

Senate File 2488 - Introduced

SENATE FILE 2488

BY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

(SUCCESSOR TO SF 2462)

(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, making appropriations, and including
4 applicability, retroactive applicability, and effective date
5 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 to
11 health, education, domestic assault response, abuse response,
12 or community-based child abuse prevention.

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 section of this division of
6 this Act enacting section 234A.6, being deemed of immediate
7 importance, takes effect upon enactment.

8 DIVISION II

9 DECATEGORYIZATION INITIATIVE

10 Sec. 9. Section 235.7, subsection 2, Code 2026, is amended
11 to read as follows:

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

26 Sec. 10. Section 237A.1, subsection 2, paragraph j,
27 subparagraph (2), Code 2026, is amended by striking the
28 subparagraph.

29 Sec. 11. Section 249A.26, subsection 5, Code 2026, is
30 amended by striking the subsection.

31 Sec. 12. Section 256I.4, subsection 6, Code 2026, is amended
32 by striking the subsection.

33 Sec. 13. REPEAL. Section 232.188, Code 2026, is repealed.

34 Sec. 14. DECATEGORYIZATION CARRYOVER FUNDING.

35 1. For purposes of this section, unless the context

1 otherwise requires:

2 a. "Carryover funding" means unobligated or unencumbered
3 moneys described in section 232.188, subsection 5, paragraph
4 "b", Code 2026, at the close of the fiscal year beginning July
5 1, 2025.

6 b. "Decategorization initiative" means the services and
7 activities funded through a funding pool.

8 c. "Department" means the department of health and human
9 services.

10 d. "Funding pool" means the same as defined in section
11 232.188, Code 2026.

12 e. "Governance board" means the same as defined in section
13 232.188, Code 2026.

14 2. Carryover funding that remains in a funding pool at
15 the close of the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, which
16 has been encumbered or obligated by the governance board for
17 a decategorization initiative or by contract beyond that
18 fiscal year, shall remain available for expenditure to ensure
19 continuation of such decategorization initiative or contract
20 until the close of the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026,
21 or as otherwise agreed by the department and juvenile court
22 services after receiving input from appropriate stakeholders
23 under subsection 4.

24 3. Carryover funding that remains in a funding pool at
25 the end of the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, which
26 remains unencumbered or unobligated by the governance board
27 for a decategorization initiative or contract at the close of
28 the fiscal year, shall be appropriated to the department and
29 juvenile court services proportionately based on the percentage
30 of moneys appropriated to each entity by the general assembly
31 for decategorization initiatives.

32 4. a. With input from appropriate stakeholders, the
33 department and juvenile court services shall identify each
34 contract funded through a funding pool impacted by this
35 division of this Act.

1 b. On or before January 1, 2027, the department or juvenile
2 court services shall evaluate each contract identified under
3 paragraph "a" to determine the following:

4 (1) If permitted by the terms of a contract, whether the
5 state should exercise the option to terminate the contract or
6 continue the contract until the end of the current contract
7 term.

8 (2) If the option to terminate a contract is not permitted
9 by the terms of the contract, whether the contract should be
10 renewed or extended at the end of the current contract term.

11 (3) Whether the department or juvenile court services
12 should assume responsibility for a contract for the remainder
13 of the current term of the contract, for the term of the
14 renewed contract, or for the term of the extended contract to
15 avoid service interruption.

16 c. Unless otherwise provided under this section, a
17 governance board or other entity shall not enter into a
18 contract funded through a funding pool after the effective date
19 of this section of this division of this Act if the term of the
20 contract extends past, or the deliverables under the contract
21 would be provided after, June 30, 2027.

22 Sec. 15. EFFECTIVE DATE. The section of this division of
23 this Act related to decategorization carryover funding, being
24 deemed of immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.

25 Sec. 16. RETROACTIVE APPLICABILITY. The section of this
26 division of this Act related to decategorization carryover
27 funding applies retroactively to July 1, 2025.

