

**House File 2712 - Introduced**

HOUSE FILE 2712  
BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES

(SUCCESSOR TO HSB 623)

**A BILL FOR**

1 An Act relating to early childhood and family services,  
2 including the creation of an early childhood and family  
3 services system, state child care assistance for the child  
4 care workforce, making appropriations, and including  
5 effective date provisions.  
6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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DIVISION I

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY SERVICES SYSTEM

Section 1. NEW SECTION. 234A.1 Definitions.

For the purposes of this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. *“Community resources”* means locally focused, strength-based programs and supports that aim to enhance family functioning and resilience, promote child development and safety, and prevent future involvement with child protective services or the juvenile justice system.
2. *“Department”* means the department of health and human services.
3. *“Early childhood and family services district”* or *“ECFS district”* means a health and human services district utilized for the purpose of administering the ECFS system.
4. *“Early childhood and family services district advisory council”* or *“ECFS district advisory council”* means an advisory council established under section 234A.3.
5. *“Early childhood and family services district plan”* or *“ECFS district plan”* means a plan developed by the department to outline the ECFS system infrastructure of a district and the programs and services intended to be provided within that district.
6. *“Early childhood and family services state plan”* or *“ECFS state plan”* means the plan developed by the department that describes the key components of the state’s ECFS system.
7. *“Early childhood and family services system”* or *“ECFS system”* means the system established in section 234A.2.
8. *“Early childhood and family services system fund”* or *“ECFS system fund”* means the fund created in section 234A.6.
9. *“Early intervention strategies”* means services and supports designed to proactively identify and address risk factors and includes services that aim to strengthen families, promote healthy development, and reduce the likelihood of abuse or neglect by providing timely, targeted assistance to children

1 and caregivers through the ECFS system.

2 10. "*Evidence-based*" means practices, programs, and policies  
3 grounded in the best available research and data, and that have  
4 been scientifically tested and shown to be effective through  
5 rigorous evaluation.

6 11. "*Family support services*" include group-based parent  
7 education and home visiting programs designed to strengthen  
8 protective factors including parenting skills, increase  
9 parental knowledge of child development, and increase family  
10 functioning and problem-solving skills. Family support  
11 services may be used as an early intervention strategy to  
12 improve birth outcomes, parental knowledge, family economic  
13 success, the home learning environment, family and child  
14 involvement with others, and coordination with other community  
15 resources. Family support services may have a specific focus  
16 on preventing child maltreatment or ensuring children are safe,  
17 healthy, and ready to succeed in school.

18 12. "*Health and human services district*" means the same as  
19 defined in section 217.1.

20 13. "*HOPES-HFI program*" means the healthy opportunities for  
21 parents to experience success – healthy families Iowa program  
22 established in section 234A.5.

23 14. "*Ongoing family and community resources*" means a  
24 continuum of sustained, accessible, and family-centered  
25 resources provided through the ECFS system that help families  
26 meet their needs, strengthen protective factors, and prevent  
27 child abuse and neglect.

28 15. "*Primary prevention strategies*" means a comprehensive  
29 set of services and supports provided through the ECFS system  
30 that are designed to strengthen families, promote healthy child  
31 development, and prevent adverse outcomes before they occur.  
32 These activities focus on addressing the underlying social,  
33 economic, and environmental conditions that place children and  
34 families at risk, such as poverty, social isolation, and lack  
35 of access to quality early care and education.

1 16. "*Protective factor*" means an inherent strength,  
2 resource, or capacity of a family, or a resource that helps a  
3 family thrive, buffer against stress, and reduce the likelihood  
4 of child abuse, neglect, or other poor outcome.

5 17. "*Strength-based*" means an approach that focuses  
6 on identifying and building upon the inherent strengths,  
7 resources, and capacities of a family to support the family's  
8 growth, resilience, and well-being.

9 Sec. 2. NEW SECTION. 234A.2 **Early childhood and family**  
10 **services system — department powers and duties.**

11 1. An early childhood and family services system is  
12 established under the control of the department for the  
13 purposes of implementing a statewide array of primary  
14 prevention strategies, early intervention strategies, and  
15 ongoing family and community resources for families and their  
16 children under nineteen years of age.

17 2. The ECFS system shall be administered in a manner to  
18 maximize funding opportunities, interagency collaboration, and  
19 integration of activities and services that support positive  
20 outcomes for children and families.

21 3. The ECFS system shall support equitable statewide access  
22 to all services, supports, and other resources offered through  
23 the ECFS system that, at a minimum, shall include all of the  
24 following:

25 a. Evidence-based primary prevention strategies, including  
26 family support services, designed to assist families in  
27 establishing healthy, successful futures.

28 b. Tailored early intervention strategies for children and  
29 families to ensure long-term well-being, including economic  
30 self-sufficiency.

