



**THE SUNSHINE PORTAL**

Florida's Early Childhood Integrated Data System

# Describing Florida School Readiness Service Use Among “At-Risk” Children

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**The Early Childhood Policy Research Group (ECPRG)**

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## Introduction

Prior Economic Self-Sufficiency Analysis (ESSA) research conducted by the Early Childhood Policy Research Group (ECPRG) at the University of Florida Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies (Early Childhood Policy Research Group, 2022), revealed differences in the manner in which families participating in Florida's School Readiness (SR) subsidized child care program used services based on families' initial, primary billing groups (BG). Specifically, the families who were eligible for subsidies due to economic eligibility (BG8) had a median usage of 13 months. Comparatively, families who were eligible for SR due to elevated risk status (BG1) had a median usage of 8 months. The children and families receiving services through the BG1 "Child At Risk or In Protective Services" billing group are known to have increased likelihood of household instability due to their interaction with the child welfare system. The difference in service use between these two groups of families warrants further investigation.

## Data

This analysis used the eligibility codes, the reason a child receives service, within the BG1 category to more precisely describe a child's interaction with the child care subsidy system. Eligibility codes showed monthly service records of 286,287 children in BG1 spanning two years (July 2019 - June 2021). These data were cleaned (e.g., dates reformatted), de-duplicated, and delimited based on child age (0 to 13). The final dataset used in the analysis included 286,205 unique children with 5,265,903 monthly service records across 30 Early Learning Coalitions and 67 counties.

## Methodology

Child-level service statistics were calculated using monthly service records to help understand 1) the **duration** of service (i.e., months between each child's first and last service records), 2) the **usage** of service (i.e., each child's months of service used, not counting breaks in service greater than 2 months), 3) the **effective rate** of service (i.e., service duration divided by usage of service) and 4) **terms** of service (i.e., continuous periods of service unbroken by more than 2 months). Within BG1, children can have one of nine eligibility codes described in Table 1. The "ESS" or pandemic essential worker eligibility code was excluded from analyses, due to concern that children with this eligibility code may reflect time-limited pandemic support, which is distinct from other at-risk BG1 eligibilities.

We sought to examine how the changes in circumstances of children in BG1 (e.g., moving from BG1 to BG8) might relate to their service statistics. To this end, we calculated, tabulated, and compared service statistics for children who had their initial service record under BG1 across three dimensions: eligibility code, maximum number of service terms, and whether a child transitioned from BG1 to another billing group at any point. Table 2 details the results of this cross-tabulation, and reports the number of children as well as the maximum, minimum, and median (middle rank) of child-level service statistics in each subgroup.

## Results

### **Terms**

In Table 2, Children are subdivided into three groups based on their maximum number of terms: children who have only 1 unbroken term across service records, children who have 2 terms of service, and children who have 3 or more terms of service across records. Table 2 shows that the majority of children have 1 term of service, followed by children who have 2 terms of service, and then the smallest group—children who have 3 or more terms of service.

Among children with 1 term who did not have a change in BG code, we generally see less service use compared with children who have 2 or 3+ terms and did not change BG code, as reflected by the median service duration and usage (duration and usage medians ranging from 4-23 months of service).

Among children with 2 terms of service who did not change BG codes, the length of service use and duration are greater than children with only 1 term of service. In comparison with children with 3+ terms of service, children with 2 terms of service generally had greater service usage, but shorter service duration (usage medians ranging from 9-19 months of service and duration medians ranging from 15-24 months of service). Children with 2 terms of service showed a higher effective rate than children with 3 or more terms of service (median effective rate ranging from 0.65 - 0.88).

Among children with more than 3 terms of service, the length of service use was generally shorter, and duration was generally longer compared to children with two terms (usage medians ranging from 10-18 months of service and duration medians ranging from 19-24 months of service). The effective rate of children with more than 3 terms was lower compared to children with two or one term of service (median effective rate ranged from 0.54 - 0.76).