28 DIVISION III

29 CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM

30 Sec. 17. Section 144.13A, subsection 5, paragraph a, Code
31 2026, is amended to read as follows:

32 a. Ten dollars of each registration fee is appropriated and
33 shall be used for ~~primary and secondary~~ child abuse prevention
34 ~~programs pursuant to section 235A.1~~, and ten dollars of each
35 registration fee is appropriated and shall be used for the

1 congenital and inherited disorders central registry established
2 pursuant to [section 136A.6](#). Notwithstanding [section 8.33](#),
3 moneys appropriated in this paragraph that remain unencumbered
4 or unobligated at the close of the fiscal year shall not revert
5 but shall remain available for expenditure for the purposes
6 designated until the close of the succeeding fiscal year, and
7 shall not be transferred, used, obligated, appropriated, or
8 otherwise encumbered except as provided in this paragraph.

9 Sec. 18. Section 422.12K, Code 2026, is amended to read as
10 follows:

11 **422.12K Income tax checkoff for child abuse prevention**
12 **~~program fund.~~**

13 1. A person who files an individual or a joint income tax
14 return with the department of revenue under [section 422.13](#) may
15 designate one dollar or more to be paid to the ~~child abuse~~
16 ~~prevention program~~ early childhood and family services system
17 fund created in section ~~235A.2~~ 234A.6, to be used for the
18 purpose of child abuse prevention. If the refund due on the
19 return or the payment remitted with the return is insufficient
20 to pay the additional amount designated by the taxpayer to
21 the ~~child abuse prevention program~~ early childhood and family
22 services system fund, the amount designated shall be reduced to
23 the remaining amount remitted with the return. The designation
24 of a contribution to the ~~child abuse prevention program~~ early
25 childhood and family services system fund under [this section](#)
26 is irrevocable.

27 2. The director of revenue shall draft the income tax form
28 to allow the designation of contributions to the ~~child abuse~~
29 ~~prevention program~~ early childhood and family services system
30 fund on the tax return. The department of revenue, on or
31 before January 31, shall transfer the total amount designated
32 on the tax return forms due in the preceding calendar year to
33 the ~~child abuse prevention program~~ early childhood and family
34 services system fund. However, before a checkoff pursuant
35 to [this section](#) shall be permitted, all liabilities on the

1 books of the department and accounts identified as owing under
2 section 421.65 shall be satisfied.

3 3. The department of health and human services may authorize
4 payment of moneys from the ~~child abuse prevention program~~ early
5 childhood and family services system fund for the purpose
6 of child abuse prevention in accordance with section ~~235A.2~~
7 234A.6.

8 4. The department of revenue shall adopt rules to administer
9 this section.

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

11 Sec. 19. REPEAL. Sections 235A.1, 235A.2, and 235A.3, Code
12 2026, are repealed.

13 Sec. 20. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM FUND — TRANSFER
14 OF MONEYS. Any unencumbered or unobligated moneys remaining
15 in the child abuse prevention program fund created in section
16 235A.2, on June 30, 2026, shall be transferred to the early
17 childhood and family services system fund created in section
18 234A.6, as enacted in this Act.

19 Sec. 21. CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM — REVIEW OF
20 CONTRACTS IMPACTED BY TRANSITION TO THE EARLY CHILDHOOD
21 AND FAMILY SERVICES SYSTEM. With input from appropriate
22 stakeholders, the department shall review the child abuse
23 prevention program's contract for program administration and
24 each grant project funded through the child abuse prevention
25 program for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending
26 June 30, 2026, impacted by this division of this Act. The
27 department shall work with the child abuse prevention program's
28 program administrator, local child abuse stakeholders, and
29 grant project recipients to transition the funding and child
30 abuse prevention administration and service delivery to the
31 early childhood and family services system established in
32 division I of this Act.

33 Sec. 22. EFFECTIVE DATE. The section of this division of
34 this Act relating to the review of contracts impacted by the
35 transition of the child abuse prevention program to the early

1 childhood and family services system, being deemed of immediate
2 importance, takes effect upon enactment.

3 Sec. 23. RETROACTIVE APPLICABILITY. The section of this
4 division of this Act relating to the review of contracts
5 impacted by the transition of the child abuse prevention
6 program to the early childhood and family services system
7 applies retroactively to July 1, 2025.

