

**Senate Study Bill 1135 - Introduced**

SENATE/HOUSE FILE \_\_\_\_\_  
BY (PROPOSED GOVERNOR BILL)

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to early childhood education and care, including  
2 by modifying provisions related to the statewide preschool  
3 program, the child development coordinating council, programs  
4 for at-risk children, the responsibilities of the department  
5 of education, the early childhood Iowa initiative, and the  
6 state child care assistance program, and establishing the  
7 child care continuum partnership grants pilot program within  
8 the department of health and human services.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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DIVISION I

STATEWIDE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Section 1. Section 256C.1, subsection 1, Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

1. *"Approved local program"* means a school district's program or community-based provider's program for four-year-old children approved by the department of education to provide ~~high-quality~~ high-quality preschool instruction.

Sec. 2. Section 256C.1, Code 2025, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

NEW SUBSECTION. 1A. *"Community-based provider approved to directly participate in the preschool program"* means a community-based provider that meets the community-based provider requirements under section 256C.3 and has been approved by the department to directly participate in the preschool program. *"Community-based provider approved to directly participate in the preschool program"* does not mean a community-based provider that partners with a school district's approved local program.

Sec. 3. Section 256C.3, subsection 1, paragraph b, Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

b. If space and funding are available, including funding from another school district account or fund from which preschool program expenditures are authorized by law, a school district approved to participate in the preschool program or community-based provider approved to directly participate in the preschool program may enroll and pay the cost of attendance for a younger or older child in the preschool program; however, the child shall not be counted for state funding purposes.

Sec. 4. Section 256C.3, subsection 3, unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

The state board shall adopt rules to further define the following preschool program requirements which shall be used to determine whether or not a local program implemented by a school district approved to implement the preschool program or a community-based provider directly approved to implement the

1 preschool program qualifies as an approved local program:

2 Sec. 5. Section 256C.3, subsection 3, paragraph h, Code 2025,  
3 is amended to read as follows:

4 h. Provision for ensuring that children receiving care from  
5 other child care arrangements can participate in the preschool  
6 program with minimal disruption due to transportation and  
7 movement from one site to another. The children participating in  
8 the preschool program may be transported by the school district  
9 or community provider to activities associated with the program  
10 along with other children.

11 Sec. 6. Section 256C.3, Code 2025, is amended by adding the  
12 following new subsection:

13 NEW SUBSECTION. 4A. *Community-based provider*  
14 *requirements.* The state board shall adopt rules to further  
15 define the following requirements of community-based providers  
16 approved to directly participate in the preschool program in  
17 implementing the preschool program:

18 a. Methods of demonstrating readiness to implement  
19 high-quality instruction in the local program shall be  
20 identified.

21 b. A community-based provider shall participate in data  
22 collection and performance measurement processes and reporting as  
23 defined by rule.

24 c. Professional development for community-based provider  
25 preschool teachers shall be addressed in the community-based  
26 provider's professional development plan.

27 Sec. 7. Section 256C.3, subsection 5, paragraphs a, b, and d,  
28 Code 2025, are amended to read as follows:

29 a. The department shall implement an application and  
30 selection process for school district participation and  
31 community-based provider participation in the preschool program  
32 that includes but is not limited to the enrollment requirements  
33 provided under section 256C.4.

34 b. The department shall track the progress of students  
35 served by a school district preschool program or community-based

1 provider preschool program and the students' performance in  
2 elementary and secondary education.

3 d. The state board, in collaboration with the department,  
4 shall ensure that the administrative rules adopted to support  
5 the preschool program emphasize that children's access to the  
6 program is voluntary, that the preschool foundation aid provided  
7 to a school district or a community-based provider is provided  
8 based upon the enrollment of eligible students in the school  
9 district's or community-based provider's local program regardless  
10 of whether an eligible student is a resident of the school  
11 district, and that agreements entered into by a school district  
12 for the provision of programming in settings other than the  
13 school district's facilities are between the school district and  
14 the private provider.

15 Sec. 8. Section 256C.4, subsection 1, Code 2025, is amended  
16 to read as follows:

17 1. General State funding for school district approved to  
18 participate in the preschool program.

19 a. State funding provided under the preschool program to  
20 school districts shall be based upon the enrollment of eligible  
21 students in the preschool programming provided by a school  
22 district approved to participate in the preschool program.

23 b. A school district approved to participate in the preschool  
24 program may authorize expenditures for the district's preschool  
25 programming from any of the revenue sources available to the  
26 district from the sources listed in chapter 298A, provided  
27 the expenditures are within the uses permitted for the revenue  
28 source. In addition, the use of the revenue source for preschool  
29 or prekindergarten programming must have been approved prior  
30 to any expenditure from the revenue source for the district's  
31 approved local program.

32 c. Funding provided under the preschool program is intended  
33 to supplement, not supplant, existing public funding for  
34 preschool programming.

35 d. Preschool foundation aid funding shall not be commingled

1 with the other state aid payments made under section 257.16  
2 to a school district and shall be accounted for by the local  
3 school district separately from the other state aid payments.  
4 Preschool foundation aid payments made to school districts are  
5 miscellaneous income for purposes of chapter 257. A school  
6 district shall maintain a separate listing within its budget  
7 for preschool foundation aid payments received and expenditures  
8 made. A school district shall certify to the department of  
9 education that preschool foundation aid funding received by the  
10 school district was used to supplement, not supplant, moneys  
11 otherwise received and used by the school district for preschool  
12 programming.

