

256A.4 Family support programs.

1. a. The board of directors of each school district may develop and offer a family support program which provides outreach and incentives for the voluntary participation of expectant parents and parents of children in the period of life from birth through age five, who reside within district boundaries, in educational family support experiences designed to assist parents in learning about the physical, mental, and emotional development of their children. A board may contract with another school district or public or private nonprofit agency for provision of the approved program or program site.

b. A family support program shall meet multicultural gender fair guidelines. The program shall encourage parents to be aware of practices that may affect equitable development of children. The program shall include parents in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program. A program shall be designed to meet the needs of the residents of the participating district and may use unique approaches to provide for those needs. The goals of a family support program shall include but are not limited to the following:

(1) Family involvement as a key component of school improvement with an emphasis on communication and active family participation in family support programming.

(2) Family participation in the planning and decision-making process for the program and encouragement of long-term parental involvement in their children's education.

(3) Meeting the educational and developmental needs of expectant parents and parents of young children.

(4) Developmentally appropriate activities for children that include those skills necessary for adaptation to both the home and school environments.

2. The department of education shall develop guidelines for family support programs. Program components may include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

a. Instruction, techniques, and materials designed to educate parents about the physical, mental, character, and emotional development of children.

b. Instruction, techniques, and materials designed to enhance the skills of parents in assisting in their children's learning and development.

c. Assistance to parents about learning experiences for both children and parents.

d. Activities, such as developmental screenings, designed to detect children's physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral problems that may cause learning problems and referrals to appropriate agencies, authorities, or service providers.

e. Activities and materials designed to encourage parents' and children's self-esteem and to enhance parenting skills and both parents' and children's appreciation of the benefits of education.

f. Information on related community resources, programs, or activities.

g. Role modeling and mentoring techniques for families of children who meet one or more of the criteria established for the definition of at-risk children by the child development coordinating council.

3. Family support programs shall be provided by family support program educators who have completed a minimum of thirty clock hours of an approved family support preservice or in-service training program and meet one of the following requirements:

a. The family support program educator is licensed in elementary education, early childhood education, early childhood special education, home economics, or consumer and homemaking education, or is licensed or certified in occupational child care services and has demonstrated an ability to work with young children and their parents.

b. The family support program educator has achieved child development associate recognition in early childhood education, has completed programming in child development and nursing, and has demonstrated an ability to work with young children and their parents.

c. The family support program educator has completed sixty college credit hours and possesses two years of experience in a program working with young children and their parents.

d. The family support program educator possesses five years of experience in a program working with young children and their parents.

4. Each district shall maintain a separate account within the district budget for moneys

allocated for family support programs. A district may receive moneys from state and federal sources, and may solicit funds from private sources, for deposit into the account.

5. A district shall coordinate a family support program with district special education and career and technical education programs and with any related services or programs provided by other state, federal, or private nonprofit agencies.

[92 Acts, ch 1158, §4](#); [2001 Acts, ch 159, §4](#); [2003 Acts, ch 180, §8](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1061, §42](#); [2016 Acts, ch 1108, §35](#)

Legislative intent; [92 Acts, ch 1158, §1](#)