

By Representative Kosmas

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to early childhood assistance;
3 creating s. 411.21, F.S.; creating the Children
4 First Program; providing legislative intent;
5 creating the Children First governing board;
6 providing membership and responsibilities;
7 creating the Children First coordinating
8 council; providing membership and
9 responsibilities; providing for funding;
10 providing for members' per diem and travel
11 expenses; requiring a report by the State
12 Coordinating Council for Early Childhood
13 Services; providing for termination of said
14 council on a specified date; providing for
15 staffing for the Children First governing board
16 and coordinating council; providing for
17 creation of county Children First coalitions;
18 providing membership and responsibilities;
19 providing for coalition initiation grants and
20 for block grant funding and certain waiver
21 authority; requiring development of community
22 plans; providing plan requirements; providing
23 procedures and a funding schedule; providing
24 for evaluation and performance measures;
25 requiring annual reports; providing
26 responsibility of the Governor's Commission on
27 Education for initial implementation; providing
28 for creation of local school readiness
29 coalitions; providing for award of grants;
30 amending ss. 230.2303, 383.14, 391.304,
31 402.281, 402.305, 402.3052, 402.45, 411.204,

1 and 411.221, F.S., to conform to the act;
2 repealing s. 411.222(4), F.S., relating to the
3 Coordinating Council for Early Childhood
4 Services; providing effective dates.

5
6 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

7
8 Section 1. Section 411.21, Florida Statutes, is
9 created to read:

10 411.21 Children First Program.--

11 (1) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.--

12 (a) It is the intent of the Legislature that the
13 well-being of children from birth to 5 years of age become a
14 top priority of the people of the state, including families,
15 local and state government and their agencies, charitable
16 organizations, children's services providers, the private
17 sector, and the health care, early care and education,
18 disabilities, and child welfare systems.

19 (b) The Legislature recognizes that high-quality early
20 childhood health care, child care, and education experiences
21 increase children's chances of educational success and reduce
22 the need for costly future intervention and remediation. It is
23 the intent of the Legislature that all children in Florida,
24 from birth until they enter kindergarten, have access to
25 quality developmental assistance to ensure that they are ready
26 to succeed when they enter kindergarten.

27 (c) The Legislature recognizes that parents are
28 responsible for the well-being of their children. The
29 Legislature further recognizes that the condition of children
30 in Florida must be improved. It is the intent of the
31 Legislature that local communities assist families, where

1 desired, in ensuring the well-being of children under 5 years
2 of age, and that state government assist local communities and
3 parents in providing high-quality early childhood experiences
4 and care with a minimum of state interference.

5 (d) The Legislature finds that for families to move to
6 and maintain economic self-sufficiency, Florida must have an
7 efficient way for these families to access quality child care
8 and health care services. The Legislature recognizes that
9 quality in early care and education arrangements provides
10 significant benefits for children and families.

11 (e) It is the intent of the Legislature that all
12 programs and services serving children in Florida during the
13 first 5 years of life, whether health care, child care, child
14 welfare, or formal education, are considered school readiness
15 programs. The Legislature finds that despite the efforts of
16 hundreds of thousands of Floridians and increased
17 collaboration among service providers, services for young
18 children remain uncoordinated, of uneven quality, and
19 inaccessible to many. It is the intent of the Legislature that
20 a true continuum of high-quality, coordinated, and
21 comprehensive services be available to all children under 5
22 years of age.

23 (f) The Legislature recognizes that the new brain
24 research emphasizes the critical importance of the first years
25 of life in children's emotional, social, and cognitive
26 development, and that these scientific discoveries create an
27 opportunity to apply the findings to all programs and services
28 for children from birth to 5 years of age. The Legislature
29 also recognizes that the period of time from birth to 3 years
30 of age is an optimal time for learning in the areas of motor
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1 development, emotional control, vision, social attachment,
2 vocabulary, second language, and logic.

3 (2) For purposes of this section, school readiness
4 programs shall include all programs funded with state,
5 federal, lottery, or local public funds providing services to
6 children from birth to 5 years of age in the areas of health
7 care, early care and education, disabilities, and child
8 welfare.

9 (3) CHILDREN FIRST GOVERNING BOARD.--

10 (a) There is created a Children First governing board
11 with responsibility for creating and maintaining coordinated
12 programmatic, administrative, and fiscal policies, and a
13 common set of early care and education standards for all
14 school readiness programs. The governing board shall determine
15 guidelines for granting waivers to these policies and
16 standards. The governing board shall establish goals for early
17 childhood development leading to school readiness, and
18 policies that lead to the achievement of these goals with
19 oversight to ensure achievement. The governing board shall
20 develop a strategic plan for accomplishing these goals.

