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A bill to be entitled
 An act relating to school readiness programs; amending s.
 411.01, F.S., relating to the Florida Partnership for
 School Readiness and school readiness coalitions; revising
 minimum standards and provisions for coalition plans for
 school readiness programs; specifying ratios for
 instructional personnel to children; requiring an
 introductory training course for all personnel; requiring
 inservice training for child care personnel; providing
 certification and screening requirements; providing
 requirements for administrative personnel and child care
 operators; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (d) of subsection (5) of section
 411.01, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

411.01 Florida Partnership for School Readiness; school
 readiness coalitions.--

(5) CREATION OF SCHOOL READINESS COALITIONS.--

(d) *Implementation*.--

1. The school readiness program is to be phased in. Until
 the coalition implements its plan, the county shall continue to
 receive the services identified in subsection (3) through the
 various agencies that would be responsible for delivering those
 services under current law. Plan implementation is subject to
 approval of the coalition and the plan by the Florida
 Partnership for School Readiness.

2. Each school readiness coalition shall develop a plan
 for implementing the school readiness program to meet the



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31 requirements of this section and the performance standards and
32 outcome measures established by the partnership. The plan must
33 include a written description of the role of the program in the
34 coalition's effort to meet the first state education goal,
35 readiness to start school, including a description of the plan
36 to involve the prekindergarten early intervention programs, Head
37 Start Programs, programs offered by public or private providers
38 of child care, preschool programs for children with
39 disabilities, programs for migrant children, Title I programs,
40 subsidized child care programs, and teen parent programs. The
41 plan must also demonstrate how the program will ensure that each
42 3-year-old and 4-year-old child in a publicly funded school
43 readiness program receives scheduled activities and instruction
44 designed to prepare children to enter kindergarten ready to
45 learn. Prior to implementation of the program, the school
46 readiness coalition must submit the plan to the partnership for
47 approval. The partnership may approve the plan, reject the plan,
48 or approve the plan with conditions. The Florida Partnership for
49 School Readiness shall review coalition plans at least annually.

50 3. The plan for the school readiness program must include
51 the following minimum standards and provisions:

52 a. A sliding fee scale establishing a copayment for
53 parents based upon their ability to pay, which is the same for
54 all program providers, to be implemented and reflected in each
55 program's budget.

56 b. A choice of settings and locations in licensed,
57 registered, religious-exempt, or school-based programs to be
58 provided to parents.

59 c. A ratio of direct instructional personnel to children
60 of 1 adult to 10 3-year-old and 4-year-old children, or a lower



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61 ratio. Upon written request from a school readiness coalition,
62 the partnership may grant permission for a ratio of up to 1
63 adult to 15 3-year-old and 4-year-old children for individual
64 schools or centers for which a 1 to 10 ratio is not feasible.

65 d. For all personnel, completion of an approved 40-clock-
66 hour introductory training course planned jointly by the
67 Department of Education and the Department of Children and
68 Family Services to include the following areas: state and local
69 rules that govern child care, health, safety, and nutrition;
70 identification and report of child abuse and neglect; child
71 growth and development, including typical and atypical language,
72 cognitive, motor, social, and self-help skills development;
73 observation of developmental behaviors, using a checklist or
74 other similar observation tools and techniques to determine a
75 child's developmental age level; use of developmentally
76 appropriate early childhood curricula; and avoidance of income-
77 based, race-based, and gender-based stereotyping. The
78 introductory training course shall stress, to the extent
79 possible, an interdisciplinary approach to the study of
80 children. Within 90 days after employment, child care personnel
81 must begin the introductory training course and, within 1 year
82 after the date on which the training course began, complete such
83 training. Exemption from all or a portion of the introductory
84 training course shall be granted to child care personnel based
85 upon educational credentials or passage of competency
86 examinations.

87 e. For child care personnel who have completed the
88 introductory training course, completion of an additional
89 approved 8 clock hours of inservice training, or an equivalent
90 as determined by the Department of Children and Family Services,



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91 on an annual basis to improve child care skills and, if
92 appropriate, administrative skills.

93 f. When individual classrooms are staffed by certified
94 teachers, certification of those teachers for the appropriate
95 grade levels under s. 1012.56 and State Board of Education
96 rules. Teachers who are not certified for the appropriate grade
97 levels must obtain proper certification within 2 years. However,
98 the partnership may make an exception on an individual basis
99 when the requirements are not met because of serious illness,
100 injury, or other extraordinary, extenuating circumstance.