8 DIVISION IV

9 EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA INITIATIVE — HOME VISITING SERVICES
10 ADMINISTRATION TRANSITION

11 Sec. 24. EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA INITIATIVE — HOME VISITING
12 SERVICES ADMINISTRATION TRANSITION.

13 1. For purposes of this section, unless the context
14 otherwise requires:

15 a. "Department" means the department of health and human
16 services.

17 b. "Early childhood Iowa area" means the same as defined in
18 section 256I.1.

19 c. "Early childhood Iowa area board" means the same as
20 defined in section 256I.1.

21 d. "Early childhood Iowa initiative" means the same as
22 described in section 256I.2.

23 e. "ECFS system" means the same as defined in section
24 234A.1, as enacted in division I of this Act.

25 f. "Transition period" means the period beginning on the
26 date of enactment of this division of this Act and concluding
27 January 1, 2028.

28 2. During the transition period, the department shall
29 develop and implement a plan to transfer administration of home
30 visiting services currently funded by the early childhood Iowa
31 initiative to the ECFS system by the end of the transition
32 period. The plan to transfer the administration of home
33 visiting services shall, at a minimum, include all of the
34 following:

35 a. The amount of funding expended through each early

1 childhood Iowa area and each early childhood Iowa area board
2 for home visiting services for which administration has not yet
3 transferred to the ECFS system shall be no less than the amount
4 expended through each early childhood Iowa area and each early
5 childhood Iowa area board for home visiting services during the
6 fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.

7 b. An amount of state funding equal to the aggregate amount
8 of state funding expended during the fiscal year beginning
9 July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, by the early childhood
10 Iowa initiative for home visiting services shall be available
11 for expenditure on home visiting services for families with
12 children age five and under.

13 c. With input from appropriate stakeholders, the department
14 shall identify each home visiting services contract under
15 the purview of an early childhood Iowa area or an early
16 childhood Iowa area board. Prior to the end of the transition
17 period, the department shall, if permitted by the terms of
18 the contract, exercise the option to terminate each contract
19 identified under this paragraph. If a contract does not permit
20 early termination of the contract, the contract shall be
21 terminated at the end of the current term of the contract. A
22 contract identified under this paragraph shall not be renewed
23 or extended at the end of the current contract term.

24 d. All debts, claims, or other liabilities owed to an early
25 childhood Iowa area or an early childhood Iowa area board due
26 to home visiting services provided or rendered pursuant to
27 chapter 256I shall remain due and owing after administration
28 of home visiting services is transferred to the ECFS system
29 and after the end of the transition period. Each fiscal agent
30 contracted with an early childhood Iowa area board shall
31 collect outstanding debts, claims, or other liabilities owed
32 to the early childhood Iowa area board or the early childhood
33 Iowa area board's early childhood Iowa area for home visiting
34 services rendered pursuant to chapter 256I before the date the
35 home visiting service was transferred to the ECFS system or

1 before the end of the transition period, whichever occurred
2 first.

3 e. An early childhood Iowa area, an early childhood Iowa
4 area board, an early childhood Iowa area director, an agent of
5 an early childhood Iowa area, an agent of an early childhood
6 Iowa area board, or a subdivision of the state shall not enter
7 into, renew, or extend a home visiting services contract
8 related to the early childhood Iowa initiative or related
9 activities if the term of the contract extends past, or the
10 deliverables under the contract would be provided after,
11 the date administration of the home visiting services is
12 transferred to the ECFS system or the end of the transition
13 period, whichever occurs first.

14 f. The department shall ensure that individuals currently
15 receiving home visiting services provided through the early
16 childhood Iowa initiative have uninterrupted continuity of care
17 during the transition period.

18 g. The department shall maintain ongoing communication
19 with, and provide a means to receive input from, each early
20 childhood Iowa area board during the process to select home
21 visiting services providers in the early childhood Iowa area
22 board's respective early childhood Iowa area. The department
23 shall also ensure that each contract the department enters into
24 for home visiting services requires that the contracted home
25 visiting services provider inform each early childhood Iowa
26 area board of an early childhood Iowa area in which the home
27 visiting services provider will provide home visiting services.

