

CHAPTER 238

EDUCATION - PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HOUSE BILL 05-1238

BY REPRESENTATIVE(S) Hefley, Marshall, McFadyen, Stafford, Coleman, Decker, Frangas, Merrifield, Paccione, Todd, White, Boyd, Carroll M., Carroll T., Madden, Pommer, Ragsdale, Riesberg, Romanoff, and Berens;
also SENATOR(S) Williams, Bacon, Hanna, Spence, Groff, and Keller.

AN ACT

CONCERNING SCHOOL-READINESS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT, AND MAKING AN APPROPRIATION IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly hereby finds that studies indicate a strong correlation between low socio-economic status and poor academic performance by students. The general assembly further finds that providing school-readiness quality improvement funding to early care and education providers and facilities that provide care to the children of low-income and economically disadvantaged families for the purpose of enhancing school readiness will enable the parents to work while helping those parents provide their young children with a strong developmental foundation with which to start school and meet the challenges of a standards-based public education.

(2) Accordingly, in 2002, the general assembly enacted legislation establishing a program that provided targeted investments in the form of school-readiness subsidies to licensed child care providers serving families in low-income communities. The program was designed to help improve the school readiness of the children, five years of age and younger, from those low-income and economically disadvantaged families while also assisting the state of Colorado in closing the learning gap and enhancing the overall academic performance and achievement of Colorado school children.

(3) The general assembly finds that, since January of 2003, the school-readiness child care subsidization program, originally implemented through the pilot site agency communities as contemplated in the 2002 legislation, has provided in excess of four million two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$4,250,000) in federal child care development funds to the early care and education providers working with young,

Capital letters indicate new material added to existing statutes; dashes through words indicate deletions from existing statutes and such material not part of act.

economically disadvantaged children in the state of Colorado for the improvement of their school readiness. The general assembly finds that the return on the investment of these federal funds has exceeded expectations. As of 2005, approximately ninety-three percent of early care and education providers that received school-readiness subsidies through the program have either improved the quality of their services to young children or maintained high levels of quality.

(4) The general assembly therefore determines and declares that expansion of the program to additional eligible communities, subject to the continuing availability of sufficient federal funding, and continued investment in children's educational preparedness through such quality improvement funding is warranted and beneficial to the citizens of the state of Colorado.

SECTION 2. 26-6.5-106, Colorado Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

26-6.5-106. School-readiness quality improvement program. (1) **Legislative declaration.** ~~(a) The general assembly hereby finds that studies indicate a strong correlation between low socio-economic status and poor academic performance by students. The general assembly further finds that financial subsidies to child care facilities that provide care to the children of low-income and economically disadvantaged families for the purpose of enhancing school readiness will enable the parents to work while helping those parents provide their young children with a strong developmental foundation with which to start school and meet the challenges of a standards-based public education.~~

~~(b) The general assembly therefore determines and declares that targeted investments in the form of school-readiness subsidies to licensed child care providers serving families in low-income communities will help to improve the school readiness of the children, five years of age and younger, from those families while also assisting the state of Colorado in closing the learning gap and enhancing the overall academic performance and achievement of Colorado school children.~~

(2) **Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

(a) "CSAP" MEANS THE COLORADO STUDENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-7-409, C.R.S.

~~(a) (b) "Child care providers" and "child care facilities" "EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROVIDERS" AND "EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION FACILITIES" mean child care SCHOOL DISTRICTS, providers, or facilities:~~

~~(I) That are licensed pursuant to part 1 of article 6 of this title OR THAT PARTICIPATE IN THE COLORADO PRESCHOOL PROGRAM PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 28 OF TITLE 22, C.R.S.; AND~~

~~(II) That participate in LOCAL community consolidated child care pilot site agencies EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCILS. and~~

~~(III) That have a child enrollment, at least half of which is children from low-income families.~~

(b) ~~"CSAP" means the Colorado student assessment program developed pursuant to part 4 of article 7 of title 22, C.R.S.~~

(c) ~~"Low-income" means a family income that is at or below two hundred twenty-five percent of the federal poverty level.~~ "EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCILS" MEANS COUNCILS REPRESENTATIVE OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS IDENTIFIED OR ESTABLISHED LOCALLY IN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3.5) OF THIS SECTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEVELOPING AND ULTIMATELY IMPLEMENTING A COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM TO ENSURE THE SCHOOL READINESS OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY. "EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCILS" SHALL PROVIDE SCHOOL-READINESS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROVIDERS PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION TO ENHANCE THE SCHOOL READINESS OF CHILDREN FIVE YEARS OF AGE AND YOUNGER.

