

**STORAGE NAME:** h4383s1a.ed

**DATE:** April 2, 1998

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
AS REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS  
BILL RESEARCH & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT**

**BILL #:** CS/CS/HB 4383

**RELATING TO:** School Readiness

**SPONSOR(S):** Committee on Children and Family Empowerment, Representatives Roberts-Burke and Lacasa

**COMPANION BILL(S):**

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

- (1) CHILDREN AND FAMILY EMPOWERMENT YEAS 6 NAYS 3
- (2) EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS YEAS 9 NAYS 7
- (3)
- (4)
- (5)

---

**I. SUMMARY:**

CS/CS/HB 4383 Creates the Healthy Opportunity Program and the Healthy Opportunity for School Readiness Voucher for the purpose of assisting children entering kindergarten who are not ready for school to enhance their opportunity for school readiness. The bill provides that the Florida Partnership for Children First, Inc. operate the voucher program with the following minimum components:

1. Parental option on participation in the program for children who are measured as not ready for school in February of the year in which they will enter kindergarten.
2. Optional participation by private kindergartens. To participate the private kindergartens must:
  - be chartered pursuant to s. 623.02, F. S,
  - submit information requested by a Children First coalition
  - have been open for 12 months,
  - agree to the goal of each participating child attaining the goal of school readiness, and
  - agree to administer the school readiness screening instruments,
3. Program choice information for parents or guardians on the private kindergartens wishing to participate in the program provided by each Children First Coalition.
4. Guidance or assistance from each Children First Coalition to enable the parents or guardians to make a fully informed decision and easily facilitated arrangements.
5. A system for the Children First Coalition to pay by voucher the total cost of tuition or the public school district funding for kindergarten, whichever is less, at a public kindergarten or a private kindergarten that participates in the program.
6. A process for each Children First coalition to provide for a follow-up measurement of the children who participate in the program to assess their readiness for school prior to entering first grade.
7. An annual report from each Children First Coalition on the school readiness of each participating child after a year of attending kindergarten and prior to entering first grade and a comparison of the performance of participants with other children.

It is estimated that the program will have no immediate fiscal impact. However, there would probably be substantial savings in the long term.

## II. SUBSTANTIVE RESEARCH:

### A. PRESENT SITUATION:

Current standards and testing instruments used by Florida public school districts for measuring school readiness are not uniform. However, the Department of Education reports that measurements by these standards indicate that approximately 36,000 or 20 percent of Florida children were measured as not ready for school when they entered kindergarten in the 1996-1997 school year. Achievement levels under the current measurement systems indicate a variation in the percent of children enrolled in kindergarten who are measured as not ready for school varies dramatically from district to district. Most districts, however, fall within the range of 10 to 25 percent of children not ready for school.

### **Research on the Importance of Early Childhood Education**

#### **Effects on Education**

A comprehensive meta-analysis identified 50 Head Start studies that found evidence of immediate improvements in children's intellectual and socioemotional performance and health that lasted several years (McKey et al., 1985)

Several studies, including those by Gray et al. (1982), Irvine (1982), Levenstein et al. as reported in the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies (CLS) (1983, p.237-263), and Schweinhart et al. (1993), found that significantly fewer program participants than nonparticipants in a matched control group were *Ever Placed in Special Education Classes*. In three studies by Gotts (1989), Irvine (1982), and Palmer as reported in the CLS (1983, p.201-236), significantly fewer program participants than nonparticipants were *Ever Retained in Grade*.

In several studies (Fuerst & Fuerst, 1993; Gotts, 1989; Schweinhart et al., 1993), the program group had a significantly higher *high school graduation rate* than the no-program group. When these findings were examined by gender, it was found that girls who had participated in the program had significantly higher graduation rates than girls who had not participated, but that a similar difference was not evident for boys. Nevertheless, in the one study with relevant data for adults (Schweinhart et al., 1993), men who had been program participants had significantly higher monthly earnings, higher rates of home ownership, and fewer lifetime arrests than men who had not participated in the program.