28 3. During and after the transfer of administration of home
29 visiting services to the ECFS system, and contingent upon the
30 department's receipt of additional federal funds for home
31 visiting services pursuant to the Social Security Act, Tit.
32 IV-E, the department shall annually redistribute through the
33 early childhood Iowa initiative the following percentages,
34 up to seven million dollars, of the additional federal funds
35 received for coordination of early childhood services for

1 children from age zero through age five:

2 a. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2027, and ending
3 June 30, 2028, twenty-five percent.

4 b. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2028, and ending
5 June 30, 2029, fifteen percent.

6 c. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2029, and ending
7 June 30, 2030, five percent.

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DIVISION V

9 EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA INITIATIVE — EVALUATION — REPORT

10 Sec. 25. EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA INITIATIVE — EVALUATION —
11 REPORT.

12 1. For purposes of this division, unless the context
13 otherwise requires:

14 a. "Department" means the department of health and human
15 services.

16 b. "Early childhood Iowa initiative" means the early
17 childhood Iowa initiative described in section 256I.2.

18 c. "Early childhood Iowa state board" means the same as
19 defined in section 256I.1.

20 d. "ECFS system" means the same as defined in section
21 234A.1, as enacted in division I of this Act.

22 2. a. The department, in collaboration with the association
23 of early childhood Iowa area boards and advocates, and
24 the early childhood Iowa state board, shall evaluate the
25 operational functions of the early childhood Iowa initiative
26 and the feasibility and potential impacts of leveraging
27 additional federal resources to inform recommendations to
28 modernize early childhood Iowa initiative operations to
29 support statewide prevention activities designed to strengthen
30 families. The department shall provide administrative support
31 for the evaluation by facilitating the collection and analysis
32 of information and compiling a final report.

33 b. The department shall collect information through means
34 including but not limited to work groups, focus groups, and
35 surveys to accomplish all of the following:

1 (1) Identify opportunities to modernize the early
2 childhood Iowa initiative's operational functions including
3 administration, financing, personnel, and reporting.

4 (2) Evaluate the early childhood Iowa initiative's service
5 access, quality, and coordination.

6 (3) Assess the fiscal and operational impacts to the early
7 childhood Iowa initiative using a new funding allocation
8 methodology.

9 (4) Assess the operational impacts on the department in
10 managing additional federal funding for early childhood and
11 family support services.

12 c. The association of early childhood Iowa area boards
13 and advocates, and the early childhood Iowa state board,
14 shall review the final report compiled by the department
15 under paragraph "a" prior to the department submitting the
16 final report to the governor and the general assembly. The
17 department shall submit the final report to the governor and
18 the general assembly no later than February 5, 2027. The final
19 report shall include all of the following:

20 (1) A summary of the department's evaluation under
21 paragraph "a" and the findings from that evaluation.

22 (2) Recommended revisions to chapter 256I that address, at a
23 minimum, all of the following:

24 (a) Alignment and efficiencies.

25 (b) Operational functions including administration,
26 financing, personnel, and reporting.

27 (c) The relationship between the early childhood Iowa
28 initiative and the ECFS system.

29 (3) A transition plan for implementing the revisions
30 recommended under subparagraph (2) that maintains continuity of
31 service delivery.

32 DIVISION VI

33 HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DISTRICTS

34 Sec. 26. Section 217.1, Code 2026, is amended by adding the
35 following new subsection:

1 NEW SUBSECTION. 4. *“Health and human services district”* or
2 *“HHS district”* means a geographic, multicounty area designated
3 by the department under section 217.1B for statewide program
4 and service delivery.

5 Sec. 27. NEW SECTION. **217.1B Health and human services**
6 **districts.**

7 1. The department shall divide the entirety of the state
8 into designated health and human services districts. The
9 initial HHS districts shall be the same as the behavioral
10 health districts designated pursuant to section 225A.4, Code
11 2026, and that exist on the effective date of this division
12 of this Act. Beginning the calendar year that begins January
13 1, 2032, and every ten consecutive calendar years thereafter,
14 the department shall review the efficacy of the designated HHS
15 districts in performing the HHS districts’ functions during the
16 immediately preceding ten consecutive calendar years.