13 e. Preschool foundation aid funding shall not be used for  
14 the costs of constructing a facility in connection with an  
15 approved local program. Preschool foundation aid funding may  
16 be used by approved local programs and community providers  
17 for any purpose determined by the board of directors of the  
18 school district to meet standards for high-quality preschool  
19 instruction and for purposes that directly or indirectly benefit  
20 students enrolled in the approved local program, including  
21 but not limited to professional development for preschool  
22 teachers, instructional equipment and supplies, material and  
23 equipment designed to develop pupils' large and small motor  
24 skills, translation services, playground equipment and repair  
25 costs, food and beverages used by children in the approved  
26 local program, safety equipment, facility rental fees, and for  
27 other direct costs that enhance the approved local program,  
28 including by contracting with community partners for any such  
29 services. Preschool foundation aid funding may be used by  
30 approved local programs for the costs of transportation involving  
31 children participating in the preschool program. The costs of  
32 transporting other children associated with the preschool program  
33 or transported as provided in section 256C.3, subsection 3,  
34 paragraph "h", may be prorated by the school district. Preschool  
35 foundation aid funding received by an approved local program that

1 remains unexpended and unobligated at the end of a fiscal year  
2 beginning on or after July 1, 2017, shall be used to build the  
3 approved local program's preschool program capacity in the next  
4 succeeding fiscal year excluding that portion of such unexpended  
5 and unobligated funding that the school district authorizes  
6 for transfer for deposit in the school district's flexibility  
7 account established under section 298A.2, subsection 2, if the  
8 statutory requirements for the use of such funding are met. For  
9 purposes of determining whether a school district has authority  
10 to transfer preschool foundation aid funding for deposit in the  
11 school district's flexibility account established under section  
12 298A.2, subsection 2, the school district must have provided  
13 preschool programming during the fiscal year for which funding  
14 remains unexpended and unobligated to all eligible students for  
15 whom a timely application for enrollment was submitted.

16 *f.* The receipt of funding by a school district for the  
17 purposes of this chapter, the need for additional funding for  
18 the purposes of this chapter, or the enrollment count of eligible  
19 students under this chapter shall not be considered to be unusual  
20 circumstances, create an unusual need for additional funds, or  
21 qualify under any other circumstances that may be used by the  
22 school budget review committee to grant supplemental aid to or  
23 establish a modified supplemental amount for a school district  
24 under section 257.31.

25 *g.* For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015, and each  
26 succeeding fiscal year, of the amount of preschool foundation aid  
27 received by a school district for a fiscal year in accordance  
28 with section 257.16, not more than five percent may be used by  
29 the school district for administering the district's approved  
30 local program. Outreach activities and rent for facilities  
31 not owned by the school district are permissive uses of the  
32 administrative funds.

33 *h.* For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015, and each  
34 succeeding fiscal year, of the amount of preschool foundation aid  
35 received by a school district for a fiscal year in accordance

1 with section 257.16, not less than ninety-five percent of the  
2 per pupil amount shall be passed through to a community-based  
3 provider for each pupil enrolled in the district's approved local  
4 program. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015, and each  
5 succeeding fiscal year, not more than ten percent of the amount  
6 of preschool foundation aid passed through to a community-based  
7 provider may be used by the community-based provider for  
8 administrative costs. The costs of outreach activities and  
9 rent for facilities not owned by the school district are  
10 permissive administrative costs. The costs of transportation  
11 involving children participating in the preschool program and  
12 other children may be prorated.

13 Sec. 9. Section 256C.4, Code 2025, is amended by adding the  
14 following new subsection:

15 NEW SUBSECTION. 1A. *State preschool funding for*  
16 *community-based providers approved to directly participate in the*  
17 *preschool program.*

18 a. State preschool funding shall not be used for the costs  
19 of constructing a facility in connection with an approved local  
20 program. Preschool foundation aid funding may be used by  
21 community-based providers for any purpose determined by the  
22 community-based provider to meet standards for high-quality  
23 preschool instruction and for purposes that directly or  
24 indirectly benefit students enrolled in the approved local  
25 program, including but not limited to professional development  
26 for preschool teachers, instructional equipment and supplies,  
27 material and equipment designed to develop pupils' large and  
28 small motor skills, translation services, playground equipment  
29 and repair costs, food and beverages used by children in the  
30 approved local program, safety equipment, facility rental fees,  
31 and for other direct costs that enhance the approved local  
32 program, including by contracting with other community partners  
33 for any such services. State preschool funding may be used by  
34 approved local programs for the costs of transportation involving  
35 children participating in the preschool program. Preschool

1 foundation aid funding received by a community-based provider  
2 approved to directly participate in the preschool program that  
3 remains unexpended and unobligated at the end of a fiscal year  
4 shall be used to build the community-based provider's capacity in  
5 the next succeeding fiscal year.

6 b. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and each  
7 succeeding fiscal year, of the amount of state preschool funding  
8 received by a community-based provider approved to directly  
9 participate in the preschool program for a fiscal year, not more  
10 than five percent may be used by the community-based provider for  
11 administering the approved local program. Outreach activities  
12 and rent for facilities not owned by the community-based provider  
13 are permissive uses of the administrative funds.

