

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.

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

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

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

61 (c) A member of a family that is economically
62 disadvantaged and resides in locally or federally subsidized
63 housing. For 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
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 submitted to the office in a procedure and
113 format determined by the office.

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