

By Representative Clemons

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to child care; establishing a
3 child care tuition assistance program;
4 providing for allocation of state and federal
5 funds and distribution to families of eligible
6 children; requiring the Department of Education
7 and the Department of Children and Family
8 Services to establish eligibility requirements
9 for children and quality standards for child
10 care centers; requiring a simplified point of
11 entry to child care services; providing for
12 rules; providing an effective date.

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14 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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16 Section 1. (1) There is established a child care
17 tuition assistance program to be administered jointly by the
18 Department of Education and the Department of Children and
19 Family Services. Under this program state and federal funds
20 available for child care shall be allocated to local entities,
21 including district school boards and community child care
22 coordinating agencies, for distribution to families of
23 children eligible to participate in the program. Allocations
24 shall be based on a uniform value for tuition assistance, to
25 be determined by the Department of Education and the
26 Department of Children and Family Services, and the expected
27 number of children to be served.

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29 (2) The Department of Education and the Department of
30 Children and Family Services shall establish eligibility
31 requirements for receipt of full tuition assistance or partial
tuition assistance based on family income.

1 (3) A family may use the tuition assistance to pay for
2 child care at any child care center designated by the
3 Department of Education or the Department of Children and
4 Family Services. To be designated as a center available for
5 participation in the tuition assistance program, a child care
6 center must meet the quality standards developed jointly by
7 the departments. These standards must include, but not be
8 limited to, developmentally appropriate programming,
9 appropriately trained staff, fair and equitable caregiver
10 salaries, multiple parent involvement opportunities, and
11 access to comprehensive services for both children and
12 families.

13 (4) Each county must provide a simplified point of
14 entry to the child care services provided under the tuition
15 assistance program and develop a streamlined system for
16 enrolling children in appropriate child care programs and
17 issuing tuition assistance. A uniform database must be in
18 place in each county to maintain an unduplicated list of
19 eligible children waiting for child care.

20 (5) The Department of Education and the Department of
21 Children and Family Services shall adopt rules necessary to
22 implement the provisions of this program.

23 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 1997.

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26 HOUSE SUMMARY

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28 Establishes a child care tuition assistance program to be
29 administered jointly by the Department of Education and
30 the Department of Children and Family Services. Requires
31 a uniform value for tuition assistance, qualifications
 for student eligibility, quality standards for child care
 centers, and a simplified point of entry system.