

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to funding for the school readiness  
3           program; amending s. 1002.89, F.S.; deleting a  
4           requirement that specified funds be used to increase  
5           the number of children served; conforming provisions  
6           and cross-references to changes made by the act;  
7           creating s. 1002.90, F.S.; requiring the principals of  
8           the Early Learning Programs Estimating Conference to  
9           annually develop official cost-of-care information;  
10          providing requirements for conference principals;  
11          requiring the Division of Early Learning to provide  
12          conference principals with specified data; requiring  
13          the conference to annually provide the official cost-  
14          of-care information to the Legislature by a specified  
15          date; amending ss. 1002.81 and 1002.82, F.S.;  
16          conforming cross-references to changes made by the  
17          act; providing an effective date.

18  
19   Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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21           Section 1. Subsections (4) through (6) of section 1002.89,  
22   Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (3) through (5),  
23   respectively, and present subsections (1), (3), and (5) of that  
24   section are amended to read:

25           1002.89   School readiness program; funding.—

26 (1) Funding for the school readiness program shall be  
 27 allocated among the early learning coalitions in accordance with  
 28 ~~this section and~~ the General Appropriations Act and s. 1002.90.

29 ~~(3) All cost savings and all revenues received through a~~  
 30 ~~mandatory sliding fee scale shall be used to increase the number~~  
 31 ~~of children served.~~

32 (4)~~(5)~~ Costs shall be kept to the minimum necessary for  
 33 the efficient and effective administration of the school  
 34 readiness program with the highest priority of expenditure being  
 35 direct services for eligible children. However, no more than 5  
 36 percent of ~~the funds described in subsection (4)~~ may be used for  
 37 administrative costs and no more than 22 percent of ~~the funds~~  
 38 ~~described in subsection (4)~~ may be used in any fiscal year for  
 39 any combination of administrative costs, quality activities, and  
 40 nondirect services as follows:

41 (a) Administrative costs as described in 45 C.F.R. s.  
 42 98.54, which shall include monitoring providers using the  
 43 standard methodology adopted under s. 1002.82 to improve  
 44 compliance with state and federal regulations and law pursuant  
 45 to the requirements of the statewide provider contract adopted  
 46 under s. 1002.82(2)(m).

47 (b) Activities to improve the quality of child care as  
 48 described in 45 C.F.R. s. 98.53, which shall be limited to the  
 49 following:

- 50 1. Developing, establishing, expanding, operating, and

51 coordinating resource and referral programs specifically related  
52 to the provision of comprehensive consumer education to parents  
53 and the public to promote informed child care choices specified  
54 in 45 C.F.R. s. 98.33.

55 2. Awarding grants and providing financial support to  
56 school readiness program providers and their staff to assist  
57 them in meeting applicable state requirements for the program  
58 assessment required under s. 1002.82(2)(n), child care  
59 performance standards, implementing developmentally appropriate  
60 curricula and related classroom resources that support  
61 curricula, providing literacy supports, and providing continued  
62 professional development and training. Any grants awarded  
63 pursuant to this subparagraph shall comply with ss. 215.971 and  
64 287.058.

65 3. Providing training, technical assistance, and financial  
66 support to school readiness program providers, staff, and  
67 parents on standards, child screenings, child assessments, child  
68 development research and best practices, developmentally  
69 appropriate curricula, character development, teacher-child  
70 interactions, age-appropriate discipline practices, health and  
71 safety, nutrition, first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the  
72 recognition of communicable diseases, and child abuse detection,  
73 prevention, and reporting.

74 4. Providing, from among the funds provided for the  
75 activities described in subparagraphs 1.-3., adequate funding

76 | for infants and toddlers as necessary to meet federal  
 77 | requirements related to expenditures for quality activities for  
 78 | infant and toddler care.

79 |         5. Improving the monitoring of compliance with, and  
 80 | enforcement of, applicable state and local requirements as  
 81 | described in and limited by 45 C.F.R. s. 98.40.

82 |         6. Responding to Warm-Line requests by providers and  
 83 | parents, including providing developmental and health screenings  
 84 | to school readiness program children.

