

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
2001S0088/2

S.B. 665
By: Moncrief
Health & Human Services
2/26/2001
As Filed

DIGEST AND PURPOSE

S.B. 665 creates an office of Early Childhood Coordination in the Health and Human Services Commission to be charged with creating and implementing a statewide strategic plan for the delivery of services to children from birth through five years of age. This bill also creates an advisory committee composed of members who have a demonstrated interest in early childhood development, including parents, representatives of business, the faith community, law enforcement, social services, and state executive agencies that have programs affecting or serving children ages zero to six.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Chapter 531, Government Code, by adding Subchapter H, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER H. OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD COORDINATION

Sec. 531.281. DEFINITIONS. Defines “office” and “advisory committee.”

Sec. 531.282. OFFICE; STAFF. (a) Provides that the Office of Early Childhood Coordination (office) is an office within the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (commission).

(b) Requires the commissioner of health and human services to employ staff as needed to carry out the duties of the office.

Sec. 531.283. GOALS. Provides that the goals of the office are to promote community support for parents of all children younger than six years of age through an integrated state and local-level decision-making process and to provide for the seamless delivery of health and human services to all children younger than six years of age to ensure that all children are prepared to succeed in school.

Sec. 531.284. STRATEGIC PLAN. (a) Requires the office to create and implement a statewide strategic plan (plan) for the delivery of health and human services to children younger than six years of age.

(b) Requires the office, in developing the plan, to consider existing programs and models to serve children younger than six years of age, including certain specified programs; to attempt to maximize federal funds and local existing infrastructure and funds; and to provide for local participation to the greatest extent possible.

(c) Requires the plan to address the needs of children younger than six years of age

with disabilities.

Sec. 531.285. POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) Requires the office to identify:

- (1) gaps in early childhood services by functional area and geographical area;
- (2) state policies, rules, and service procedures that prevent or inhibit children younger than six years of age from accessing available services;
- (3) sources of funds for early childhood services, including federal, state, and private-public ventures;
- (4) opportunities for collaboration between the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and health and human services agencies to better serve the needs of children younger than six years of age;
- (5) methods for coordinating the provision of early childhood services provided by the Texas Head Start-State Collaboration Project, TEA, and the Texas Workforce Commission;
- (6) quantifiable benchmarks for success within early childhood service delivery; and
- (7) national best practices in early care and educational delivery models.

(b) Requires the office to establish outreach efforts to communities and ensure adequate communication lines that provide the office with information about community-level efforts and communities with information about funds and programs available to communities.

(c) Requires the office to make recommendations to the commission on strategies to:

- (1) ensure optimum collaboration and coordination between state agencies serving the needs of children younger than six years of age and other community stakeholders;
- (2) fill geographical and functional gaps in early childhood services; and
- (3) amend state policies, rules, and service procedures that prevent or inhibit children younger than six years of age from accessing services.

Sec. 531.286. ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a) Requires the commissioner to appoint an advisory committee to assist the office in the performance of its duties. Requires the commissioner to appoint to the advisory committee persons with a demonstrated interest in early childhood development, including parents and representatives of business, religious organizations, law enforcement, social services, and state agencies that have programs affecting or serving children younger than six years of age.

(b) Requires the advisory committee to meet and serve under rules established by the commissioner, but requires the advisory committee to elect its own presiding officer.

(c) Provides that the advisory committee is subject to Chapter 2110 (State Agency Advisory Committees).

SECTION 2. Requires the commissioner of health and human services, as soon as practicable on or

after the effective date of this Act, to appoint members to the Office of Early Childhood Coordination Advisory Committee as required by Section 531.286, Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 3. Requires the Office of Early Childhood Coordination, not later than January 1, 2003, to create the statewide strategic plan required by Section 531.284, Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 4. Effective date: September 1, 2001.