

By Senator Klein

28-735A-99

See HB

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to child care; providing
3 legislative intent; authorizing the
4 establishment of Institutes of Excellence in
5 Infant and Toddler Development; specifying
6 functions of Institutes of Excellence;
7 providing for funding; requiring the submission
8 of annual evaluations; requiring an assessment
9 regarding persons in the fields of child care
10 and early childhood development; providing an
11 effective date.
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13 WHEREAS, recent brain development research has shown
14 that the greatest window of opportunity for brain development
15 in children is during the first three years of life, and
16 WHEREAS, Florida care and educational support systems
17 do not adequately address the needs in this area, and
18 WHEREAS, over 60 percent of the mothers of children
19 under six are in the workforce, and
20 WHEREAS, the number of working mothers is expanding as
21 Florida implements WAGES initiatives, and
22 WHEREAS, over one-half of Florida's infants and
23 toddlers are cared for by family providers, with wide
24 variation in quality, and
25 WHEREAS, there is a tremendous need to educate both
26 parents and providers about the importance of these first
27 three years of life, and
28 WHEREAS, improving the quality of care and education
29 during this critical time period of the first three years of
30 life is a high priority of the Legislature, NOW, THEREFORE,
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1 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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3 Section 1. Institutes of Excellence in Infant and
4 Toddler Development.--

5 (1) The Legislature recognizes the importance of
6 preschool developmental education for children from birth to
7 kindergarten age. Therefore, the Legislature authorizes
8 community colleges, public or private colleges, and state
9 universities to establish Institutes of Excellence in Infant
10 and Toddler Development. Initiatives of Institutes of
11 Excellence are to be consistent with legislative initiatives
12 relating to school readiness, address specific concerns
13 regarding children from birth to age three, and link directly
14 with other efforts in the community, including Head Start,
15 Healthy Start and Healthy Families, and Caring for Kids.
16 Legislative funding will enable institutes to serve as model
17 demonstration and resource-development programs in the
18 community for the development of professional childcare
19 providers and for the enhancement of knowledge on the part of
20 providers, related professionals, and parents regarding the
21 development of children from birth to age three.

22 (2) Institutes of Excellence in Infant and Toddler
23 Development may be established by community colleges, public
24 or private colleges, and state universities. Initial
25 designation of community colleges, public or private colleges,
26 and universities authorized to establish an Institute of
27 Excellence shall be provided by the Legislature in the General
28 Appropriations Act. During the 2000-2001 fiscal year, and
29 thereafter, community colleges, public or private colleges,
30 and universities shall submit to the Secretary of Health and
31 the Commissioner of Education requests for authorization to

1 establish an Institute of Excellence in Infant and Toddler
2 Development. The Secretary of Health and the Commissioner of
3 Education shall review the requests and submit those that meet
4 guidelines established by the State Board of Education and the
5 Department of Health to the Legislature for funding.
6 Institutes of Excellence established at community colleges
7 that have established child development training centers,
8 pursuant to section 240.382, Florida Statutes, should be
9 created as part of that center. Institutes of Excellence may
10 be established by community colleges, public or private
11 colleges, or universities in cooperation with an institution
12 that has established a child development training center
13 according to section 240.382, Florida Statutes.

14 (3) Institutes of Excellence shall perform the
15 following functions:

16 (a) Outreach efforts, including support for
17 professionals certified as infant and toddler mentors who
18 provide services to child care providers and parents, and the
19 development of marketing and outreach materials for mentors,
20 parents, and childcare and related professionals.

21 (b) Development and implementation of observation and
22 demonstration sites at the community college or university.

23 Such sites shall be used:

24 1. By the community, including other childcare
25 providers, training providers, and parents, for observations
26 of a model quality childcare environment.

27 2. By related providers to provide quality health care
28 services, including critical screening for auditory, visual,
29 and other physical impairments that can impede healthy brain
30 development.

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1 3. As sites to implement efforts that identify early
2 language acquisition difficulties in infants and toddlers and
3 that target interventions for improving early language
4 development.

5 (c) Development and support of specialized training
6 courses, systems and programs in the area of infant and
7 toddler development from birth to age three which include
8 articulation mechanisms to ensure and promote a career ladder
9 within the educational institution and among other
10 institutions. Such training shall:

11 1. Be provided for a wide range of existing and
12 potential childcare workers, including economically
13 disadvantaged citizens.

14 2. Be established as a mechanism to increase the
15 professional stature of those working in the childcare arena.

16 3. Provide leadership development for childcare center
17 directors.

18 4. Include coordinated development and implementation
19 of distance learning instruction, to provide continuing
20 education for family providers and parents in their homes or
21 in centrally located sites such as public libraries or child
22 care coordinating agencies.

23 (4) Funding shall be included annually in the General
24 Appropriations Act to provide grants for those Institutes of
25 Excellence specifically authorized by the Legislature.
26 Funding for Institutes of Excellence that are created as part
27 of child development training centers is not to supplant
28 funding provided according to section 240.382, Florida
29 Statutes, or to be used for operational costs or facilities
30 currently funded through that section.

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1 (5) Institutes of Excellence must submit to the
2 Secretary of Health and the Commissioner of Education
3 evaluations of progress made. Evaluations shall indicate the
4 number of persons receiving services, the number of community
5 training and technical assistance programs and model programs,
6 the effectiveness of articulation agreements, the number of
7 children evaluated and served, and other performance measures
8 required by the local readiness council.

9 (6) The Commissioner of Education shall assign to the
10 Articulation Coordinating Committee the responsibility for
11 conducting a statewide assessment to determine the extent and
12 nature of instruction for those who work or are training to
13 work in the fields of child care and early childhood
14 education. The Articulation Coordinating Committee shall,
15 after completing this assessment, recommend rules that will
16 provide for credit to be awarded to those who enroll in and
17 complete courses offered by both private and public providers
18 of early childhood instruction, including instruction that
19 addresses the minimum training requirements for employment in
20 the child care field and for attainment of the child
21 development associate credential, or its equivalent. Such
22 recommendations shall also provide for articulation of
23 vocational credit to college credit, and articulation of
24 credits earned in an associate in science degree program, or
25 an associate in arts specialization course to credit in a
26 baccalaureate degree program. The Commissioner of Education
27 shall implement the recommendations of the Articulation
28 Coordinating Committee through rules adopted by the State
29 Board of Education.

30 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 1999.

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LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

Authorizes the establishment of Institutes of Excellence in Infant and Toddler Development. Specifies functions of Institutes of Excellence. Provides for funding. Requires the submission of annual evaluations. Requires a statewide assessment regarding persons in the fields of child care and early childhood development.