

By Senator Abruzzo

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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to the Literacy Jump Start Pilot  
3           Project; requiring the Office of Early Learning to  
4           establish the pilot project in St. Lucie County to  
5           assist low-income, at-risk children in developing  
6           emergent literacy skills; requiring the office to  
7           select an organization to implement the pilot project;  
8           requiring the office to oversee implementation of the  
9           pilot project; defining the term "emergent literacy";  
10          providing eligibility requirements for participation;  
11          requiring background screening for child care  
12          personnel; requiring emergent literacy training for  
13          instructors; encouraging the coordination of basic  
14          health screening and immunization services in  
15          conjunction with emergent literacy instruction;  
16          requiring annual submission of an accountability  
17          report; requiring the office to allocate funds for the  
18          pilot project; providing an effective date.

19  
20 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

21  
22           Section 1. (1) The Office of Early Learning shall establish  
23 the 5-year Literacy Jump Start Pilot Project in St. Lucie County  
24 to assist low-income, at-risk children in developing emergent  
25 literacy skills.

26           (a) The Office of Early Learning shall consult with local  
27 organizations within St. Lucie County and identify an  
28 organization to implement the pilot project. The office shall  
29 also consult with the Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie

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30 County to select municipalities within St. Lucie County eligible  
31 for participation in the pilot project. A municipality is  
32 eligible for participation if locally or federally subsidized  
33 housing is located within the municipality. The office shall  
34 oversee the implementation of the pilot project.

35 (b) The Office of Early Learning shall select a local  
36 organization that is a not-for-profit corporation, qualified as  
37 charitable under s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, that  
38 provides training to parents to assist their children with  
39 success in school, such as the Parent Academy of St. Lucie  
40 County or another similarly qualified local organization, to  
41 implement the pilot project. The office may select a faith-based  
42 organization; however, funds provided for the purpose of  
43 implementing the pilot project may be used for only those  
44 purposes expressly provided in this section and may not be used  
45 for the purpose of religious indoctrination.

46 (2) The organization selected by the Office of Early  
47 Learning must use funds provided for the pilot project only to  
48 provide emergent literacy instruction to children. In order to  
49 provide easy access for participating children and families, the  
50 instruction must be provided in a subsidized housing unit  
51 located within an eligible municipality selected by the office.

52 (3) As used in this section, the term "emergent literacy"  
53 means a variety of early behaviors and skills associated with  
54 successful reading and writing development.

55 (4) A child is eligible to receive emergent literacy  
56 instruction provided through the pilot project only if the child  
57 is:

58 (a) Two or three years of age;

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59 (b) Eligible for a federally subsidized child care program;  
60 and

61 (c) A member of a family that is economically disadvantaged  
62 and resides in locally or federally subsidized housing. For  
63 purposes of this paragraph, the term "economically  
64 disadvantaged" means having a family income that does not exceed  
65 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

66 (5) The organization selected by the Office of Early  
67 Learning must require all child care personnel, as defined in s.  
68 402.302(3), Florida Statutes, to meet the background screening  
69 requirements of s. 402.305, Florida Statutes, before  
70 participating in the pilot project. The organization may not use  
71 state funds to implement the pilot project to pay for background  
72 screening. The organization must certify in writing to the  
73 office that individuals required to be screened under this  
74 subsection have complied with the background screening  
75 requirements of this subsection before the office may issue the  
76 organization any state funds to implement the pilot project.

77 (6) An instructor in the pilot project must successfully  
78 complete an emergent literacy training course, approved by the  
79 Office of Early Learning, before providing emergent literacy  
80 instruction under this section.

81 (7) The organization is encouraged to coordinate with the  
82 St. Lucie County Health Department in providing basic health  
83 screening and immunization services for children participating  
84 in the pilot project in conjunction with emergent literacy  
85 instruction. The organization is further encouraged to engage in  
86 community outreach efforts to local community service  
87 organizations for the purpose of improving the availability and

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88 effective delivery of emergent literacy instruction.

89 (8) By December 31 of each year that the organization  
90 provides emergent literacy instruction, the organization shall  
91 submit an accountability report to the Office of Early Learning,  
92 the Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County, the Governor,  
93 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
94 Representatives. The accountability report must include, at a  
95 minimum, the following information:

96 (a) The manner in which all state funds received by the  
97 organization are used to implement the pilot project, separated  
98 by type of expenditure and measured in exact dollar amounts.

99 (b) Other sources of funding received by the organization  
100 for purposes of providing emergent literacy instruction.

101 (c) The municipalities selected by the Office of Early  
102 Learning for participation in the pilot project.

103 (d) The identities of the organization's officers.

104 (e) The number of children receiving emergent literacy  
105 instruction in each municipality.

106 (f) Information and data relating to coordinated health  
107 screening and immunization services provided in conjunction with  
108 the emergent literacy instruction, if any.

109 (9) The Office of Early Learning shall allocate funds for  
110 implementation of the pilot project pursuant to this section.  
111 Expenditures of state funds pursuant to this section must be  
112 verified by affidavit and submitted to the office in a procedure  
113 and format determined by the office.

114 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.