

124D.13 EARLY CHILDHOOD FAMILY EDUCATION (ECFE) PROGRAMS.

Subdivision 1. **Establishment; purpose.** A district that provides a community education program under sections 124D.18 and 124D.19 may establish an early childhood family education program. Two or more districts, each of which provides a community education program, may cooperate to jointly provide an early childhood family education program. The purpose of the early childhood family education program is to provide parenting education to support children's learning and development.

Subd. 2. **Program requirements.** (a) Early childhood family education programs are programs for children in the period of life from birth to kindergarten, for the parents and other relatives of these children, and for expectant parents. To the extent that funds are insufficient to provide programs for all children, early childhood family education programs should emphasize programming for a child from birth to age three and encourage parents and other relatives to involve four- and five-year-old children in school readiness programs, and other public and nonpublic early learning programs. A district may not limit participation to school district residents. Early childhood family education programs must provide:

(1) programs to educate parents and other relatives about the physical, mental, and emotional development of children and to enhance the skills of parents and other relatives in providing for their children's learning and development;

(2) structured learning activities requiring interaction between children and their parents or relatives;

(3) structured learning activities for children that promote children's development and positive interaction with peers, which are held while parents or relatives attend parent education classes;

(4) information on related community resources;

(5) information, materials, and activities that support the safety of children, including prevention of child abuse and neglect; and

(6) a community outreach plan to ensure participation by families who reflect the racial, cultural, and economic diversity of the school district.

The programs must include learning experiences for children, parents, and other relatives that promote children's early literacy skills. The program must not include activities for children that do not require substantial involvement of the children's parents or other relatives. The program must be reviewed periodically to assure the instruction and materials are not racially, culturally, or sexually biased. The programs must encourage parents to be aware of practices that may affect equitable development of children.

(b) For the purposes of this section, "relative" or "relatives" means noncustodial grandparents or other persons related to a child by blood, marriage, adoption, or foster placement, excluding parents.

Subd. 3. **Substantial parental involvement.** The requirement of substantial parental or other relative involvement in subdivision 2 means that:

(a) parents or other relatives must be physically present much of the time in classes with their children or be in concurrent classes;

(b) parenting education or family education must be an integral part of every early childhood family education program;

(c) early childhood family education appropriations must not be used for traditional day care or nursery school, or similar programs; and

(d) the form of parent involvement common to kindergarten, elementary school, or early childhood special education programs such as parent conferences, newsletters, and notes to parents do not qualify a program under subdivision 2.

Subd. 4. Home visiting program. A district that levies for home visiting under section 124D.135, subdivision 6, shall use this revenue to include as part of the early childhood family education programs a parent education component that is designed to reach isolated or at-risk families.

The home visiting program must use:

(1) an established risk assessment tool to determine the family's level of risk;

(2) establish clear objectives and protocols for home visits;

(3) encourage families to make a transition from home visits to site-based parenting programs;

(4) provide program services that are community-based, accessible, and culturally relevant; and

(5) foster collaboration among existing agencies and community-based organizations that serve young children and their families.

Home visitors should reflect the demographic composition of the community to the extent possible.

Subd. 5. Separate accounts. The district must maintain a separate account within the community education fund for money for early childhood family education programs.

Subd. 6. Participants' fees. A district must establish a reasonable sliding fee scale but it shall waive the fee for a participant unable to pay.

Subd. 7. Additional funding. A district may receive funds from any governmental agency or private source.

Subd. 8. Coordination. (a) A district must describe strategies to coordinate and maximize public and private community resources and reduce duplication of services.

(b) A district is encouraged to coordinate adult basic education programs provided to parents and early childhood family education programs provided to children to accomplish the goals of section 124D.895.

Subd. 9. District advisory councils. The board must appoint an advisory council from the area in which the program is provided. A majority of the council must be parents participating in the program. The council must assist the board in developing, planning, and monitoring the early childhood family education program. The council must report to the board and the community education advisory council.

Subd. 10. Alternative council. A board may direct the community education council, required according to section 124D.19, subdivision 2, to perform the functions of the Advisory Council for Early Childhood Family Education.

Subd. 11. **Teachers.** A school board must employ necessary licensed teachers for its early childhood family education programs. The Board of Teaching, at its discretion, may grant an applicant a variance under this subdivision, consistent with sections 122A.09, subdivision 10, and 122A.25, and Board of Teaching rules.

Subd. 12. **Assistance.** The department must provide assistance to districts with programs described in this section. The department must establish guidelines that list barriers to learning and development affecting children served by early childhood family education programs.

Subd. 13. **Program data submission requirements.** Districts receiving early childhood family education revenue under section 124D.135 must submit annual program data to the department by July 15 in the form and manner prescribed by the commissioner.

History: 1984 c 463 art 4 s 1; 1Sp1985 c 12 art 4 s 2; 1989 c 329 art 4 s 3; 1990 c 562 art 4 s 1; 1991 c 130 s 37; 1991 c 265 art 4 s 3-5; 1992 c 571 art 10 s 1,2; 1993 c 224 art 4 s 11; 1Sp1995 c 3 art 16 s 13; 1997 c 162 art 1 s 5; 1998 c 397 art 3 s 43-50,103; art 11 s 3; 1999 c 205 art 1 s 41,70; 1Sp2003 c 9 art 7 s 3-5; 2006 c 263 art 6 s 6,7; 2007 c 146 art 9 s 5-8; 2008 c 266 s 1; 2009 c 96 art 6 s 2