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1 A bill to be entitled  
2 An act relating to the Literacy Jump Start Pilot  
3 Project; requiring the Department of Education to  
4 establish the pilot project in St. Lucie County to  
5 assist low-income, at-risk children in developing  
6 emergent literacy skills; requiring the department to  
7 select an organization to implement the pilot project;  
8 requiring the Office of Early Learning to oversee  
9 implementation of the pilot project; providing  
10 eligibility requirements for participation; requiring  
11 background screening for instructors, volunteers, and  
12 noninstructional personnel who make direct contact  
13 with children; requiring emergent literacy training  
14 for instructors; encouraging the coordination of basic  
15 health screening and immunization services in  
16 conjunction with emergent literacy instruction;  
17 requiring annual submission of an accountability  
18 report; requiring the department to allocate funds for  
19 the pilot project; providing an effective date.  
20

21 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
22

23 Section 1. (1) The Department of Education shall  
24 establish the 5-year Literacy Jump Start Pilot Project in St.  
25 Lucie County to assist low-income, at-risk children in  
26 developing emergent literacy skills.

27 (a) The department shall consult with local organizations  
28 within St. Lucie County and identify an organization to

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29 implement the pilot project. The department shall also consult  
30 with the Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County to select  
31 municipalities within St. Lucie County eligible for  
32 participation in the pilot project. The Office of Early Learning  
33 shall oversee the implementation of the pilot project.

34 (b) A municipality is eligible for participation in the  
35 pilot project if locally or federally subsidized housing is  
36 located within the municipality.

37 (c) The department shall select to implement the pilot  
38 project a local organization that is a not-for-profit  
39 corporation, qualified as charitable under s. 501(c)(3) of the  
40 Internal Revenue Code, that provides training to parents to  
41 assist their children with success in school, such as the Parent  
42 Academy of St. Lucie County or another similarly qualified local  
43 organization. The department may select a faith-based  
44 organization; however, funds provided for the purpose of  
45 implementing the pilot project may be used for only those  
46 purposes expressly provided in this section and may not be used  
47 for the purpose of religious indoctrination.

48 (2) The organization selected by the department must use  
49 funds provided for the pilot project only to provide emergent  
50 literacy instruction to children. In order to provide easy  
51 access for participating children and families, the instruction  
52 must be provided in a subsidized housing unit located within an  
53 eligible municipality selected by the department.

54 (3) As used in this section, the term "emergent literacy"  
55 means a variety of early behaviors and skills associated with  
56 successful reading and writing development.

57        (4) A child is eligible to receive emergent literacy  
58 instruction provided through the pilot project only if the child  
59 is:

60        (a) Two or 3 years of age;

61        (b) Eligible for a federally subsidized child care  
62 program; and

63        (c) A member of a family that is economically  
64 disadvantaged and resides in locally or federally subsidized  
65 housing. For purposes of this paragraph, "economically  
66 disadvantaged" means having a family income that does not exceed  
67 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

68        (5) The organization selected by the department may not  
69 receive any funds from the state for purposes of implementing  
70 the pilot project until the Office of Early Learning receives  
71 written certification from the organization and confirms that  
72 all of the organization's volunteers, instructors, and  
73 noninstructional personnel who make direct contact with children  
74 have cleared level 2 background screening pursuant to s. 435.04,  
75 Florida Statutes, within 5 years before implementation of the  
76 pilot project. The organization shall require volunteers and  
77 applicants for employment as instructors or noninstructional  
78 personnel who make direct contact with children participating in  
79 the pilot project to undergo level 2 background screening  
80 pursuant to s. 435.04, Florida Statutes, prior to hiring the  
81 applicant or allowing the volunteer to participate in the pilot  
82 project. The organization may not use state funds provided to  
83 implement the pilot project to pay for background screening.

84       (6) An instructor in the pilot project must successfully  
85 complete an emergent literacy training course, approved by the  
86 department, prior to providing emergent literacy instruction  
87 under this section.

88       (7) The organization is encouraged to coordinate with the  
89 St. Lucie County Health Department for the provision of basic  
90 health screening and immunization services for children  
91 participating in the pilot project in conjunction with emergent  
92 literacy instruction. The organization is further encouraged to  
93 engage in community outreach efforts to local community service  
94 organizations for the purpose of improving the availability and  
95 effective delivery of emergent literacy instruction.

96       (8) By December 31 of each year that the organization  
97 provides emergent literacy instruction, the organization shall  
98 submit an accountability report to the Office of Early Learning,  
99 the Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County, the Governor,  
100 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of  
101 Representatives. The accountability report must include, at  
102 minimum, the following information:

103       (a) The manner in which all state funds received by the  
104 organization are used to implement the pilot project, separated  
105 by type of expenditure and measured in exact dollar amounts.

106       (b) Other sources of funding received by the organization  
107 for purposes of providing emergent literacy instruction.

108       (c) The municipalities selected by the department for  
109 participation in the pilot project.

110       (d) The identities of the organization's officers.

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111 (e) The number of children receiving emergent literacy  
112 instruction in each municipality.

113 (f) Information and data relating to coordinated health  
114 screening and immunization services provided in conjunction with  
115 the emergent literacy instruction, if any.

116 (9) The department shall allocate funds for implementation  
117 of the pilot project pursuant to this section. Expenditures of  
118 state funds pursuant to this section must be verified by  
119 affidavit submitted to the department in a procedure and format  
120 determined by the department.

121 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2014.