21 (b) The members of the Children First governing board
22 shall include the Governor, the minority and majority leaders
23 of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the
24 Commissioner of Education, the chair of the Child Care
25 Executive Partnership, the chair of the WAGES Program State
26 Board of Directors, the president of the Florida Pediatric
27 Society, the chair of the Florida Council of 100, and five
28 additional members representing private sector, community, and
29 social service leaders selected by a majority vote of the
30 other 10 members.

31

1 (c) The governing board shall be chaired by the
2 Governor.

3 (d) The members of the governing board shall
4 participate without proxy. Meetings of the governing board
5 shall be held at least quarterly to establish goals and policy
6 for the well-being of Florida's youngest children and to
7 consider reports from the Children First coordinating council.

8 (e) The governing board shall determine the
9 feasibility of combining funding streams for school readiness
10 programs into a Children First Education Trust Fund.

11 (3) CHILDREN FIRST COORDINATING COUNCIL.--

12 (a) There is created a Children First coordinating
13 council with responsibility for implementing policies
14 developed by the governing board, monitoring progress toward
15 achievement of the goals established by the governing board,
16 assessing gaps in current services statewide, recommending
17 quality standards, monitoring the implementation of a common
18 set of early care and education standards, approving community
19 plans, facilitating local implementation, providing technical
20 assistance, recommending common eligibility requirements for
21 similar programs, and helping to secure waivers, within the
22 guidelines established by the governing board and changes in
23 law from the state and federal governments. The coordinating
24 council shall make recommendations to the governing board
25 regarding changes in state law, rule, or agency policy that
26 may assist communities in improving the well-being of children
27 from birth to 5 years of age. On or before October 1, 1999,
28 the coordinating council shall submit to the governing board a
29 report concerning the feasibility of combining funding streams
30 for school readiness programs into a Children First Education
31 Trust Fund.

1 (b) The members of the coordinating council shall
2 include the Secretary of Children and Family Services, the
3 Secretary of Health, the Secretary of Labor and Employment
4 Security, the executive director of the Department of Revenue,
5 the Director of Health Care Administration, the Deputy
6 Commissioner for Educational Programs of the Department of
7 Education, the president of the Florida Head Start Directors
8 Association, the president of the Florida Children's Forum,
9 the chair of the Developmental Disabilities Council, the
10 director of the Healthy Start Coalition Association, the chair
11 of the Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants
12 and Toddlers, the coordinator of the Parent Resource
13 Organization, the president of the Children's Services Council
14 Association, the executive director of the Florida School
15 Boards Association, the chair of the Florida Association of
16 Child Care Management, the chair of the Florida Family Child
17 Care Association, Inc., the president of the Early Childhood
18 Association of Florida, and the chairs of two Children First
19 coalitions and two local WAGES coalitions. The latter four
20 members shall be selected by a majority vote of the other
21 members.

22 (c) The members of the coordinating council shall
23 participate without proxy. Meetings of the coordinating
24 council shall be held monthly to plan for and monitor progress
25 in implementing the goals of the governing board and review
26 and respond to requests for assistance from local communities.

27 (d) It is the intent of the Legislature that the
28 coordinating council shall be an independent nonpartisan body
29 and shall not be identified or affiliated with any one agency,
30 program, or group.

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1 (e) The coordinating council shall have a budget and
2 shall be financed through an annual appropriation made for
3 this purpose in the General Appropriations Act. Coordinating
4 council members shall be entitled to receive per diem and
5 travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061.

6 (f) By December 31, 1998, the State Coordinating
7 Council for Early Childhood Services shall submit a final
8 report of recommendations regarding early childhood health,
9 care, and education programs to the governing board. The State
10 Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services shall cease
11 to exist after December 31, 1998.

12 (g) The coordinating council shall prepare and submit
13 to the State Board of Education a system for measuring school
14 readiness. The system must include a screening instrument, or
15 instruments, which shall provide objective data according to
16 Florida's Expectations for School Readiness regarding:

17 1. The child's immunizations.

18 2. The child's display of physical development
19 appropriate for kindergarten.

20 3. The child's compliance with rules, limitations, and
21 routines.

22 4. The child's successful engagement in kindergarten
23 tasks.

24 5. The child's demonstration of appropriate
25 interaction with adults.

26 6. The child's demonstration of appropriate
27 interaction with peers.

28 7. The child's ability to effectively cope with
29 challenges and frustrations.

30 8. The child's demonstration of appropriate self-help
31 skills.

