

**STORAGE NAME:** h3909.cfe

**DATE:** April 6, 1998

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON  
CHILDREN AND FAMILY EMPOWERMENT  
BILL RESEARCH & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

**BILL #:** HB 3909

**RELATING TO:** State-funded education and care programs for infants and toddlers

**SPONSOR(S):** Representative Miller

**COMPANION BILL(S):** Similar SB 660

**ORIGINATING COMMITTEE(S)/COMMITTEE(S) OF REFERENCE:**

- (1) CHILDREN AND FAMILY EMPOWERMENT
  - (2)
  - (3)
  - (4)
  - (5)
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**I. SUMMARY:**

House Bill 3909 requires each state-funded education and care program for children from birth to five years of age to provide activities to foster brain development in infants and toddlers. The programs must include classical music and at least 30 minutes of reading to the children each day. The program must provide training for the children's parents, including direct dialogue and interaction between teachers and parents demonstrating the urgency of brain development in the first year of the child's life.

The Executive Office of the Governor must contract for an evaluation of programs to stimulate brain development and submit a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2000.

The only predicted fiscal costs are \$100,000, the cost of the evaluation.

The bill takes effect upon becoming a law.

II. SUBSTANTIVE RESEARCH:

A. PRESENT SITUATION:

Education and child care programs are not currently required to provide training specific to fostering infant brain development, nor are they required to provide classical music and 30 minutes of reading each day. Child-rearing practices for infants and toddlers traditionally have included singing, talking, telling stories, and providing textiles and toys for the child's play. Those traditional practices stimulate the child's overall development. Early education and care programs recognize national recommendations for developmentally appropriate practice. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recognizes three important kinds of information educators must keep in mind when selecting the day's activities for children: 1) the activities, materials, and experiences must be age appropriate; 2) the activities must be selected in consideration of the interests, strengths, and needs of the individual child; and 3) the activities must be appropriate in the social and cultural context of the child and his or her family.

**Infant Brain Development Research**

Research in brain development suggests that policymakers should reconsider many education policies related to early childhood and special education (Education Commission of the States, 1997). Early-childhood education has historically been defined as occurring generally between ages three and six years old. However, research clarifying the critical period of learning may suggest that the period between birth until age three an even more crucial time (Education Commission of the States, 1996).

- ◆ A growing body of research indicates that the first three years of life are exceptionally critical to laying the foundation for future learning.
- ◆ Researchers have confirmed that the infant brain requires almost nonstop stimulation from birth to age three to develop properly.
- ◆ Babies need to be sung to, talked to, held, touched and kept warm and safe for their brains to develop properly.
- ◆ Babies are born with most of the nerve cells, called neurons, they will ever have. Furthermore, the major connections between those neurons, called synapses, are joined during the first five to six years of life, although trimming and fine tuning of the number of synapses continues until perhaps as late as puberty. The number of synapses remains stable through most of adult life and then gradually decreases in old age (Education Commission of the States, 1996).
- ◆ A recent Carnegie study pointed out that "the quality of young children's environment and social experience has a decisive, long lasting impact on their well-being and ability to learn" (as cited in Adams and Poersch, 1997).

The environment where an infant or toddler spends time should be rich in language. Children are born with a propensity to develop language and they learn the language they hear. Scientists generally agree that primary functions such as vision and language are acquired most naturally and quickly during biologically determined time slots (Education Commission of the States, 1996). Patricia Kuhl, professor and chairwoman at the University of Washington, reported that **infants less than 6 months old respond with equal interest to sounds of all languages. However, infants rapidly begin to**

develop “language magnets” that screen out fine contrasts among the sounds of languages different from that of their caregiver, which may explain why children have more difficulty learning languages later in life. Talking, telling stories, reading, and singing teach a child how language occurs in social relationships.

The Georgia Pre-K program reports that **music imparts to children a sense of rhythm which is important not only for music but for the development of mathematical and spacial abilities as well.** While studies show the relationship of early music training to the development of spacial and mathematical abilities, there is not a body of research to show a direct link between classical music and intellectual development.

