

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based only on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Date: January 26, 1998 Revised: _____

Subject: State-funded Education/Infant & Toddler

| | <u>Analyst</u> | <u>Staff Director</u> | <u>Reference</u> | <u>Action</u> |
|----|----------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1. | <u>Harkey</u> | <u>O'Farrell</u> | <u>ED</u> | <u>Favorable</u> |
| 2. | _____ | _____ | <u>CF</u> | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | _____ | <u>WM</u> | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

I. Summary:

The bill requires each state funded education and care program for children from birth to five years of age to provide activities to foster brain development in infants and toddlers; specifically, the programs must include classical music and at least 30 minutes of reading to the children each day. The program must provide training for the children's parents regarding the urgency of brain development in the first year of the child's life.

The Executive Office of the Governor must contract for an evaluation of the program and submit a report to the Legislature by January 1, 2000.

The bill takes effect upon becoming a law.

This bill creates an unnumbered section of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Child rearing practices for infants and toddlers traditionally have included singing, talking and telling stories, and providing textiles and toys for the child's play. Those traditional practices stimulate the child's overall development. Early education and care programs recognize national recommendations for developmentally appropriate practice. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recognizes three important kinds of information educators must keep in mind when selecting the day's activities for children: 1) the activities, materials, and experiences must be age appropriate, 2) the activities must be selected in consideration of the interests, strengths, and needs of the individual child, and 3) the activities must be appropriate in the social and cultural context of the child and his or her family.

Recent research on brain development has brought public attention to the way personality and aptitudes are developed during the first few years of life. A recent national public awareness campaign has generated much public interest in the brain research and has fostered a desire on the part of parents and educators to make the most of the child's potential in the first few years of life.

Music imparts to children a sense of rhythm which is important not only for music but for the development of mathematical and spacial abilities as well. While studies show the relationship of early music training to the development of spacial and mathematical abilities, there is not a body of research to show a direct link between classical music and intellectual development.

Children are born with a propensity to develop language and they learn the language they hear. Thus talking, telling stories, reading, and singing give the child the language he or she learns. Those activities teach the child how language occurs in social relationships. The environment where an infant or toddler spends time should be rich in language.

The prekindergarten early intervention program established in s. 230.2305, F.S., requires a curriculum that is developmentally appropriate according to current nationally recognized recommendations for high-quality prekindergarten programs. The Legislature annually appropriates \$3 million for the Florida First Start Program, established in s. 230.2303, F.S., to serve children from birth to three years of age and their parents. The First Start program requires monthly home visits by parent educators who teach parents methods for enhancing their children's intellectual, social, and physical development.

Currently the subsidized child care programs are using a child care program assessment tool, defined in s. 402.3051(1)(a), F.S. The tool was developed by the department to determine quality child care for children enrolled in subsidized child care; it was modeled after the assessment instrument utilized by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. According to the department, directly operated and contracted providers follow a developmentally appropriate curriculum for children birth to five years of age. However, due to the federally mandated parental choice (45 CFR 98.30), the department is also required to have a voucher program. The assessment tool is not required for the voucher program.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill requires each state funded education and care program for children from birth to five years of age to provide activities to foster brain development in infants and toddlers. A program must provide an environment rich in language and music and filled with objects of various colors, shapes, textures and sizes to stimulate visual, tactile, auditory and linguistic senses in the children. The programs must include classical music and at least 30 minutes of reading to the children each day.

The program must provide training for the children's parents including direct dialog between teachers and parents demonstrating the urgency of brain development in the first year of the child's life.

The Executive Office of the Governor must contract for an evaluation of the program. A report of the results of the program must be presented to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1, 2000.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The cost of implementing and monitoring the requirements for classical music and reading is indeterminate.

The Department of Children and Family Services is required to provide parental choice in the subsidized child care program. If this requirement were mandated to providers who accept vouchers, and many chose not to participate in the subsidized program, parental choice would be severely limited. The department does not have a mechanism for monitoring compliance with the specific requirements for classical music and for 30 minutes of reading each day.

The Executive Office of the Governor would incur the cost of an evaluation.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's sponsor or the Florida Senate.