- 1 9. The child's ability to express needs appropriately.
2 10. The child's demonstration of verbal communication
3 skills necessary to succeed in kindergarten.
4 11. The child's demonstration of problem-solving
5 skills necessary to succeed in kindergarten.
6 12. The child's ability to follow verbal directions.
7 13. The child's demonstration of curiosity,
8 persistence, and exploratory behavior.
9 14. The child's demonstration of an interest in books
10 and other printed materials.
11 15. The child's ability to pay attention to stories.
12 16. The child's participation in art and music
13 activities.
14 (h) The coordinating council shall prepare a plan for
15 implementing the system for measuring school readiness and
16 contract with an independent entity for an evaluation of the
17 system. The evaluation must provide the information that local
18 and state agencies, the Governor, and the Legislature need to
19 provide for the effective administration of programs that
20 serve preschool children.
21 (4) STAFFING.--
22 (a) The governing board and coordinating council shall
23 be staffed by a director and professional and support staff
24 and shall draw upon state agency personnel and resources as
25 needed to implement policy and manage interagency agreements
26 necessary to create a more coherent system of care and
27 education for the state's youngest children.
28 (b) The director, consistent with the recommendations
29 of the coordinating council and needs of local coalitions,
30 shall be responsible for contracting for technical assistance
31 and support during fiscal years 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 to

1 assist counties, on a voluntary basis, in creating Children
2 First coalitions and developing local community plans.
3 (5) CHILDREN FIRST COALITIONS.--
4 (a) In each county in the state public and private
5 agencies are encouraged to create Children First coalitions to
6 assume overall responsibility for the well-being of children
7 from birth to 5 years of age. Counties may create such
8 partnerships under the provisions of s. 125.901, which
9 authorizes creation of independent special districts to fund
10 children's services; s. 163.01, the Florida Interlocal
11 Cooperation Act of 1969; s. 383.216, which provides for
12 community-based prenatal and infant health care coalitions; or
13 similar legislation.
14 (b) Children First coalitions shall include the local
15 public and private leaders of the health care, early care and
16 education, disabilities, and child welfare systems in each
17 county. Coalition membership may include, but is not limited
18 to, representatives of such organizations as children's
19 services councils, central agencies for state-subsidized child
20 care, Healthy Start coalitions, local school boards, child
21 care licensing boards, local WAGES coalitions and Head Start,
22 and city and county governments, the Department of Children
23 and Family Services, county health departments, and chambers
24 of commerce.
25 (c) The coalition shall designate an entity with
26 demonstrated capacity in fiscal management to serve as fiscal
27 agent for receipt of block grant funding and maintaining
28 program accountability.
29 (d) Coalitions shall assume responsibility for
30 recommending phasing out duplicative coordinating bodies,
31 increasing collaboration among service providers, coordinating

1 services for young children, increasing program quality and
2 accessibility, and ensuring that a true continuum of
3 coordinated services is available to all children under 5
4 years of age living in the county.

5 (e) Counties which create Children First coalitions
6 shall be eligible to receive block grant funding and waiver
7 authority, conditioned on the submission of an approved plan
8 designed to increase the number of children ready to succeed
9 at the time of entry into kindergarten.

10 (f) Block grant funding and waiver of inhibiting rules
11 and regulations shall be available to Children First
12 coalitions to achieve the following outcomes that increase
13 school readiness: to improve health outcomes for all children
14 from birth to 5 years of age; to increase the availability and
15 accessibility of quality early care and education services; to
16 assist families while they are achieving economic
17 self-sufficiency; to provide family support and parent
18 education and development services; and to increase the
19 quality and accessibility of early care and education services
20 for infants and for children from birth to 5 years of age with
21 disabilities and developmental delays.

22 (g) Two or more counties may join together to create a
23 Children First coalition.

24 (5) INCENTIVES FOR COMMUNITY PLANS.--

25 (a) Children First coalitions shall receive coalition
26 initiation grants to develop community plans and block grant
27 funding to implement approved plans designed to enable a
28 community to achieve the outcomes specified in paragraph
29 (4)(f). The community plans shall reflect strategies and
30 activities for achieving these outcomes through enhancing the
31 quality of services provided and ensuring that such services

1 will be adequate and appropriate for the outcome desired,
2 increasing the level of services available to ensure that
3 those children in need of identified services will have access
4 to such services, and creating incentives to integrate the
5 various systems of children's services so that all the systems
6 work together as one to achieve the identified common
7 outcomes.

8 (b) Community plans shall be reviewed and approved by
9 the Children First coordinating council.

