section 411.01(5)(a)5.m., F.S.<sup>1</sup>  
20 U.S.C. § 1401(3)(A) and (B)

**Purpose:** To provide information concerning the appointment of a coalition representative of programs for children with disabilities

**Background:** In December 2004, at its 2004 Special Session “A,” the Legislature enacted House Bill 1-A (ch. 2004-484, L.O.F.), which created the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK) Program. The bill was approved by the Governor and became effective on January 2, 2005. The VPK law requires the membership of each early learning coalition to include “a representative of programs for children with disabilities under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, who shall be a nonvoting member.”

The federal Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) identifies the term “child with a disability” (20 U.S.C. § 1401(3)(A)) as a child:

With mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance ..., orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

Furthermore, IDEA identifies a “child with a disability,” age 3 through 9 (20 U.S.C. § 1401(3)(B)), [or at the discretion of the state, a subset of this age group including a child ages 3 through 5] as a child:

Experiencing developmental delays, as defined by the State and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in

<sup>1</sup> Citations to the School Readiness Act, s. 411.01, F.S., were amended by s. 2, ch. 2004-484, L.O.F.

one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

**Information:** Section 411.01(5)(a)5.m., F.S., requires each early learning coalition to appoint a representative of programs for children with disabilities to the early learning coalition.

(1) ***Knowledge, skills and abilities.***—It is recommended that a coalition consider the knowledge, skills and abilities of an individual who serves as the representative of programs for children with disabilities under the IDEA. The representative should have:

- (a) Significant knowledge of the provisions of the IDEA.
- (b) Significant knowledge of, and direct experience with, implementing a public or private program serving eligible infants, toddlers, or preschool children with disabilities, in accordance with IDEA.
- (b) Knowledge of child development.
- (c) Significant understanding of developmentally appropriate practices and specially designed instruction for young children with disabilities.
- (d) Awareness of, and familiarity with, community agencies and resources for young children with disabilities and their families.
- (e) Understanding of the needs of families with young children with disabilities.
- (f) Understanding of serving young children with disabilities in the regular educational environment and inclusive settings, including an understanding of necessary supports.

(2) ***Public or private entity.***—A coalition may consider individuals that are employed or volunteer with a public agency or a private organization, or parents of children with disabilities. There exist many statewide and local entities that offer services and support for children with disabilities. These entities may be an effective resource for locating and choosing a knowledgeable representative.

- (a) ***Public agencies.***—The Florida Department of Health is the lead agency for the IDEA Part C program for infants and toddlers with disabilities, commonly known as the “Early Steps Program.” The Department of Health has a broad regional network of community-based service providers. In addition, the state’s local educational agencies (*i.e.*, school districts) are responsible for providing specially designed instruction and related services to eligible children with disabilities ages 3 through 21 under the IDEA Part B program.

- (b) *Private entities.*—There exist many private entities that may be useful to coalitions seeking expertise in programs for children with disabilities.

PLEASE DIRECT QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS TO THE STAFF CONTACT LISTED ABOVE.

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