



The Florida School Readiness Program's Utilization of Child Care Capacity

The Early Childhood Policy Research Group (ECPRG)

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Introduction

As Florida administrators continue to design improvements to the Florida School Readiness (SR) program, it is important to understand the potential reach that system changes connected to subsidized enrollment might have on SR-contracted providers, as well as the broader early care and education system. In this brief, the Early Childhood Policy Research Group (ECPRG) at the University of Florida Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies introduces the SR Utilization Rate – a measure of the share of the child care marketplace used by the SR program. This measure represents the proportion of child care slots used by SR children with respect to: 1) the SR child care system (providers contracted to provide SR services); and 2) the entire Florida child care system during the 2020-2021 fiscal year (FY).

Data & Methodology

To illustrate the SR Utilization Rate, analyses focus on non-public school providers serving SR children ages 0-5 during FY 2020-21. School age enrollments, school age only providers, and public schools were not included in these analyses.

The SR Utilization Rate measures the proportion of provider capacity used by children served by the Florida SR program. SR enrollment during the peak enrollment month in the identified time-period was used rather than calculating summary/average enrollment to present the greatest potential of SR market share. SR Utilization Rate is calculated as follows:

$$SR\ Utilization\ Rate = \frac{Peak\ Monthly\ Enrollment}{Provider\ Capacity}$$

Peak monthly enrollment represents the month with the highest SR enrollment, typically August. This measure was calculated using the Florida Division of Early Learning (DEL) child payment record files. Provider capacity represents the total licensed capacity, as reported by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), during the peak enrollment month. Provider capacity either includes all licensed providers or only SR-contracted providers, depending upon the analysis.

Results

Table 1 shows the SR Utilization Rates of all SR-contracted providers in Florida. Statewide, approximately 25% of all SR-contracted providers' capacities were used by SR children during peak SR enrollment. Coalition utilization rates range between 17% (Pinellas, Broward) to 42% (Escambia), with a coalition average of 28%.

Table 1. SR Utilization Rate of SR-Contracted Providers

Coalition	Peak Monthly Enrollment	Licensed Capacity	SR Utilization Rate
State	121,103	487,276	25%
Alachua	1,667	7,206	23%
Big Bend	3,288	11,584	28%
Brevard	3,703	11,048	34%
Broward	9,525	56,281	17%
Duval	7,763	30,240	26%
Emerald Coast	1,405	5,135	27%
Escambia	2,334	5,562	42%
Flagler Volusia	4,084	14,720	28%
Florida Gateway	1,465	3,665	40%
Florida Heartland	1,501	4,786	31%
Hillsborough	9,071	30,981	29%
IRMO	1,754	5,048	35%
Lake	1,769	5,184	34%
Manatee	2,106	7,799	27%
Marion	2,184	8,002	27%
Miami-Dade Monroe	15,668	82,113	19%
Nature Coast	1,567	4,564	34%
North Florida	3,254	16,770	19%
Northwest Florida	2,159	6,449	33%
Orange	9,031	29,924	30%
Osceola	1,783	6,497	27%
Palm Beach	10,406	28,978	36%
Pasco-Hernando	3,366	16,444	20%
Pinellas	5,393	32,149	17%
Polk	4,473	12,707	35%
Santa Rosa	668	2,539	26%
Sarasota	1,412	5,644	25%
Seminole	2,312	11,190	21%
Southwest Florida	3,918	16,267	24%
St. Lucie	2,074	7,800	27%