#### **Effects on Community Behavior**

Schweinhart et al. (1993), reported that the High/Scope study found evidence that program participation had positive effects on adult crime, earnings, wealth, welfare dependence, and success of marriage. For example, program group members averaged significantly fewer *Criminal Arrests* than the no-program group (2.3 versus 4.6 arrests). Only 12% of men who had participated in the program had been arrested five or more times, compared to 49% of men who had not participated in the program. Only 7% of the program group had ever been arrested for drug dealing, significantly fewer than the 25% of the no-program group. In the High/Scope study and one other (Lally et al., 1988), program-group members spent significantly less time on probation than did no-program group members.

The High/Scope study found that:

- ◆ 29% of those who had participated in the program reported *monthly earnings at age 27* of \$2,000 or more, significantly more than the 7% of nonparticipants who reported such earnings. For men, the difference was due to better paying jobs: 42% of participants as compared to only 6% of nonparticipants reported such monthly earnings.
- ◆ For women, the difference was in employment rates: 80% of participants but only 55% of nonparticipants were employed at the time of the age-27 interview.
- ◆ Significantly more of the program group than the no-program group *owned their own homes* (36% versus 13%) and owned *Second cars* (30% versus 13%).
- ◆ Significantly fewer program group members than no-program group members *received welfare assistance* or other social services as adults (59% versus 80%).
- ◆ The study found that 40% of women who had participated in the program, but only 8% of those who had not, were *married at age 27*;
- ◆ 57% of the births to program females were *out-of-wedlock*, 83% of the births to no-program females were out-of-wedlock.

### **Return on Investment**

The 1993 Schweinhart et al. study also involved a systematic analysis of the costs and benefits of the preschool program and its effects, expressed in constant 1992 dollars discounted annually at 3%. The program returned to taxpayers \$88,433 per participant from the following sources:

- ◆ savings in schooling, due primarily to reduced need for special education services, and despite increased college costs for preschool-program participants;
- ◆ higher taxes paid by preschool-program participants because they had higher earnings;
- ◆ savings in welfare assistance; and
- ◆ savings to the criminal justice system and to potential victims of crimes.

### **References**

Consortium for Longitudinal Studies. (1983). *As the Twig Is Bent: Lasting Effects of Preschool Programs*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. ED 253 299.

Fuerst, J.S. and D. Fuerst. (1993). Chicago Experience with an Early Childhood Program: The Special Case of the Child Parent Center Program. *Urban Education* 28(1, Apr): 69-96. EJ 463 446.

Gotts, E.E. (1989). *Hope, Preschool to Graduation: Contributions to Parenting and School-family Relations Theory and Practice*. Charleston, WV: Appalachia Educational Laboratory. ED 305 146.

Gray, S.W., B.K. Ramsey, and R.A. Klaus. (1982). *From 3 to 20: the Early Training Project*. Baltimore, MD: University Park Press.

Irvine, D.J. (1982). *Evaluation of the New York State Experimental Prekindergarten Program*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY. ED 217 980.

Schweinhart, L.J., H.V. Barnes, and D.P. Weikart. (1993). Significant Benefits: *The High/scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 27. (Monographs of the High/scope Educational Research Foundation, 10)*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press. PS021 998.

### **World Wide Web Links**

The World Wide Web provides access to extensive research materials on the importance of school readiness to a child's success in school.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. Early childhood resources from the US Department of Education's Educational Resource Information Center. Provides information on-line, through the mail, on microfiche in libraries, and through e-mail or phone requests.

<http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/ericeece.html>

ERIC Digests: Short, research-based papers on a variety of early childhood topics from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

<http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/eece/pubs/digests.html>

ERIC newsletter: Twice yearly newsletter published by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

<http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/eece/pubs/eece-nl.html>

National Association for the Education of Young Children. Nation's largest organization of early childhood educators and others concerned with young children. Site contains research based informational and policy articles for early childhood professionals and parents.

<http://www.america-tomorrow.com/naeyc/>

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL): Educational research and development organization of U.S. Department of Education for North Central region.