### **Billing Group Change Over Service Records**

In Table 2, children whose initial SR service was under BG1 are subdivided into two groups based on whether they changed billing groups at any time during SR participation. Generally, most children did not change billing groups across time that they received services. Their median service use ranged from 4-17 months, median service duration ranged from 4-24 months of service, and median effective rate ranged from 0.54-1.00. Among those children who did change billing groups, the median service use, duration and effective rate tended to be greater (median service use ranged from 11-23 months of service, median service duration ranged from 14-24 months of service, median effective rate ranged from 0.56-1.00)

Table 1. Billing Group 1 Eligibility Codes

Initial Eligibility Code	Description	Count of Children (proportion)
11	SR At Risk – In Home	9,680 (15.8%)
11D	SR At Risk – Diversion Protective Services	3,058 (5%)
13	SR At Risk – Out of Home – Foster Care	9,364 (15.2%)
14R	SR At Risk – Out of Home – Relative/Non-Relative Care	11,302 (18.4%)
ESS*	Essential Worker*	.
FAM	Family Supports	2,572 (4.2%)
HOME	At Risk – Homeless	7,120 (11.6%)
IN	Protective Investigation In Home	15,419 (25.1%)
OUT	Protective Investigation Out of Home	2,923 (4.8%)

**Eligibility Code**

The eligibility codes of **11**, **13**, **14R** and **IN** had the greatest number of children. The eligibility codes of **11D** and **FAM** had the fewest number of children.

**Service Use**

Children with 1 term who changed billing groups in eligibility codes **13** and **14R** had the greatest median service use (median 23 months). Children who did not change billing groups and had only 1 term in eligibility codes **11**, **FAM** and **IN** had the lowest median service use (median 4 months).

**Service Duration**

Children in eligibility codes **11**, **11D**, **13** and **14R** had the greatest median service duration (24 months). Children with 1 term who did not change billing groups in **11**, **FAM** and **IN** have the lowest median service duration (median 4 months).

**Effective Rate**

Not considering the children with 1 term (i.e., those who have an effective rate equal to 1.00), the highest median effective rates occurred in eligibility codes **13** (median effective rate 0.88), **14R** (median effective rate 0.86) and **11** (median effective rate 0.79) among children who experienced a change in billing group codes and 2 terms. The lowest median effective rates were among children in eligibility codes **IN** and **11D** (median effective rates 0.54).

## Discussion

During review of Table 2, the ECPRG compared and discussed trends in service statistics across eligibility codes, service terms, and change in billing group codes. Overall, it was encouraging that the majority of children did not experience breaks in service (as indicated by having 2 or more terms), and that children who changed billing group codes from BG1 had a longer and more effective service use than children who did not. The ECPRG further discussed the general operation and purpose of the eligibility codes, including **1N** *Protective In Home Investigation*, **11** *SR At Risk – In Home* and **11D** *SR At Risk – Diversion Protective Services*. The lower service usage among children who did not change from BG1 is expected due to the shorter eligibility time-periods for this group compared to other billing groups. Overall, the impression is that the results presented in Table 2 reflect that the programs are operating as expected.

Table 2. Service Statistics of Children Initially Enrolled in Billing Group 1 by Initial Eligibility Code

Initial BG1 Eligibility Code	Maximum Number of Terms	Does Billing Group Change over Service Records?	Number of Children	Child Effective Rate			Child Service Usage			Child Service Duration		
				Min	Median	Max	Min	Median	Max	Min	Median	Max
<b>11:</b> SR At Risk – In Home	<b>1</b>	<b>No</b>	6158	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.0	6.0	24.0	1.0	6.0	24.0
		<b>Yes</b>	2455	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.0	18.0	24.0	1.0	18.0	24.0
	<b>2</b>	<b>No</b>	499	0.08	0.71	0.92	2.0	10.0	22.0	4.0	15.0	24.0
		<b>Yes</b>	474	0.13	0.79	0.92	2.0	16.0	22.0	5.0	23.0	24.0
	<b>3+</b>	<b>No</b>	40	0.17	0.54	0.83	4.0	10.0	20.0	8.0	19.5	24.0
		<b>Yes</b>	54	0.21	0.63	0.83	5.0	14.0	20.0	14.0	24.0	24.0
<b>11D:</b> SR At Risk - Diversion Protective Services	<b>1</b>	<b>No</b>	1837	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.0	4.0	24.0	1.0	4.0	24.0
		<b>Yes</b>	890	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.0	15.0	24.0	2.0	15.0	24.0
	<b>2</b>	<b>No</b>	114	0.17	0.65	0.91	2.0	9.0	21.0	4.0	17.0	24.0
		<b>Yes</b>	190	0.13	0.75	0.92	2.0	14.0	22.0	7.0	20.0	24.0
	<b>3+</b>	<b>No</b>	7	0.38	0.54	0.75	9.0	13.0	18.0	20.0	24.0	24.0
		<b>Yes</b>	20	0.29	0.62	0.83	7.0	14.0	20.0	16.0	24.0	24.0
<b>13:</b> SR At Risk – Out of Home – Foster Care	<b>1</b>	<b>No</b>	8219	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.0	6.0	24.0	1.0	6.0	24.0
		<b>Yes</b>	407	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.0	23.0	24.0	2.0	23.0	24.0
	<b>2</b>	<b>No</b>	616	0.08	0.75	0.92	2.0	11.0	22.0	4.0	16.5	24.0
		<b>Yes</b>	64	0.25	0.88	0.92	3.0	19.0	22.0	9.0	24.0	24.0
	<b>3+</b>	<b>No</b>	50	0.28	0.61	0.83	4.0	12.0	20.0	8.0	22.0	24.0
		<b>Yes</b>	8	0.33	0.56	0.79	8.0	13.0	18.0	19.0	24.0	24.0
<b>14R:</b> SR At Risk - Out of Home –	<b>1</b>	<b>No</b>	8623	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.0	8.0	24.0	1.0	8.0	24.0
		<b>Yes</b>	1712	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.0	23.0	24.0	1.0	23.0	24.0
	<b>2</b>	<b>No</b>	655	0.15	0.76	0.92	2.00	12.0	22.0	4.0	18.0	24.0
		<b>Yes</b>	229	0.13	0.86	0.92	3.00	18.0	22.0	11.0	23.0	24.0