14 Sec. 10. Section 256C.4, subsection 2, paragraph a, Code  
15 2025, is amended to read as follows:

16 a. To be included as an eligible student in the enrollment  
17 count of the preschool programming provided by a school  
18 district approved to participate in the preschool program or  
19 a community-based provider approved to directly participate in  
20 the preschool program, a child must be four years of age by  
21 September 15 in the base year and attending the school district's  
22 or community-based provider's approved local program.

23 Sec. 11. Section 256C.5, subsection 1, paragraphs c and d,  
24 Code 2025, are amended to read as follows:

25 c. "*Preschool budget enrollment*" means the figure that is  
26 equal to fifty percent of the actual enrollment of eligible  
27 students in the preschool programming provided by a school  
28 district approved to participate in the preschool program or a  
29 community-based provider approved to directly participate in the  
30 preschool program on October 1 of the base year, or the first  
31 Monday in October if October 1 falls on a Saturday or Sunday.

32 d. "*Preschool foundation aid*" means the product of the  
33 regular program state cost per pupil for the budget year  
34 multiplied by the school district's preschool budget enrollment  
35 or the community-based provider's preschool budget enrollment.

1 Sec. 12. Section 256C.5, Code 2025, is amended by adding the  
2 following new subsection:

3 NEW SUBSECTION. 2A. *Preschool foundation aid community-based*  
4 *provider amount.* For the initial school year for which a  
5 community-based provider approved to directly participate in  
6 the preschool program receives that approval and implements  
7 the preschool program, the preschool foundation aid payable  
8 to the community-based provider is the product of the regular  
9 program state cost per pupil for the school year multiplied  
10 by fifty percent of the community-based provider's eligible  
11 student enrollment on the date in the school year determined  
12 by rule. For budget years subsequent to the initial year  
13 for which a community-based provider approved to directly  
14 participate in the preschool program receives that initial  
15 approval and implements the preschool program, the preschool  
16 foundation aid is the same as calculated pursuant to subsection  
17 1. The funding for the preschool foundation aid payable to the  
18 community-based provider shall be paid from the appropriation  
19 made in section 257.16. Continuation of a community-based  
20 provider's participation in the preschool program for a second  
21 or subsequent budget year is subject to the approval of the  
22 department based upon the community-based provider's compliance  
23 with accountability provisions and the department's on-site  
24 review of the community-based provider's implementation of the  
25 preschool program.

26 Sec. 13. Section 256C.5, subsection 3, Code 2025, is amended  
27 to read as follows:

28 3. *Aid payments.*

29 a. Preschool foundation aid shall be paid as part of the  
30 state aid payments made to school districts in accordance with  
31 section 257.16.

32 b. Preschool foundation aid paid directly to community-based  
33 providers shall be paid to the community-based provider in  
34 monthly installments beginning on September 15 of a budget year  
35 and ending on or about June 15 of the budget year as determined

1 by the department of management, taking into consideration the  
2 relative budget and cash position of the state resources.

3 Sec. 14. EMERGENCY RULES. The state board of education may  
4 adopt emergency rules under section 17A.4, subsection 3, and  
5 section 17A.5, subsection 2, paragraph "b", to implement the  
6 provisions of this division of this Act and the rules shall  
7 be effective immediately upon filing unless a later date is  
8 specified in the rules. Any rules adopted in accordance with  
9 this section shall also be published as a notice of intended  
10 action as provided in section 17A.4.

11 DIVISION II

12 CHILD DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL AND PROGRAMS FOR AT-RISK  
13 CHILDREN

14 Sec. 15. Section 256.9, subsection 28, Code 2025, is amended  
15 to read as follows:

16 28. ~~Develop, in conjunction with the child development~~  
17 ~~coordinating council or other similar agency,~~ child-to-staff  
18 ratio recommendations and standards for at-risk programs based on  
19 national literature and test results and Iowa longitudinal test  
20 results.

21 Sec. 16. Section 256.9, subsection 31, paragraph b, Code  
22 2025, is amended to read as follows:

23 b. Standards and materials developed shall include  
24 materials which employ developmentally appropriate practices and  
25 incorporate substantial parental involvement. The materials and  
26 standards shall include alternative teaching approaches including  
27 collaborative teaching and alternative dispute resolution  
28 training. ~~The department shall consult with the child~~  
29 ~~development coordinating council, the department of health~~  
30 ~~and human services, the state board of regents center for~~  
31 ~~early developmental education, the area education agencies,~~  
32 ~~the department of human development and family studies in the~~  
33 ~~college of human sciences at Iowa state university of science~~  
34 ~~and technology, the early childhood elementary division of the~~  
35 ~~college of education at the university of Iowa, and the college~~

1 ~~of education at the university of northern Iowa, in developing~~  
2 ~~these standards and materials.~~

3 Sec. 17. Section 256.163, subsection 1, paragraph d, Code  
4 2025, is amended to read as follows:

5 d. Shared visions programs receiving grants from the child  
6 ~~development coordinating council~~ department of education under  
7 section 256A.3.

8 Sec. 18. Section 256A.3, Code 2025, is amended to read as  
9 follows:

10 **256A.3 Duties of council the department of education.**

11 The ~~child development coordinating council~~ department of  
12 education shall promote the provision of child development  
13 services to at-risk three-year-old and four-year-old children,  
14 and shall do all of the following:

15 1. Develop a definition of at-risk children for the purposes  
16 of this chapter. The definition shall include income, family  
17 structure, the child's level of development, and availability or  
18 accessibility for the child of a head start or other child care  
19 program as criteria.