85 |         (c) Nondirect services as described in applicable Office  
 86 | of Management and Budget instructions are those services not  
 87 | defined as administrative, direct, or quality services that are  
 88 | required to administer the school readiness program. Such  
 89 | services include, but are not limited to:

- 90 |             1. Assisting families to complete the required application
- 91 | and eligibility documentation.
- 92 |             2. Determining child and family eligibility.
- 93 |             3. Recruiting eligible child care providers.
- 94 |             4. Processing and tracking attendance records.
- 95 |             5. Developing and maintaining a statewide child care
- 96 | information system.

97 |  
 98 | As used in this paragraph, the term "nondirect services" does  
 99 | not include payments to school readiness program providers for  
 100 | direct services provided to children who are eligible under s.

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101 1002.87, administrative costs as described in paragraph (a), or  
102 quality activities as described in paragraph (b).

103 Section 2. Section 1002.90, Florida Statutes, is created  
104 to read:

105 1002.90 School readiness cost-of-care information.-  
106 Annually, the principals of the Early Learning Programs  
107 Estimating Conference established in s. 216.136 shall develop  
108 official cost-of-care information based on actual school  
109 readiness direct services program expenditures and information  
110 provided pursuant to s. 1002.92(4). Conference principals shall  
111 agree on the cost of child care by level and care type, the  
112 eligible population data, and the methods of computation. The  
113 Division of Early Learning shall provide the conference  
114 principals with all requested and necessary data to develop such  
115 information. The data may include a matrix by early learning  
116 coalition of any full-time equivalent changes made by the  
117 division as part of its administration of the school readiness  
118 program. The Early Learning Programs Estimating Conference shall  
119 provide the official cost-of-care information to the Legislature  
120 at least 90 days before the scheduled annual legislative  
121 session.

122 Section 3. Subsection (4) of section 1002.81, Florida  
123 Statutes, is amended to read:

124 1002.81 Definitions.-Consistent with the requirements of  
125 45 C.F.R. parts 98 and 99 and as used in this part, the term:

126 (4) "Direct enhancement services" means services for  
 127 families and children that are in addition to payments for the  
 128 placement of children in the school readiness program. Direct  
 129 enhancement services for families and children may include  
 130 supports for providers, parent training and involvement  
 131 activities, and strategies to meet the needs of unique  
 132 populations and local eligibility priorities. Direct enhancement  
 133 services offered by an early learning coalition shall be  
 134 consistent with the activities prescribed in s. 1002.89(4)(b) ~~s.~~  
 135 ~~1002.89(5)(b)~~.

136 Section 4. Paragraph (a) of subsection (7) of section  
 137 1002.82, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

138 1002.82 Department of Education; powers and duties.—

139 (7) By January 1 of each year, the department shall  
 140 annually publish on its website a report of its activities  
 141 conducted under this section. The report must include a summary  
 142 of the coalitions' annual reports, a statewide summary, and the  
 143 following:

144 (a) An analysis of early learning activities throughout  
 145 the state, including the school readiness program and the  
 146 Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.

147 1. The total and average number of children served in the  
 148 school readiness program, enumerated by age, eligibility  
 149 priority category, and coalition, and the total number of  
 150 children served in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education

151 Program.

152 2. A summary of expenditures by coalition, by fund source,  
153 including a breakdown by coalition of the percentage of  
154 expenditures for administrative activities, quality activities,  
155 nondirect services, and direct services for children.

156 3. A description of the department's and each coalition's  
157 expenditures by fund source for the quality and enhancement  
158 activities described in s. 1002.89(4)(b) ~~s. 1002.89(5)(b)~~.

159 4. A summary of annual findings and collections related to  
160 provider fraud and parent fraud.

161 5. Data regarding the coalitions' delivery of early  
162 learning programs.

163 6. The total number of children disenrolled statewide and  
164 the reason for disenrollment.

165 7. The total number of providers by provider type.

166 8. The number of school readiness program providers who  
167 have completed the program assessment required under paragraph  
168 (2)(n); the number of providers who have not met the minimum  
169 program assessment composite score for contracting established  
170 under paragraph (2)(n); and the number of providers that have an  
171 active improvement plan based on the results of the program  
172 assessment under paragraph (2)(n).

173 9. The total number of provider contracts revoked and the  
174 reasons for revocation.

175 Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.