31 c. Ongoing family and community resources for children and  
32 families to address the root causes of child abuse and neglect  
33 and enhance protective factors.

34 d. Specific service components including early childhood  
35 services, evidence-based family support services, and community

1 resources.

2 4. To the extent funding is available, the department  
3 shall do all of the following to develop and administer the  
4 ECFS system and carry out the department's duties under this  
5 chapter:

6 a. Plan, establish, and maintain primary prevention  
7 strategies, early intervention strategies, and ongoing family  
8 and community resources.

9 b. (1) Develop an early childhood and family services state  
10 plan that is consistent with the department's agency strategic  
11 plan adopted pursuant to section 8E.204, and the state health  
12 improvement plan developed under section 217.17.

13 (2) When developing the ECFS state plan, the department  
14 shall do all of the following:

15 (a) Collaborate with stakeholders including but not  
16 limited to experienced public health and medical providers, law  
17 enforcement, educators, the early childhood Iowa state board,  
18 the early childhood Iowa area boards, and organizations that  
19 represent populations including but not limited to children to  
20 be served by the ECFS system.

21 (b) Publish the proposed ECFS state plan on the department's  
22 internet site and allow the public to review and comment on the  
23 proposed ECFS state plan prior to adoption.

24 c. Administer the ECFS system in each ECFS district based on  
25 early childhood and family services district plans.

26 d. Develop ECFS district plans in collaboration with ECFS  
27 system partners and stakeholders.

28 e. Establish ECFS district advisory councils pursuant to  
29 section 234A.3.

30 f. Coordinate administration of each ECFS district plan with  
31 federal and state resources.

32 g. Enter into contracts as necessary to perform activities,  
33 and provide services, supports, and other resources in  
34 accordance with each ECFS district plan.

35 h. Coordinate district activities with other state agencies

1 and state-funded initiatives that support positive outcomes for  
2 children and families.

3 *i.* Administer and distribute federal aid received, and state  
4 appropriations, grants, and other moneys deposited into the  
5 early childhood and family services system fund.

6 *j.* Oversee, provide technical assistance to, and monitor  
7 department contractors to ensure compliance with ECFS district  
8 plans.

9 *k.* Establish and maintain data collection and management  
10 information systems to identify, collect, and analyze service  
11 outcomes and performance data to address the needs of clients,  
12 providers, the department, and ECFS system programs.

13 *l.* Collect, maintain, monitor, analyze, and utilize  
14 information including but not limited to ECFS client records  
15 and programmatic, state, and national data, engage in studies  
16 and analyses, and gather relevant statistics to understand  
17 emerging needs and effectively deploy information, resources,  
18 and technical assistance in response.

19 *m.* Adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A to administer this  
20 chapter.

21 *n.* Take any other necessary actions to execute the  
22 department's duties under this chapter or maintain compliance  
23 with federal requirements.

24 5. The department may do all of the following to develop and  
25 administer the ECFS system:

26 *a.* Cooperate with any state agency, political subdivision,  
27 or federal governmental agency to apply for grants.

28 *b.* Solicit and accept for use any gift of money, by will or  
29 otherwise, and any grant of money or services from the federal  
30 government, the state, a political subdivision of the state or  
31 federal government, or a private source.

32 **Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. 234A.3 Early childhood and family**  
33 **services district advisory councils.**

34 1. The department shall establish an early childhood  
35 and family services district advisory council in each ECFS

1 district. The department shall develop policies and procedures  
2 for the operational functions of each ECFS district advisory  
3 council.

4 2. An ECFS district advisory council shall consist of ten  
5 members appointed by the department. Individuals eligible  
6 for appointment include but are not limited to all of the  
7 following:

8 a. Elected public officials who currently hold office within  
9 the ECFS district.

10 b. Individuals who have experience or expertise related  
11 to health, education, domestic assault response, or abuse  
12 response.

13 c. Individuals who are representative of the populations  
14 served in the ECFS district advisory council's ECFS district.

15 d. Individuals who represent the faith community or  
16 community partners in the ECFS district advisory council's ECFS  
17 district.

18 3. An ECFS district advisory council shall do all of the  
19 following:

20 a. Identify opportunities and address challenges based  
21 on updates received from the department relating to the  
22 implementation of the ECFS district plan for the ECFS district  
23 advisory council's ECFS district.

24 b. Provide feedback to the department while the department  
25 is developing ECFS system policies.

26 c. Advise the department on how to best provide families  
27 access to primary prevention strategies, early intervention  
28 strategies, and ongoing family and community resources  
29 throughout the ECFS district advisory council's ECFS district.

30 4. An ECFS district advisory council shall perform the  
31 duties required under this section regardless of whether any  
32 seat on the ECFS district advisory council is vacant.