<http://www.ncrel.org>

Early Childhood Educator's and Family Web Corner. Broad-ranging site that is often updated. <http://www.nauticom.net/www/cokids/>

### **The Readiness Committee Recommendations**

The Governor's Commission on Education, was created by executive order on September 20, 1996, to conduct a wholesale review of Florida's public schools from prekindergarten through college. The commission was specifically asked to address the objective of improving readiness for school, and an appointed Readiness Committee made recommendations that were adopted by the commission on December 15, 1997. Selected recommendations are as follows:

- ◆ Recognizing the primacy of parental responsibility, enhance all parents' understanding of child development. Maximize their involvement in publicly funded care and education programs.
- ◆ Enhance the role of public schools in the provision of coordinated early childhood services.

- ◆ Increase private sector involvement.
- ◆ Improve performance measures and evaluations of early childhood care and education programs.
- ◆ Competitive outside evaluation of all state-funded children's readiness programs, including subsidized child care should be resumed.
- ◆ The Department of Education should complete its refinement of the kindergarten readiness system to gather more useful information regarding the background of all children assessed in kindergarten for performance budgeting purposes.

### **Chapter 411 and The State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services**

Chapter 411, F.S., requires collaboration between DOE and CFS to provide early assistance to children who are handicapped or at risk of developmental delay in order to help the children achieve optimum growth and development. This chapter creates the State Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services which advises the Governor, the Legislature, and state agencies regarding the coordination of the various programs serving preschool children. The council members represent the various public and private programs and services for preschool children and their families. The council is not assigned to a single agency, but rather floats back and forth between DOE and C&F in alternate years. In some years the council was without support staff in its assigned agency, a situation which contributed to an unevenness in the council's effectiveness. The Readiness Committee recommended reexamining the role of this council.

### **Private School Charters**

Section 623.02 of the Florida Statutes provides for the chartering of private school corporations. Any 25 or more adult persons, who are legal residents of Florida and of the county in which any corporation may be formed, may form a private school corporation. The private school is incorporated by presenting to one of the judges of the circuit court for the county in which such corporation will operate, a proposed charter subscribed by the intended incorporators.

### **Teacher Certification**

State law provides extensive and detailed requirements by which teachers at public and nonpublic institutions may be certified, including the following statutes:

**231.145 Purpose of instructional personnel certification.--**

**1231.17 Official statements of eligibility and certificates granted on application to those meeting prescribed requirements.--**

These requirements include:

- ◆ fingerprint reports from the Department of Law Enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation pursuant to s. 231.02, and
- ◆ a bachelor's or higher degree from an accredited institution of higher learning.

- ◆ meeting such academic and professional requirements based on credentials certified by standard institutions of higher learning, including any institutions of higher learning in this state accredited by an accrediting association that is a member of the Commission on Recognition of Postsecondary Accreditation, as prescribed by the state board.
- ◆ competence and capability of performing the duties, functions, and responsibilities of a teacher, including general knowledge, subject matter knowledge and professional skills and knowledge of the standards of professional practice
- ◆ recognize signs of child abuse and neglect, severe emotional distress, alcohol, or drug abuse in students
- ◆ pass subject area tests.

**B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:**

CS/HB 4383 Creates the Healthy Opportunity Program and the Healthy Opportunity for School Readiness Voucher for the purpose of assisting children entering kindergarten who are not ready for school to enhance their opportunity for school readiness. The bill provides that the Florida Partnership for Children First, Inc. operate the voucher program with the following minimum components:

1. Parental option for participation in the Children First program for children who are measured as not ready for school in February of the year in which they will enter kindergarten.
2. Optional participation by private kindergartens. To participate the private kindergartens must:
  - be chartered pursuant to s. 623.02, F. S, and been open 12 months,
  - submit information requested by a Children First coalition,
  - agree to the goal of each participating child attaining the goal of school readiness, and
  - agree to administer the school readiness screening instruments,
3. Program choice information for parents or guardians on the private kindergartens wishing to participate in the program provided by each Children First Coalition.
4. Guidance or assistance to enable the parents or guardians to make a fully informed decision and easily facilitated arrangements from each Children First Coalition.
5. A system for the Children First Coalition to pay by voucher the total cost of tuition or the amount of funding for the kindergarten program offered by the public school district, whichever is less, at a public kindergarten or a private kindergarten that participates in the program.
6. A process for each Children First coalition to provide for a follow-up measurement of the children who participate in the program to assess their readiness for school prior to entering first grade.
7. An annual report from each Children First Coalition on the school readiness of each participating child after a year of attending kindergarten and prior to

entering first grade and a comparison of the performance of participants with other children.