20 2. ~~Establish minimum guidelines for comprehensive early child~~  
21 ~~development services for at-risk three-year and four-year-old~~  
22 ~~children. The guidelines shall reflect current research findings~~  
23 ~~on the necessary components for cost-effective child development~~  
24 ~~services.~~

25 3. ~~At least biennially, develop an inventory of child~~  
26 ~~development services provided to at-risk three-year and~~  
27 ~~four-year-old children in this state and identify the number of~~  
28 ~~children receiving and not receiving these services, the types~~  
29 ~~of programs under which the services are received, the degree~~  
30 ~~to which each program meets the council's minimum guidelines for~~  
31 ~~a comprehensive program, and the reasons children not receiving~~  
32 ~~the services are not being served. The council is not required~~  
33 ~~to conduct independent research in developing the inventory, but~~  
34 ~~shall determine information needs necessary to provide a more~~  
35 ~~complete inventory.~~

1     4. 2. Subject to the availability of funds appropriated  
2 or otherwise available for the purpose of providing child  
3 development services, award grants for programs that provide new  
4 or additional child development services to at-risk children.

5     a. In awarding program grants to an agency or individual, the  
6 ~~council~~ department of education shall consider the following:

7     (1) The quality of the staff and staff background in child  
8 development services.

9     (2) The degree to which the program is or will be integrated  
10 with existing community resources and has the support of the  
11 local community.

12     (3) The ability of the program to provide for child care  
13 in addition to child development services for families needing  
14 full-day child care.

15     (4) A staff-to-children ratio ~~within the guidelines~~  
16 ~~established under subsection 2,~~ but not less than one staff  
17 member per eight children.

18     (5) The degree to which the program involves and works with  
19 the parents, and includes home visits, instruction for parents  
20 on parenting skills, on enhancement of skills in providing for  
21 their children's learning and development, and the physical,  
22 mental, and emotional development of children, and experiential  
23 education.

24     (6) The manner in which health, medical, dental, and  
25 nutrition services are incorporated into the program.

26     (7) The degree to which the program complements existing  
27 programs and services for at-risk three-year-old and  
28 four-year-old children available in the area, including other  
29 child care services, services provided through the school  
30 district, and services available through area education agencies.

31     ~~(8) The degree to which the program can be monitored and~~  
32 ~~evaluated to determine its ability to meet its goals.~~

33     ~~(9)~~ (8) The provision of transportation or other auxiliary  
34 services that may be necessary for families to participate in the  
35 program.

1     ~~(10)~~ (9) The provision of staff training and development,  
2 and staff compensation sufficient to assure continuity.

3     b. Program grants funded under this subsection may integrate  
4 children not meeting at-risk criteria into the program and shall  
5 establish a fee for participation in the program in the manner  
6 provided in section 279.49, but grant funds shall not be used to  
7 pay the costs for those children.

8     c. Programs awarded grants under this subsection shall meet  
9 the national association for the education of young children  
10 program standards and accreditation criteria, the Iowa quality  
11 preschool program standards and criteria, or other approved  
12 program standards as determined by the department of education.  
13 Programs awarded grants prior to July 1, 2015, shall continue to  
14 be evaluated and assessed based on eligibility and award criteria  
15 established under rules adopted by the state board of education  
16 pursuant to section 279.51 prior to June 30, 2015.

17     ~~5.~~ 3. Encourage the submission of grant requests from  
18 all potential providers of ~~child development services~~ statewide  
19 voluntary preschool programming and shall be flexible in  
20 evaluating grants, recognizing that different types of programs  
21 may be suitable for different locations in the state.

22     a. Requests for grants must contain a procedure for  
23 evaluating the effectiveness of the program and accounting  
24 procedures for monitoring the expenditure of grant moneys.

25     b. The ~~council~~ department of education shall seek to  
26 use performance-based measures to evaluate programs. Not  
27 more than five percent of any state funds appropriated for  
28 child development purposes may be used for administration and  
29 evaluation.

30     ~~6.~~ 4. Annually, submit recommendations to the governor  
31 and the general assembly on the need for investment in child  
32 development services in the state.

33     ~~7.~~ 5. Subject to a decision by the ~~council~~ department of  
34 education to initiate the programs, develop criteria for and  
35 award grants under section 279.51, subsection 2.

1 ~~8. Encourage the establishment of programs that will enhance~~  
2 ~~the skills of parents in parenting and in providing for the~~  
3 ~~learning and development of their children.~~

4 Sec. 19. Section 256A.4, subsection 2, paragraph g, Code  
5 2025, is amended to read as follows:

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

10 Sec. 20. Section 256A.5, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended  
11 by striking the subsection.

12 Sec. 21. Section 256C.3, subsection 3, paragraph e, Code  
13 2025, is amended to read as follows:

14 e. Collaboration with participating families, early care  
15 providers, and community partners including but not limited to  
16 early childhood Iowa area boards, head start programs, shared  
17 visions and other programs provided under the auspices of  
18 the ~~child development coordinating council~~ department, licensed  
19 child care centers, registered child development homes, area  
20 education agencies, child care resource and referral services  
21 provided under section 237A.26, early childhood special education  
22 programs, services funded by Tit. I of the federal Elementary and  
23 Secondary Education Act of 1965, and family support programs.

