

ALACHUA COUNTY QUESTION 1

In order to provide developmental, preventive, and supportive services for children, such as early learning supports and out of school enrichment programming, should an independent special district titled “The Children’s Trust of Alachua County” be created and authorized to levy an annual ad valorem tax not to exceed one-half mill (1/2) for 12 years?

The Children’s Trust of Alachua County would help to coordinate and fund organizations that provide programs and services which respond to the needs of children of all ages throughout the County. Similar organizations can be found in other counties in Florida such as Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie. The Trust would, like the library district, be overseen by an independent board.

If you vote YES

- Approximately seven million dollars will be raised annually to provide funding for children’s services in the county.
- A governing board of ten people will be established to decide how the funds will be spent. Five spots will be predetermined by state law and five will be at large seats.
- The Trust can be authorized for up 12 years and then reauthorized. The County also will be able to request reauthorization at any time if the Trust is not living up to expectations.
- Alachua County homeowners will pay an extra one-half mill in property taxes. Based on 2017’s property values, this amounts to about \$3.00 a month for the median household.
- All children in Alachua County will be eligible to benefit from programs supported by the Trust, such as early learning, tutoring and literacy programs, nurse home visiting programs, professional training for child care providers, and quality rating systems for preschools and after school programs.

If you vote NO

- Some children’s services will still be offered in Alachua County but the funding sources will continue to be unstable since guaranteed funding support will not be available.
- Children, families, and communities in Alachua County will be at a disadvantage. Research has shown that early learning/intervention programs are the most effective way to reduce behavioral problems among children later in life, such as delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse, school dropout, and teen pregnancy.

Supporters of this referendum include the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce, Florida AFL-CIO, United Way of North Central Florida, the Alachua County Council of PTAs, and the League of Women Voters of Alachua County.