One of the most well regarded early childhood intervention programs, the High/Scope Perry Preschool program, featured a variety of activities including reading and music. Evaluations of the High/Scope Perry Preschool program have indicated positive results for a variety of educational and economic outcomes lasting into young adulthood (Reynolds et al., 1997). Children in the preschool group scored higher than the comparison group on performance tests at ages 4-7, 14, 19, and 27. The preschool children also spent less than half as much time in special education and were more likely to graduate from high school than the children who did not attend the preschool (Miller, 1996). The preschool children were also found to be more able to compete in the economy as adults and contribute back to society. In addition, the program group had significantly fewer lifetime arrests and adult arrests at age 27.

Features of the High/Scope Perry Preschool project include (Barry, 1994):

- ◆ A circle time in the morning, during which children share experiences and plan their day and a circle time in the afternoon when children can talk and illustrate on paper the day’s experiences. (This enforces that literacy is an every day experience.)
- ◆ **A variety of activity stations for the children to choose from such as stations for reading, costume stations for role playing, and science, art, and music centers**
- ◆ Open, labeled shelves where children can find and return toys
- ◆ Age appropriate toys
- ◆ Use of symbols, as well as words, for objects the children use
- ◆ Drawings and pictures on the wall
- ◆ Outdoor time

### **Current Florida Law**

The prekindergarten early intervention program established in s. 230.2305, F.S., requires a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate according to current nationally recognized recommendations for high-quality prekindergarten programs. The Legislature annually appropriates \$3 million for the Florida First Start Program, established in s. 230.2303, F.S., to serve children from birth to 3 years of age and their parents. The First Start program requires monthly home visits by parent educators who teach parents methods for enhancing their children’s intellectual, social, and physical development.

Currently the subsidized child care programs are using a child care program assessment tool, defined in s. 402.3051(1)(a), F.S. The tool was developed by the department to determine quality child care for children enrolled in subsidized child care; it was modeled after the assessment instrument utilized by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. According to the department, directly operated and contracted providers follow a developmentally appropriate curriculum for children from birth to five years of age. However, due to the federally mandated parental choice (45 CFR 98.30), the department is also required to have a voucher program. The assessment tool is not required for the voucher program.

**References**

Adams, G. C. and Poersch, N.O. (1997). Key facts about child care and early education: A briefing book. Washington D.C.: Children's Defense Fund.

Barry, J. (1994, November 9). Day care that turns kids on. The Miami Herald, pp.E1-E2.

Education Commission of the States. (1996). Bridging the gap between neuroscience and education. Denver, CO:Author.

Education Commission of the States. (1997). State Education Leader, 15 (1).

Miller, J. (1996, November). Early childhood education. Education Commission of the States Policy Brief.

Reynolds, A., Mann, E., Meidel, W. & Smokowski, P. (1997). The state of early intervention: Effectiveness, myths and realities, new directions. Focus, 19 (1), 5-11.

**B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:**

The bill requires each state-funded education and care program for children from birth to five years of age to provide activities to foster brain development in infants and toddlers. A program must provide an environment rich in language and music and filled with objects of various colors, shapes, textures, and sizes to stimulate visual, tactile, auditory, and linguistic senses in the children. The programs must include classical music and at least 30 minutes of reading to the children each day.

The program must provide training for the children's parents including direct dialogue between teachers and parents demonstrating the urgency of brain development in the first year of the child's life.

The Executive Office of the Governor must contract for an evaluation of the program. A report of the results of the program must be presented to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1, 2000.

C. APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES:

1. Less Government:

a. Does the bill create, increase or reduce, either directly or indirectly:

(1) any authority to make rules or adjudicate disputes?

No

(2) any new responsibilities, obligations or work for other governmental or private organizations or individuals?

Yes, the Executive Office of the Governor is required to contract for an evaluation of programs to stimulate brain development.

Any state-funded education and care programs for children that are not already providing the requirements specified in the bill will be required to do so.

No specific duties for the Department of Children and Family Services are delineated in the bill. However, the Department of Children and Family Services will incur increased monitoring responsibilities associated with the additional child care services required by the bill.

(3) Any entitlement to a government service or benefit?

No

b. If an agency or program is eliminated or reduced:

(1) what responsibilities, costs and powers are passed on to another program, agency, level of government, or private entity?

N/A

(2) what is the cost of such responsibility at the new level/agency?

N/A

(3) how is the new agency accountable to the people governed?

N/A

2. Lower Taxes:

- a. Does the bill increase anyone's taxes?