24 Sec. 22. Section 256C.3, subsection 4, paragraph a, Code  
25 2025, is amended to read as follows:

26 a. Methods of demonstrating community readiness to implement  
27 high-quality instruction in a local program shall be identified.  
28 The potential provider shall submit a collaborative program  
29 proposal that demonstrates the involvement of multiple community  
30 stakeholders including but not limited to, and only as  
31 applicable, parents, the school district, accredited nonpublic  
32 schools and faith-based representatives, the area education  
33 agency, the early childhood Iowa area board, representatives of  
34 business, head start programs, shared visions and other programs  
35 provided under the auspices of the ~~child development coordinating~~

1 ~~council~~ department, center-based and home-based providers of  
2 child care services, human services, public health, and economic  
3 development programs. The methods may include but are not  
4 limited to a school district providing evidence of a public  
5 hearing on the proposed programming and written documentation of  
6 collaboration agreements between the school district, existing  
7 community providers, and other community stakeholders addressing  
8 operational procedures and other critical measures.

9 Sec. 23. Section 262.71, subsection 8, Code 2025, is amended  
10 by striking the subsection.

11 Sec. 24. Section 273.2, subsection 6, unnumbered paragraph 1,  
12 Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

13 The area education agency board may provide for the following  
14 programs and services to local school districts, and at  
15 the request of local school districts to providers of child  
16 development services who have received grants under chapter 256A  
17 from the ~~child development coordinating council~~ department of  
18 education, within the limits of funds available:

19 Sec. 25. Section 279.51, subsection 1, paragraphs b and d,  
20 Code 2025, are amended to read as follows:

21 b. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2007, and for each  
22 succeeding fiscal year, eight million five hundred thirty-six  
23 thousand seven hundred forty dollars of the funds appropriated  
24 shall be allocated to the ~~child development coordinating council~~  
25 established in chapter 256A department of education for the  
26 purposes set out in subsection 2, ~~of this section and section~~  
27 256A.3, and to be used as grants to early childhood programs that  
28 demonstrate the greatest need for programs for at-risk children  
29 and the families of at-risk children.

30 d. Notwithstanding section 256A.3, subsection 5 3, of the  
31 amount appropriated in this subsection for the fiscal year  
32 beginning July 1, 2007, and for each succeeding fiscal year, up  
33 to two hundred eighty-two thousand six hundred dollars may be  
34 used for administrative costs.

35 Sec. 26. Section 279.51, subsection 2, paragraph a,

1 unnumbered paragraph 1, Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

2 Funds allocated under subsection 1, paragraph "b", shall be  
3 used by the ~~child development coordinating council~~ department of  
4 education for the following:

5 Sec. 27. Section 279.51, subsection 2, paragraph a,  
6 subparagraphs (1) and (2), Code 2025, are amended to read as  
7 follows:

8 (1) To continue funding for programs previously funded by  
9 grants awarded under section 256A.3 and to provide additional  
10 grants under section 256A.3. The ~~council~~ department shall seek  
11 to provide grants on the basis of the location within the state  
12 of children meeting at-risk definitions.

13 (2) At the discretion of the ~~child development coordinating~~  
14 department of education, award grants ~~for the following:~~

15 ~~(a) To~~ to school districts to establish programs for  
16 three-year-old, and four-year-old, ~~and five-year-old~~ at-risk  
17 children.

18 ~~(b) To provide grants to provide educational support services~~  
19 ~~to parents of at-risk children age birth through three years.~~

20 Sec. 28. Section 279.51, subsection 2, paragraph b, Code  
21 2025, is amended to read as follows:

22 b. A grantee under this subsection may direct the use of  
23 moneys received to serve any qualifying child ranging in age from  
24 three years old to ~~five~~ four years old, regardless of the age  
25 of population indicated on the grant request in its initial year  
26 of application. A grantee is encouraged to consider the degree  
27 to which the program complements existing programs and services  
28 for three-year-old, and four-year-old, ~~and five-year-old~~ at-risk  
29 children available in the area, including other child care and  
30 preschool services, services provided through a school district,  
31 and services available through an area education agency.

32 Sec. 29. Section 279.51, subsection 3, Code 2025, is amended  
33 by striking the subsection.

34 Sec. 30. REPEAL. Section 256A.2, Code 2025, is repealed.

35

DIVISION III

1 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESPONSIBILITIES

2 Sec. 31. Section 256.9, Code 2025, is amended by adding the  
3 following new subsections:

4 NEW SUBSECTION. 69. a. Review and conduct research related  
5 to the most effective evidence-based curricula, instructional  
6 materials, and evidence-based or promising practices used in  
7 prekindergarten programs and in preschools, which shall include  
8 a review of the curricula and instructional materials used  
9 by prekindergarten programs in this state, preschool programs  
10 serving children with individualized education programs, and  
11 preschool programs created in accordance with chapters 256A and  
12 256C.

13 b. Develop and make available on the department's internet  
14 site a list of the most effective evidence-based curricula,  
15 instructional materials, and evidence-based or promising  
16 practices for prekindergarten programs and preschools.

17 NEW SUBSECTION. 70. a. Develop a preschool accountability  
18 system representing, at minimum, developmental and learning  
19 outcomes and continuous implementation of high-quality program  
20 standards for school districts offering a prekindergarten  
21 program, accredited nonpublic schools offering a prekindergarten  
22 program, prekindergarten and preschool programs serving children  
23 with individualized education programs, and preschool programs  
24 created in accordance with chapters 256A and 256C. The preschool  
25 accountability system must utilize, at minimum, data from child  
26 performance and growth measures described in section 279.60,  
27 continuous improvement activities described in chapters 256A  
28 and 256C, and other measures and activities defined by the  
29 department.

