

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

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

BILL: SB 1260

SPONSOR: Senator Wilson

SUBJECT: High School Graduation Requirements/Parenting Skills

DATE: March 11, 2003

REVISED: 03/12/03 _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Dormady</u>	<u>O'Farrell</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Fav/1 amendment</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>HC</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	<u>AED</u>	_____
4.	_____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

SB 1260 requires that parenting skills be added to the curriculum of life management skills classes taught in Florida's high schools.

This bill amends the following section of the Florida Statutes: 1003.43.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2003.

II. Present Situation:

Section 1003.43, F.S., sets forth general requirements for high school graduation. Of the 24 credits generally required for graduation, one-half credit must be in life management skills, which by statute currently include consumer education, emotional development, marriage and relationship education, nutrition, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, benefits of sexual abstinence and consequences of teenage pregnancy, information on breast cancer detection and breast self-examination, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, drug education, and the hazards of smoking.

Participation in a parenting skills program or class is generally believed to enhance parenting skills, reducing the likelihood of abuse. A study in Florida designed to determine the impact of parent education programs on parenting practices found that parents who complete parenting programs express significantly more positive parenting attitudes than parents who drop out.¹ This same study indicated that parenting skills classes of 90 days or longer appear to produce more gains in parenting skills than those of shorter length.

¹ Stephen J. Bavolek, Ph.D., Family Development Resources, Inc., Family Nurturing Centers International: The Florida Report: The Impact of Gender, Race, Income and Education on Parenting Attitudes July 1999 to July 2001.

In fiscal year 2000-2001, 130,209 child victims of abuse or neglect were confirmed upon investigation in the state of Florida.² According to a 2001 report, the direct and indirect costs of child abuse and neglect in the U.S. as a whole are approximately \$118 billion annually,³ equal to \$1461.66 per U.S. family, daily. Based on these calculations, Florida's direct and indirect costs from child abuse equal approximately \$8.8 billion annually.⁴

The Florida Department of Education's Course Code currently includes two parenting courses, one that focuses on prenatal care and environmental influences on children, and one that focuses on the development of toddlers and preschool age children. These half-credit courses are designed for high school and adult students and are electives that may be offered by schools. Parenting skills instruction is also a required component for high school students who participate in teen parent programs.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This legislation adds "parenting skills" to the list of topics to be covered in the life management skills class required under s. 1003.43(1)(i), F.S. In order to implement the legislation, the Department of Education or school districts will have to develop or purchase a parenting skills program appropriate for inclusion in the life management skills class. Existing requirements for parenting classes now listed in the course code could possibly be used as a basis for the requirements in the life management skills class. Once developed, this program will have to be disseminated to districts, if applicable, and to teachers. Training for teachers, if necessary, will have to be provided as well.

Existing subjects within the life management skills curriculum will receive less classroom time as the curriculum is adjusted to accommodate the new subject. Because of the relatively short amount of time that may be spent on parenting skills in a high school class, the effect of parenting skills instruction in these classes may be lesser than that found in the longer parenting classes reviewed in the study noted above.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

² Florida Department of Children & Families, Office of Family Safety, for state fiscal year 2000-2001.

³ Prevent Child Abuse America, Total Estimated Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States, Statistical Evidence, 2001.

⁴ April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, www5.myflorida.com/cf_web/news/cap/.

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:

Either the Department of Education or the school districts will incur the expense of purchasing and/or developing a parenting skills program for the life management skills class and disseminating it as necessary. Each school district will incur the cost of implementing the program within the life management curriculum of the high school and training teachers if necessary.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

The term “parenting skills,” as commonly understood, encompasses a wide array of skills. The absence of a more specific definition of “parenting skills” in the bill is not a technical deficiency, as other life management skills listed in the statute are also left undefined; this general language provides greater flexibility to school districts in implementing the section. Content of current parenting classes in Florida includes growth and development, prenatal care, caregiver skills, family relationships, child abuse and neglect, parent-child communication, child safety, and behavior management.

VIII. Amendments:

#1 by Education:

Provides that life management skills class need not be given in grades 9 or 10 only. (WITH TITLE AMENDMENT)