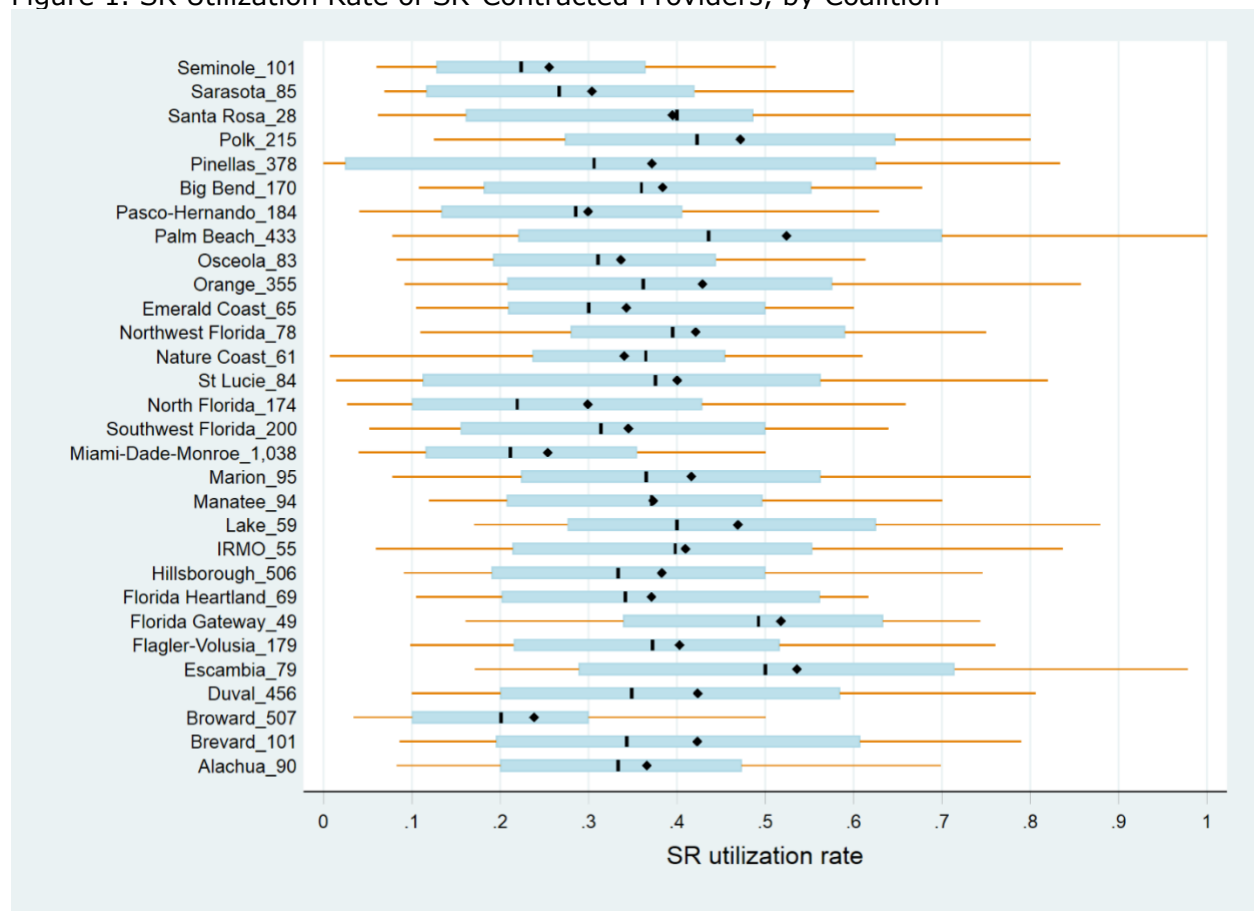
Table 2 shows the SR Utilization Rate accounting for all licensed/registered providers in Florida. Statewide, 16% of all licensed capacity was used by children receiving subsidy from the Florida SR program during peak enrollment. Utilization Rates at the Early Learning Coalition level range between 7% (North Florida) and 27% (Palm Beach), with a coalition level average of 18%.

