# Rilya Wilson Act

Pursuant to s. 39.604, Florida Statutes, a child from birth to the age of school entry, who is under court-ordered protective supervision or in out-of-home care and is enrolled in an early education or child care program must attend the program 5 days a week unless the court grants an exemption. A child enrolled in an early education or child care program who meets the requirements of this act may not be withdrawn from the program without prior written approval of the Department or community-based care lead agency. If a child covered by this act is absent, the program shall report any unexcused absence or seven excused absences to the Department or the community-based care lead agency by the end of the business day following the unexcused absence or seventh consecutive excused absence.

Educational stability and transition are key components of this act to minimize disruptions, secure attachments and maintain stable relationships with supportive caregivers of children from birth to school age. Successful partnerships are imperative to ensure that these attachments are not disrupted due to placement in out-of-home care or subsequent changes in out-of-home placement. A child must be allowed to remain in the child care or early education setting that he/she attended before entry into out-of-home care, unless the program is not in the best interest of the child. If a child from birth to school-age leaves a child care or early education program, a transition plan needs to be developed that involves cooperation and sharing of information among all persons involved, respects the child's developmental stage and associated psychological needs, and allows for a gradual transition from one setting to another.

This law provides priority for child care services for specified children who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or abandonment. *These children are also known as Protective Services children.*

## Rilya Wilson Act Requirements:

- ✓ Protective services children **MUST** be enrolled to participate 5 days per week.
- ✓ Protective services children **MAY NOT** be withdrawn without prior written approval from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or Community Based Care (CBC).
- ✓ If a Protective Services child has 7 consecutive excused or any unexcused absence, the child care provider **MUST** notify the appropriate community based care staff.
- ✓ The Department and child care providers **MUST** follow local protocols set up by the CBC to ensure continuity.
- ✓ If it is not in the best interest of the child to remain at the child care or early education program, the caregiver **MUST** work with the Case Manager, Guardian Ad Litem, child care and educational staff, and educational surrogate, if one has been appointed, to determine the best setting for the child.

Community-Based Care Lead Agencies Contact Information:
http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/cbc/docs/leadagencycontacts.pdf

** If you have concerns regarding any child that you may care for, please contact the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE**