

CHAPTER 2025-105

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 1102

An act relating to the school readiness program; amending s. 1002.87, F.S.; revising the criteria for a child to receive priority for participation in the school readiness program; amending s. 1002.89, F.S.; providing requirements for a school readiness program provider to be eligible for specified funding beginning on a specified date; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) and subsection (2) of section 1002.87, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1002.87 School readiness program; eligibility and enrollment.—

(1) Each early learning coalition shall give priority for participation in the school readiness program as follows:

(c) Subsequent priority shall be given, based on the early learning coalition's local priorities identified under s. 1002.85(2)(i), to children who meet the following criteria:

1. A child from birth to the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2. who is from a working family that is economically disadvantaged, and may include such child's eligible siblings, beginning with the school year in which the sibling is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2. until the beginning of the school year in which the sibling is eligible to begin 6th grade, provided that the first priority for funding an eligible sibling is local revenues available to the coalition for funding direct services.

2. A child of a parent who transitions from the work program into employment as described in s. 445.032 from birth to the beginning of the school year for which the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2.

3. An at-risk child who is at least 9 years of age but younger than 13 years of age. An at-risk child whose sibling is enrolled in the school readiness program within an eligibility priority category listed in paragraphs (a) and (b) and subparagraph 1. shall be given priority over other children who are eligible under this paragraph.

4. A child who is younger than 13 years of age from a working family that is economically disadvantaged.

5. A child of a parent who transitions from the work program into employment as described in s. 445.032 who is younger than 13 years of age.

6. A child who has special needs ~~and~~, has been determined eligible as a student who requires additional accommodations beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The child's special needs and associated accommodations must be validated by a licensed health care professional, a licensed mental health professional, or an educational psychologist. Such person may not be the child's parent or relative or a person employed by a child care provider. The following documentation must be used to determine the child's eligibility for such accommodations:

~~a. with a disability, has~~ A current individual education plan with a Florida school district, ~~and is not younger than 3 years of age.~~

b. A current individualized family support plan;

c. A diagnosed special need; or

d. A written determination of required accommodations by a licensed health care professional, a licensed mental health professional, or an educational psychologist needs child eligible under this paragraph remains eligible until the child is eligible for admission to kindergarten in a public school under s. 1003.21(1)(a)2.

7. A child who otherwise meets one of the eligibility criteria in paragraphs (a) and (b) and subparagraphs 1. and 2. but who is also enrolled concurrently in the federal Head Start Program and the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program.

(2) A school readiness program provider may be paid only for authorized hours of care provided for a child in the school readiness program. A child enrolled in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program may receive care from the school readiness program if the child is eligible according to the eligibility priorities and criteria established in subsection (1). The school readiness program provider of a child who meets the requirements of subsection (6) may be eligible for additional funding through the special needs differential allocation to implement the special needs rate as determined in s. 1002.89(1)(d).

Section 2. Paragraph (d) 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.

(d) *Special needs differential allocation.*—There is created the special needs differential allocation to assist eligible school readiness program providers to implement the special needs rate provisions defined in the state's approved Child Care and Development Fund Plan. Subject to

legislative appropriation, each early learning coalition shall be reimbursed based on actual expenditures. All expenditures from the special needs differential allocation shall be used by the department to help meet federal targeted requirements for improving quality to the extent allowable in the state's approved plan. A school readiness program provider is eligible for funding through the allocation to implement the special needs differential rate upon meeting all of the following requirements beginning July 1, 2027:

1. The provider has met or exceeded the minimum program assessment composite score required for contracting as determined by the department, as applicable.

2. Instructional staff employed or contracted by the provider has completed training on early identification of social and communication delays as specified by the department.

3. The instructor assigned by the provider to the child in need of additional accommodations under s. 1002.87(1)(c)6. has completed 10 hours of training in inclusive early childhood or inclusive school-age education practices within the first 90 days after the child's enrollment or within 90 days after the hiring of a new instructor assigned by the provider to a child in need of additional accommodations under s. 1002.87(1)(c)6.

After the initial determination of eligibility, the provider must maintain the required program composite score and the instructor assigned by the provider to a child who needs additional accommodations under s. 1002.87(1)(c)6. must complete a minimum of 2 hours of relevant training in each subsequent year after the initial determination of eligibility in order to remain eligible to implement the special needs differential rate.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

Approved by the Governor May 30, 2025.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 30, 2025.