

**Senate File 2462 - Introduced**

SENATE FILE 2462  
BY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES

(SUCCESSOR TO SSB 3111)

**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:

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 following take effect July 1,  
6 2027:

7 1. The sections of this division of this Act enacting  
8 sections 234A.1 through 234A.5.

9 2. The sections of this division of this Act repealing  
10 section 135.106.

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

14 DIVISION II

15 DECATEGORIZATION INITIATIVE

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

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

32 Sec. 11. Section 237A.1, subsection 2, paragraph j,  
33 subparagraph (2), Code 2026, is amended by striking the  
34 subparagraph.

35 Sec. 12. Section 249A.26, subsection 5, Code 2026, is

1 amended by striking the subsection.

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

4 Sec. 14. REPEAL. Section 232.188, Code 2026, is repealed.

5 DIVISION III

6 CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM

7 Sec. 15. Section 144.13A, subsection 5, paragraph a, Code  
8 2026, is amended to read as follows:

9 a. Ten dollars of each registration fee is appropriated and  
10 shall be used for ~~primary and secondary~~ child abuse prevention  
11 ~~programs pursuant to [section 235A.1](#)~~, and ten dollars of each  
12 registration fee is appropriated and shall be used for the  
13 congenital and inherited disorders central registry established  
14 pursuant to [section 136A.6](#). Notwithstanding [section 8.33](#),  
15 moneys appropriated in this paragraph that remain unencumbered  
16 or unobligated at the close of the fiscal year shall not revert  
17 but shall remain available for expenditure for the purposes  
18 designated until the close of the succeeding fiscal year, and  
19 shall not be transferred, used, obligated, appropriated, or  
20 otherwise encumbered except as provided in this paragraph.

21 Sec. 16. Section 422.12K, Code 2026, is amended to read as  
22 follows:

23 **422.12K Income tax checkoff for child abuse prevention**  
24 ~~program fund.~~

25 1. A person who files an individual or a joint income tax  
26 return with the department of revenue under [section 422.13](#) may  
27 designate one dollar or more to be paid to the ~~child abuse~~  
28 ~~prevention program~~ early childhood and family services system  
29 fund created in section ~~235A.2~~ 234A.6, to be used for the  
30 purpose of child abuse prevention. If the refund due on the  
31 return or the payment remitted with the return is insufficient  
32 to pay the additional amount designated by the taxpayer to  
33 the ~~child abuse prevention program~~ early childhood and family  
34 services system fund, the amount designated shall be reduced to  
35 the remaining amount remitted with the return. The designation

1 of a contribution to the ~~child abuse prevention program~~ early  
2 childhood and family services system fund under this section  
3 is irrevocable.

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

15 3. The department of health and human services may authorize  
16 payment of moneys from the ~~child abuse prevention program~~ early  
17 childhood and family services system fund for the purpose  
18 of child abuse prevention in accordance with section ~~235A.2~~  
19 234A.6.

20 4. The department of revenue shall adopt rules to administer  
21 this section.

22 5. This section is subject to repeal under section 422.12E.

23 Sec. 17. REPEAL. Sections 235A.1, 235A.2, and 235A.3, Code  
24 2026, are repealed.

25 Sec. 18. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM FUND — TRANSFER  
26 OF MONEYS. Any unencumbered or unobligated moneys remaining  
27 in the child abuse prevention program fund created in section  
28 235A.2, on June 30, 2026, shall be transferred to the early  
29 childhood and family services system fund created in section  
30 234A.6, as enacted in this Act.