30 b. Provide, in coordination with the department of health and  
31 human services, an alignment of an outcomes-based accountability  
32 system for school districts offering a prekindergarten program,  
33 accredited nonpublic schools offering a prekindergarten program,  
34 preschool programs serving children with individualized education  
35 programs, and preschool programs created in accordance with

1 chapters 256A and 256C. The outcomes-based accountability system  
2 shall take into account the voluntary quality rating system  
3 established pursuant to section 237A.30.

4 NEW SUBSECTION. 71. a. Review and revise the state early  
5 learning standards and standards related to preschool programs  
6 serving children with individualized education programs and  
7 preschool programs created in accordance with chapters 256A and  
8 256C.

9 b. Provide professional development services to school  
10 districts offering a prekindergarten program, accredited  
11 nonpublic schools offering a prekindergarten program, preschool  
12 programs serving children with individualized education programs,  
13 and preschool programs created in accordance with chapters 256A  
14 and 256C to assist such programs in implementing the revised  
15 early learning standards, preschool assessments, high-quality  
16 program standards, and standards related to preschool programs.

17 DIVISION IV

18 EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA INITIATIVE

19 Sec. 32. Section 256I.1, subsection 4, Code 2025, is amended  
20 to read as follows:

21 4. "Early childhood Iowa area" means a geographic area  
22 designated by the department in accordance with this chapter.

23 Sec. 33. Section 256I.4, subsection 3, Code 2025, is amended  
24 by striking the subsection.

25 Sec. 34. Section 256I.6, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended  
26 by striking the subsection and inserting in lieu thereof the  
27 following:

28 2. By January 1, 2026, the department shall designate  
29 early childhood Iowa areas in the same number and using the  
30 same geographic boundaries as the behavioral health districts  
31 designated by the department pursuant to section 225A.4, as  
32 enacted by 2024 Iowa Acts, ch. 1161.

33 Sec. 35. Section 256I.6, subsections 3 and 4, Code 2025, are  
34 amended by striking the subsections.

35 Sec. 36. Section 256I.9, subsection 4, paragraphs a, b, and

1 c, Code 2025, are amended to read as follows:

2     a. A school ready children grant shall be awarded to an area  
3 board annually, as funding is available. Receipt of continued  
4 funding is subject to submission of the required annual report  
5 data and the state board's determination that the area board  
6 is making progress, through the use of specific, quantifiable  
7 performance measures and locally identified community-wide  
8 indicators, toward achieving the desired results and other  
9 results identified in the community plan. Each area board  
10 shall participate in the ~~designation~~ process to measure the  
11 ~~area's~~ area board's success. If the use of performance measures  
12 and community-wide indicators does not show that an area board  
13 has made progress toward achieving the results identified in  
14 the community plan, the state board shall require a plan of  
15 corrective action, provide technical assistance, withhold any  
16 increase in funding, or withdraw grant funding.

17     b. The state board shall distribute school ready children  
18 grant moneys to area boards with approved comprehensive community  
19 plans based upon a determination of ~~an early childhood Iowa~~  
20 ~~area's designation~~ the success of the area board.

21     c. An area board's ~~designation~~ success shall be determined  
22 by evidence of successful collaboration among public and private  
23 early care, education, health, and human services interests in  
24 the area or a documented program design that supports a strong  
25 likelihood of a successful collaboration between these interests.

26     Sec. 37. Section 256I.11, subsection 4, paragraph a, Code  
27 2025, is amended to read as follows:

28     a. An early childhood programs grant account is created in  
29 the fund under the authority of the director of the department.  
30 Moneys credited to the account are appropriated to and shall be  
31 distributed by the department in the form of grants to early  
32 childhood Iowa areas that the department determines are eligible  
33 pursuant to criteria established by the state board in accordance  
34 with law. ~~The criteria shall include but are not limited to a~~  
35 ~~requirement that an early childhood Iowa area must be designated~~

~~1 by the state board in order to be eligible to receive an early  
2 childhood programs grant.~~

3

DIVISION V

4 CHILD CARE WORKFORCE — STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY

5 Sec. 38. NEW SECTION. **237A.13A State child care assistance**  
6 **— child care workforce.**

7 1. Notwithstanding any provision of section 237A.13 to the  
8 contrary, a child shall be eligible for the state child care  
9 assistance program under section 237A.13 if a parent, guardian,  
10 or custodian meets all of the following requirements, as  
11 applicable:

12 a. The parent, guardian, or custodian is employed at a child  
13 care facility or child care home that has an agreement with  
14 the department to accept reimbursement from the state child care  
15 assistance program.

16 b. The parent, guardian, or custodian works in a child care  
17 facility or child care home an average minimum of thirty-two  
18 hours per week during the month in a position with a primary duty  
19 of providing child care directly to children, and is regularly  
20 counted in the minimum child-to-staff ratio established by the  
21 department by rule.

22 c. If the parent, guardian, or custodian is employed at  
23 a child care home or a child development home, the parent,  
24 guardian, or custodian does not provide child care to the parent,  
25 guardian, or custodian's own child. A co-provider at a child  
26 development home may qualify for state child care assistance if  
27 the person meets all the requirements specified in this section  
28 and by the department by rule.

29 d. The parent, guardian, or custodian is not a substitute or  
30 an assistant at a child care home or a child development home.

31 e. Based on the department's evaluation of the parent,  
32 guardian, or custodian's application for state child care  
33 assistance, the department has determined the parent, guardian,  
34 or custodian has a need for child care.

35 f. The parent, guardian, or custodian is not the owner of the

1 child care facility or child care home where the children are  
2 enrolled.

3 2. A director, co-director, or other administrative staff  
4 member of a child care facility may qualify for state child care  
5 assistance pursuant to subsection 1 if such person is regularly  
6 counted in the minimum child-to-staff ratio established by the  
7 department by rule.

8 3. A person participating in the state child care assistance  
9 program pursuant to eligibility established under this section  
10 shall make copayments based on the person's household income for  
11 services received from the program.

12 4. The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A  
13 to administer this section.

14 DIVISION VI

15 CHILD CARE CONTINUUM PARTNERSHIP GRANTS — PILOT PROGRAM

16 Sec. 39. CHILD CARE CONTINUUM PARTNERSHIP GRANTS — PILOT  
17 PROGRAM. The department of health and human services, in  
18 collaboration with early childhood Iowa area boards created  
19 pursuant to section 256I.7 and the department of education,  
20 shall create and administer a child care continuum partnership  
21 grants pilot program. The pilot program shall award competitive  
22 grants to partnerships between providers of statewide voluntary  
23 preschool programming and child care centers licensed pursuant  
24 to chapter 237A to provide full-day early childhood education  
25 and care programming for participants in the statewide voluntary  
26 preschool program created in accordance with chapter 256C. The  
27 department of health and human services shall adopt rules  
28 pursuant to chapter 17A to administer the child care continuum  
29 partnership grants pilot program.

30 EXPLANATION

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

33 This bill relates to early childhood education and care,  
34 including by modifying provisions related to the statewide  
35 preschool program, the child development coordinating council,

1 programs for at-risk children, the responsibilities of the  
2 department of education (DE), the early childhood Iowa  
3 initiative, and the state child care assistance program, and  
4 establishing the child care continuum partnership grants pilot  
5 program within the department of health and human services (HHS).

6 DIVISION I — STATEWIDE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM. Under current law,  
7 only school districts that meet certain requirements established  
8 by the state board of education are able to participate  
9 in the statewide preschool program for four-year-old children  
10 established pursuant to Code chapter 256C, although school  
11 districts may contract with community-based providers. The  
12 bill authorizes community-based providers to directly participate  
13 in the statewide preschool program for four-year-old children  
14 established pursuant to Code chapter 256C by applying with DE to  
15 implement a preschool program. The state board is required to  
16 adopt rules to further define the requirements of community-based  
17 providers implementing the preschool program.

18 Under current law, state funding provided under the statewide  
19 preschool program for four-year-old children is provided to  
20 school districts based upon the number of eligible students  
21 enrolled in the preschool programming provided by the school  
22 district. Also under current law, if the school district  
23 contracts with a community-based provider, state funding passes  
24 from the school district to the community-based provider. The  
25 bill allows a community-based provider approved to directly  
26 participate in the preschool program to be paid preschool  
27 foundation aid directly in the same manner as a school district.  
28 The bill establishes the amount of preschool foundation aid that  
29 is payable to such a community-based provider for the initial  
30 school year for which the community-based provider is approved to  
31 directly participate in the preschool program, and for subsequent  
32 school years.

33 The bill makes conforming changes.

34 DIVISION II — CHILD DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL  
35 AND PROGRAMS FOR AT-RISK CHILDREN. Current Code chapter 256A

1 establishes the child development coordinating council to  
2 promote the provision of child development services to at-risk  
3 three-year-old and four-year-old children. The bill strikes  
4 transfers all of the responsibilities of the child development  
5 coordinating council to DE and makes conforming changes.  
6 Current law requires the child development coordinating council  
7 to establish minimum guidelines for comprehensive early child  
8 development services for at-risk three-year-old and four-year-old  
9 children. Current law also requires the child development  
10 coordinating council to develop an inventory of child development  
11 services provided to at-risk three-year-old and four-year-old  
12 children in this state that identifies the number of children  
13 who are not receiving these services. Additionally, current law  
14 requires the child development coordinating council to encourage  
15 the establishment of programs that will enhance the skills of  
16 parents in parenting and in providing for the learning and  
17 development of their children. Also, current law requires the  
18 child development coordinating council to develop a resource  
19 directory of parent involvement programs to assist districts  
20 in planning family support programs. The bill strikes these  
21 provisions and does not transfer these responsibilities to DE.  
22 Current law requires the director of the department of  
23 education to develop standards and instructional materials to  
24 assist school districts in development of appropriate before  
25 and after school programs for elementary school children,  
26 child care services and programs to complement half-day and  
27 all-day kindergarten programs, curricula for all-day kindergarten  
28 programs, and curricula for the early elementary grades one  
29 through three. Current law also requires the director to assist  
30 prekindergarten instructors in the development of appropriate  
31 curricula and teaching practices. In developing these standards  
32 and materials, current law requires the director to consult with  
33 the child development coordinating council, the department of  
34 health and human services, the state board of regents center  
35 for early developmental education, the area education agencies,

1 the department of human development and family studies in the  
2 college of human sciences at Iowa state university of science  
3 and technology, the early childhood elementary division of the  
4 college of education at the university of Iowa, and the college  
5 of education at the university of northern Iowa. The bill  
6 strikes the provision related to persons the director is required  
7 to consult with in developing these standards and materials.