(d) ~~"Neighborhood "ELIGIBLE elementary school" means a public elementary school to which the school district provides transportation for the student or which is located so close to the residence of the student that the school district does not provide transportation for the student THAT:~~

(I) (A) FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING SUBMISSION OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL'S APPLICATION FOR FUNDING, HAS AN OVERALL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE RATING OF "LOW" OR "UNSATISFACTORY", PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-7-604, C.R.S.; OR

(B) FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING SUBMISSION OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL'S APPLICATION FOR FUNDING, HAS BEEN ASSIGNED AN ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT RATING OF "DECLINE" OR "SIGNIFICANT DECLINE", AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 22-7-604, C.R.S., AND, FOR THE SAME SCHOOL YEAR, HAS AN OVERALL ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE RATING OF "AVERAGE", PURSUANT TO SECTION 22-7-604, C.R.S.; AND

(II) AS OF THE DATE ON WHICH THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL APPLIES FOR FUNDING THROUGH THE PROGRAM, IS RECEIVING MONEYS PURSUANT TO TITLE I OF THE FEDERAL "ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965", 20 U.S.C. SEC. 6301 ET SEQ.

(e) "Pilot site agencies" means the community consolidated child care pilot site agencies established pursuant to section 26-6.5-103.

(f) "Program" means the school-readiness ~~child care subsidization~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT program created pursuant to subsection (3) of this section.

(3) **School-readiness quality improvement program created.** On and after January 1, 2003, AND CONTINUING THEREAFTER SUBJECT TO SUFFICIENT AND AVAILABLE FEDERAL FUNDING, there is hereby created the school-readiness ~~child care subsidization~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT program, pursuant to which the state department of human services shall award ~~three-year school-readiness subsidies to county departments of social services~~ THREE YEARS OF SCHOOL-READINESS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING TO ELIGIBLE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCILS IDENTIFIED OR ESTABLISHED THROUGHOUT THE STATE PURSUANT TO

SUBSECTION (3.5) OF THIS SECTION. SCHOOL-READINESS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING SHALL BE AWARDED to improve the school-readiness of children five years of age and younger who are enrolled in ~~the Colorado child care assistance program or who are enrolled at a child care facility~~ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION FACILITIES. SCHOOL-READINESS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING SHALL BE AWARDED TO ELIGIBLE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCILS BASED UPON ALLOCATIONS MADE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE FEDERAL FUNDING. NOTHING IN THIS SECTION OR IN ANY RULES PROMULGATED PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION SHALL BE INTERPRETED TO CREATE A LEGAL ENTITLEMENT IN ANY EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL TO SCHOOL-READINESS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING PURSUANT TO THE PROGRAM. Moneys awarded through the program shall be used to improve the school readiness of children, five years of age and younger, cared for at such ~~child care~~ facilities, who ultimately attend ~~neighborhood~~ ELIGIBLE elementary schools. ~~that receive overall academic performance ratings of "low" or "unsatisfactory", pursuant to section 22-7-604, C.R.S.~~

(3.5) Early childhood care and education councils. (a) (I) COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE THAT DO NOT HAVE A PILOT SITE AGENCY MAY IDENTIFY AN EXISTING ENTITY OR ESTABLISH A NEW ENTITY TO SERVE AS THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL TO WORK TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM TO ENSURE THE SCHOOL READINESS OF YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY. A COMMUNITY MAY IDENTIFY AN EXISTING ENTITY, SUCH AS A CONSOLIDATED CHILD CARE PILOT SITE AGENCY OR AN INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL OR A COLORADO PRESCHOOL PROGRAM ADVISORY COUNCIL, TO SERVE AS ITS EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL OR IT MAY ESTABLISH A NEW COUNCIL. TO THE EXTENT IT IS PRACTICAL, EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCILS SHALL BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE VARIOUS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE COMMUNITY, AS SPECIFIED IN THIS SUBSECTION (3.5), WHO ARE COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING THE PREPAREDNESS OF YOUNG CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL. SUCH STAKEHOLDERS SHALL INCLUDE:

(A) SCHOOL DISTRICTS;

(B) THE COUNTY DEPARTMENT;

(C) PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT AND NONPROFIT LICENSED CHILD CARE PROVIDERS REPRESENTING CHILD CARE CENTERS, FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES, AND PRESCHOOLS;

(D) LOCAL RESOURCE AND REFERRAL AGENCY OR AGENCIES;

(E) LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT OR DEPARTMENTS; AND

(F) LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY OR COMMUNITIES.

