

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to child care; creating s. 402.3012, F.S.;
 3 establishing the Florida's Sunshine State Stars Quality
 4 Rating System, a voluntary rating system, in the Agency
 5 for Workforce Innovation; providing quality rating
 6 requirements for early learning programs, child care
 7 facilities, and facilities participating in the Voluntary
 8 Prekindergarten Education Program; establishing a
 9 voluntary pilot program in specified counties; providing
 10 financial incentives for advancement in quality rating;
 11 providing for technical support; providing for expiration
 12 of the program; requiring the Office of Early Learning
 13 within the Agency for Workforce Innovation to develop a
 14 workforce development plan; providing an appropriation;
 15 providing an effective date.

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

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 19 Section 1. Section 402.3012, Florida Statutes, is created
 20 to read:

21 402.3012 Florida's Sunshine State Stars Quality Rating
 22 System.--

23 (1) FLORIDA'S SUNSHINE STATE STARS QUALITY RATING
 24 SYSTEM.--The Office of Early Learning within the Agency for
 25 Workforce Innovation shall establish the Florida's Sunshine
 26 State Stars Quality Rating System to provide a voluntary,
 27 statewide standard rating system for licensed early learning
 28 programs, child care facilities as defined in s. 402.302, and

29 facilities participating in the Voluntary Prekindergarten
 30 Education Program created under s. 1002.53.

31 (a) The rating system shall consist of five tiers. For the
 32 purposes of this section, a "tier" refers to each level of
 33 progression and represents a higher level of quality within the
 34 quality rating system. To communicate the level of quality to
 35 parents, consumers, and the participating early learning
 36 program, a star symbol shall be used. Programs that meet the
 37 highest level of quality in the rating system shall be awarded
 38 five stars.

39 (b) Programs must meet all the criteria of a tier before
 40 advancing to the next tier. The office shall be responsible for
 41 implementing the requirements for each tier in each category
 42 based upon recommendations of the Early Learning Advisory
 43 Council's Quality Rating System Task Force and recommendations
 44 from organized meetings to gather local input from parent and
 45 provider focus groups and interviews.

46 (2) REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILD CARE FACILITIES AND FACILITIES
 47 PARTICIPATING IN THE VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION
 48 PROGRAM.--

49 (a) Overall quality rating assessment shall be based on
 50 the following major components that have been documented by
 51 research or best practices to positively impact child and family
 52 outcomes:

- 53 1. Learning environment.
- 54 2. Curricula, screening, and assessment.
- 55 3. Staff qualifications.
- 56 4. Professional development.

57 5. Business practices.
 58 6. Family involvement.
 59 (b) Advancement through the tiers in each major component
 60 shall be based on the following:
 61 1. Learning environment, verified through document
 62 submission or use of the appropriate Early Childhood Environment
 63 Rating Scales (Harms, Clifford, and Cryer).
 64 2. Curricula, screening, and assessment, verified through
 65 document review and observation.
 66 3. Staff qualifications, verified by linkage with
 67 licensing and document review.
 68 4. Professional development for the director, lead
 69 teacher, and assistant teacher, verified by linkage with
 70 licensing and document review.
 71 5. Business practices, verified by document review and
 72 observation. Consideration shall be given to child care
 73 providers possessing a Gold Seal Quality Care designation and
 74 Head Start and Early Head Start programs of quality and
 75 excellence.
 76 6. Family involvement, verified through document review.
 77 Section 2. Florida's Sunshine State Stars Quality Rating
 78 System Voluntary Pilot Program.--
 79 (1) FLORIDA'S SUNSHINE STATE STARS QUALITY RATING SYSTEM
 80 VOLUNTARY PILOT PROGRAM.--Florida's Sunshine State Stars Quality
 81 Rating System voluntary pilot program is created for the
 82 implementation of the rating system tier program in the
 83 following counties: Broward, Duval, Hillsborough, Leon, Miami-
 84 Dade, Orange, Palm Beach, and Pinellas. The identified counties

85 include urban counties and rural counties that have established
86 or are in the process of establishing quality rating systems.

87 (2) FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR ADVANCEMENT IN THE RATING
88 SYSTEM.--

89 (a) Centers and programs in tiers 1, 2, and 3 shall be
90 eligible for grants and awards to improve quality.

91 (b) Centers and programs in tiers 4 and 5 shall be
92 eligible for merit awards to maintain high quality.

93 (3) TECHNICAL SUPPORT.--Technical support shall be
94 provided to programs to ensure successful entry into the rating
95 system and movement through the system. The Office of Early
96 Learning within the Agency for Workforce Innovation shall
97 coordinate with the participating early learning coalitions to
98 facilitate the successful participation of child care facilities
99 in the pilot program and with those programs currently
100 implementing a quality rating system.

101 (4) OTHER COUNTIES.--Nothing in this section shall
102 preclude early learning coalitions from implementing a quality
103 rating system in other counties.

104 (5) EXPIRATION OF THE PILOT PROGRAM.--The pilot program
105 shall expire on July 1, 2009.

106 Section 3. In order to ensure the availability of
107 qualified teachers to meet the needs associated with higher
108 standards, the Office of Early Learning within the Agency for
109 Workforce Innovation shall develop a workforce development plan.
110 The plan shall include recommendations for the funding and
111 expansion of current child care professional development
112 credentialing programs, such as the Teacher Education and

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113 Compensation Helps program (TEACH), as well as other programs
114 designed to provide professional development, credentialing, and
115 advanced education.

116 Section 4. The sum of \$25 million is appropriated from the
117 General Revenue Fund to the Agency for Workforce Innovation for
118 the 2007-2008 fiscal year to implement the provisions of this
119 act.

120 Section 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.