Relative/Non-Relative Care	3+	No	43	0.21	0.62	0.83	4.0	11.0	20.0	9.0	19.0	24.0
		Yes	40	0.38	0.67	0.83	5.0	14.5	20.0	11.0	24.0	24.0
FAM: Family Supports	1	No	1565	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.0	4.0	24.0	1.0	4.0	24.0
		Yes	686	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.0	16.0	24.0	2.0	16.0	24.0
	2	No	148	0.17	0.71	0.92	2.0	10.0	22.0	4.0	16.5	24.0
		Yes	148	0.17	0.78	0.92	2.0	15.0	22.0	9.0	22.0	24.0
	3+	No	5	0.67	0.76	0.83	14.0	17.0	20.0	21.0	22.0	24.0
		Yes	20	0.17	0.65	0.83	4.0	12.5	20.0	10.0	23.0	24.0
HOME: At Risk - Homeless	1	No	4499	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.0	6.0	24.0	1.0	6.0	24.0
		Yes	1573	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.0	18.0	24.0	1.0	18.0	24.0
	2	No	513	0.08	0.75	0.92	2.0	12.0	22.0	4.0	17.0	24.0
		Yes	435	0.13	0.76	0.92	2.0	15.0	22.0	5.0	23.0	24.0
	3+	No	52	0.30	0.62	0.83	5.0	12.0	20.0	10.0	22.0	24.0
		Yes	48	0.22	0.64	0.79	4.0	11.0	19.0	9.0	22.5	24.0
IN: Protective Investigation In Home	1	No	8375	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.0	4.0	24.0	1.0	4.0	24.0
		Yes	5259	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.0	14.0	24.0	1.0	14.0	24.0
	2	No	656	0.08	0.67	0.92	2.0	9.0	22.0	4.0	16.0	24.0
		Yes	962	0.08	0.77	0.92	2.0	14.0	22.0	4.0	21.0	24.0
	3+	No	49	0.14	0.54	0.81	3.0	11.0	19.0	8.0	19.0	24.0
		Yes	118	0.29	0.58	0.83	6.0	12.0	20.0	12.0	22.0	24.0
OUT: Protective Investigation Out of Home	1	No	2268	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.0	6.0	24.0	1.0	6.0	24.0
		Yes	430	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.0	18.0	24.0	1.0	18.0	24.0
	2	No	151	0.08	0.71	0.92	2.0	10.0	22.0	4.0	18.0	24.0
		Yes	58	0.25	0.78	0.92	4.0	16.0	22.0	6.0	23.0	24.0
	3+	No	9	0.26	0.56	0.71	6.0	10.0	17.0	16.0	22.0	24.0
		Yes	7	0.50	0.58	0.82	12.0	13.0	18.0	16.0	24.0	24.0

## Reference

Early Childhood Policy Research Group (2022). *Economic Self Sufficiency Analysis (ESSA): Annual report*. [Submitted to the Florida Division of Early Learning].