33 Sec. 4. NEW SECTION. 234A.4 Data collection and use.

34 1. The department shall perform all of the following actions  
35 related to ECFS system data:

1     *a.* (1) Collect, maintain, monitor, analyze, and utilize  
2 data, including but not limited to child welfare data, Medicaid  
3 data, ECFS system data, and other data depicting the status of  
4 children and families in the state, as necessary to issue cost  
5 estimates for serving populations, make and receive payments,  
6 conduct operations, and perform ECFS system activities.

7     (2) When performing duties under this paragraph, the  
8 department shall maintain compliance with applicable federal  
9 and state privacy laws to ensure the confidentiality and  
10 integrity of individually identifiable data.

11     (3) The department shall periodically assess the status of  
12 the department's compliance with subparagraph (2) to ensure  
13 that data collected and maintained by the department under this  
14 paragraph is protected.

15     *b.* To the extent possible, establish a record for each  
16 individual receiving publicly funded ECFS system services.  
17 Each record established under this paragraph shall include a  
18 unique client identifier for the purposes of identifying and  
19 tracking the individual's record.

20     *c.* Consult with department contractors and other ECFS system  
21 stakeholders on an ongoing basis relating to the administration  
22 of the ECFS system, including but not limited to reviewing  
23 trends and outcomes as indicators for improving or modifying  
24 administration of the ECFS system.

25     *d.* Engage with entities that maintain information the  
26 department is required to collect pursuant to this section to  
27 integrate data relating to individuals receiving ECFS system  
28 services.

29     *e.* Engage with entities that maintain general population  
30 data relating to the ECFS system to develop action plans,  
31 create projections relating to a population's ECFS system  
32 needs, develop ECFS system policies, and otherwise perform  
33 activities as necessary to support families in achieving a  
34 healthy, successful future.

35     2. The department shall ensure that public and private

1 agencies, organizations, and individuals that operate within  
2 the ECFS system use uniform methods to maintain statistical  
3 information relating to ECFS system outcomes and performance.

4 Sec. 5. NEW SECTION. **234A.5 Healthy families programs —**  
5 **HOPES-HFI program.**

6 1. The department may establish the HOPES-HFI program to  
7 provide services to families and children during a child's  
8 prenatal through preschool years. If established, the  
9 HOPES-HFI program shall do all of the following:

10 a. Promote optimal child health and development.

11 b. Improve family coping skills and functioning.

12 c. Promote positive parenting skills and intrafamilial  
13 interaction.

14 d. Prevent child abuse, child neglect, infant mortality, and  
15 infant morbidity.

16 2. The department shall administer the HOPES-HFI program,  
17 in whole or in part, by contracting with local organizations  
18 that use evidence-based home visiting models.

19 Sec. 6. NEW SECTION. **234A.6 Early childhood and family**  
20 **services system fund.**

21 1. An early childhood and family services system fund  
22 is created in the state treasury under the control of the  
23 department and consisting of any moneys appropriated to the  
24 department for the ECFS system fund's purposes by the general  
25 assembly and any other moneys available and obtained or  
26 accepted by the department for deposit in the ECFS system fund.  
27 The ECFS system fund shall be used to implement and administer  
28 the ECFS system.

29 2. Moneys in the ECFS system fund are appropriated to the  
30 department for the purposes of implementing and administering  
31 the ECFS system.

32 3. Notwithstanding section 8.33, moneys appropriated in  
33 this section that remain unencumbered or unobligated at the  
34 close of a fiscal year shall not revert but shall remain  
35 available for expenditure for the purposes designated.

1 4. Notwithstanding section 12C.7, subsection 2, interest or  
2 earnings on moneys in the ECFS system fund shall be credited  
3 to the ECFS system fund.

4 Sec. 7. REPEAL. Section 135.106, Code 2026, is repealed.

5 Sec. 8. EFFECTIVE DATE. The sections of this division of  
6 this Act enacting sections 234A.1 through 234A.5 take effect  
7 July 1, 2027.

8 Sec. 9. EFFECTIVE DATE. The section of this division of  
9 this Act enacting section 234A.6, being deemed of immediate  
10 importance, takes effect upon enactment.

11 DIVISION II

12 DECATEGORIZATION INITIATIVE

13 Sec. 10. Section 235.7, subsection 2, Code 2026, is amended  
14 to read as follows:

15 2. *Membership.* ~~The department may authorize the governance~~  
16 ~~boards of decategorization of child welfare and juvenile~~  
17 ~~justice funding projects established under [section 232.188](#) to~~  
18 ~~appoint the transition committee membership and may utilize~~  
19 ~~the boundaries of decategorization projects to establish~~  
20 ~~the service areas for transition committees. The committee~~  
21 A committee's membership may include but is not limited to  
22 department staff involved with foster care, child welfare,  
23 and adult services, juvenile court services staff, staff  
24 involved with county general assistance or emergency relief  
25 under [chapter 251](#) or [252](#), school district and area education  
26 agency staff involved with special education, and a child's  
27 court appointed special advocate, guardian ad litem, service  
28 providers, and other persons knowledgeable about the child.

