

HCS SS SB 112 -- EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

SPONSOR: Rupp (Faith)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Family Services by a vote of 10 to 0.

Currently, when children who receive early intervention services reach three years of age, they move from Part C to Part B of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, administered by the local school district. This substitute requires school districts to continue the services of a child's Part C provider upon the parent's request and if the cost is no more than what the district would charge for the services. The reporting requirements and deadlines for the requests are specified. The parent may furnish and the initial individualized education program team may consider any outside evaluation information during the team meeting. The substitute also exempts the state's early intervention services for children, known as First Steps, from the sunset provisions.

The substitute establishes pilot programs in the southwest and greater St. Louis points of entry. The southwest area program requires the system to hire, by January 1, 2008, one or more providers of early intervention services, either directly or through contract with sheltered workshop boards. The greater St. Louis program allows the regional interagency coordinating council to hire, by January 1, 2008, a child-find coordinator. A study of the programs must be completed by September 1, 2009, and the programs will expire September 1, 2011. The Part C Early Intervention Pilot Program Fund is created in the state treasury for implementing the pilot programs.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of \$14,650,703 in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill corrects a drafting error previously made that ensures all early childhood development programs will not expire. The bill is important for young children and their families and will create increased awareness about the First Steps Program which helps community members get access to much needed services. Early childhood development programs increase family morale, help reduce child care costs, and are an important investment for the state.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Rupp; Carissa Mattern; and Missouri State Teachers Association.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.