



**104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**State of Illinois**

**2025 and 2026**

INTRODUCED \_\_\_\_\_, BY

**SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:**

325 ILCS 85/95-10

Amends the Smart Start Illinois Act. Expands eligibility under the Smart Start Child Care Workforce Compensation Program to Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

LRB104 18415 KTG 31857 b

**A BILL FOR**

1 AN ACT concerning children.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Smart Start Illinois Act is amended by  
5 changing Section 95-10 as follows:

6 (325 ILCS 85/95-10)

7 Sec. 95-10. Smart Start Child Care Workforce Compensation  
8 Program.

9 (a) The Department of Human Services shall create and  
10 establish the Smart Start Child Care Workforce Compensation  
11 Program. The purpose of the Smart Start Child Care Workforce  
12 Compensation Program is to invest in early childhood education  
13 and care service providers, including, but not limited to,  
14 providers participating in the Child Care Assistance Program  
15 or in a Head Start or Early Head Start Program; to expand the  
16 supply of high-quality early childhood education and care; and  
17 to create a strong and stable early childhood education and  
18 care system with attractive wages, high-quality services, and  
19 affordable costs.

20 (b) The purpose of the Smart Start Child Care Workforce  
21 Compensation Program is to stabilize community-based early  
22 childhood education and care service providers, raise the  
23 wages of early childhood educators, and support quality

1 enhancements that can position service providers to  
2 participate in other public funding streams, such as Preschool  
3 for All, in order to further enhance and expand quality  
4 service delivery.

5 (c) Subject to appropriation, the Department of Human  
6 Services shall implement the Smart Start Child Care Workforce  
7 Compensation Program for eligible licensed day care centers,  
8 licensed day care homes, and licensed group day care homes by  
9 October 1, 2024, or as soon as practicable, following  
10 completion of a planning and transition year. ~~As By October 1,~~  
11 ~~2025, or as~~ soon as practicable, and for each year thereafter,  
12 subject to appropriation, the Department of Human Services  
13 shall continue to operate the Smart Start Child Care Workforce  
14 Compensation Program annually with all licensed day care  
15 centers, licensed day care homes, ~~and~~ licensed group day care  
16 homes, Head Start programs, and Early Head Start programs that  
17 meet eligibility requirements. The Smart Start Child Care  
18 Workforce Compensation Program shall operate separately from  
19 and shall not supplant the Child Care Assistance Program as  
20 provided for in Section 9A-11 of the Illinois Public Aid Code.

21 (d) The Department of Human Services shall adopt  
22 administrative rules ~~by October 1, 2024~~ to facilitate  
23 administration of the Smart Start Child Care Workforce  
24 Compensation Program, including, but not limited to,  
25 provisions for program eligibility, the application and  
26 funding calculation process, eligible expenses, required wage

1 floors, and requirements for financial and personnel reporting  
2 and monitoring requirements. Eligibility and funding  
3 provisions shall be based on appropriation and a current model  
4 of the cost to provide child care services by a licensed child  
5 care center or licensed family child care home.

6 (Source: P.A. 103-8, eff. 6-7-23; 103-605, eff. 7-1-24.)