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LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS
53rd Legislature, 2nd Session, 2018

Bill Number SB100 **Sponsor** Tallman
Tracking Number .209575.1 **Committee Referrals** SCC/SPAC/SFC
Short Title Early Childhood Educator Development Program
Analyst McCorquodale **Original Date** 1/29/18
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BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

SB100 appropriates \$100 thousand from the general fund to the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) to fund a workforce and professional development program to increase the quality of early childhood education for children from birth to the age of eligibility for kindergarten.

FISCAL IMPACT

SB100 appropriates \$100 thousand from the general fund to CYFD for expenditure in FY19. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of FY19 shall revert to the general fund. The proposed appropriation is in addition to the Legislative Finance Committee's (LFC) FY19 recommendation of \$1.3 million.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

SB100 is designed to fund professional development and continuing education for early childhood educators, as determined by CYFD guidelines. CYFD defines early childhood educators as those working in early learning programs, including child care, prekindergarten, Head Start, home visiting, and early intervention.

CYFD has managed professional development programs for early childhood educators in New Mexico for over 10 years. CYFD's Early Care and Education Professional Development System, started in 2010, includes training, technical assistance, consultation, coaching, and scholarships for higher education. In the past 10 years, CYFD indicated that it increased the quality of early care and education for children prenatal to age 5 through professional development through private and public partnerships.

LFC noted in their analysis that in FY17, 699 early childhood educators received scholarships and 171 participated in incentive wage supplements statewide:

- 5,537 total credits were earned at New Mexico public higher educational institutions;
- 57 percent of early childhood educators who received scholarships had previously only received a high school diploma; and
- 48 percent of early childhood educators who received scholarships were first generation college students.

Wages and Credentials of Early Childhood Educators. The *2016 Early Childhood Workforce Index* notes across all early childhood education programs, teaching staff who work with children younger than age 3 earn about 70 percent of the income earned by those who work with children ages three to five. Infant and toddler educators have limited opportunity to work in the higher paying early learning programs; 91 percent of jobs in school sponsored programs are for early educators who work with children age 3 to 5. Despite education levels, infant and toddler educators earn less than those working with preschool-age children. The U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services indicate the national median annual wage for preschool teachers is \$29 thousand compared to kindergarten teachers, \$52 thousand. While education and training requirements have increased for early educators, workforce pay has not caught up.

Additionally, the *2016 Early Childhood Workforce Index* states that nationally, the educational attainment of early childhood workforce varies from bachelor's degrees to limited formal schooling. According to the report, the learning and development of infants, toddlers, and preschool children requires knowledge and skills as complex as those qualifications needed for teaching older children, yet low qualification requirements for early childhood educators exist. Training and professional development of early educators is the primary indicator of program quality and is the most significant predictor of children's learning and development.

The National Conference of State Legislatures' international study of successful school systems, *No Time to Lose*, found strong early learning educational systems with extra support for struggling students have rigorous requirements for early education. Early educators in high performing countries are required to have a bachelor's degree and in some cases, a master's degree in early childhood education, and assistants who work with these teachers are required to have certification in early childhood development. These successful school systems have a world-class teaching profession that supports a world-class instructional system birth through high school, where every student has access to highly effective teachers and is expected to succeed. Additionally, top performing countries raised the rigor, expectations, structure and status of the teaching profession, and compensated those who were willing to meet the challenge.

Early Childhood Issues. While New Mexico has increased its focus on early childhood programs, the state is among one of the lowest-ranked states in the Annie E. Casey Foundation's annual Kids Count Data Book, which ranks states according to 16 child well-being measures. Ranked 49th in 2017, New Mexico is challenged by the consequences of poverty on its children.

Children who experience toxic stress – whether it is the result of poverty, instability, abuse or neglect, or other adverse childhood experiences – can experience impaired brain development, especially in the areas of the brain dedicated to higher-order skills. High-quality early childhood education can reduce the toxic developmental effects of poverty and childhood trauma by providing children with rich social experiences needed to succeed in school. According to the Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences, high quality early childhood programs that incorporate highly socialized interactions between the care provider and the child will support children's learning and language development.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

SB100 requires CYFD to contract with a nonprofit entity or entities experienced in promoting quality early childhood education for the implementation and management of the workforce and professional development program. CYFD's analysis indicates this requirement may limit the department's procurement ability to contract with a fiscally viable for-profit or nonprofit organization.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- LESC Files
- Children, Youth and Families Department
- Legislative Finance Committee

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