29 Sec. 11. Section 237A.1, subsection 2, paragraph j,  
30 subparagraph (2), Code 2026, is amended by striking the  
31 subparagraph.

32 Sec. 12. Section 249A.26, subsection 5, Code 2026, is  
33 amended by striking the subsection.

34 Sec. 13. Section 256I.4, subsection 6, Code 2026, is amended  
35 by striking the subsection.



1     2. The director of revenue shall draft the income tax form  
2 to allow the designation of contributions to the ~~child abuse~~  
3 ~~prevention program~~ early childhood and family services system  
4 fund on the tax return. The department of revenue, on or  
5 before January 31, shall transfer the total amount designated  
6 on the tax return forms due in the preceding calendar year to  
7 the ~~child abuse prevention program~~ early childhood and family  
8 services system fund. However, before a checkoff pursuant  
9 to [this section](#) shall be permitted, all liabilities on the  
10 books of the department and accounts identified as owing under  
11 section 421.65 shall be satisfied.

12     3. The department of health and human services may authorize  
13 payment of moneys from the ~~child abuse prevention program~~ early  
14 childhood and family services system fund for the purpose  
15 of child abuse prevention in accordance with section ~~235A.2~~  
16 234A.6.

17     4. The department of revenue shall adopt rules to administer  
18 this section.

19     5. [This section](#) is subject to repeal under [section 422.12E](#).

20     Sec. 17. REPEAL. Sections 235A.1, 235A.2, and 235A.3, Code  
21 2026, are repealed.

22     Sec. 18. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM FUND — TRANSFER  
23 OF MONEYS. Any unencumbered or unobligated moneys remaining  
24 in the child abuse prevention program fund created in section  
25 235A.2, on June 30, 2026, shall be transferred to the early  
26 childhood and family services system fund created in section  
27 234A.6, as enacted in this Act.

28     Sec. 19. EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this Act, being  
29 deemed of immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.

30                                   DIVISION IV

31                                   TRANSITION PROVISIONS

32     Sec. 20. EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY SERVICES SYSTEM.

33     1. For purposes of this division:

34     a. The following mean the same as defined in section 234A.1  
35 as enacted in division I of this Act:

- 1 (1) "Department".
- 2 (2) "Early intervention strategies".
- 3 (3) "ECFS district plan".
- 4 (4) "ECFS state plan".
- 5 (5) "ECFS system".
- 6 (6) "ECFS system fund".
- 7 (7) "Ongoing family and community resources".
- 8 (8) "Primary prevention strategies".

9 b. "Early childhood Iowa area", "early childhood Iowa area  
10 board", and "early childhood Iowa area state board" mean the  
11 same as defined in section 256I.1.

12 c. "Early childhood Iowa initiative" means the early  
13 childhood Iowa initiative described in section 256I.2.

14 d. "Transition period" means the period beginning on the  
15 date of enactment of this division of this Act and concluding  
16 on June 30, 2027.

17 2. There is created an early childhood and family services  
18 system under the control of the department. Beginning July  
19 1, 2027, the department shall be responsible for implementing  
20 and maintaining a statewide system of primary prevention  
21 strategies, early intervention strategies, and ongoing family  
22 and community resources through the ECFS system.

23 3. During the transition period, the department may  
24 exercise all policymaking functions and regulatory powers as  
25 necessary to establish the ECFS system as if the sections of  
26 division I of this Act enacting sections 234A.1 through 234A.5  
27 were enacted.

28 4. The department shall perform all the following duties by  
29 the conclusion of the transition period:

30 a. Adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A as necessary to  
31 establish, implement, and administer the ECFS system.

32 b. Establish policies as necessary to efficiently  
33 establish, implement, and administer the ECFS system.

34 c. Prepare forms necessary to establish, implement, and  
35 administer the ECFS system.