10 (c) To determine county priorities for community plans
11 for coordinated school readiness programs, each plan submitted
12 by a Children First coalition shall include:

13 1. An assessment of current public, private, and
14 charitable resources available within the county for children
15 from birth to 5 years of age.

16 2. An assessment of unmet needs for children from
17 birth to 5 years of age.

18 3. The assessment of kindergarten readiness
19 administered by the school district which measures school
20 readiness according to Florida's Expectations for School
21 Readiness.

22 (d) Community plans shall also address service systems
23 integration; demonstration of methods for achieving the
24 outcomes specified in paragraph (4)(f); demonstration of
25 methods for meeting the needs of particular subgroups of the
26 population, including migrant children, children with special
27 needs, and minorities; and methods for administering and
28 maintaining accountability in the integrated systems.

29 (e) Community plans which include a focus on the
30 provision of early care and education services shall adhere to
31 the minimum standards for adult-to-child ratios as specified

1 in s. 230.2305(3)(e) for the prekindergarten early
2 intervention program and in s. 402.305(4)(a) for child care
3 facilities participating in the subsidized child care system,
4 unless otherwise authorized through waiver by the governing
5 board. Community plans which include a focus on the provision
6 of early care and education services shall address
7 improvements in the quality of current and new programs. The
8 recognized components of quality include provision of
9 developmentally appropriate curricula, low adult-to-child
10 ratios, small group sizes, increased staff training, and lower
11 staff turnover rates.

12 (f) Additional areas to be given priority
13 consideration by the coordinating council include family
14 involvement; business and private sector involvement;
15 implementation of a simplified point of entry and a unified
16 waiting list for early care and education programs; provision
17 of full-day, full-year, and night services; and inclusion of
18 children with disabilities.

19 (6) COALITION INITIATION GRANTS.--

20 (a) Counties which submit a letter of intent to create
21 a Children First coalition to the Governor by September 1,
22 1998, shall be eligible for a \$25,000 grant to support
23 organizing a Children First coalition and developing a
24 community plan.

25 (b) Community plans submitted by Children First
26 coalitions by January 15, 1999, and approved by the
27 coordinating council by February 1, 1999, shall receive
28 Children First block grant funding to begin a phase-in
29 implementation of their community plan. Children First block
30 grant funding for these counties shall continue from year to
31

1 year consistent with funding so designated in the General
2 Appropriations Act.

3 (c) Counties are encouraged to phase in the
4 integration of the health care, early care and education,
5 disabilities, and child welfare systems in their community
6 plans, starting with the systems that are currently most
7 involved in collaboration with each other and consistent with
8 local needs and priorities.

9 (d) Beginning in January 1999, the coordinating
10 council shall issue a call for Children First coalition
11 initiation grants every 6 months, until all counties desiring
12 to do so have responded. Counties submitting letters of intent
13 by the dates specified by the coordinating council shall be
14 eligible for a \$25,000 grant to support organizing a Children
15 First coalition and developing a community plan. Children
16 First block grant funding shall be made available for these
17 counties contingent upon approval of the community plans and
18 legislative appropriations for this purpose. Children First
19 block grant funding for these counties shall continue from
20 year to year consistent with funding so designated in the
21 General Appropriations Act.

22 (7) EVALUATION AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES.--

23 (a) The coordinating council shall have the
24 responsibility for designing the evaluation and performance
25 measures to track the effectiveness of the Children First
26 block grant funding in meeting the goals of the governing
27 board for increasing the quality and accessibility of services
28 for children from birth to 5 years of age.

29 (b) The kindergarten screening measures required by
30 paragraph (5)(c) shall be used as one of the measures of
31 performance.

1 (c) The governing board shall report to the
2 Legislature on the implementation and performance of the
3 Children First coalitions by March 1 of each year.

4 (8) IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SECTION.--

5 (a) From July 1, 1998, through January 1, 1999, the
6 implementation of this section shall be the responsibility of
7 the Governor's Commission on Education. The responsibilities
8 of the commission shall be extended beyond the date specified
9 in Executive Order No. for this purpose.

10 (b) Effective January 1, 1999, the responsibility for
11 implementation of this section shall transfer to the governing
12 board, the coordinating council, and their staff.

13 Section 2. From funds appropriated in the General
14 Appropriations Act, the School Readiness Commission shall
15 award grants to local school readiness coalitions created to
16 enhance the preparation of children to succeed in school at
17 the time of entry into kindergarten. Such coalitions shall be
18 created, and local school readiness plans submitted, according
19 to procedures adopted by the School Readiness Commission.

