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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
03/06/2025	.	
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The Committee on Fiscal Policy (Harrell) recommended the following:

Senate Amendment

Delete lines 182 - 246
and insert:
developmental delays or disabilities a choice for such children
to continue services in the Early Steps Program beyond the age
of 3 years old.

(2) PURPOSE.—

(a) The purpose of the Early Steps Extended Option is to
continue enrollment in the Early Steps Program for those



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11 children who are eligible. Therefore, the provisions of s.
12 391.308 are maintained and incorporated in the Early Steps
13 Extended Option.

14 (b) For the purposes of this section, "child" means a child
15 from birth until the beginning of the school year following the
16 child's fourth birthday, as provided in 34 C.F.R. s.
17 303.211(a)(2)(ii).

18 (3) DUTIES.—

19 (a) The department shall:

20 1. Submit its application for federal approval to extend
21 eligibility for services under part C of the federal Individuals
22 with Disabilities Education Act no later than July 1, 2026.

23 2. Jointly with the Department of Education, develop or
24 amend any rule, policy, procedure, written agreement, or
25 contract necessary to implement the Early Steps Extended Option
26 in accordance with state law and part C of the federal
27 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

28 3. Seek additional federal grant funds, as available, for
29 the implementation of the Early Steps Extended Option, including
30 a state incentive grant. However, the department may implement
31 the Early Steps Extended Option regardless of the availability
32 or acceptance of supplemental federal grant funds, contingent
33 upon the appropriation of state funds.

34 (b) As part of the individualized family support plan for
35 each child served under the Early Steps Extended Option, a local
36 program office shall include steps for a child to transition to
37 part B of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education
38 Act or other future services by the beginning of the school year
39 following the child's fourth birthday.



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40 (4) ELIGIBILITY.—The department must apply the following
41 eligibility criteria if specific funding is provided in the
42 General Appropriations Act:

43 (a) All of the following criteria must be met for a child
44 to continue receiving Early Steps Program services under the
45 Early Steps Extended Option:

46 1. The child must be determined eligible for early
47 intervention services through the Early Steps Program at least
48 45 days before the child's third birthday.

49 2. The child must be determined eligible for services under
50 part B of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education
51 Act.

52 3. Before the child's third birthday, the family must
53 choose to continue services through the Early Steps Extended
54 Option, which shall include an educational component to promote
55 school readiness and incorporate pre-literacy, language, and
56 numeracy skills.

57 (b) A child becomes ineligible to reenter the Early Steps
58 Extended Option upon exiting the program. If a family chooses to
59 exit the Early Steps Extended Option before the beginning of the
60 school year following the child's fourth birthday, the local
61 school district, in conjunction with the local program office,
62 must notify the child's parent or legal guardian of his or her
63 rights under part B of the federal Individuals with Disabilities
64 Education Act.

65 (c) A child may not receive services under part B of the
66 federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act while
67 receiving services through the Early Steps Extended Option.

68 (d) A child may not receive a state scholarship under s.



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69 1002.394 while receiving services through the Early Steps
70 Extended Option.

71 (5) TRANSITION TO EDUCATION.—

72 (a) At least 90 days before the beginning of the school
73 year following the fourth birthday of a child enrolled in the
74 Early Steps Extended Option, the