

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to education; providing that
3 state-funded education and care programs for
4 infants and toddlers must foster brain
5 development; providing an appropriation while
6 requiring an evaluation and a report; providing
7 an effective date.

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9 WHEREAS, at birth, a child has one hundred billion
10 brain cells that will be developed by the experiences of life,
11 and

12 WHEREAS, the stimulation that causes brain development
13 can be positive, such as conversation, music, and parental
14 love, or it can be negative, such as neglect or emotional and
15 physical abuse, and

16 WHEREAS, during the first year of a child's life the
17 connections between the cells, the synapses, increase
18 twenty-fold, making the first year a crucial time for brain
19 development, and

20 WHEREAS, infants develop synapses when they listen to
21 language and music, see colors and shapes, and feel and handle
22 objects of different sizes, shapes, and textures, and

23 WHEREAS, there is no other time in a child's life as
24 productive for brain development as the first year, NOW

25 THEREFORE,

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

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29 Section 1. Each state-funded education and care
30 program for children from birth to 5 years of age must provide
31 activities to foster brain development in infants and

1 toddlers. A program must provide an environment rich in
2 language and music and filled with objects of various colors,
3 shapes, textures, and sizes to stimulate visual, tactile,
4 auditory, and linguistic senses in the children and must
5 include classical music and at least 30 minutes of reading to
6 the children each day. A program may be offered through an
7 existing early childhood program such as Healthy Start, the
8 Title I program, subsidized child care, the prekindergarten
9 early-intervention program, Florida First Start, the Head
10 Start program, or a private childcare program. A program must
11 provide training for the infants' and toddlers' parents
12 including direct dialogue and interaction between teachers and
13 parents demonstrating the urgency of brain development in the
14 first year of a child's life.

15 Section 2. There is appropriated \$50,000 from the
16 General Revenue Fund to the Department of Health to contract
17 for an evaluation of programs to stimulate brain development
18 in infants and toddlers and shall report the results to the
19 evaluation to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of
20 the House of Representatives by January 1, 2000.

21 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 1998.
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