- 1 d. Prepare an ECFS state plan.
- 2 e. Develop ECFS district plans.
- 3 f. Develop a plan for the transition of early childhood and  
4 family services to the ECFS system.
- 5 g. Execute contracts as necessary to establish, implement,  
6 and administer the ECFS system.
- 7 h. Ensure that individuals currently receiving primary  
8 prevention strategies, early intervention strategies, services,  
9 and supports or ongoing family and community resources under  
10 the purview of the department, or home visiting services  
11 provided through the early childhood Iowa initiative, have  
12 uninterrupted continuity of care.
- 13 i. Submit a report to the general assembly no later  
14 than January 15, 2027, that details the administrative and  
15 operational costs to establish, implement, and administer the  
16 ECFS system.
- 17 j. Establish contractual rights, privileges, and  
18 responsibilities as necessary to establish, implement, and  
19 administer the ECFS system.
- 20 k. Develop a plan to transition oversight and  
21 accountability for home visiting services currently funded by  
22 the early childhood Iowa initiative to the ECFS system.
- 23 l. Work with a cohort of early childhood Iowa area directors  
24 designated by the association of early childhood Iowa area  
25 boards and advocates, and the early childhood Iowa state  
26 board, to develop a plan to modernize the early childhood Iowa  
27 initiative. The plan shall include the frequency of work  
28 sessions, engagement opportunities for early childhood Iowa  
29 partners, and mutually agreed upon deliverables including  
30 revisions to chapter 256I.
- 31 5. If the department determines that a federal waiver  
32 or authorization is necessary to administer any provision of  
33 this division of this Act, or to effectuate the ECFS system  
34 by the conclusion of the transition period, the department  
35 shall timely request the federal waiver or authorization.

1 Notwithstanding any other effective date to the contrary, a  
2 provision of this division of this Act that the department  
3 determines requires a federal waiver or authorization shall be  
4 effective only upon receipt of federal approval for the waiver  
5 or authorization.

6 6. a. All debts, claims, or other liabilities owed to  
7 an early childhood Iowa area or an early childhood Iowa area  
8 board due to home visiting services rendered pursuant to  
9 chapter 256I, Code 2026, at the conclusion of the transition  
10 period shall remain due and owing after the transition period  
11 concludes.

12 b. After the transition period concludes, all fiscal agents  
13 contracted with an early childhood Iowa area board shall  
14 collect outstanding debts, claims, or other liabilities owed  
15 to an early childhood Iowa area or an early childhood Iowa  
16 area board for home visiting services pursuant to chapter 256I  
17 provided or rendered before the transition period concluded.

18 7. With input from appropriate stakeholders, the department  
19 shall identify each home visiting services contract that will  
20 be impacted by divisions I through V of this Act. On or before  
21 June 30, 2027, each party to a contract identified by the  
22 department under this subsection shall exercise the option, if  
23 permitted under the terms of the contract, to terminate the  
24 contract. Contracts identified under this subsection that do  
25 not provide for termination shall not be renewed or extended at  
26 the end of the current contract term.

27 8. Unless otherwise provided in this division of this Act,  
28 an early childhood Iowa area, an early childhood Iowa area  
29 board, an early childhood Iowa area director, or any agent  
30 of an early childhood Iowa area or early childhood Iowa area  
31 board, and any subdivision of the state, shall not enter into,  
32 renew, or extend a home visiting services contract related to  
33 the early childhood Iowa initiative or related activities if  
34 the term of the contract would extend past, or the deliverables  
35 under the contract would be provided after, June 30, 2027.

1 Sec. 21. EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this Act, being  
2 deemed of immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.

3 DIVISION V

4 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DISTRICTS

5 Sec. 22. Section 217.1, Code 2026, is amended by adding the  
6 following new subsection:

7 NEW SUBSECTION. 4. "*Health and human services district*" or  
8 "*HHS district*" means a geographic, multicounty area designated  
9 by the department under section 217.1B for statewide program  
10 and service delivery.

11 Sec. 23. NEW SECTION. **217.1B Health and human services**  
12 **districts.**

13 1. The department shall divide the entirety of the state  
14 into designated health and human services districts. The  
15 initial HHS districts shall be the same as the behavioral  
16 health districts designated pursuant to section 225A.4, Code  
17 2026, and that exist on the effective date of this division  
18 of this Act. The department shall review the designated HHS  
19 districts at least once every seven consecutive fiscal years.

20 2. *a.* The department may modify a designated HHS district.  
21 When modifying a designated HHS district, the department shall  
22 consider all of the following:

23 (1) City and county boundaries.

24 (2) The population size that can be effectively served in a  
25 specific area.

26 (3) Areas of high need for services.

27 (4) Patterns various populations exhibit when accessing or  
28 receiving services.

29 *b.* Notwithstanding chapter 17A, the manner in which  
30 the modification of an HHS district is made, including the  
31 determination of boundaries for a modified HHS district, shall  
32 not be subject to judicial review.

33 3. The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A  
34 to administer this section.

35 Sec. 24. CONTINGENT EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this

1 Act takes effect July 1, 2026, unless the sections of 2026 Iowa  
2 Acts, LSB 5558 XD, or successor legislation, amending section  
3 217.1 and enacting section 217.1B are enacted on or before July  
4 1, 2026.

