

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Subject: Continuing Certain Early Education Pilot Projects

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Overview

This bill extends the sunsets on three pilot projects – School Readiness Service Agreements; Prekindergarten Exploratory Projects; and Family, Friend, and Neighbor Grants. The bill also provides unspecified appropriations for these three pilot projects.

The 2007 Legislature established School Readiness Service Agreements (SRSA) for child care providers who apply to the Commissioner of Human Services, meet certain criteria, and perform services that support school readiness for children and economic stability for parents. The SRSAs allow the commissioner to pay higher child care provider reimbursement rates to up to 50 child care providers that represent diverse parts of the state and a variety of child care delivery models.

The 2007 Legislature established three prekindergarten exploratory projects to be conducted in partnership with the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation to promote children’s school readiness. The three projects are located in St. Paul, Hennepin County, and Blue Earth County. The Minnesota Early Learning Foundation must design and evaluate the exploratory projects.

The 2007 Legislature established a family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) grant program to promote children’s early literacy, healthy development, school readiness, and to foster community partnerships to promote children’s school readiness. Grants must be used by community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and Indian tribes working with FFN caregivers in local communities, cultural communities, and Indian tribes.

- 1 Provider eligibility.** Amends § 119B.231, subd. 2. Allows additional providers to participate in the school readiness service agreement (SRSA) program if sufficient funds are available. Gives priority for funds to providers who had agreements prior to June 30, 2009. Modifies the list of requirements providers must meet in order to be eligible to participate. Modifies the list of factors the commissioner must evaluate when determining whether or

not to enter into an agreement with a provider.

- 2 **Family and child eligibility.** Amends § 119B.231, subd. 3. Requires families choosing a provider with an SRSA to maintain eligibility for child care assistance and be in an authorized activity.
- 3 **Requirements of providers.** Amends § 119B.231, subd. 4. Requires providers who enter into an SRSA to comply with all SRSA requirements. Requires providers who have been previously selected for an SRSA to begin the process of obtaining a rating using the Parent Aware quality rating system according to the timelines established by the commissioner. Specifies provider and commissioner duties if a provider does not obtain a rating of at least three stars. Requires providers who are selected for a new SRSA on or after July 1, 2009, to have at least a three star rating under the Parent Aware quality rating system at the time their agreement is signed.
- 4 **Prekindergarten exploratory projects.** Amends Laws 2007, ch. 147, art. 2, § 62. Changes the date for the age cut off from August 31 to September 1 so that it is the same as the cut off for kindergarten entry. Prohibits programs from asking parents or legal guardians for information regarding immigration status as a condition of eligibility. Explicitly includes paying for parental co-payments or other fees or charges as an eligible use of funds. Gives explicit authority to grantees and DHS to use some of the funds for administrative and implementation activities. Makes other technical changes.
- 5 **Prekindergarten exploratory projects; carry forward authority.** Allows prekindergarten exploratory project funding to be used until expended.
- 6 **Appropriations.** Appropriates unspecified amounts for the school readiness service agreements; prekindergarten exploratory projects; and family, friend, and neighbor grants. Adds the school readiness service agreement and family, friend, and neighbor grant appropriations to the base.