

By Senator Calatayud

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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; amending s. 1002.89, F.S.;  
6           providing requirements for a school readiness program  
7           provider to be eligible for specified funding  
8           beginning on a specified date; providing an effective  
9           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) and subsection  
14           (2) of section 1002.87, Florida Statutes, are 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 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, a licensed  
54 mental health professional, or an 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 a. ~~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 b. A current individualized family support plan;

62 c. A diagnosed special need; or

63 d. A determination of required accommodations ~~needs child~~  
64 ~~eligible under this paragraph remains eligible until the child~~  
65 ~~is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school~~  
66 ~~under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2.~~

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

71 (2) A school readiness program provider may be paid only  
72 for authorized hours of care provided for a child in the school  
73 readiness program. A child enrolled in the Voluntary  
74 Prekindergarten Education Program may receive care from the  
75 school readiness program if the child is eligible according to  
76 the eligibility priorities and criteria established in  
77 subsection (1). The school readiness program provider of a child  
78 who meets the requirements of subsection (6) may be eligible for  
79 additional funding through the special needs differential  
80 allocation to implement the special needs rate as determined in  
81 s. 1002.89(1)(d).

82 Section 2. Paragraph (d) of subsection (1) of section  
83 1002.89, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

84 1002.89 School readiness program; funding.—

85 (1) DETERMINATION OF EARLY LEARNING COALITION SCHOOL  
86 READINESS PROGRAM FUNDING.—Funding for the school readiness  
87 program shall be used by the early learning coalitions in

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88 accordance with this part and the General Appropriations Act.

89 (d) *Special needs differential allocation.*—There is created  
90 the special needs differential allocation to assist eligible  
91 school readiness program providers to implement the special  
92 needs rate provisions defined in the state’s approved Child Care  
93 and Development Fund Plan. Subject to legislative appropriation,  
94 each early learning coalition shall be reimbursed based on  
95 actual expenditures. All expenditures from the special needs  
96 differential allocation shall be used by the department to help  
97 meet federal targeted requirements for improving quality to the  
98 extent allowable in the state’s approved plan. A school  
99 readiness program provider is eligible for funding through the  
100 allocation to implement the special needs differential rate upon  
101 meeting all of the following requirements by July 1, 2027:

102 1. The provider has met or exceeded the minimum program  
103 assessment composite score required for contracting as  
104 determined by the department, as applicable.

105 2. The provider has completed training on early  
106 identification of social and communication delays as specified  
107 by the department.

108 3. The provider has completed 10 hours of training in  
109 inclusive early childhood or inclusive school-age education  
110 practices within the preceding 2-year period with the provider  
111 completing an additional 10 hours of such training each  
112 subsequent 5-year period as specified by the department.

113 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2027.