5 DIVISION VI

6 CONFORMING CHANGES

7 Sec. 25. Section 232.69, subsection 1, paragraph b,  
8 subparagraph (5), Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

9 (5) An employee or operator of a licensed child care center,  
10 registered child development home, head start program, family  
11 development and self-sufficiency grant program under section  
12 216A.107, or healthy opportunities for parents to experience  
13 success - healthy families Iowa program under section ~~135.106~~  
14 234A.5.

15 Sec. 26. Section 237A.30, subsection 1, Code 2026, is  
16 amended to read as follows:

17 1. The department shall ~~work with the early childhood~~  
18 ~~Iowa program established in [section 256I.5](#) in designing and~~  
19 ~~implementing~~ implement a voluntary quality rating system for  
20 each provider type of child care facility.

21 Sec. 27. Section 256I.3, subsection 2, paragraph b, Code  
22 2026, is amended to read as follows:

23 *b.* The governor's appointees shall ~~be selected from~~  
24 ~~individuals nominated by area boards. The nominations shall~~  
25 reflect the range of interests represented on the area boards  
26 so that the governor is able to appoint one or more members  
27 each for early care, education, health, human services,  
28 business, faith, and public interests. At least one of the  
29 citizen members shall be a service consumer or the parent of a  
30 service consumer. The term of office of the citizen members  
31 is three years. A citizen member vacancy on the board shall be  
32 filled in the same manner as the original appointment for the  
33 balance of the unexpired term.

34 Sec. 28. Section 256I.13, subsection 1, Code 2026, is  
35 amended to read as follows:

1 1. In order to implement the legislative intent stated  
2 in ~~sections 135.106~~ and section 256I.9, that priority for  
3 family support program funding be given to programs using  
4 evidence-based or promising models for family support, it is  
5 the intent of the general assembly that ninety percent of state  
6 funds expended for family support programs shall be used for  
7 evidence-based or promising program models. The remaining ten  
8 percent of funds may be used for innovative program models that  
9 do not yet meet the definition of evidence-based or promising  
10 programs.

11 Sec. 29. EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this Act takes  
12 effect July 1, 2027.

13 DIVISION VII

14 CHILD CARE WORKFORCE — STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY

15 Sec. 30. NEW SECTION. **237A.15 State child care assistance**  
16 **— child care workforce eligibility.**

17 1. Notwithstanding any provision of section 237A.13 or  
18 237A.14 to the contrary, a child shall be eligible for the  
19 state child care assistance program established in section  
20 237A.13 and the state child care assistance graduated  
21 eligibility phase-out program established in section 237A.14 if  
22 a parent, guardian, or custodian of the child meets all of the  
23 following requirements, as applicable:

24 *a.* The parent, guardian, or custodian is employed in this  
25 state at a child care facility or child care home that has an  
26 agreement with the department to accept reimbursements from the  
27 state child care assistance program.

28 *b.* The parent, guardian, or custodian works an average  
29 minimum of thirty-two hours per week. A portion of the hours  
30 worked, as specified by the department, must be in a position  
31 with a primary duty of providing child care directly to  
32 children, and the parent's, guardian's, or custodian's position  
33 must be regularly counted in the minimum child-to-staff ratio  
34 established by the department.

35 *c.* (1) If the parent, guardian, or custodian is employed

1 at a child care home or a child development home, the parent,  
2 guardian, or custodian does not provide child care to the  
3 parent's, guardian's, or custodian's own child.

4 (2) Notwithstanding subparagraph (1), a co-provider at  
5 a child development home may qualify for state child care  
6 assistance if the co-provider meets all requirements specified  
7 in this section and by the department by rule.

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

10 e. Based on the department's evaluation of the parent's,  
11 guardian's, or custodian's application for state child care  
12 assistance, the department has determined the parent, guardian,  
13 or custodian has a need for child care.

14 f. The parent, guardian, or custodian is not the owner of  
15 the child care facility or child care home where any of the  
16 parent's, guardian's, or custodian's children are enrolled.

17 2. A child of a director, co-director, or other  
18 administrative staff member of a child care facility may  
19 qualify for state child care assistance under subsection 1  
20 if the director, co-director, or other administrative staff  
21 member is regularly counted in the minimum child-to-staff ratio  
22 established by the department by rule.

23 3. A parent, guardian, or custodian of a child participating  
24 in the state child care assistance program based on eligibility  
25 established under this section shall make copayments as  
26 specified by the department by rule.

27 4. The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A  
28 to administer this section.

29 Sec. 31. EMERGENCY RULES. The department of health and  
30 human services may adopt emergency rules under section 17A.4,  
31 subsection 3, and section 17A.5, subsection 2, paragraph "b",  
32 to implement the provisions of this division of this Act and  
33 the rules shall be effective immediately upon filing unless  
34 a later date is specified in the rules. Any rules adopted  
35 in accordance with this section shall also be published as a

1 notice of intended action as provided in section 17A.4.

