

By the Committee on Appropriations; and Senator Abruzzo

576-04514-15

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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.

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

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

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

57 (a) Two or 3 years of age;

58 (b) Eligible for a federally subsidized child care program;

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59 and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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