8 Current Code section 279.51(1)(b) provides that for the  
9 fiscal year beginning July 1, 2007, and for each succeeding  
10 fiscal year, \$8,536,740 of the funds appropriated from the  
11 general fund of the state to DE under Code section 279.51(1)  
12 (programs for at-risk children) shall be allocated to the  
13 child development coordinating council for the purposes set  
14 out in Code section 279.51(2) and Code section 256A.3 (duties  
15 of child development coordinating council). The bill modifies  
16 Code section 279.51(1)(b) to provide that the moneys shall be  
17 allocated to DE for purposes set out in Code section 279.51(2),  
18 Code section 256A.3, as modified in the bill, and to be used as  
19 grants to early childhood programs that demonstrate the greatest  
20 need for programs for at-risk children and the families of  
21 at-risk children.

22 Under current law, the moneys allocated under Code section  
23 279.51(1)(b) may be used by the child development coordinating  
24 council to award grants to school districts to establish programs  
25 for three-year-old, four-year-old, and five-year-old at-risk  
26 children, and to provide grants to provide educational support  
27 services to parents of at-risk children age birth through  
28 three years. The bill modifies Code section 279.51(1)(b) to  
29 provide that such moneys may be used by DE to award grants to  
30 school districts to establish programs for three-year-old and  
31 four-year-old at-risk children.

32 Current law requires DE to seek assistance from foundations  
33 and public and private agencies in the evaluation of the programs  
34 funded under Code section 279.51 (programs for at-risk children),  
35 and in the provision of support to school districts in developing

1 and implementing the programs funded under Code section 279.51.  
2 The bill strikes this provision.

3 DIVISION III — DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RESPONSIBILITIES. The  
4 bill requires the director of DE to review and conduct  
5 research related to the most effective evidence-based curricula,  
6 instructional materials, and evidence-based or promising  
7 practices used in prekindergarten programs and in preschools,  
8 and make a list of the most effective evidence-based curricula,  
9 instructional materials, and evidence-based or promising  
10 practices for prekindergarten programs and preschools available  
11 on the DE's internet site.

12 The bill requires the director of DE to develop a preschool  
13 accountability system representing, at minimum, developmental and  
14 learning outcomes and continuous implementation of high-quality  
15 program standards for school districts offering a prekindergarten  
16 program, accredited nonpublic schools offering a prekindergarten  
17 program, prekindergarten and preschool programs serving children  
18 with individualized education programs, and preschool programs  
19 created in accordance with Code chapters 256A and 256C. The  
20 director is also required to provide, in coordination with HHS,  
21 an alignment of an outcomes-based accountability system for  
22 school districts offering a prekindergarten program, accredited  
23 nonpublic schools offering a prekindergarten program, preschool  
24 programs serving children with individualized education programs,  
25 and preschool programs created in accordance with Code chapters  
26 256A and 256C.

27 The bill requires the director of DE to review and revise  
28 the state early learning standards and standards related to  
29 preschool programs serving children with individualized education  
30 programs and preschool programs created in accordance with  
31 Code chapters 256A and 256C. The bill also requires the  
32 director of DE to provide professional development services to  
33 assist such programs in implementing the revised early learning  
34 standards, preschool assessments, high-quality program standards,  
35 and standards related to preschool programs.

1 DIVISION IV — EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA INITIATIVE. In general,  
2 the early childhood Iowa program established under Code  
3 chapter 256I within HHS provides leadership for facilitation,  
4 communication, and coordination for the early childhood Iowa  
5 initiative activities and funding and for improvement of the  
6 early care, education, health, and human services systems.  
7 Current law requires the early childhood Iowa state board  
8 to approve the geographic boundaries for the early childhood  
9 Iowa areas throughout the state and any changes in the  
10 boundaries. The bill provides that, by January 1, 2026, HHS  
11 shall designate early childhood Iowa areas in the same number  
12 and using the same geographic boundaries as the behavioral health  
13 districts designated by HHS pursuant to Code section 225A.4  
14 (behavioral health service system — districts and administrative  
15 organizations). The bill makes conforming changes.

16 DIVISION V — CHILD CARE WORKFORCE — STATE CHILD CARE  
17 ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY. The bill provides that a child shall be  
18 eligible for the state child care assistance program under Code  
19 section 237A.13 if a parent, guardian, or custodian meets certain  
20 specified requirements established in the bill. A director,  
21 co-director, or other administrative staff member of a child  
22 care facility may qualify for the state child care assistance  
23 program if such person is regularly counted in the minimum  
24 child-to-staff ratio established by HHS. The bill requires a  
25 person participating in the state child care assistance program  
26 pursuant to eligibility established under the bill's provisions  
27 to make copayments based on the person's household income for  
28 services received from the program.

29 DIVISION VI — CHILD CARE CONTINUUM PARTNERSHIP GRANTS —  
30 PILOT PROGRAM. The bill requires HHS, in collaboration with early  
31 childhood Iowa area boards and DE, to create and administer  
32 a child care continuum partnership grants pilot program. The  
33 pilot program shall award competitive grants to partnerships  
34 between providers of statewide voluntary preschool programming  
35 and licensed child care centers to provide full-day early

1 childhood education and care programming for participants in the  
2 statewide voluntary preschool program.

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