(II) IN ADDITION, EACH EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL MAY INCLUDE, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, REPRESENTATION FROM ANY COMBINATION OF THE FOLLOWING:

(A) THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS;

(B) THE LOCAL HEAD START GRANTEE;

(C) THE COLORADO PRESCHOOL PROGRAM;

(D) CHILD CARE ASSOCIATIONS;

(E) OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES;

(F) PARENTS OR OTHER CONSUMERS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION SERVICES; AND

(G) FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS.

(b) FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL, WHETHER NEWLY ESTABLISHED IN A COMMUNITY OR NEWLY IDENTIFIED TO SERVE AS SUCH, SHALL WORK TOWARD CONSOLIDATING AND COORDINATING FUNDING, INCLUDING SCHOOL-READINESS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING, TO CREATE A SEAMLESS EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM OF COLLABORATION AMONG THE VARIOUS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STAKEHOLDERS FOR THE EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION TO YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY.

(4) **Application for funding.** (a) (I) ~~Any county department~~ AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL seeking a ~~subsidy~~ SCHOOL-READINESS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING from the state department pursuant to this section shall apply directly to the state department in the manner specified by rule of the state board of human services. ~~Any county department~~ AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL applying for school-readiness ~~child care subsidization~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION shall meet the following minimum criteria:

(A) The ~~county~~ COMMUNITY represented by the ~~county department~~ EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL shall ~~have within its borders~~ INCLUDE one or more ~~neighborhood~~ ELIGIBLE elementary schools; ~~that have received an overall academic performance rating of "low" or "unsatisfactory", as described in section 22-7-604, C.R.S.;~~

(B) The ~~county department shall~~ EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL SHALL DEVELOP AND submit a school-readiness plan ~~developed by the pilot site agency within the county~~ to improve the SCHOOL readiness of children in the ~~pilot site agency~~ community as described in subsection (6) of this section; and

(C) The ~~county department~~ EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL shall demonstrate the commitment of the ~~child care~~ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION facilities identified in the ~~pilot site agency's~~ school-readiness plan to cooperate with and participate in the school-readiness QUALITY rating system described in subsection (5) of this section.

(II) ~~Any county department~~ AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL seeking school-readiness ~~child care subsidization~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING pursuant to this section shall, in addition to the requirements set forth in subparagraph (I) of this paragraph (a), meet any additional eligibility requirements specified by rule

of the state board.

(b) ~~County departments~~ EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCILS that receive school-readiness ~~child-care subsidization~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING pursuant to this section shall distribute such moneys to ~~child-care~~ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION facilities identified in the ~~pilot-site agency's~~ school-readiness plan described in subsection (6) of this section.

(5) **School-readiness quality rating system.** The state early childhood and school-readiness commission created pursuant to section 26-6-304 shall adopt a voluntary school-readiness QUALITY rating system. Such rating system shall measure the level of preparedness of and quality of services provided by ~~a child-care~~ AN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION provider to prepare children to enter elementary school. The school-readiness QUALITY rating system shall:

(a) Measure such elements of quality of ~~a child-care~~ AN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION facility as:

(I) The quality of the learning environment;

(II) The quality of adult-child interactions;

(III) Adult-to-child ratios;

(IV) Provider ~~credentials~~ TRAINING AND EDUCATION, including recognized credentials through the state department's voluntary credentialing system developed pursuant to section 26-6.5-103 (8); and

(V) Parent-involvement activities at the ~~child-care~~ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION facility;

(b) Be variable to inform parents, counties, and other purchasers of ~~child~~ EARLY CHILDHOOD care AND EDUCATION about the level of quality at ~~a child-care~~ AN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION facility in a simple and easy-to-understand manner;

(c) Be supported by statistically valid research as a reliable measure of quality of ~~a child-care~~ AN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION facility;

(d) Include a quality improvement plan that informs ~~rated child-care~~ QUALITY-RATED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION providers of their strengths and weaknesses and that provides such ~~child-care~~ providers with strategies to improve the quality of their services; and

(e) Have demonstrated effectiveness at improving the level of quality of ~~child-care~~ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION providers in geographically diverse Colorado communities.

