

By Senator Jones

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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to the school readiness program;  
3       amending s. 1002.87, F.S.; revising the criteria for a  
4       child to receive priority for participation in the  
5       school readiness program; conforming provisions to  
6       changes made by the act; amending s. 1002.89, F.S.;  
7       providing requirements for a school readiness program  
8       provider to be eligible to receive specified funding;  
9       providing an effective date.

10  
11 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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13       Section 1. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section  
14       1002.87, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

15       1002.87 School readiness program; eligibility and  
16       enrollment.—

17       (1) Each early learning coalition shall give priority for  
18       participation in the school readiness program as follows:

19       (c) Subsequent priority shall be given, based on the early  
20       learning coalition's local priorities identified under s.  
21       1002.85(2)(i), to children who meet the following criteria:

22       1. A child from birth to the beginning of the school year  
23       for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in  
24       a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2. who is from a working  
25       family that is economically disadvantaged, and may include such  
26       child's eligible siblings, beginning with the school year in  
27       which the sibling is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a  
28       public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2. until the beginning of  
29       the school year in which the sibling is eligible to begin 6th

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30 grade, provided that the first priority for funding an eligible  
31 sibling is local revenues available to the coalition for funding  
32 direct services.

33 2. A child of a parent who transitions from the work  
34 program into employment as described in s. 445.032 from birth to  
35 the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible  
36 for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s.  
37 1003.21(1)(a)2.

38 3. An at-risk child who is at least 9 years of age but  
39 younger than 13 years of age. An at-risk child whose sibling is  
40 enrolled in the school readiness program within an eligibility  
41 priority category listed in paragraphs (a) and (b) and  
42 subparagraph 1. shall be given priority over other children who  
43 are eligible under this paragraph.

44 4. A child who is younger than 13 years of age from a  
45 working family that is economically disadvantaged.

46 5. A child of a parent who transitions from the work  
47 program into employment as described in s. 445.032 who is  
48 younger than 13 years of age.

49 6.a. A child who has special needs ~~and~~ has been determined  
50 eligible as a student who requires additional accommodations  
51 beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.  
52 The child's special needs and associated accommodations must be  
53 validated by a licensed health care professional, licensed  
54 mental health professional, or educational psychologist. Such  
55 person may not be the child's parent or a person employed by a  
56 child care provider. The following documentation must be used to  
57 determine the child's eligibility for such accommodations:

58 (I) ~~with a disability, has~~ A current individual education

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59 plan with a Florida school district; ~~and is not younger than 3~~  
60 ~~years of age.~~

61 (II) A current individualized family support plan;

62 (III) A diagnosed special need; or

63 (IV) A determination of required accommodations.

64 b. The child care provider of a child who meets the  
65 requirements of this subparagraph may be eligible for additional  
66 funding through the special needs differential allocation to  
67 implement the special needs rate as determined in s.  
68 1002.89(1)(d) needs child eligible under this paragraph remains  
69 eligible until the child is eligible for admission to  
70 kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2.

71 7. A child who otherwise meets one of the eligibility  
72 criteria in paragraphs (a) and (b) and subparagraphs 1. and 2.  
73 but who is also enrolled concurrently in the federal Head Start  
74 Program and the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.

75 Section 2. Paragraph (d) of subsection (1) of section  
76 1002.89, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

77 1002.89 School readiness program; funding.—

78 (1) DETERMINATION OF EARLY LEARNING COALITION SCHOOL  
79 READINESS PROGRAM FUNDING.—Funding for the school readiness  
80 program shall be used by the early learning coalitions in  
81 accordance with this part and the General Appropriations Act.

82 (d) *Special needs differential allocation.*—There is created  
83 the special needs differential allocation to assist eligible  
84 school readiness program providers to implement the special  
85 needs rate provisions defined in the state's approved Child Care  
86 and Development Fund Plan. Subject to legislative appropriation,  
87 each early learning coalition shall be reimbursed based on

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88 actual expenditures. All expenditures from the special needs  
89 differential allocation shall be used by the department to help  
90 meet federal targeted requirements for improving quality to the  
91 extent allowable in the state's approved plan. A school  
92 readiness program provider is eligible for funding through the  
93 allocation to implement the special needs differential rate upon  
94 meeting all of the following requirements by July 1, 2025:

95 1. The provider has met or exceeded the minimum program  
96 assessment composite score required for contracting as  
97 determined by the department, as applicable.

98 2. The provider has completed 10 hours of training in  
99 inclusive early childhood or inclusive school-age education  
100 practices within the preceding 2-year period, with the provider  
101 completing an additional 10 hours of such training each  
102 subsequent 5-year period as specified by the department.

103 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.