

LEGISLATIVE BILL 326

Approved by the Governor March 18, 2002

Introduced by Suttle, 10; Foley, 29; Aguilar, 35; Price, 26; Stuhr, 24

AN ACT relating to education; to adopt the Nebraska Read, Educate, and Develop Youth Act.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Sections 1 to 5 of this act shall be known and may be cited as the Nebraska Read, Educate, and Develop Youth Act.

Sec. 2. (1) The State Department of Education, in cooperation with the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure, and the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support shall develop a packet entitled "Learning Begins at Birth" to be given to the parents of each child born in this state on and after January 1, 2003.

(2) The packet shall contain information about child development, child care, how children learn, children's health, services available to children and parents, and any other information deemed relevant by the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure, the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support, or the State Department of Education. The State Department of Education shall indicate which information in the packet is appropriate for the parents of infants, for the parents of toddlers, and for the parents of preschoolers.

(3) The State Department of Education shall develop a variety of types of the packet, based on the needs of parents. The information in the packets may be in the form of printed material or in the form of video tapes, audio cassettes, or other appropriate media.

Sec. 3. (1) The Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure, and the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support shall assist the State Department of Education in developing the packet and shall develop methods of distributing the packet to parents upon the birth of a child in this state beginning on January 1, 2003.

(2) The departments shall solicit private financial assistance to carry out their duties under the Nebraska Read, Educate, and Develop Youth Act. The departments shall not endorse any private company or product, but private companies may have their names placed on materials in the packet to help underwrite the costs of developing and distributing the packets.

Sec. 4. The READY Cash Fund is created. The fund shall contain money received from private sources to underwrite the costs of the Nebraska Read, Educate, and Develop Youth Act. The fund shall be used by the State Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure, and the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support to aid in carrying out their duties under the act. The fund shall be administered by the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support. Any money in the fund available for investment may be invested by the state investment officer pursuant to the Nebraska Capital Expansion Act and the Nebraska State Funds Investment Act.

Sec. 5. The State Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and Human Services Regulation and Licensure, and the Department of Health and Human Services Finance and Support shall annually report to the Legislature and the Governor regarding the actions, activities, accomplishments, and shortcomings in carrying out the Nebraska Read, Educate, and Develop Youth Act.