

HB 3435 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

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Meeting Dates: 3/15, 3/29

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Renames "Oregon prekindergarten program" to "Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten Program" and redefines "Oregon prekindergartens" as "providers under the Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten Program." Provides that children are eligible to enroll in program until they enter kindergarten regardless of age. Repeals requirement that funds appropriated for program be used to grow program and may not supplant federally supported Head Start programs. Renames "Prekindergarten Program Trust Fund" in State Treasury to "Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten Program Trust Fund." Allows provider under the Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten Program to participate in State Interagency Coordinating Council. Repeals legislative findings relating to financial investments in quality early learning programs and replaces definitions. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Consolidation of early learning and prenatal care programs
- Ability to provide grants for multiple years

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Pre-kindergarten (OPK) program was established in 1987 as a supplemental statewide counterpart to Head Start, a federal program that provides free early learning, health, and family support services to low-income children and their families. OPK provides grants to public and private providers and is intended to serve a greater proportion of these families than Head Start alone. According to a 2019 report from the Early Learning Division, a total of 12,500 children were projected to be served in the 2019-2021 biennium, roughly 62.5% of the eligible population, with 4,400 children served by Head Start and 8,100 children served by OPK.

Eligibility for enrollment in a Head Start or OPK program is open to children and their families whose income falls below the federal poverty line, receive public assistance, are homeless, or are in foster care. The standard Head Start program serves children aged three to five, while Early Head Start offers prenatal services up to age three. OPK was originally based on the original Head Start model for ages three to five but has since expanded to encompass all services from prenatal to kindergarten.

House Bill 3235 updates statutory definitions and provisions referring to the Oregon Pre-kindergarten Program and changes the program's name to "Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten Program."