

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1201

To amend the Head Start Act to ensure that every child who is eligible to participate in a program under such Act has the tools to learn to read.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 22, 2001

Mr. SCHIFF (for himself, Mr. PLATTS, Mr. DOOLEY of California, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Mr. CLEMENT, Mr. ETHERIDGE, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. FROST, Mr. WAXMAN, Ms. SANCHEZ, and Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To amend the Head Start Act to ensure that every child who is eligible to participate in a program under such Act has the tools to learn to read.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Reading Readiness Act
5 of 2001”.

1 **SEC. 2. READING READINESS REPORT AND EVALUATION OF**
2 **CURRENT BEST READING READINESS PRAC-**
3 **TICES.**

4 Section 649(d) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C.
5 9844(d)) is amended—

6 (1) in subsection (d)—

7 (A) by redesignating paragraphs (2)
8 through (9) as paragraphs (3) through (10), re-
9 spectively, and

10 (B) by inserting after paragraph (1) the
11 following:

12 “(2) determine whether every Head Start pro-
13 gram is providing to children who participate in such
14 program the tools necessary to succeed in school, in-
15 cluding reading readiness, and to review current best
16 practices of Head Start programs with respect to
17 reading readiness;”, and

18 (2) in the matter following paragraph (10), as
19 so redesignated, by striking “paragraph (9)” and in-
20 serting “paragraph (10)”.

21 **SEC. 3. REQUIRING READING READINESS IN ALL HEAD**
22 **START PROGRAMS.**

23 The Head Start Act (42 U.S.C 9831 et seq.) is
24 amended—

1 (1) in section 636 by inserting “(including a
2 strong focus on reading readiness)” after “other
3 services”, and

4 (2) in section 638 by inserting “(including a
5 strong focus on reading readiness)” after “other
6 services”.

7 **SEC. 4. INCENTIVE FOR HEAD START PROGRAMS TO ADOPT**
8 **CURRENT BEST PRACTICES IN READING**
9 **READINESS ACTIVITIES.**

10 (a) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 638 of the
11 Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9833) is amended—

12 (1) by inserting “(a)” after “SEC.”, and

13 (2) by adding at the end the following:

14 “(b) From the portion specified in section 639(b)(4),
15 the Secretary shall award grants under this subsection on
16 a competitive basis to applicants selected by the Secretary
17 to carry out current best practices in reading readiness
18 activities.”.

19 (b) PRIORITY USE OF ALLOTTED FUNDS.—Section
20 640(a)(2)(C) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C.
21 9835(a)(2)(C)) is amended in the matter preceding clause
22 (i) by inserting “reading readiness and” after “carry out”.

23 **SEC. 5. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS ON MAKING HEAD START**
24 **SEAMLESS.**

25 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Recent early brain research has yielded evi-
2 dence of the need to help children in the earliest
3 years of life in order to ensure their success in
4 school and in life.

5 (2) The Early Head Start pilot program begun
6 in 1994 has proven the value of intervention with
7 younger children and their families.

8 (3) Head Start programs have shown an in-
9 creasing interest to expand the scope of their pre-
10 school programs to include infants, toddlers, and
11 their families, and there is nothing in the Head
12 Start Act that precludes the Secretary of Health and
13 Human Services from approving the use of preschool
14 Head Start funds to enroll children less than 3 years
15 of age.

16 (b) SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.—It is the sense of
17 the Congress that the Secretary of Health and Human
18 Services should immediately take such steps as may be
19 necessary to allow Head Start grantees that find evidence
20 of community need, to modify the use of their current
21 grants so as to enroll infants and toddlers in Head Start
22 programs without obtaining a separate Early Head Start
23 grant.

1 **SEC. 6. NATIONAL HEAD START ENROLLMENT CAMPAIGN.**

2 The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall
3 implement an outreach campaign to promote enrollment
4 in Head Start programs and Early Head Start programs
5 and shall include in such campaign—

6 (1) forceful messages that convey the fact that
7 participating in such programs increases the ability
8 of children to learn to read, and

9 (2) outreach activities in hospitals, clinics, Fed-
10 eral food assistance programs, child care referral
11 agencies, and other programs that serve the health
12 needs of children and pregnant women.

13 **SEC. 7. INCREASED ELIGIBILITY THRESHOLD.**

14 Section 645(a)(1)(B)(i) of the Head Start Act (42
15 U.S.C. 9840(a)(1)(B)(i)) is amended to read as follows:

16 “(i) programs demonstrating by commu-
17 nity assessment that all reasonable attempt has
18 been made to enroll children whose families’ in-
19 comes are below the poverty line may make eli-
20 gible for participation in the program children
21 whose families’ incomes are no greater than
22 150 percent of the poverty line; and”.

23 **SEC. 8. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS REGARDING FULL FUND-**
24 **ING OF THE HEAD START ACT.**

25 It is the sense of the Congress that the Congress
26 should appropriate sufficient funds to carry out the Head

1 Start Act so that all children who are eligible to partici-
2 pate in programs under such Act (including children who
3 are on waiting lists to participate in such programs) may
4 participate in such programs.

5 **SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

6 Section 639 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9834)
7 is amended—

8 (1) in subsection (a) by striking “such sums”
9 and all that follows through “2003”, and inserting
10 “\$9,200,000,000 for fiscal year 2002, and
11 \$11,200,000,000 for fiscal year 2003”, and

12 (2) in subsection (b)—

13 (A) in paragraph (2) by striking “and” at
14 the end,

15 (B) in paragraph (3) by striking the period
16 at the end and inserting “; and”, and

17 (C) by adding at the end the following:

18 “(4) not more than \$1,000,000,000 for each of
19 the fiscal years 2002 and 2003 to provide additional
20 funds for expansion of existing Head Start programs
21 or for new grantees who are using current best prac-
22 tices in reading readiness activities identified under
23 section 649(d)(2).”.

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