

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.
Act 504 of the Regular Session

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

As Engrossed: H3/12/25 H3/31/25

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1733

By: Representatives Joey Carr, Tosh

By: Senator Caldwell

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS
CODE CONCERNING THE ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE PROGRAM
ACT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE
ARKANSAS CODE CONCERNING THE ARKANSAS
BETTER CHANCE PROGRAM ACT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings and intent.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) Preschool is an essential resource and component in the State of Arkansas that is necessary to prepare young children to adequately participate in a learning environment in elementary education;

(2) Currently, the Arkansas Better Chance Program and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program have twenty-three thousand (23,000) available preschool slots between the two programs;

(3) It is in the best interest of Arkansas's families and childcare providers to combine the Arkansas Better Chance Program and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program to promote efficiency in the use and administration of the programs; and

(4) The qualifications for eligibility to participate in the Arkansas Better Chance Program and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program should be established by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education and should be the same qualifications for eligibility to



participate in the Arkansas Better Chance Program for the 2024-2025 school year.

(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly to ensure a greater opportunity for a more efficient utilization of current slots and resources available in both the Arkansas Better Chance Program and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program for Arkansas families and childcare providers.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-45-104(a)(2), concerning the requirement of a local school to work with the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop an Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program in certain circumstances, is amended to read as follows:

(2) A local school is required to work with the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education and its local community to establish, promote, and assist in the development of a program under the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program to serve all children in the school as provided in ~~§ 6-45-108~~ § 6-45-105, if the school is located in a school district classified as in need of Level 5 – Intensive support.

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-45-105 is amended to read as follows:

6-45-105. Establishment of Arkansas Better Chance Program – Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program.

(a)(1)(A) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall establish the Arkansas Better Chance Program to assist in the establishment and funding of the appropriate early childhood programs for children from birth through five (5) years of age.

(B) Within the Arkansas Better Chance Program there is established the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program for providing appropriate early care and education programs for children ~~three (3) years of age and four (4) years of age as identified under § 6-45-108(a)~~ from birth through five (5) years of age.

(C) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall establish the same criteria and qualifications for eligibility to participate in the Arkansas Better Chance Program and the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program.

(D) A child from birth through five (5) years of age who

meets at least one (1) of the qualifications established by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education for the Arkansas Better Chance Program or the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program shall be eligible to participate in the Arkansas Better Chance Program or the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program.

(2)(A) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall award grants or contracts to appropriate early childhood programs selected by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education in accordance with specified programmatic standards.

(B)(i) These standards ~~will~~ shall be developed by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, with the advice and assistance of the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission.

(ii) Standards for funding the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) U.S.A. ~~will~~ shall be developed in conjunction with the Arkansas HIPPY Advisory Board.

(C) The Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) U.S.A. regional technical assistance and training center shall be defined and funded as an integral part of the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) U.S.A. to provide necessary training, technical assistance, and program support to program sites in Arkansas.

(b) The programmatic standards and other rules necessary for the implementation of the Arkansas Better Chance Program and the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program shall be adopted by the State Board of Education in accordance with the provisions of the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq.

(c)(1) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education may expend a maximum of two percent (2%) of available funds to administer the Arkansas Better Chance Program and the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program and to monitor Arkansas Better Chance Program and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program grantees to ensure compliance with programmatic standards.

(2) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education may contract with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education to administer the Arkansas Better Chance Program and the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-45-108 is repealed.

~~6-45-108. Criteria for determining need.~~

~~(a)(1) All children three (3) years of age and four (4) years of age who are members of a family with a gross family income not exceeding two hundred percent (200%) of the federal poverty guidelines are eligible to attend an Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program if there is an Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program available in the school district where the child resides and if there is available space for the child to attend the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program.~~

~~(2) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education may develop a fee schedule and establish eligibility based on family income for children who are not eligible under subdivision (a)(1) of this section, but priority enrollment shall be allowed to children eligible under subdivision (a)(1) of this section.~~

~~(b) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education shall review various criteria for identifying and targeting the areas of the state with the greatest need for early childhood programs.~~

~~(c) The State Board of Education, with the advice and assistance of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, shall adopt the appropriate criteria for identifying Arkansas children with the greatest need to participate in Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program-funded early childhood programs.~~

/s/Joey Carr

APPROVED: 4/10/25