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

33 DIVISION IV

34 TRANSITION PROVISIONS

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

- 1 1. For purposes of this division:  
2 a. The following mean the same as defined in section 234A.1  
3 as enacted in division I of this Act:  
4 (1) "Department".  
5 (2) "Early intervention strategies".  
6 (3) "ECFS district plan".  
7 (4) "ECFS state plan".  
8 (5) "ECFS system".  
9 (6) "ECFS system fund".  
10 (7) "Ongoing family and community resources".  
11 (8) "Primary prevention strategies".  
12 b. "Early childhood Iowa area", "early childhood Iowa area  
13 board", and "early childhood Iowa area state board" mean the  
14 same as defined in section 256I.1.  
15 c. "Early childhood Iowa initiative" means the early  
16 childhood Iowa initiative described in section 256I.2.  
17 d. "Transition period" means the period beginning on the  
18 date of enactment of this division of this Act and concluding  
19 on June 30, 2027.  
20 2. There is created an early childhood and family services  
21 system under the control of the department. Beginning July  
22 1, 2027, the department shall be responsible for implementing  
23 and maintaining a statewide system of primary prevention  
24 strategies, early intervention strategies, and ongoing family  
25 and community resources through the ECFS system.  
26 3. During the transition period, the department may  
27 exercise all policymaking functions and regulatory powers as  
28 necessary to establish the ECFS system as if the sections of  
29 division I of this Act enacting sections 234A.1 through 234A.5  
30 were enacted.  
31 4. The department shall perform all the following duties by  
32 the conclusion of the transition period:  
33 a. Adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A as necessary to  
34 establish, implement, and administer the ECFS system.  
35 b. Establish policies as necessary to efficiently

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

1 this division of this Act, or to effectuate the ECFS system  
2 by the conclusion of the transition period, the department  
3 shall timely request the federal waiver or authorization.  
4 Notwithstanding any other effective date to the contrary, a  
5 provision of this division of this Act that the department  
6 determines requires a federal waiver or authorization shall be  
7 effective only upon receipt of federal approval for the waiver  
8 or authorization.

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

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

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

30 8. Unless otherwise provided in this division of this Act,  
31 an early childhood Iowa area, an early childhood Iowa area  
32 board, an early childhood Iowa area director, or any agent  
33 of an early childhood Iowa area or early childhood Iowa area  
34 board, and any subdivision of the state, shall not enter into,  
35 renew, or extend a home visiting services contract related to

1 the early childhood Iowa initiative or related activities if  
2 the term of the contract would extend past, or the deliverables  
3 under the contract would be provided after, June 30, 2027.

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

6 DIVISION V

7 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DISTRICTS

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

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

14 Sec. 23. NEW SECTION. **217.1B Health and human services**  
15 **districts.**

16 1. The department shall divide the entirety of the state  
17 into designated health and human services districts. The  
18 initial HHS districts shall be the same as the behavioral  
19 health districts designated pursuant to section 225A.4, Code  
20 2026, and that exist on the effective date of this division  
21 of this Act. The department shall review the designated HHS  
22 districts at least once every seven consecutive fiscal years.

23 2. *a.* The department may modify a designated HHS district.  
24 When modifying a designated HHS district, the department shall  
25 consider all of the following:

26 (1) City and county boundaries.

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

29 (3) Areas of high need for services.

30 (4) Patterns various populations exhibit when accessing or  
31 receiving services.

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

1 3. The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A  
2 to administer this section.

3 Sec. 24. CONTINGENT EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this  
4 Act takes effect July 1, 2026, unless the sections of 2026 Iowa  
5 Acts, LSB 5558 XD, or successor legislation, amending section  
6 217.1 and enacting section 217.1B are enacted on or before July  
7 1, 2026.

8 DIVISION VI

9 CONFORMING CHANGES

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

12 (5) An employee or operator of a licensed child care center,  
13 registered child development home, head start program, family  
14 development and self-sufficiency grant program under section  
15 216A.107, or healthy opportunities for parents to experience  
16 success - healthy families Iowa program under section ~~135.106~~  
17 234A.5.

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

20 1. The department shall ~~work with the early childhood~~  
21 ~~Iowa program established in section 256I.5 in designing and~~  
22 ~~implementing~~ implement a voluntary quality rating system for  
23 each provider type of child care facility.

24 Sec. 27. Section 256I.3, subsection 2, paragraph b, Code  
25 2026, is amended to read as follows:

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

1 balance of the unexpired term.