101 g. When individual classrooms are staffed by noncertified
102 teachers, the regularly scheduled direct contact with each
103 classroom of a program director or lead teacher who is eligible
104 for certification or certified for the appropriate grade levels
105 pursuant to s. 1012.56 and State Board of Education rules.
106 Notwithstanding the provisions of s. 1012.55, such classrooms
107 must be staffed by at least one person who has, at a minimum, a
108 child development associate credential (CDA) or an amount of
109 training determined by the Commissioner of Education to be
110 equivalent to or to exceed the minimum, such as an associate in
111 science degree in the area of early childhood education.

112 h. For administrative and supervisory personnel with
113 direct responsibility for the program, demonstration of
114 knowledge of prekindergarten education programs that increase
115 children's chances of achieving future educational success and
116 becoming productive members of society in a manner established
117 by State Board of Education rule.

118 i. For all personnel who are not certified under s.
119 1012.56, compliance with screening requirements under s.
120 1012.32.



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121 j. For child care operators, completion of basic training
122 in serving children with disabilities within 5 years after
123 employment, either as a part of the introductory training course
124 or the annual 8 hours of inservice training.

125 ~~e. Instructional staff who have completed the training~~
126 ~~course as required in s. 402.305(2)(d)1., as well as staff who~~
127 ~~have additional training or credentials as required by the~~
128 ~~partnership. The plan must provide a method for assuring the~~
129 ~~qualifications of all personnel in all program settings.~~

130 ~~k.d.~~ Specific eligibility priorities for children within
131 the coalition's county pursuant to subsection (6).

132 l.e. Performance standards and outcome measures
133 established by the partnership or alternatively, standards and
134 outcome measures to be used until such time as the partnership
135 adopts such standards and outcome measures.

136 ~~m.f.~~ Reimbursement rates that have been developed by the
137 coalition. Reimbursement rates shall not have the effect of
138 limiting parental choice or creating standards or levels of
139 services that have not been authorized by the Legislature.

140 ~~n.g.~~ Systems support services, including a central agency,
141 child care resource and referral, eligibility determinations,
142 training of providers, and parent support and involvement.

143 ~~o.h.~~ Direct enhancement services to families and children.
144 System support and direct enhancement services shall be in
145 addition to payments for the placement of children in school
146 readiness programs.

147 p.i. A business plan, which must include the contract with
148 a school readiness agent if the coalition is not a legally
149 established corporate entity. Coalitions may contract with other



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150 coalitions to achieve efficiency in multiple-county services,
151 and such contracts may be part of the coalition's business plan.

152 ~~g.j.~~ Strategies to meet the needs of unique populations,
153 such as migrant workers.

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155 As part of the plan, the coalition may request the Governor to
156 apply for a waiver to allow the coalition to administer the Head
157 Start Program to accomplish the purposes of the school readiness
158 program. If any school readiness plan can demonstrate that
159 specific statutory goals can be achieved more effectively by
160 using procedures that require modification of existing rules,
161 policies, or procedures, a request for a waiver to the
162 partnership may be made as part of the plan. Upon review, the
163 partnership may grant the proposed modification.

164 4. Persons with an early childhood teaching certificate
165 may provide support and supervision to other staff in the school
166 readiness program.

167 5. The coalition may not implement its plan until it
168 submits the plan to and receives approval from the partnership.
169 Once the plan has been approved, the plan and the services
170 provided under the plan shall be controlled by the coalition
171 rather than by the state agencies or departments. The plan shall
172 be reviewed and revised as necessary, but at least biennially.

173 6. The following statutes will not apply to local
174 coalitions with approved plans: ss. 125.901(2)(a)3., 411.221,
175 and 411.232. To facilitate innovative practices and to allow
176 local establishment of school readiness programs, a school
177 readiness coalition may apply to the Governor and Cabinet for a
178 waiver of, and the Governor and Cabinet may waive, any of the
179 provisions of ss. 411.223, 411.232, and 1003.54 if the waiver is



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180 necessary for implementation of the coalition's school readiness
181 plan.

182 7. Two or more counties may join for the purpose of
183 planning and implementing a school readiness program.

184 8. A coalition may, subject to approval of the partnership
185 as part of the coalition's plan, receive subsidized child care
186 funds for all children eligible for any federal subsidized child
187 care program and be the provider of the program services.

188 9. Coalitions are authorized to enter into multiparty
189 contracts with multicounty service providers in order to meet
190 the needs of unique populations such as migrant workers.

191 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2003.