(6) **School-readiness plans.** Each ~~county department~~ EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL seeking to apply for school-readiness ~~child-care subsidization~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING pursuant to this section shall PREPARE AND submit a ~~three-year school-readiness plan, prepared by the pilot-site agency~~

~~within the county~~, to the state department A THREE-YEAR SCHOOL-READINESS PLAN that outlines strategies to improve the school readiness of children who reside in neighborhoods with ~~neighborhood~~ ELIGIBLE elementary schools. ~~that have received overall academic performance ratings of "low" or "unsatisfactory", pursuant to section 22-7-604, C.R.S.~~ The school-readiness plan, at a minimum, shall include:

(a) The number and location of ~~neighborhood~~ ELIGIBLE elementary schools ~~that have received an overall academic performance rating of "low" or "unsatisfactory", as described in section 22-7-604, C.R.S.~~ IN THE COMMUNITY;

(b) The number and location of ~~child-care~~ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION providers that will voluntarily participate in the school-readiness ~~child-care subsidization~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT program;

(c) A commitment that the ~~child-care~~ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION providers identified in the school-readiness plan will cooperate with and participate in the school-readiness QUALITY rating system described in subsection (5) of this section; and

(d) Community strategies to target school-readiness ~~subsidies~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING to improve the level of quality at participating ~~child-care~~ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION providers.

(7) **Rules.** (a) The state board of human services shall promulgate rules for the implementation of this section, including but not limited to rules that:

(I) Specify the procedure by which ~~a county department, in partnership with the pilot site agency within the county~~, AN EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL may apply for school-readiness ~~child-care subsidization~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING pursuant to the program;

(II) Specify the manner in which school-readiness ~~child-care subsidies are~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING IS distributed to ~~county departments~~ EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCILS, ensuring an equitable distribution between rural and urban ~~counties~~ COMMUNITIES; and

(III) Identify any additional eligibility requirements for ~~county departments~~ EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCILS seeking school-readiness ~~child-care subsidization~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING, as described in subparagraph (II) of paragraph (a) of subsection (4) of this section.

(b) At a minimum, the rules promulgated pursuant to this subsection (7) shall identify a specific and measurable level of improvement in the school-readiness QUALITY rating that ~~a child-care~~ AN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION provider must achieve ~~within eighteen months~~ OVER THE COURSE OF THE FUNDING DISTRIBUTION PERIOD after receiving an initial funding distribution through the program in order for the ~~child-care~~ provider to continue ~~to receive~~ RECEIVING school-readiness ~~child-care subsidization~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FUNDING, AS WELL AS THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM.

(8) **Funding.** (a) The school-readiness ~~child-care subsidization~~ QUALITY

IMPROVEMENT program shall be funded using federal child care development fund moneys annually appropriated for the program. Such moneys shall be allocated ~~to county departments~~ by the state department and ~~distributed to child care providers by pilot site agencies~~ TO THE ELIGIBLE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCILS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RATING SYSTEM AND FOR DISTRIBUTION TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROVIDERS, as provided in this section.

(b) (I) If moneys are required to match the federal child care development funds, such matching moneys may be from, but need not be limited to, general fund moneys appropriated by the general assembly, local moneys, or private matching moneys. Any state department staff that may be necessary to support the school-readiness ~~child care subsidization~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT program shall be funded by federal child care development funds appropriated for the program and not from general funds. The FTE authorization for any staff necessary to support the school-readiness ~~child care subsidization~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT program shall be eliminated should federal funds no longer be available for the program.

(II) Notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (I) of this paragraph (b), the general assembly shall not be obligated to appropriate general fund moneys if private matching moneys are not available or later become unavailable.

(c) ~~If the state designates matching moneys from a private organization, the state department, the participating county department, and school districts shall be authorized to enter into a sole-source contract with the AN organization that provides such matching share to provide the following:~~ The state department ~~the participating county department, and school districts~~ shall be authorized to enter into a sole-source contract with ~~the AN organization that provides such matching share~~ to provide the following:

(I) Ratings of child care;

(II) Technical assistance for child care providers;

(III) Community infrastructure and resource development for improving the quality of child care;

(IV) Parent and consumer education on the quality of child care providers in the community.