20 Section 3. Effective December 31, 1998, subsection (8)
21 of section 230.2303, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

22 230.2303 Florida First Start Program.--

23 (8) COORDINATION.--

24 ~~(a)~~ The Florida First Start Program shall be included
25 under the jurisdiction of the Children First State
26 ~~coordinating council for Early Childhood Services~~ established
27 pursuant to s. 411.21 ~~411.222~~. The coordinating council shall
28 make recommendations for effective implementation of the
29 program ~~and shall advise the Department of Education on needed~~
30 ~~legislation, rules, and technical assistance to ensure the~~
31 ~~continued implementation of an effective program.~~

1 ~~(b) Each school district shall develop, implement, and~~
2 ~~evaluate its program in cooperation with the district~~
3 ~~interagency coordinating council established under s.~~
4 ~~230.2305.~~

5 Section 4. Effective December 1, 1998, paragraph (b)
6 of subsection (1) and subsection (2) of section 383.14,
7 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

8 383.14 Screening for metabolic disorders, other
9 hereditary and congenital disorders, and environmental risk
10 factors.--

11 (1) SCREENING REQUIREMENTS.--To help ensure access to
12 the maternal and child health care system, the Department of
13 Health shall promote the screening of all infants born in
14 Florida for phenylketonuria and other metabolic, hereditary,
15 and congenital disorders known to result in significant
16 impairment of health or intellect, as screening programs
17 accepted by current medical practice become available and
18 practical in the judgment of the department. The department
19 shall also promote the identification and screening of all
20 infants born in this state and their families for
21 environmental risk factors such as low income, poor education,
22 maternal and family stress, emotional instability, substance
23 abuse, and other high-risk conditions associated with
24 increased risk of infant mortality and morbidity to provide
25 early intervention, remediation, and prevention services,
26 including, but not limited to, parent support and training
27 programs, home visitation, and case management.
28 Identification, perinatal screening, and intervention efforts
29 shall begin prior to and immediately following the birth of
30 the child by the attending health care provider. Such efforts
31 shall be conducted in hospitals, perinatal centers, county

1 health departments, school health programs that provide
2 prenatal care, and birthing centers, and reported to the
3 Office of Vital Statistics.

4 (b) Postnatal screening.--A risk factor analysis using
5 the department's designated risk assessment instrument shall
6 also be conducted as part of the medical screening process
7 upon the birth of a child and submitted to the department's
8 Office of Vital Statistics for recording and other purposes
9 provided for in this chapter. The department's screening
10 process for risk assessment shall include a scoring mechanism
11 and procedures that establish thresholds for notification,
12 further assessment, referral, and eligibility for services by
13 professionals or paraprofessionals consistent with the level
14 of risk. Procedures for developing and using the screening
15 instrument, notification, referral, and care coordination
16 services, reporting requirements, management information, and
17 maintenance of a computer-driven registry in the Office of
18 Vital Statistics which ensures privacy safeguards must be
19 consistent with the provisions and plans established under
20 chapter 411, Pub. L. No. 99-457, and this chapter. Procedures
21 established for reporting information and maintaining a
22 confidential registry must include a mechanism for a
23 centralized information depository at the state and county
24 levels. The department shall coordinate with existing risk
25 assessment systems and information registries. The department
26 must ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that the
27 screening information registry is integrated with the
28 department's automated data systems, including the Florida
29 On-line Recipient Integrated Data Access (FLORIDA) system.
30 Tests and screenings must be performed at such times and in
31 such manner as is prescribed by the department after

1 consultation with the Genetics and Infant Screening Advisory
2 Council ~~and the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood~~
3 ~~Services.~~

4 (2) RULES.--After consultation with the Genetics and
5 Infant Screening Advisory Council, the department shall adopt
6 and enforce rules requiring that every infant born in this
7 state shall, prior to becoming 2 weeks of age, be subjected to
8 a test for phenylketonuria and, at the appropriate age, be
9 tested for such other metabolic diseases and hereditary or
10 congenital disorders as the department may deem necessary from
11 time to time. ~~After consultation with the State Coordinating~~
12 ~~Council for Early Childhood Services,~~The department shall
13 also adopt and enforce rules requiring every infant born in
14 this state to be screened for environmental risk factors that
15 place children and their families at risk for increased
16 morbidity, mortality, and other negative outcomes. The
17 department shall adopt such additional rules as are found
18 necessary for the administration of this section, including
19 rules relating to the methods used and time or times for
20 testing as accepted medical practice indicates, rules relating
21 to charging and collecting fees for screenings authorized by
22 this section, and rules requiring mandatory reporting of the
23 results of tests and screenings for these conditions to the
24 department.

