

House File 2092 - Introduced

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BY A. MEYER

A BILL FOR

- 1 An Act relating to the statewide preschool program by modifying
- 2 provisions relating to eligibility, funding, and compulsory
- 3 attendance and including applicability provisions.
- 4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

unofficial

1 Section 1. Section 256C.1, subsections 1 and 4, Code 2026,
2 are amended to read as follows:

3 1. "Approved local program" means a school district's program
4 for ~~four-year-old~~ young children approved by the department of
5 education to provide high quality preschool instruction.

6 4. "Preschool program" means the statewide preschool program
7 for ~~four-year-old~~ young children created in accordance with this
8 chapter.

9 Sec. 2. Section 256C.1, Code 2026, is amended by adding the
10 following new subsection:

11 NEW SUBSECTION. 7. "Young children" means children who are
12 four years of age or who are five years of age on specified dates
13 as provided in section 256C.3, subsection 1, paragraph "a".

14 Sec. 3. Section 256C.2, Code 2026, is amended to read as
15 follows:

16 **256C.2 Statewide preschool program for ~~four-year-old~~ young**
17 **children — purpose.**

18 1. A statewide preschool program for ~~four-year-old~~ young
19 children is established. The purpose of the preschool program
20 is to provide an opportunity for all young children in the state
21 to enter school ready to learn by expanding voluntary access to
22 quality preschool curricula ~~for all children who are four years~~
23 ~~old.~~

24 2. The state board shall adopt rules in accordance with
25 chapter 17A as necessary to implement the preschool program as
26 provided in this chapter.

27 Sec. 4. Section 256C.3, subsection 1, paragraphs a and b,
28 Code 2026, are amended to read as follows:

29 a. A child who is a resident of Iowa and who is either four
30 years of age on or before September 15 of a school year or who
31 reaches five years of age on or after March 15 but on or before
32 September 15 of the calendar year during which the school year
33 begins shall be eligible to enroll in the preschool program under
34 this chapter. If such a child is enrolled under this chapter,
35 the child shall be considered to be of compulsory attendance age

1 as provided in section 299.1A, subsection 3. If a child enrolled
2 in the preschool program pursuant to this paragraph has been
3 counted for state funding purposes under this chapter for a prior
4 school year, the child shall not be counted for state funding
5 purposes.

6 b. If space and funding are available, including funding from
7 another school district account or fund from which preschool
8 program expenditures are authorized by law, a school district
9 approved to participate in the preschool program may enroll and
10 pay the cost of attendance for a ~~younger or older~~ child in the
11 preschool program who does not satisfy the requirements under
12 paragraph "a"; however, the child shall not be counted for state
13 funding purposes.

14 Sec. 5. Section 256C.3, subsection 4, paragraph b, Code 2026,
15 is amended to read as follows:

16 b. Subject to implementation of chapter 28E agreements
17 between a school district and community-based providers of
18 services to four-year-old children and eligible five-year-old
19 children, a four-year-old child or eligible five-year-old child
20 who is enrolled in a child care center or child development
21 home licensed or registered under chapter 237A, or in an
22 existing public or private preschool program, shall be eligible
23 for services provided by the school district's local preschool
24 program.

25 Sec. 6. Section 256C.4, subsection 2, Code 2026, is amended
26 to read as follows:

27 2. *Eligible student enrollment.*

28 a. To be included as an eligible student in the enrollment
29 count of the preschool programming provided by a school district
30 approved to participate in the preschool program, a child must
31 ~~be four years of~~ satisfy the age by September 15 requirements of
32 section 256C.3, subsection 1, paragraph "a", in the base year and
33 be attending the school district's approved local program.

34 b. The enrollment count of eligible students shall not
35 include a child who is included in the enrollment count

1 determined under section 257.6 or a child who is served by
2 a program already receiving state or federal funds for the
3 purpose of the provision of four-year-old or five-year-old
4 preschool programming while the child is being served by the
5 program. Such preschool programming includes but is not limited
6 to child development assistance programs provided under chapter
7 256A, special education programs provided under section 256B.9,
8 school ready children grant programs and other programs provided
9 under chapter 256I, and federal head start programs and the
10 services funded by Tit. I of the federal Elementary and Secondary
11 Education Act of 1965.

12 Sec. 7. Section 298A.2, subsection 2, paragraph a,
13 subparagraph (1), Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

14 (1) An approved local program under the statewide preschool
15 program for ~~four-year-old~~ young children under chapter 256C.

16 Sec. 8. Section 298A.2, subsection 2, paragraph c,
17 subparagraph (1), Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

18 (1) Start-up costs for an approved local program under the
19 statewide preschool program for ~~four-year-old~~ young children
20 under chapter 256C.

21 Sec. 9. Section 299.1A, subsection 3, Code 2026, is amended
22 to read as follows:

23 3. A child who has reached the age of four ~~by September 15~~ or
24 five and who is enrolled in the statewide preschool program under
25 chapter 256C shall be considered to be of compulsory attendance
26 age unless the parent or guardian of the child submits written
27 notice to the school district implementing the program of the
28 parent's or guardian's intent to remove the child from enrollment
29 in the preschool program.

30 Sec. 10. APPLICABILITY. This Act applies to school budget
31 years beginning on or after July 1, 2027.

32 EXPLANATION

33 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
34 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

35 The statewide preschool program for four-year-old children

1 under Code chapter 256C provides that a child who is a resident
2 of Iowa and is four years of age on or before September 15
3 of a school year shall be eligible to enroll in the preschool
4 program. Additionally, to be included as an eligible student
5 in the enrollment count of the preschool programming for state
6 funding purposes, a child must be four years of age by September
7 15 in the base year and attending the school district's approved
8 local program.

9 This bill expands the eligibility and state funding provisions
10 of the statewide preschool program for four-year-old children
11 under Code chapter 256C to also include five-year-old children
12 who reach the age of five on or after March 15 but on or before
13 September 15 of the calendar year during which the school year
14 begins. However, if a child enrolled in the preschool program
15 has been counted for state funding purposes under this Code
16 chapter for a prior school year, the child shall not be counted
17 for state funding purposes.

18 References to four-year-old children in the program named in
19 Code chapter 256C and in related Code provisions are changed
20 to "young children" or expanded to also refer to eligible
21 five-year-old children and Code section 299.1A relating to
22 compulsory education is also modified to reflect changes made in
23 the bill.

24 The bill applies to school budget years beginning on or after
25 July 1, 2027.