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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Lopez DATE TYPED 2/14/04 HB _____

SHORT TITLE At-Home Infant Care Act SB 553/aSPAC

ANALYST Dunbar

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY04	FY05	FY04	FY05		
	\$180.0			Recurring	TANF Maintenance of Effort

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Health

No Responses Received From

Children, Youth and Families

Human Services Department

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SPAC Amendment

The Senate Public Affairs Committee Amendment provides for the following:

- ❑ Changes the definition of an “infant” to a child who is 23 months of age or less. The original bill defined an infant as a child who was 24 months or less.
- ❑ Clarifies language relevant to the reimbursement rates for at home infant care providers. These providers will be paid at the rate that registered child care providers are currently reimbursed.
- ❑ Make clear that at-home infant care is considered a work activity to the extent possible and within the limits of the federal law for purposes of the NM Works Act.

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 553 appropriates \$180 thousand from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) maintenance of effort to Children Youth and Families Department. The bill, the At-Home Infant Care Act, would direct the Children Youth and Families Department (CYFD) to initiate an at-home infant care pilot program to pay for 50 families to have a parent provided care for an infant at home for up to 24-months as a maximum lifetime benefit. The eligibility for the families is specified and CYFD is urged to have a mixture of urban and rural families. While participating in this program, adult members of the family would be supported to receive parenting and early childcare development training as required by CYFD. Further, the parenting effort for those selected for the pilot project would meet the work requirement for the New Mexico Works Act and temporary assistance to needy families. The bill specifies how the benefit rate should be determined and what additional assistance programs the participating families can and cannot continue to receive.

Significant Issues

The Department of Health reports:

This pilot program would allow the participant to stay at home to care for the infant as well as any other toddlers/preschoolers at home and receive benefits of parenting and early child education training. This program could promote parent involvement, parenting skills, as well as enhance commitment to family and social behaviors.

Characteristics, such as, confidence, curiosity, sense of self, self-control, capacity to communicate and cooperate are largely developed in the first three years of life and lay the foundation on “how to learn”. How parents in early childhood programs encourage or ignore the development of these main attributes can determine a child’s success or failure in life.

Effective early childhood programs take into account three areas of potential vulnerability: health, cognitive achievement, and social and emotional development. Factors to consider are gender, race/ethnicity, parental education, household income, country of birth, family structure, and neighborhood environment. Vulnerable children require different levels of services depending upon their different needs. Support for parents in early childhood programs must include considerations of cultural and geographic diversity, and diverse family values, as well as training in adaptive modifications to provide them equal access to the various educational programs.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$180 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the TANF maintenance of effort. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of Fiscal Year 2005 shall revert to the TANF funds.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

All TANF funds are appropriated in the current version of the general appropriation act. Any change would require reallocation of the current funding levels.

MW/njw:yr:lg