2 Sec. 32. EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this Act, being  
3 deemed of immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.

4 DIVISION VIII

5 CODE EDITOR DIRECTIVES

6 Sec. 33. CODE EDITOR DIRECTIVES. The Code editor is  
7 directed to do all of the following:

8 1. Make changes in any Code sections amended or enacted  
9 by any other Act to correspond with the changes made in this  
10 Act if there appears to be no doubt as to the proper method of  
11 making the changes and the changes would not be contrary to or  
12 inconsistent with the purposes of this Act or any other Act.

13 2. Correct internal references in the Code and in enacted  
14 legislation as necessary due to the enactment of this Act.

15 EXPLANATION

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

18 This bill relates to early childhood and family services,  
19 including creation of an early childhood and family services  
20 (ECFS) system and child care workforce eligibility for state  
21 child care assistance (CCA).

22 DIVISION I — EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY SERVICES SYSTEM.  
23 The bill creates new Code chapter 234A (early childhood and  
24 family services system). The purpose of the ECFS system is  
25 to provide accessible, ongoing, and community-based services  
26 for children and families. The bill defines terms used in the  
27 chapter.

28 The ECFS system is established under the control of  
29 the department of health and human services (HHS) and  
30 ECFS districts (districts) are established for statewide  
31 implementation of primary prevention strategies and early  
32 intervention strategies for families and their children under  
33 19 years of age. The ECFS system must be administered in  
34 a manner that maximizes funding opportunities, interagency  
35 collaboration, and integration of activities and services that

1 support positive outcomes for children and families.

2 The bill details actions HHS must perform, to the extent  
3 funding is available, to develop and administer the ECFS  
4 system.

5 The bill directs HHS to establish an ECFS district advisory  
6 council (council) in each district, and develop policies and  
7 procedures for the operational functions of the councils. A  
8 council shall consist of 10 members appointed by HHS. The bill  
9 specifies individuals who are eligible for appointment, and the  
10 duties of a council.

11 The bill specifies the duties of HHS related to data  
12 collection and use for the ECFS system. The bill requires  
13 HHS to maintain compliance with applicable federal and state  
14 privacy laws to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of  
15 individually identifiable data related to the ECFS system  
16 collected by HHS.

17 Current Code section 135.106 (healthy opportunities  
18 for parents to experience success – healthy families Iowa  
19 (HOPES-HFI)) is placed in the new Code chapter and becomes part  
20 of the ECFS system. The bill specifies the requirements for  
21 the HOPES-HFI program and directs HHS to develop and administer  
22 the HOPES-HFI program, in whole or in part, by contracting  
23 with local organizations that use evidence-based home visiting  
24 models.

25 The bill establishes an ECFS system fund (ECFS fund)  
26 consisting of moneys appropriated to HHS for the ECFS fund's  
27 purposes by the general assembly and any other moneys available  
28 and obtained or accepted by HHS for deposit in the ECFS  
29 fund. Moneys in the ECFS fund are appropriated to HHS for the  
30 purposes of implementing and administering the ECFS system.  
31 Moneys appropriated that remain unencumbered or unobligated at  
32 the close of a fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund  
33 of the state, and interest or earnings on moneys in the fund  
34 shall be credited to the ECFS fund.

35 The section of the division that establishes the ECFS

1 fund takes effect upon enactment. All other sections in the  
2 division take effect July 1, 2027.

3 DIVISION II — DECATEGORYIZATION INITIATIVE. The bill  
4 eliminates the decategorization initiative.

5 DIVISION III — CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM. The  
6 bill eliminates the child abuse prevention program, fund,  
7 and advisory committee. A taxpayer may still receive a  
8 nonrefundable reduction in the taxpayer's income taxes for  
9 contributing one or more dollars to child abuse prevention,  
10 but the moneys received will be administered through the ECFS  
11 system instead of the child abuse prevention program fund.  
12 Funding for child abuse prevention and moneys in the current  
13 child abuse prevention fund are directed to the ECFS fund to be  
14 used by HHS for child abuse prevention.

15 This division of the bill takes effect upon enactment.

16 DIVISION IV — TRANSITION PROVISIONS. The bill defines  
17 terms used in the division, including "transition period",  
18 which means the period beginning on the date of enactment of  
19 the division and concluding on June 30, 2027.

20 The bill allows HHS to exercise all policymaking functions  
21 and regulatory powers as necessary to establish the ECFS system  
22 during the transition period.