25 Section 5. Effective December 31, 1998, paragraph (a)
26 of subsection (1) of section 391.304, Florida Statutes, is
27 amended to read:

28 391.304 Program coordination.--

29 (1) The Department of Health shall:

30 (a) Coordinate with the Department of Education, the
31 Offices of Prevention, Early Assistance, and Child

1 Development, and the Florida Interagency Coordinating Council
2 for Infants and Toddlers, ~~and the State Coordinating Council~~
3 ~~for Early Childhood Services~~ in planning and administering ss.
4 391.301-391.307. This coordination shall be in accordance with
5 s. 411.222.

6 Section 6. Effective December 31, 1998, subsection (3)
7 of section 402.281, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

8 402.281 Gold Seal Quality Care program.--

9 (3) In developing the Gold Seal Quality Care program
10 standards, the department shall consult with the Department of
11 Education, the Florida Head Start Directors Association, the
12 Florida Association of Child Care Management, the Florida
13 Family Day Care Association, the Florida Children's Forum, ~~the~~
14 ~~State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services~~, the
15 Early Childhood Association of Florida, the National
16 Association for Child Development Education, providers
17 receiving exemptions under s. 402.316, and parents, for the
18 purpose of approving the accrediting associations.

19 Section 7. Effective December 31, 1998, paragraph (d)
20 of subsection (2) and subsection (17) of section 402.305,
21 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

22 402.305 Licensing standards; child care facilities.--

23 (2) PERSONNEL.--Minimum standards for child care
24 personnel shall include minimum requirements as to:

25 (d) Minimum staff training requirements.

26 1. Such minimum standards for training shall ensure
27 that all child care personnel and operators of family day care
28 homes serving at-risk children in a subsidized child care
29 program pursuant to s. 402.3015 take an approved 30-clock-hour
30 introductory course in child care, which course covers at
31 least the following topic areas:

- 1 a. State and local rules and regulations which govern
2 child care.
- 3 b. Health, safety, and nutrition.
- 4 c. Identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.
- 5 d. Child development, including typical and atypical
6 language, cognitive, motor, social, and self-help skills
7 development.
- 8 e. Specialized areas, as determined by the department,
9 for owner-operators and child care personnel of a child care
10 facility.
- 11
- 12 Within 90 days of employment, child care personnel shall begin
13 training to meet the training requirements and shall complete
14 such training within 1 year of the date on which the training
15 began. Exemption from all or a portion of the required
16 training shall be granted to child care personnel based upon
17 educational credentials or passage of competency examinations.
- 18 2. The introductory course in child care shall stress,
19 to the extent possible, an interdisciplinary approach to the
20 study of children.
- 21 3. On an annual basis in order to further their child
22 care skills and, if appropriate, administrative skills, child
23 care personnel who have fulfilled the requirements for the
24 child care training shall be required to take an additional
25 approved 8 clock hours of inservice training or an equivalent
26 as determined by the department.
- 27 4. Procedures for ensuring the training of qualified
28 child care professionals to provide training of child care
29 personnel, including onsite training, shall be included in the
30 minimum standards. It is recommended that the state community
31 child care coordination agencies (central agencies) be

1 contracted by the department to coordinate such training when
2 possible. Other district educational resources, such as
3 community colleges and vocational-technical programs, can be
4 designated in such areas where central agencies may not exist
5 or are determined not to have the capability to meet the
6 coordination requirements set forth by the department.

7 5. Training requirements shall not apply to certain
8 occasional or part-time support staff, including, but not
9 limited to, swimming instructors, piano teachers, dance
10 instructors, and gymnastics instructors.

11 ~~6. The State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood~~
12 ~~Services, in coordination with the department, shall evaluate~~
13 ~~or contract for an evaluation for the general purpose of~~
14 ~~determining the status of and means to improve staff training~~
15 ~~requirements and testing procedures. The evaluation shall be~~
16 ~~completed by October 1, 1992, and conducted every 2 years~~
17 ~~thereafter. The evaluation shall include, but not be limited~~
18 ~~to, determining the availability, quality, scope, and sources~~
19 ~~of current staff training; determining the need for specialty~~
20 ~~training; and determining ways to increase inservice training~~
21 ~~and ways to increase the accessibility, quality, and~~
22 ~~cost-effectiveness of current and proposed staff training. The~~
23 ~~evaluation methodology shall include a reliable and valid~~
24 ~~survey of child care personnel.~~

25 6.7. The child care operator shall be required to take
26 basic training in serving children with disabilities within 5
27 years after employment, either as a part of the introductory
28 training or the annual 8 hours of inservice training.