17 2. *a.* The department may modify a designated HHS district.
18 When modifying a designated HHS district, the department shall
19 consider all of the following:

20 (1) City and county boundaries.

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

23 (3) Areas of high need for services.

24 (4) Patterns various populations exhibit when accessing or
25 receiving services.

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

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

32 Sec. 28. **CONTINGENT EFFECTIVE DATE.** This division of this
33 Act takes effect July 1, 2026, unless the sections of 2026 Iowa
34 Acts, LSB 5558 XD, or successor legislation, amending section
35 217.1 and enacting section 217.1B are enacted on or before July

1 1, 2026.

2 DIVISION VII
3 CONFORMING CHANGES

4 Sec. 29. Section 232.69, subsection 1, paragraph b,
5 subparagraph (5), Code 2026, is amended to read as follows:

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

12 Sec. 30. Section 237A.30, subsection 1, Code 2026, is
13 amended to read as follows:

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

18 Sec. 31. Section 256I.13, subsection 1, Code 2026, is
19 amended to read as follows:

20 1. In order to implement the legislative intent stated
21 in ~~sections 135.106 and section~~ 256I.9, that priority for
22 family support program funding be given to programs using
23 evidence-based or promising models for family support, it is
24 the intent of the general assembly that ninety percent of state
25 funds expended for family support programs shall be used for
26 evidence-based or promising program models. The remaining ten
27 percent of funds may be used for innovative program models that
28 do not yet meet the definition of evidence-based or promising
29 programs.

30 DIVISION VIII
31 CODE EDITOR DIRECTIVES

32 Sec. 32. CODE EDITOR DIRECTIVES. The Code editor is
33 directed to do all of the following:

34 1. Make changes in any Code sections amended or enacted
35 by any other Act to correspond with the changes made in this

1 Act if there appears to be no doubt as to the proper method of
2 making the changes and the changes would not be contrary to or
3 inconsistent with the purposes of this Act or any other Act.

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

6 EXPLANATION

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

9 This bill relates to early childhood and family services,
10 including creation of an early childhood and family services
11 (ECFS) system.

12 DIVISION I — EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY SERVICES SYSTEM.

13 The bill creates new Code chapter 234A (early childhood and
14 family services system). The purpose of the ECFS system is
15 to provide accessible, ongoing, and community-based services
16 for children and families. The bill defines terms used in the
17 chapter.

18 The ECFS system is established under the control of
19 the department of health and human services (HHS) and
20 ECFS districts (districts) are established for statewide
21 implementation of primary prevention strategies and early
22 intervention strategies for families and their children under
23 19 years of age. The ECFS system must be administered in
24 a manner that maximizes funding opportunities, interagency
25 collaboration, and integration of activities and services that
26 support positive outcomes for children and families.

27 The bill details actions HHS must perform, to the extent
28 funding is available, to develop and administer the ECFS
29 system.

30 The bill directs HHS to establish an ECFS district advisory
31 council (council) in each district, and develop policies and
32 procedures for the operational functions of the councils. A
33 council shall consist of 10 members appointed by HHS. The bill
34 specifies individuals who are eligible for appointment, and the
35 duties of a council.

1 The bill specifies the duties of HHS related to data
2 collection and use for the ECFS system. The bill requires
3 HHS to maintain compliance with applicable federal and state
4 privacy laws to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of
5 individually identifiable data related to the ECFS system
6 collected by HHS.

7 Current Code section 135.106 (healthy opportunities
8 for parents to experience success – healthy families Iowa
9 (HOPES-HFI)) is placed in the new Code chapter and becomes part
10 of the ECFS system. The bill specifies the requirements for
11 the HOPES-HFI program and directs HHS to develop and administer
12 the HOPES-HFI program, in whole or in part, by contracting
13 with local organizations that use evidence-based home visiting
14 models.

15 The bill establishes an ECFS system fund (ECFS fund)
16 consisting of moneys appropriated to HHS for the ECFS fund's
17 purposes by the general assembly and any other moneys available
18 and obtained or accepted by HHS for deposit in the ECFS
19 fund. Moneys in the ECFS fund are appropriated to HHS for the
20 purposes of implementing and administering the ECFS system.
21 Moneys appropriated that remain unencumbered or unobligated at
22 the close of a fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund
23 of the state, and interest or earnings on moneys in the fund
24 shall be credited to the ECFS fund.

