



Strong Start for Children Act **Bill Summary**

Preschool

Federal State Partnership: The federal government, states and communities will work together to expand access to high-quality preschool programs to children from families at 200 percent of poverty. This partnership includes a financial commitment by the state. States that are not yet in a position to offer full day, full year, high quality programming can compete for development funds to build quality early care systems that make them eligible for larger grants.

Quality: The bill ensures quality by setting a high threshold while being sensitive to the varying stages of each state's ability to participate. States that commit to meeting these standards will receive funding. States that are still building quality systems will be able to compete for grants to help them meet the criteria. Elements of quality, rooted in research, include high staff qualifications, comparable compensation, and professional development, as well as to provide a full-day program with small class sizes. Programs must meet children's needs for cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development; provide comprehensive services, including access to nutrition, health, and social services; and include activities to engage and educate parents

Coordination/Implementation: Each state is unique, which is why the bill provides flexibility to states to use a portion of their funds for infants and toddlers. To maintain coherence, the bill emphasizes coordination with other federal, state and local programs.

Early Learning Quality Partnerships

The bill also establishes partnerships between Early Head Start programs and child care providers to help child care centers and family child care homes improve their quality of coordinated, comprehensive services for infants and toddlers and children through age 3. This leverages resources currently in the child care program, and will help to elevate quality in child care centers also offering Early Head Start.

Child Care

The bill provides the Secretary of Health and Human Services with the ability to reserve funding to support quality activities, including child care training, licensure, compensation and improvements health and safety standards.

Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program

The bill expresses a "sense of the Congress" that Congress should continue to fund evidence-based, voluntary home visitation programs under MIECHV to promote maternal and child health, improve school readiness, prevent child abuse and neglect, support family economic self-sufficiency, reduce crime and delinquency, and improve community resources.