

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the school readiness program;
3 amending s. 1002.81, F.S.; revising definitions;
4 amending s. 1002.82, F.S.; revising requirements for a
5 specified statewide data information program within
6 the school readiness program; amending s. 1002.84,
7 F.S.; revising requirements for the program's uniform
8 waiting list; amending s. 1002.85, F.S.; conforming
9 provisions to changes made by the act; amending s.
10 1002.89, F.S.; revising the requirements for
11 determining the school readiness program allocation;
12 providing an effective date.

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

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16 **Section 1. Subsections (6) and (13) of section 1002.81,**
17 **Florida Statutes, are amended, and paragraph (g) is added to**
18 **subsection (1) of that section, to read:**

19 1002.81 Definitions.—Consistent with the requirements of
20 45 C.F.R. parts 98 and 99 and as used in this part, the term:

21 (1) "At-risk child" means:

22 (g) A child in the custody of and in residence with a
23 parent who is receiving comprehensive services with a licensed
24 residential behavioral health treatment center with an onsite
25 child care facility.

(6) "Economically disadvantaged" means having a family income that does not exceed the greater of either 50 percent of the state median income or 150 percent of the federal poverty level and includes being a child of a working migratory family as defined by 34 C.F.R. s. 200.81(d) or (f) or an agricultural worker who is employed by more than one agricultural employer during the course of a year, and whose income varies according to weather conditions and market stability.

(13) "Single point of entry" means an integrated information system that allows a parent to enroll his or her child in the school readiness program or the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program at various locations throughout a county, that may allow a parent to enroll his or her child by telephone or through a website, and that uses a uniform waiting list to track ~~eligible~~ children waiting for enrollment in the school readiness program based on family household income and the priorities established under s. 1002.87.

Section 2. Paragraph (f) of subsection (2) of section 1002.82, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1002.82 Department of Education; powers and duties.—

(2) The department shall:

(f) Establish a unified approach to the state's efforts to coordinate a comprehensive early learning program. In support of this effort, the department:

- 51 1. Shall adopt specific program support services that
52 address the state's school readiness program, including:
53 a. Statewide data information program requirements that
54 include:
55 (I) Eligibility requirements.
56 (II) Financial reports.
57 (III) Program accountability measures.
58 (IV) Child progress reports.
59 b. Child care resource and referral services.
60 c. A single point of entry and uniform waiting list that
61 tracks children waiting for school readiness program services
62 based on family household income and the priorities established
63 under s. 1002.87.
64 2. May provide technical assistance and guidance on
65 additional support services to complement the school readiness
66 program, including:
67 a. Warm-Line services.
68 b. Anti-fraud plans.
69 c. Training and support for parental involvement in
70 children's early education.
71 d. Family literacy activities and services.

72 **Section 3. Subsection (2) of section 1002.84, Florida**
73 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

74 1002.84 Early learning coalitions; school readiness powers
75 and duties.—Each early learning coalition shall:

76 (2) Establish a uniform waiting list to track ~~eligible~~
77 children waiting for enrollment in the school readiness program
78 based on family household income and the priorities established
79 under s. 1002.87 and in accordance with rules adopted by the
80 State Board of Education.

81 **Section 4. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) and subsection**
82 **(5) of section 1002.85, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:**

83 1002.85 Early learning coalition plans.—

84 (2) Each early learning coalition must submit a school
85 readiness program plan every 3 years to the department before
86 the expenditure of funds. A coalition may not implement its
87 school readiness program plan until it receives approval from
88 the department. A coalition may not implement any revision to
89 its school readiness program plan until the coalition submits
90 the revised plan to and receives approval from the department.
91 If the department rejects a plan or revision, the coalition must
92 continue to operate under its previously approved plan. The plan
93 must include, but is not limited to:

94 (b) The coalition's procedures for implementing the
95 requirements of this part, including:

96 1. Single point of entry.

97 2. Uniform waiting list that tracks children waiting for
98 school readiness program services based on family household
99 income and the priorities established under s. 1002.87.

100 3. Eligibility and enrollment processes and local

101 eligibility priorities for children pursuant to s. 1002.87.

102 4. Parent access and choice.

103 5. Sliding fee scale and policies on applying the waiver
104 or reduction of fees in accordance with s. 1002.84(9).

105 6. Use of preassessments and postassessments, as
106 applicable.

107 7. Use of contracted slots, as applicable, based on the
108 results of the assessment required under paragraph (i).

109 (5) The department shall collect and report data on
110 coalition delivery of early learning programs. Elements shall
111 include, but are not limited to, measures related to progress
112 towards reducing the number of children on the waiting list, the
113 percentage of children served by the program as compared to the
114 number of administrative staff and overhead, the percentage of
115 children served compared to total number of children under the
116 age of 5 years below either 50 percent of the state median
117 income or 150 percent of the federal poverty level, whichever is
118 greater, provider payment processes, fraud intervention, child
119 attendance and stability, use of child care resource and
120 referral, and kindergarten readiness outcomes for children in
121 the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program or the school
122 readiness program upon entry into kindergarten. The department
123 shall request input from the coalitions and school readiness
124 program providers before finalizing the format and data to be
125 used. The report shall be implemented beginning July 1, 2014,

and results of the report must be included in the annual report under s. 1002.82.

Section 5. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section 1002.89, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1002.89 School readiness program; funding.—

(1) DETERMINATION OF EARLY LEARNING COALITION SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM FUNDING.—Funding for the school readiness program shall be used by the early learning coalitions in accordance with this part and the General Appropriations Act.

(a) School readiness program allocation.—If the annual allocation for the school readiness program is not determined in the General Appropriations Act or the substantive bill implementing the General Appropriations Act, it shall be determined as follows:

1. For each county in the early learning coalition, the total number of unweighted full-time equivalent school readiness children, as adopted by the Early Learning Programs Estimating Conference pursuant to s. 216.136(8), which shall consider the historical trend of children served and population changes for each county, shall be multiplied by the appropriate care level factor to calculate the weighted full-time equivalent school readiness children. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term "care level factor" means the adjustment made based on the relative differences in reimbursement rates associated with the eligible school readiness children pursuant to s. 1002.87.

151 2. The total weighted full-time equivalent school
152 readiness children shall be multiplied by the rate index to
153 calculate the adjusted weighted full-time equivalent school
154 readiness children. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term
155 "rate index" means the adjustment made based on the impact of
156 geographic location on reimbursement rates.

157 3. The school readiness program funds shall be distributed
158 based on each county's proportionate share of the total adjusted
159 weighted full-time equivalent school readiness children.

160 **Section 6.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.