

140th Congress
1st Session

H.R.XX

To direct the Secretary of Education to establish a program to give grants to States for universal preschool and prekindergarten, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 10, 2021

Mr. Toby (for himself, Mr. Miller (Co-author), Mr. Harris) introduced the following bill:

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Education to establish a program to give grants to States for universal preschool and prekindergarten, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Universal Preschool and Prekindergarten Grants Act of 2021”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

- (a) Only 41 percent of four-year-olds and 16 percent of three-year-olds are served in some type of publicly funded pre-K program.
- (b) Most children today grow up in households where all parents work outside of the home, making outside care a necessity so a tuition-free pre-k would reduce the burden placed on parents struggling to afford care for all hours of their workday.
- (c) Children who attend strong pre-k programs not only perform better in kindergarten, but are also less likely to be placed in special education, less likely to repeat a grade, more likely to graduate from high school, and even less likely to commit crimes.
- (d) A voluntary, high-quality, publicly funded universal prekindergarten education program serving all 3- and 4-year-old children would generate annual benefits that would surpass the annual costs of the program within eight years.

SEC. 3. DEFINITION.

In this Act:

- (1) FULL-DAY.—The term “full-day” used with respect to a program, means a program with a minimum of a 6-hour schedule per day.
- (2) STATE.—The term “State” has the meaning given the term in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 ([20 U.S.C. 7801](#)).
- (3) PARENT.—The term “parent” has the meaning given the term in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 ([20 U.S.C. 7801](#)).
- (4) PUBLIC SCHOOL.—The term “public school” has the meaning given the term “elementary school” or “secondary school” in section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 ([20 U.S.C. 7801](#)), except that the term does not include private schools.

SEC. 3. UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL AND PREKINDERGARTEN GRANT PROGRAM.

- (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Education shall establish the “Universal Preschool and Prekindergarten Grant Program” (hereinafter referred to as the “Grant Program”).
- (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the Grant Program shall be to award grants, on a competitive basis, to States to pay the Federal share of establishing or expanding full-day preschool and full-day prekindergarten programs using the amounts appropriated under section 3.
- (c) APPLICATION.—A State may send an application to the Secretary of Education to receive grants under this section, containing such information as the Secretary may require. The Secretary reserves the right to approve or deny the application.
- (d) APPROPRIATE USE OF FUNDS.—A State that receives a grant from the Grant Program shall use the funds to establish or expand a universal preschool or universal prekindergarten program, that at a minimum—
 - (1) is located at a public school in the state;
 - (2) permits each 2, 3, or 4-year-old child in the State to be voluntarily enrolled by the child’s parent, regardless of income, in the program, shall such program be used for universal preschool;
 - (3) permits each 4 or 5-year-old child in the State to be voluntarily enrolled by the child’s parent, regardless of income, in the program, shall such program be used for universal prekindergarten;
 - (4) is a full-day program that runs the length of a normal school year (it is not required that such program operates on Friday’s);
 - (5) is taught by teachers who possess equivalent or similar qualifications to teach a student in preschool or prekindergarten;
 - (6) Provides at least 1 meal per day
 - (7) Provides vision, hearing, and health screenings for children; and

- (8) meets any other criteria the Secretary may require.
- (e) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of a grant to be used for the activities in subsection (c) shall not be more than 75 percent.
- (f) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Grant funds received under this Act shall be used to supplement and not supplant other Federal early childhood education funds in the State.
- (g) The Secretary shall conduct a yearly audit to ensure that amounts appropriated to states are being used for the intended purpose

SEC. 4. FUNDING & EFFECTIVE DATE.

- (a) FUNDING.—The Secretary of Education shall be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.
 - (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The provisions of this Act shall go into effect immediately after it is signed into law.
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