29 ~~(17) CHILD CARE TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL. There is~~
30 ~~hereby created a child care technical review panel, appointed~~
31 ~~by the Chair of the State Coordinating Council for Early~~

1 ~~Childhood Services, established by s. 411.222, to develop~~
2 ~~recommendations for inclusion, unedited, in the State~~
3 ~~Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services annual~~
4 ~~report as required by s. 411.222(4)(f), and provide technical~~
5 ~~assistance to the department for the adoption of rules for~~
6 ~~licensing child care facilities in accordance with the minimum~~
7 ~~standards established in this section. The review panel must~~
8 ~~consist of seven members, five of whom must be:~~

9 ~~(a) An owner or operator of a subsidized child care~~
10 ~~facility;~~

11 ~~(b) An owner or operator of a proprietary child care~~
12 ~~facility;~~

13 ~~(c) An owner or operator of a licensed church child~~
14 ~~care facility;~~

15 ~~(d) A child care provider that has attained a child~~
16 ~~development associate credential; and~~

17 ~~(e) A child care provider that has attained a child~~
18 ~~care professional credential.~~

19
20 ~~The initial technical review panel members must be appointed~~
21 ~~by October 1, 1992, for a term of 3 years. No member shall~~
22 ~~serve more than two consecutive terms.~~

23 Section 8. Effective December 31, 1998, subsection (1)
24 of section 402.3052, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

25 402.3052 Child development associate training grants
26 program.--

27 (1) There is hereby created the child development
28 associate training grants program within the department.

29 ~~(a)~~ The purpose of the child development associate
30 training grants program is to provide child care personnel who
31 work in a licensed child care facility or public and nonpublic

1 preschool program for children 5 years of age or under an
2 opportunity to receive a child development associate
3 credential, or its equivalent, and to receive other training
4 to enhance their skills.

5 ~~(b) The State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood~~
6 ~~Services shall serve in an advisory capacity to the department~~
7 ~~in the implementation of the training program.~~

8 Section 9. Effective December 31, 1998, subsections
9 (6) and (8) of section 402.45, Florida Statutes, are amended
10 to read:

11 402.45 Community resource mother or father program.--

12 (6) The community resource mother or father program
13 shall be included under the jurisdiction of the Children First
14 ~~State~~ coordinating council ~~for Early Childhood Services~~
15 established pursuant to s. 411.21 ~~411.222~~. The coordinating
16 council shall make recommendations for effective
17 implementation of the program and shall advise the Department
18 of Children and Family ~~Health and Rehabilitative~~ Services in
19 the development of program guidelines, the schedule for
20 implementation, the establishment of evaluation procedures,
21 the provision of technical assistance to individual programs,
22 and the development of the program evaluation report.

23 (8) Individuals under contract to provide community
24 resource mother or father services shall participate in
25 preservice and ongoing training as determined by the
26 Department of Children and Family ~~Health and Rehabilitative~~
27 Services in consultation with the Children First State
28 ~~coordinating council for Early Childhood Services~~. A community
29 resource mother or father shall not be assigned a client
30 caseload until all preservice training requirements are
31 completed.

1 Section 10. Effective December 31, 1998, paragraph (b)
2 of subsection (2) and paragraphs (c) and (d) of subsection (5)
3 of section 411.204, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

4 411.204 Program evaluation design and conduct;
5 independent third-party evaluation.--

6 (2)

7 (b) Major responsibilities for the evaluator in each
8 such office shall include, but not be limited to, the
9 following activities:

10 1. Coordinating with other intraagency and interagency
11 evaluators, evaluators of prototypes established pursuant to
12 part III, and other related project evaluators, ~~the State~~
13 ~~Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services established~~
14 ~~pursuant to s. 411.222(4),~~ and independent third-party
15 evaluators.

16 2. Facilitating and documenting intradepartmental and
17 interdepartmental decisions and accomplishments, including,
18 but not limited to, strategic planning, memoranda of
19 interagency agreement, and the continuum of services.

20 3. Assisting in the development of processes and
21 criteria for decisionmaking and conflict resolution.

22 4. Identifying and documenting problems which inhibit
23 program implementation, and screening alternative solutions to
24 those problems.

25 5. Identifying and documenting unanticipated program
26 benefits and problems.

27 6. Providing technical assistance to related
28 intraheadquarters and interheadquarters programs and
29 field-based prototypes and related programs.

30 7. Assisting in the design and implementation of
31 timely, unbiased, decision-oriented mechanisms for identifying

1 and bridging jurisdictional lines within and across agencies
2 to address the needs of high-risk children and their families.

