

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.

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

12
 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
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~~r~~ 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 a. with a disability, has A current individual education
59 plan with a Florida school district;~~7~~ 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
88 accordance with this part and the General Appropriations Act.

89 (d) Special needs differential allocation.—There is
90 created the special needs differential allocation to assist
91 eligible school readiness program providers to implement the
92 special needs rate provisions defined in the state's approved
93 Child Care and Development Fund Plan. Subject to legislative
94 appropriation, each early learning coalition shall be reimbursed
95 based on actual expenditures. All expenditures from the special
96 needs differential allocation shall be used by the department to
97 help meet federal targeted requirements for improving quality to
98 the 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.