

**From:** Colle, Hope  
**Sent time:** Thursday, January 19, 2012 9:06:09 AM  
**To:** Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) <Cari@excelined.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Sentinel: Early-learning audit shows fraud, 'parade of horrible'

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hey- thanks for sharing! How you doing? I miss melinda and YOU!!

I am in Orlando and headed home tomorrow.

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**From:** Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) [mailto:Cari@excelined.org]  
**Sent:** Thu 1/19/2012 9:02 AM  
**To:** Colle, Hope  
**Subject:** FW: Sentinel: Early-learning audit shows fraud, 'parade of horrible'

See email below!

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**From:** Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org)  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 19, 2012 9:02 AM  
**To:** gatorbyte2007@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** FW: Sentinel: Early-learning audit shows fraud, 'parade of horrible'

YIKES! Here it is.

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**From:** Jaryn Emhof ([Jaryn@afloridapromise.org](mailto:Jaryn@afloridapromise.org))  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 19, 2012 8:42 AM  
**To:** Patricia Levesque ([Patricia@afloridapromise.org](mailto:Patricia@afloridapromise.org)); Joanna Hassell ([Joanna@afloridapromise.org](mailto:Joanna@afloridapromise.org)); Mary Laura Bragg ([MaryLaura@AFloridapromise.org](mailto:MaryLaura@AFloridapromise.org)); Cari Miller ([Cari@afloridapromise.org](mailto:Cari@afloridapromise.org))  
**Subject:** Sentinel: Early-learning audit shows fraud, 'parade of horrible'

## Early-learning audit shows fraud, 'parade of horrible'

[Leslie Postal](#), Orlando Sentinel  
<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/features/education/os-early-learning-fraud-audit-20120118.0.4964671.story>

Florida's early-learning program may have allowed thousands of people to fraudulently obtain subsidized childcare services for their children, according to a new state audit.

The audit of the state's Office of Early Learning found more than 16,000 cases in which people received both subsidized childcare — meant to help low-income residents afford daycare while they worked — and state unemployment benefits.

This happened even though both the child-care and unemployment programs were run out of the Agency for Workforce Innovation during the time period reviewed, said Sherill Norman, audit manager with the state's Auditor General. The early-learning office last year was moved to the Florida Department of Education.

The sweeping audit detailed 32 problems at the early-learning office, which oversees \$1 billion worth of programs — both the school-readiness program that provides subsidized childcare, and Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program that provides free preschool to 4-year-olds.

The program's government structure is adequate, but its effectiveness was "impaired," Norman said. The office had not "effectively administered its duties," she added.

The audit also showed, among other issues, that there were "double digit" error rates in payments to childcare and pre-K providers, and a failure to review in a timely way the plans of the 31 local coalitions that administer the programs statewide.

"This is quite the parade of horrible," said Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fort Walton Beach, after the report was presented to a Florida House committee this week.

Mel Jurado, appointed director of the early learning office in the fall, said she is working to fix all the problems and is setting up an internal fraud unit.

"We have addressed each and every one of the findings," Jurado told House lawmakers.

The auditors found 16,589 people who received both childcare and unemployment benefits. Those individuals collectively received nearly \$40 million in child-care benefits and more than \$54 million in unemployment, the audit found.

Auditors investigated 26 of those cases — "the worst of the worst," Norman said — and found 14 that were worth referring for a fraud investigation. Nine are still being reviewed and three were dismissed.

Jurado said her office is working to track down all of the others, trying to determine if fraud was committed.

Norman said in some cases receiving both child-care and unemployment benefits might be legitimate, but she expected a "large percentage" of fraud would be found as the records were reviewed.

"This is just awful," said Rep. Janet Adkins, R-Fernandina Beach.

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