3 8. Developing processes for the clearinghouses
4 established pursuant to s. 411.222, to ensure that judgments
5 and decisions regarding exemplary, effective programs and
6 services are based upon an accumulation and analysis of
7 available quantitative and qualitative evaluation evidence,
8 the experience of practitioners, input from families of
9 high-risk children, and consistency of such findings with
10 other research and knowledge.

11 9. Identifying processes for the clearinghouses to
12 develop and utilize dissemination and diffusion mechanisms
13 which ensure the exportability of exemplary and effective
14 programs to new sites.

15
16 During the initial year of implementation, evaluation shall
17 focus upon needs assessment and planning. During subsequent
18 years, evaluation shall focus upon the development of solution
19 alternatives, implementation of plans, and summative
20 evaluation.

21 (5)

22 (c) The uniform evaluation design system shall
23 include, but not be limited to, the following:

24 1. Activities and programs related to intraagency and
25 interagency coordination ~~and to the State Coordinating Council~~
26 ~~for Early Childhood Services established pursuant to s.~~
27 ~~411.222.~~

28 2. Evaluation of the management systems and procedures
29 for the continuum as set forth in s. 411.203(9)(f).

30
31

1 3. Activities and prototypes related to comprehensive
2 services for high-risk infants and toddlers and their families
3 as specified in part III.

4 4. Program evaluation of ss. 230.2303, 402.27, 402.28,
5 402.45, and 402.47 and other programs directly related to the
6 intent of this chapter.

7
8 Such evaluation design system shall be based upon the
9 achievement of desired outcomes resulting from prevention or
10 early intervention efforts.

11 (d) The independent third-party evaluators shall
12 utilize data and evaluation findings provided through
13 intraagency, interagency, prototype, and field-based project
14 evaluations, in addition to other data which they shall
15 independently collect. Evaluation reports shall include, but
16 not be limited to, the following:

17 1. Analyses of the nature and effectiveness of
18 intraagency and interagency activities required by this
19 chapter, ~~of the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood~~
20 ~~Services~~, of prototypes established pursuant to part III, and
21 of other field-based programs and operations as specified in
22 subparagraph (c)4.

23 2. Analyses of the nature and effectiveness of the
24 development, revisions, and use of the continuum of
25 comprehensive services, of strategic planning, of
26 clearinghouse operations, and of the memorandum of interagency
27 agreement.

28 3. Formative and summative evaluations which shall
29 ensure that the Legislature and agency heads make decisions
30 consistent with the provisions of paragraph (1)(a). Such
31 evaluations shall include, but not be limited to, design

1 effectiveness; effectiveness of each delivery system;
2 participant outcomes as specified in the evaluation design;
3 cost-effectiveness and estimates of future savings;
4 assessments of the use of resources; of administrative and
5 governance structures; of policies and procedures; of staff
6 qualifications; of programmatic methodologies; of evaluation
7 methodologies; and of the quality and effectiveness of the
8 programs delivered to high-risk children and their families.

9 Section 11. Effective December 31, 1998, subsection
10 (2) of section 411.221, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

11 411.221 Prevention and early assistance strategic
12 plan; agency responsibilities.--

13 (2) The strategic plan and subsequent plan revisions
14 shall incorporate and otherwise utilize, to the fullest extent
15 possible, the evaluation findings and recommendations from
16 intraagency, independent third-party, field projects, and
17 auditor general evaluations, ~~as well as the recommendations of~~
18 ~~the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services.~~

19 Section 12. Effective December 31, 1998, subsection
20 (4) of section 411.222, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

21 Section 13. Except as otherwise provided herein, this
22 act shall take effect July 1 of the year in which enacted.

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HOUSE SUMMARY

Creates the Children First Program, to provide for coordination and integration of early childhood health, care, and education programs leading to school readiness. Creates a governing board to administer the program and establish goals and policies. Creates a coordinating council to assess existing standards and services and make recommendations to the board, facilitate and monitor local implementation, and submit to the State Board of Education and implement a system for measuring school readiness. Provides for staff and funding for the board and council. Authorizes contracts for technical assistance. Provides for county Children First coalitions, to include local members of organizations and agencies providing services to children. Requires each coalition to develop a community plan for increased school readiness. Provides for coalition initiation grants for development of community plans, and block grant funding for implementation of approved plans. Specifies plan requirements, and procedures and schedules for grant funding. Provides for evaluation and performance measures. Requires annual reports to the Legislature. Provides responsibilities of the Governor's Commission on Education for initial implementation of the act. Provides for creation of local school readiness coalitions, plans, and grants, according to procedures of the School Readiness Commission. Repeals the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services. See bill for details.