Table 2. SR Utilization Rate of All Licensed Providers

Coalition	Peak Monthly Enrollment	Provider Capacity	SR Utilization Rate
State	121,103	756,685	16%
Alachua	1,667	12,830	13%
Big Bend	3,288	14,816	22%
Brevard	3,703	16,011	23%
Broward	9,525	89,983	11%
Duval	7,763	50,731	15%
Emerald Coast	1,405	9,180	15%
Escambia	2,334	9,756	24%
Flagler Volusia	4,084	19,620	21%
Florida Gateway	1,465	5,549	26%
Florida Heartland	1,501	8,458	18%
Hillsborough	9,071	52,919	17%
IRMO	1,754	13,193	13%
Lake	1,769	9,479	19%
Manatee	2,106	10,084	21%
Marion	2,184	10,224	21%
Miami-Dade Monroe	15,668	100,252	16%
Nature Coast	1,567	6,494	24%
North Florida	3,254	44,221	7%
Northwest Florida	2,159	9,754	22%
Orange	9,031	50,988	18%
Osceola	1,783	8,977	20%
Palm Beach	10,406	39,044	27%
Pasco-Hernando	3,366	21,068	16%
Pinellas	5,393	43,397	12%
Polk	4,473	17,273	26%
Santa Rosa	668	6,996	10%
Sarasota	1,412	10,137	14%
Seminole	2,312	20,915	11%
Southwest Florida	3,918	34,569	11%
St. Lucie	2,074	9,767	21%

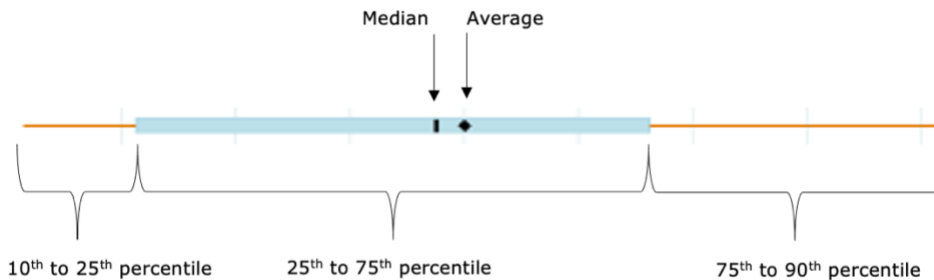
To illustrate the variation in provider-level Utilization Rates, Figure 1 shows SR Utilization Rates among providers within the coalition where they are located. The black diamond represents the average Utilization Rate for the coalition, and the black vertical bar represents the median. The blue box represents providers whose Utilization Rate is between the 25th and 75th percentiles of Utilization Rates for the coalition. The middle 50% of providers have a Utilization Rate between the indicated range on the x-axis. The orange lines on the left and right extremities represent providers in the 10th and 90th percentiles of SR Utilization Rates, respectively, showing the providers that have a Utilization Rate below 10% or above 90% of providers (see Figure 2. Graph Interpretation Guide).

Figure 1. SR Utilization Rate of SR-Contracted Providers, by Coalition



Note. Each coalition's name is followed by the count of SR-contracted providers per coalition for FY 20-21.

Figure 2. Graph Interpretation Guide



In Palm Beach, for example, the 90th percentile is a Utilization Rate of 1 (i.e., 100% of capacity is used by SR). This means that 10% of SR-contracted providers in Palm Beach exclusively enroll SR children. For providers representing the median Utilization Rate in Palm Beach, at least 40% of their capacity is used by children receiving subsidy from the Florida SR program. The providers representing the lowest 10% of Utilization Rates have 5% of their capacity used by children receiving subsidy from the Florida SR program.

The distribution of provider Utilization Rates differs significantly across coalitions. In the ELC of Northwest Florida, for example, 50% of providers have a Utilization Rate between 30-60%. In Pasco-Hernando, however, half of providers have a Utilization Rate in the range of 10-40%.

Additionally, the amount of variation between providers within a coalition differs significantly across coalitions. For example, providers in Pinellas have a wide range of Utilization Rates, with 75% of providers having a Utilization Rate in the range of 0-60%. In Broward, however, the majority of providers have a Utilization Rate in the range of 2-30%.

Discussion

The use of SR Utilization Rate to describe the share of the child care marketplace used by Florida School Readiness Program children and families may contribute important contextual information for state and local policy decisions. The Utilization Rate represents the volume of child care capacity that is used or “purchased” through the state child care subsidy program. Individual programs and communities with higher utilization rates are more likely to be affected by change in policies that relate to SR enrollment. Since there is a great deal of variation in the market share associated with the Florida SR program at the provider and coalition levels, interventions that are tied to child enrollments will have differential impacts. Our team will continue to incorporate SR Utilization Rates in system descriptions overtime.