25 The section of the division that establishes the ECFS fund
26 takes effect upon enactment.

27 DIVISION II — DECATEGORYIZATION INITIATIVE. The bill
28 eliminates the decategorization initiative. The bill details
29 how moneys available for a decategorization initiative will
30 be made available or appropriated to HHS and juvenile court
31 services. The bill prohibits a governance board, as defined in
32 the bill, or other entity from entering into certain contracts
33 if the contract extends past, or the deliverables under the
34 contract would be provided after, June 30, 2027. The section
35 of this division of the bill relating to decategorization

1 carryover funding, as defined in the bill, is effective upon
2 enactment and applies retroactively to July 1, 2025.

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

12 The bill requires HHS to review CAPP's contract for program
13 administration and each grant project funded through CAPP for
14 FY 2025-2026 that is impacted by the bill. HHS must work with
15 CAPP's program administrator, local child abuse stakeholders,
16 and grant project recipients to transition CAPP funding and
17 CAPP service delivery to the ECFS system. The provisions of
18 the bill relating to review of CAPP contracts and CAPP funding
19 take effect upon enactment and applies retroactively to July
20 1, 2025.

21 DIVISION IV — EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA INITIATIVE — HOME
22 VISITING SERVICES ADMINISTRATION TRANSITION. The bill
23 requires HHS, during the period beginning on the effective
24 date of this division of the bill and concluding January 1,
25 2028 (transition period), to develop and implement a plan
26 to transfer administration of home visiting services (HVS)
27 currently funded by the early childhood Iowa (ECI) initiative
28 to the ECFS system by the end of the transition period. HHS's
29 plan must address funding expended by ECI areas and ECI area
30 boards during the transition period; funding for HVS during
31 the transition period; HVS contracts, debts, claims, and other
32 liabilities owed to an ECI area or ECI area board; continuity
33 of care for families receiving HVS; and communication and input
34 between HHS and ECI area boards as detailed in the bill.

35 The bill requires HHS, contingent on HHS's receipt of

1 federal funds, to annually redistribute such moneys through
2 the ECI initiative in amounts as detailed in the bill for FY
3 2027-2028, FY 2028-2029, and FY 2029-2030.

4 DIVISION V — EARLY CHILDHOOD IOWA INITIATIVE — EVALUATION
5 — REPORT. The bill requires HHS, in collaboration with the
6 association of ECI area boards and advocates and the ECI state
7 board, to evaluate operational functions of the ECI initiative
8 and the feasibility and potential impacts of leveraging
9 additional federal resources to inform recommendations to
10 modernize ECI initiative operations to support statewide
11 prevention activities designed to strengthen families. HHS
12 shall gather information to accomplish goals detailed in the
13 bill. No later than February 5, 2027, HHS shall submit a
14 final report to the governor and the general assembly with
15 information detailed in the bill. Prior to HHS submitting the
16 final report, HHS shall allow the ECI area boards and advocates
17 and the ECI state board to review the final report.

18 DIVISION VI — HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DISTRICTS. The
19 bill directs HHS to divide the state into health and human
20 services districts (districts), as that term is defined in the
21 bill, to be used by HHS for statewide delivery of programs and
22 services. The initial district boundaries shall be the same as
23 the behavioral health district boundaries, as the behavioral
24 health district boundaries existed on July 1, 2025. HHS must
25 review the designation of the districts at least once every
26 seven consecutive fiscal years. The bill provides factors HHS
27 must consider when modifying a district, and modification is
28 not subject to judicial review.

29 This division of the bill is effective July 1, 2026, unless
30 the sections of 2026 Iowa Acts, LSB 5558 XD, amending Code
31 section 217.1 and enacting Code section 217.1B are enacted on
32 or before July 1, 2026.

33 DIVISION VII — CONFORMING CHANGES. The bill includes
34 conforming changes.

35 DIVISION VIII — CODE EDITOR DIRECTIVES. The bill provides

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1 Code editor directives.