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?

No

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

Existing government services are modified for a limited number of children who meet the program criteria, within available slots.

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?

Where slots are available and for private kindergartens who choose to participate, responsibilities are transferred from public to private kindergartens.

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

The cost of children who attend a private kindergarten through the program will not be the cost for the child to attend a public kindergarten.

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

An annual report on performance under the program is required.

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?

If the cost of tuition at a private kindergarten exceeds the cost of the public kindergarten, the parents or guardians pay any additional cost.

4. Individual Freedom:

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

Yes. The bill provides additional choices for parents and guardians.

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

No.



5. Family Empowerment:

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

(1) Who evaluates the family's needs?

There is an assessment in February of the year in which they will enter kindergarten. The local coalition determines who is responsible for administering the test.

(2) Who makes the decisions?

Parents and guardians.

(3) Are private alternatives permitted?

Yes. The purpose of the bill is to provide private alternatives.

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

No.

(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?

Yes.

(2) service providers?

Private kindergartens have the option of choosing to participate.

(3) government employees/agencies?

No.

D. STATUTE(S) AFFECTED:

Section 411.09, Florida Statutes is created by the bill.

E. SECTION-BY-SECTION RESEARCH:

**Section 1** creates section 411.09, Florida Statutes. Provides for an effective date of July 1, 1999.

**Subsection 1** presents legislative findings.

**Subsection 2** provides legislative intent to provide a program of enhancement of healthy opportunity by increasing school readiness before a child enters the public school system.

**Subsection 3** provides eligibility requirements. Children who are measured as not ready for school in February of the year in which they will enter kindergarten are eligible.

**Subsection 4** is described above.

**Section 2** provides an effective date of July 1, 1999.

III. FISCAL RESEARCH & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT:

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE AGENCIES/STATE FUNDS:

1. Non-recurring Effects:

N/A

2. Recurring Effects:

The bill would have minimal short term fiscal impact since the voucher is capped at the cost that would be incurred had the same children attended a public kindergarten in the district. For those who choose to attend a public kindergarten, the bill would have no impact.

Special education programs to deal with educational problems such as those targeted in this bill are among the most expensive offered through public schools. The intent of the bill is to provide early intervention and avoid a later need for intervention through special education. To the degree that this goal is realized the result would be extensive long term savings.

3. Long Run Effects Other Than Normal Growth:

N/A

4. Total Revenues and Expenditures:

The net savings resulting from the program are indeterminate at this time.

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:

The provisions of the bill for student assessment and informed parental choice appear to create a mechanism for the emergence of high quality intervention alternatives for kindergarten students.

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 expend funds.

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

This bill does not reduce revenue raising authority.

**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:**

Kindergarten is not part of the constitutional entitlement to "free public schools" -- SEE: s. 232.01(1), F.S., (school attendance requirement starts at age 6/1st grade -- kindergarten is optional).

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

The CS for HB 4383 incorporates the following amendments considered by the committee on 3/31/98:

Amendment 3 includes the effective date of the bill in the section header for section 1 in case the bill is amended onto another bill.

Amendment 4 removed an incorrect reference to the school readiness performance of specific counties.

Amendment 5 changed the program to provide that vouchers be used for eligible children regardless of whether they choose to attend a public or private kindergarten.

Amendment 7 changed the funding for the program from \$3,500 to the amount of the FEFP provided for the district's kindergarten program.

Amendment 8 requires participating private schools to be in operation for 12 months prior to applying for participation in the voucher program.

Amendment 9 provided that all funding for eligible children flow through the Children First School Readiness Trust Fund to be available on a first come first serve basis.

**VII. SIGNATURES:**

**COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND FAMILY EMPOWERMENT:**

Prepared by:

Legislative Research Director:

ROBERT S. COX

ROBERT BARRIOS

**STORAGE NAME:** h4383s1a.ed

**DATE:** April 2, 1998

**PAGE 13**

AS REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS:

Prepared by:

Legislative Research Director:

---

Mark Armstrong

---

John Newman