(9) **Evaluation - report.** (a) ~~Participating county departments, in conjunction with the pilot site agencies, shall submit a twenty-four-month report on or before July 1, 2005, to the state department on the~~ EACH EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL SHALL SUBMIT TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT A SUMMATIVE THIRTY-MONTH REPORT ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2009, AND ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1 EVERY THREE YEARS THEREAFTER. THE REPORT SHALL ADDRESS THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT OF THE PARTICIPATING EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION FACILITIES AND THE OVERALL effectiveness of the school-readiness ~~child care subsidization~~ QUALITY IMPROVEMENT program at preparing low-income children, residing in communities with ~~low-performing, or unsatisfactory-performing neighborhood~~ ELIGIBLE elementary schools, for school. Such reports, at a minimum, shall address:

(I) The number of ~~child care~~ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION facilities and children who participated in the school-readiness QUALITY IMPROVEMENT program;

(II) The baseline quality ratings of each participating ~~child-care~~ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION provider during each year of participation;

(III) An analysis and explanation of the quality improvement strategies undertaken at each ~~child-care~~ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION facility; and

(IV) The barriers to quality improvement that were encountered.

(b) On or before ~~October 1, 2005~~ APRIL 1, 2009, AND ON OR BEFORE APRIL 1 EVERY THREE YEARS THEREAFTER, the state department, or any private entity with which the state department is hereby authorized to contract for this purpose, shall submit a consolidated statewide report, based upon the reports prepared and submitted by the ~~county departments and pilot site agencies~~ EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCILS, addressing the items set forth in paragraph (a) of this subsection (9) to the state early childhood and school-readiness commission and to the members of the education committees of the house of representatives and the senate of the general assembly. ~~The general assembly shall review the appropriateness of continuing school-readiness subsidies pursuant to this section during the 2006 regular session.~~

(c) Reporting ~~county departments and pilot site agencies~~ EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCILS, as well as the state department or any private entity with which it may contract for reporting purposes, may draw upon the evaluations and studies prepared by a nationally recognized research firm to report on the SCHOOL-readiness of children in ~~rated child-care~~ QUALITY-RATED EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION facilities.

(d) ~~Participating county departments and pilot site agencies~~ EACH EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION COUNCIL shall work with state and local agencies, SUCH AS SCHOOL DISTRICTS, to support efforts to track, THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, the future academic performance of children who receive school-readiness services from ~~child-care~~ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION providers who receive funding pursuant to this section.

SECTION 3. 26-6.5-103 (3.5), (3.7), and (8), Colorado Revised Statutes, are amended to read:

26-6.5-103. Program scope. (3.5) ~~The pilot site agencies may participate in the child-care voluntary credentialing system established pursuant to subsection (8) of this section.~~

(3.7) ~~Each pilot site agency participating in the school-readiness child-care subsidization program established pursuant to section 26-6.5-106 with the county department, shall work cooperatively with the county department in seeking school-readiness child-care subsidization pursuant to said section, including preparing a school-readiness plan as described in section 26-6.5-106 (6).~~

(8) (a) The state department shall develop a child care voluntary credentialing system that recognizes the training and educational achievements of persons providing early childhood care and education and that shall be used only by community consolidated child care services pilot site agencies. The child care

voluntary credentialing system shall be a multi-tiered system of graduated credentials that reflects the increased training, education, knowledge, skills, and competencies of persons working in early childhood care and education programs in the pilot site agencies.

(b) ON AND AFTER JULY 1, 2005, THE STATE DEPARTMENT SHALL EXPAND THE CHILD CARE VOLUNTARY CREDENTIALING SYSTEM STATEWIDE TO FURTHER ENHANCE THE SCHOOL READINESS OF CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF COLORADO. THEREAFTER THE USE OF THE CREDENTIALING SYSTEM SHALL INCLUDE, BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO, THE COMMUNITY CONSOLIDATED CHILD CARE SERVICES PILOT SITE AGENCIES. THE STATE BOARD OF HUMAN SERVICES MAY PROMULGATE SUCH RULES AS ARE NECESSARY FOR THE STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VOLUNTARY CREDENTIALING SYSTEM.

SECTION 4. Appropriation. In addition to any other appropriation, there is hereby appropriated to the department of human services, division of child care, for the school-readiness quality improvement program created in section 26-6.5-106, Colorado Revised Statutes, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2005, 0.5 FTE, or so much thereof as may be necessary, for the implementation of this act.

SECTION 5. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.

Approved: June 2, 2005