No

- b. Does the bill require or authorize an increase in any fees?

No

- c. Does the bill reduce total taxes, both rates and revenues?

No

- d. Does the bill reduce total fees, both rates and revenues?

No

- e. Does the bill authorize any fee or tax increase by any local government?

No

3. Personal Responsibility:

- a. Does the bill reduce or eliminate an entitlement to government services or subsidy?

No

- b. Do the beneficiaries of the legislation directly pay any portion of the cost of implementation and operation?

No

4. Individual Freedom:

- a. Does the bill increase the allowable options of individuals or private organizations/associations to conduct their own affairs?

No

- b. Does the bill prohibit, or create new government interference with, any presently lawful activity?

Yes, the bill adds additional requirements for providers of education and child care.

5. Family Empowerment:

a. If the bill purports to provide services to families or children:

(1) Who evaluates the family's needs?

N/A

(2) Who makes the decisions?

N/A

(3) Are private alternatives permitted?

N/A

(4) Are families required to participate in a program?

Yes, they are required to participate in direct dialogue and interaction with teachers in order to learn about the urgency of brain development in the first year of a child's life.

(5) Are families penalized for not participating in a program?

No

b. Does the bill directly affect the legal rights and obligations between family members?

No

c. If the bill creates or changes a program providing services to families or children, in which of the following does the bill vest control of the program, either through direct participation or appointment authority:

(1) parents and guardians?

No

(2) service providers?

Yes, service providers are responsible for implementing the requirements provided in the bill.

(3) government employees/agencies?

Yes, however, the bill does not delineate which department will monitor and enforce the provisions of the bill.

D. STATUTE(S) AFFECTED:

None

E. SECTION-BY-SECTION RESEARCH:

**Section 1** provides that each state-funded education and care program for children from birth to five years of age must provide activities to foster brain development in infants and toddlers. The program must provide an environment rich in language and music and filled with objects of various colors, shapes, textures, and sizes to stimulate visual, tactile, auditory, and linguistic sense in the children and must include classical music and at least 30 minutes of reading to the children each day. A program may be offered through an existing early childhood program and must provide training for the children's parents including direct dialogue and interaction between the teachers and parents demonstrating the urgency of brain development in the first year of a child's life.

**Section 2** requires the Executive Office of the Governor will contract for an evaluation of programs to stimulate brain development in infants and toddlers and will report the results of the evaluation to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House by January 1, 2000.

**Section 3** provides the act will take effect upon becoming a law.

III. FISCAL RESEARCH & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE AGENCIES/STATE FUNDS:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

The Department of Children and Family Services reports that there will be no costs to them associated with monitoring the requirements for classical music and reading. Also, they report that there should be no costs to the publicly-funded providers associated with implementing the requirements for classical music and reading.

The Executive Office of the Governor would incur the cost of an evaluation which should not exceed \$100,000.

2. Recurring Effects:

N/A



3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

N/A

4. Total Revenues and Expenditures:

No more than \$100,000

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AS A WHOLE:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

N/A

2. Recurring Effects:

N/A

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

N/A

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

1. Direct Private Sector Costs:

N/A

2. Direct Private Sector Benefits:

N/A

3. Effects on Competition, Private Enterprise and Employment Markets:

N/A

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

N/A

IV. CONSEQUENCES OF ARTICLE VII, SECTION 18 OF THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION:

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE MANDATES PROVISION:

This bill does not require counties or municipalities to spend funds or to take any action requiring the expenditure of funds.

**B. REDUCTION OF REVENUE RAISING AUTHORITY:**

This bill does not reduce the authority that municipalities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate.

**C. REDUCTION OF STATE TAX SHARED WITH COUNTIES AND MUNICIPALITIES:**

This bill does not reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with counties or municipalities.

**V. COMMENTS:**

The Department of Children and Family Services is required to provide parental choice in the subsidized child care program. If this requirement were mandated to providers who accept vouchers, and many chose not to participate in the subsidized program, parental choice would be severely limited.

The Department of Children and Family Services does not have a mechanism for monitoring compliance with the specific requirements for classical music and for 30 minutes of reading each day.

**VI. AMENDMENTS OR COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES:**

N/A

**VII. SIGNATURES:**

**COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILY EMPOWERMENT:**

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