



MEDIA CONTACT: Kirsten Rabin, Communications Manager
krabin@childrenstrustofalachuacounty.us, 352-374-1825

New Childcare Tuition Assistance Program to benefit Alachua County families

Children's Trust funds will reduce childcare costs for local ALICE population

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The Children's Trust of Alachua County's new Childcare Tuition Assistance (CTA) program provides funding for the families who often struggle to make ends meet. The first-of-its-kind funding for Alachua County will reduce the cost for eligible families to access childcare programs for children up to age 13.

The program benefits ALICE families (Asset-Limited Income-Constrained Employed), who often fall between the cracks of need and available funding. The Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County (ELCAC) will administer the CTA program as an extension of their existing assistance programs. This program will target the 75 children currently on the ELCAC waitlist, with initial expectations to cut that number in half.

"We want all children to have access to high-quality early childcare and afterschool programs that prepare them for school and beyond," said Marsha Kiner, executive director of the Children's Trust. "At the same time, we believe this funding will have a ripple effect on the local economy: Parents who can remain employed or in training for a better career, childcare providers who can expand or improve their programs with greater enrollment, and eventually, we will all see the benefits from today's children who were given an early opportunity to achieve long-term success."

The average cost of childcare for Alachua County children younger than Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten age is just shy of \$9,000 each year, [according to U.S. Department of Labor](#) statistics for 2022. Once they reach school age, the [Afterschool Alliance reports](#) an average weekly cost of \$127 per child in Florida afterschool programs. For families who receive the CTA stipend, the funds will pay 100%, minus any parent fees.

"The CTA program is a game-changer for families in Alachua County who are often forced to choose between work and securing quality early education," said Xaviera White, CEO of the Early Learning Coalition of Alachua County. "By helping families access safe, enriching environments for their children, we're not only easing their financial burden but also ensuring that every child is Ready for School and Ready for

Life. This is an investment in the future of our community, supporting families and fostering opportunities for every child to thrive.”

To be eligible for CTA funding, the applicant must:

1. have a gross income between 85% and 100% of the [State Median Income](#) (SMI).
2. be on the ELCAC waitlist for ALICE families.
3. have a purpose for childcare, such as working more than 20 hours per week, attending an educational activity with a minimum of 10 credit hours, or having a combination of work and educational activities.

To learn more about eligibility requirements or apply for childcare assistance, visit elcalachua.org.

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ABOUT THE CHILDREN’S TRUST OF ALACHUA COUNTY

The Children’s Trust of Alachua County funds and supports a coordinated system of community services that allows all youth and their families to thrive, from physical and emotional wellness to educational supports and safety needs. Created by voter approval in 2018, the Children’s Trust is a special independent taxing district and works hand-in-hand with local children’s services partners.

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