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

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

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

16 DIVISION VII

17 CHILD CARE WORKFORCE — STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY

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

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

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

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

1 must be regularly counted in the minimum child-to-staff ratio  
2 established by the department.

3 *c.* (1) If the parent, guardian, or custodian is employed  
4 at a child care home or a child development home, the parent,  
5 guardian, or custodian does not provide child care to the  
6 parent's, guardian's, or custodian's own child.

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

11 *d.* The parent, guardian, or custodian is not a substitute or  
12 an assistant at a child care home or a child development home.

13 *e.* Based on the department's evaluation of the parent's,  
14 guardian's, or custodian's application for state child care  
15 assistance, the department has determined the parent, guardian,  
16 or custodian has a need for child care.

17 *f.* The parent, guardian, or custodian is not the owner of  
18 the child care facility or child care home where any of the  
19 parent's, guardian's, or custodian's children are enrolled.

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

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

30 4. The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A  
31 to administer this section.

32 Sec. 31. EMERGENCY RULES. The department of health and  
33 human services may adopt emergency rules under section 17A.4,  
34 subsection 3, and section 17A.5, subsection 2, paragraph "b",  
35 to implement the provisions of this division of this Act and

1 the rules shall be effective immediately upon filing unless  
2 a later date is specified in the rules. Any rules adopted  
3 in accordance with this section shall also be published as a  
4 notice of intended action as provided in section 17A.4.

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

7 DIVISION VIII

8 CODE EDITOR DIRECTIVES

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

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

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

18 EXPLANATION

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

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

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

31 The ECFS system is established under the control of  
32 the department of health and human services (HHS) and  
33 ECFS districts (districts) are established for statewide  
34 implementation of primary prevention strategies and early  
35 intervention strategies for families and their children under

1 19 years of age. The ECFS system must be administered in  
2 a manner that maximizes funding opportunities, interagency  
3 collaboration, and integration of activities and services that  
4 support positive outcomes for children and families.

5 The bill details actions HHS must perform, to the extent  
6 funding is available, to develop and administer the ECFS  
7 system.

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

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

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

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

1 of the state, and interest or earnings on moneys in the fund  
2 shall be credited to the ECFS fund.

3 The section of the division that establishes the ECFS  
4 fund takes effect upon enactment. All other sections in the  
5 division take effect July 1, 2027.

6 DIVISION II — DECATEGORIZATION INITIATIVE. The bill  
7 eliminates the decategorization initiative.

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

18 This division of the bill takes effect upon enactment.

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

23 The bill allows HHS to exercise all policymaking functions  
24 and regulatory powers as necessary to establish the ECFS system  
25 during the transition period.

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

1 than January 15, 2027, that details the administrative and  
2 operational costs to establish, implement, and administer  
3 the ECFS system; develop a plan to transition oversight and  
4 accountability for home visiting services currently funded  
5 by the early childhood Iowa initiative to the ECFS system;  
6 and work with a cohort of early childhood Iowa area directors  
7 and the early childhood Iowa state board to develop a plan to  
8 modernize the early childhood Iowa initiative.

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

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

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

1 An area board, an area director, or any agent of an area  
2 or area board, and any subdivision of the state, shall not  
3 enter into, renew, or extend a home visiting services contract  
4 related to the initiative or related activities if the term  
5 period of the contract would extend, or the deliverables under  
6 the contract would be provided, beyond June 30, 2027.

7 This division of the bill takes effect upon enactment.

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

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

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

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

1 in the bill. A child of a director, co-director, or other  
2 administrative staff member (staff member) may be eligible if  
3 the staff member is regularly counted in the child-to-staff  
4 ratio established by the department. A custodian of a child  
5 participating in the CCA program under the bill shall make  
6 copayments as specified by HHS by rule.

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

11 DIVISION VIII — CODE EDITOR DIRECTIVES. The bill provides  
12 Code editor directives.