

A bill for an act
relating to early childhood education; creating an Office of Early Learning;
proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 4.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **[4.046] OFFICE OF EARLY LEARNING.**

(a) An Office of Early Learning is established to coordinate a high-quality early childhood system in Minnesota to make such programs more effective and to improve the educational outcomes of all children. The governor must appoint, and the senate must confirm, a director who is a recognized expert in the field of early childhood care and education who will facilitate communication and coordinate prekindergarten and child care programs under the administration of the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services.

(b) The director of the Office of Early Learning must coordinate Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services staff efforts to:

(1) consolidate and coordinate resources and public funding streams for early childhood education and child care, and ensure the accountability and coordinated development of all early childhood education and child care services to children from birth to age five;

(2) work with the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services and the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (MELF) to create common standards for quality early childhood programming and rules for teacher training and certification;

(3) create a seamless transition from early childhood programs to kindergarten;

(4) encourage family choice by ensuring a mixed system of high-quality public and private programs, with local points of entry, staffed by well-qualified professionals;

(5) ensure parents a decisive role in the planning, operation, and evaluation of programs that aid families in the care of children;

(6) provide consumer education and accessibility to early childhood education and child care resources;

(7) advance the quality of early childhood education and child care programs in order to support the healthy development of children and preparation for their success in school;

(8) develop a seamless service delivery system with local points of entry for early childhood education and child care programs administered by local, state, and federal agencies;

(9) develop and manage an effective data collection system to support the necessary functions of a coordinated system of early childhood education and child care in order to enable accurate evaluation of its impact;

(10) respect and be sensitive to family values and cultural heritage; and

(11) establish the administrative framework for and promote the development of early childhood education and child care services in order to provide that these services, staffed by well-qualified professionals, are available in every community for all families that express a need for them.

(c) The director of the Office of Early Learning must coordinate activities with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care under section 124D.141.

(d) The director of the Office of Early Learning must report to the legislative committees with jurisdiction over the early childhood education and child care programs by February 1 of each year on the status of the work required under paragraph (b) and any statutory changes necessary to improve quality and increase access. The director also must present to these same legislative committees by February 1, 2009, a detailed plan, with an implementation timeline, to colocate state early childhood education and child care assistance programs and services.

EFFECTIVE DATE. This section is effective the day following final enactment.