23 The bill requires HHS to execute contracts as necessary to  
24 establish, implement, and administer the ECFS system; adopt  
25 necessary administrative rules; establish necessary policies  
26 and prepare necessary forms; prepare an ECFS state plan and  
27 develop ECFS district plans; develop plans for the transition  
28 of early childhood and family services to the ECFS system;  
29 ensure that individuals currently receiving ECFS system-related  
30 services under the purview of HHS or home visiting services  
31 provided through the initiative have uninterrupted continuity  
32 of care; submit a report to the general assembly no later  
33 than January 15, 2027, that details the administrative and  
34 operational costs to establish, implement, and administer  
35 the ECFS system; develop a plan to transition oversight and

1 accountability for home visiting services currently funded  
2 by the early childhood Iowa initiative to the ECFS system;  
3 and work with a cohort of early childhood Iowa area directors  
4 and the early childhood Iowa state board to develop a plan to  
5 modernize the early childhood Iowa initiative.

6 The bill requires HHS to request any federal waivers or  
7 authorizations (waivers) necessary to implement the ECFS  
8 system. Notwithstanding other effective dates stated in the  
9 bill, any provision of the bill HHS determines necessitates a  
10 waiver is effective upon receipt of the federal approval of the  
11 waiver.

12 The bill provides that all debts, claims, or other  
13 liabilities owed to an early childhood Iowa area (area) or an  
14 area board due to home visiting services rendered pursuant  
15 to Code chapter 256I at the conclusion of the transition  
16 period shall remain due and owing after the transition period  
17 concludes. After the transition period concludes, all fiscal  
18 agents contracted with an area board shall assist collect  
19 outstanding debts, claims, or other liabilities owed to the  
20 areas or area boards for home visiting services provided or  
21 rendered before the transition period concluded. Reimbursement  
22 for allowable activities and services shall only be paid if  
23 accompanied by sufficient supporting documentation.

24 With input from appropriate stakeholders, the bill requires  
25 HHS to identify each home visiting contract that will be  
26 impacted by the provisions relating to the ECFS system and  
27 the initiative. On or before June 30, 2027, each party to  
28 a contract identified by HHS shall exercise the option, if  
29 available pursuant to the terms of the contract, to terminate  
30 the contract. Contracts that do not provide for termination  
31 shall not be renewed or extended at the end of the current  
32 contract term.

33 An area board, an area director, or any agent of an area  
34 or area board, and any subdivision of the state, shall not  
35 enter into, renew, or extend a home visiting services contract

1 related to the initiative or related activities if the term  
2 period of the contract would extend, or the deliverables under  
3 the contract would be provided, beyond June 30, 2027.

4 This division of the bill takes effect upon enactment.

5 DIVISION V — HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DISTRICTS. The  
6 bill directs HHS to divide the state into health and human  
7 services districts (districts), as that term is defined in the  
8 bill, to be used by HHS for statewide delivery of programs and  
9 services. The initial district boundaries shall be the same as  
10 the behavioral health district boundaries, as the behavioral  
11 health district boundaries existed on July 1, 2025. HHS must  
12 review the designation of the districts at least once every  
13 seven consecutive fiscal years. The bill provides factors HHS  
14 must consider when modifying a district, and modification is  
15 not subject to judicial review.

16 This division of the bill is effective July 1, 2026, unless  
17 the sections of 2026 Iowa Acts, LSB 5558 XD, amending Code  
18 section 217.1 and enacting Code section 217.1B are enacted on  
19 or before July 1, 2026.

20 DIVISION VI — CONFORMING CHANGES. The bill includes  
21 conforming changes and this division takes effect July 1, 2027.

22 DIVISION VII — CHILD CARE WORKFORCE — STATE CHILD CARE  
23 ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY. The bill provides that a child shall  
24 be eligible for the state child care assistance (CCA) program  
25 under Code section 237A.13 (state child care assistance)  
26 or 237A.14 (child care assistance — graduated eligibility  
27 phase-out) if a parent, guardian, or custodian (custodian) is  
28 employed at a child care facility or child care home that has  
29 an agreement with HHS to accept reimbursement from the CCA  
30 program; works an average minimum of 32 hours per week in a  
31 position with a primary duty of providing child care directly  
32 to children; and meets several other requirements specified  
33 in the bill. A child of a director, co-director, or other  
34 administrative staff member (staff member) may be eligible if  
35 the staff member is regularly counted in the child-to-staff

1 ratio established by the department. A custodian of a child  
2 participating in the CCA program under the bill shall make  
3 copayments as specified by HHS by rule.

4 The bill requires HHS to adopt rules to administer this  
5 division of the bill. The division provides HHS with emergency  
6 rulemaking authority. This division of the bill takes effect  
7 upon enactment.

8 DIVISION VIII — CODE EDITOR DIRECTIVES. The bill provides  
9 Code editor directives.