

State of Arkansas As Engrossed: H3/12/25 H3/31/25

95th General Assembly

A Bill

Regular Session, 2025

HOUSE BILL 1733

By: Representatives Joey Carr, Tosh

By: Senator Caldwell

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS
CODE CONCERNING THE ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE PROGRAM
ACT; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND VARIOUS PROVISIONS OF THE
ARKANSAS CODE CONCERNING THE ARKANSAS
BETTER CHANCE PROGRAM ACT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings and intent.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

*(1) Preschool is an essential resource and component in the
State of Arkansas that is necessary to prepare young children to adequately
participate in a learning environment in elementary education;*

*(2) Currently, the Arkansas Better Chance Program and Arkansas
Better Chance for School Success Program have twenty-three thousand (23,000)
available preschool slots between the two programs;*

*(3) It is in the best interest of Arkansas's families and
childcare providers to combine the Arkansas Better Chance Program and
Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program to promote efficiency in
the use and administration of the programs; and*

*(4) The qualifications for eligibility to participate in the
Arkansas Better Chance Program and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success
Program should be established by the Division of Elementary and Secondary
Education and should be the same qualifications for eligibility to*



1 participate in the Arkansas Better Chance Program for the 2024-2025 school
2 year.

3 (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly to ensure a greater
4 opportunity for a more efficient utilization of current slots and resources
5 available in both the Arkansas Better Chance Program and Arkansas Better
6 Chance for School Success Program for Arkansas families and childcare
7 providers.

8
9 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-45-104(a)(2), concerning the requirement
10 of a local school to work with the Division of Elementary and Secondary
11 Education to develop an Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program in
12 certain circumstances, is amended to read as follows:

13 (2) A local school is required to work with the Division of
14 Elementary and Secondary Education and its local community to establish,
15 promote, and assist in the development of a program under the Arkansas Better
16 Chance for School Success Program to serve all children in the school as
17 provided in ~~§ 6-45-108~~ § 6-45-105, if the school is located in a school
18 district classified as in need of Level 5 – Intensive support.

19
20 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-45-105 is amended to read as follows:

21 6-45-105. Establishment of Arkansas Better Chance Program – Arkansas
22 Better Chance for School Success Program.

23 (a)(1)(A) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall
24 establish the Arkansas Better Chance Program to assist in the establishment
25 and funding of the appropriate early childhood programs for children from
26 birth through five (5) years of age.

27 (B) Within the Arkansas Better Chance Program there is
28 established the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program for
29 providing appropriate early care and education programs for children ~~three~~
30 ~~(3) years of age and four (4) years of age as identified under § 6-45-108(a)~~
31 from birth through five (5) years of age.

32 (C) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education
33 shall establish the same criteria and qualifications for eligibility to
34 participate in the Arkansas Better Chance Program and the Arkansas Better
35 Chance for School Success Program.

36 (D) A child from birth through five (5) years of age who

1 meets at least one (1) of the qualifications established by the Division of
2 Elementary and Secondary Education for the Arkansas Better Chance Program or
3 the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program shall be eligible to
4 participate in the Arkansas Better Chance Program or the Arkansas Better
5 Chance for School Success Program.

6 (2)(A) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall
7 award grants or contracts to appropriate early childhood programs
8 selected by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education in accordance
9 with specified programmatic standards.

10 (B)(i) These standards ~~will~~ shall be developed by the
11 Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, with the advice and
12 assistance of the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission.

13 (ii) Standards for funding the Home Instruction for
14 Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) U.S.A. ~~will~~ shall be developed in
15 conjunction with the Arkansas HIPPY Advisory Board.

16 (C) The Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool
17 Youngsters (HIPPY) U.S.A. regional technical assistance and training center
18 shall be defined and funded as an integral part of the Home Instruction for
19 Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) U.S.A. to provide necessary training,
20 technical assistance, and program support to program sites in Arkansas.

21 (b) The programmatic standards and other rules necessary for the
22 implementation of the Arkansas Better Chance Program and the Arkansas Better
23 Chance for School Success Program shall be adopted by the State Board of
24 Education in accordance with the provisions of the Arkansas Administrative
25 Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq.

26 (c)(1) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education may expend a
27 maximum of two percent (2%) of available funds to administer the Arkansas
28 Better Chance Program and the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success
29 Program and to monitor Arkansas Better Chance Program and Arkansas Better
30 Chance for School Success Program grantees to ensure compliance with
31 programmatic standards.

32 (2) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education may
33 contract with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education to
34 administer the Arkansas Better Chance Program and the Arkansas Better Chance
35 for School Success Program.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-45-108 is repealed.

~~6-45-108. Criteria for determining need.~~

~~(a)(1) All children three (3) years of age and four (4) years of age who are members of a family with a gross family income not exceeding two hundred percent (200%) of the federal poverty guidelines are eligible to attend an Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program if there is an Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program available in the school district where the child resides and if there is available space for the child to attend the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program.~~

~~(2) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education may develop a fee schedule and establish eligibility based on family income for children who are not eligible under subdivision (a)(1) of this section, but priority enrollment shall be allowed to children eligible under subdivision (a)(1) of this section.~~

~~(b) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education shall review various criteria for identifying and targeting the areas of the state with the greatest need for early childhood programs.~~

~~(c) The State Board of Education, with the advice and assistance of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, shall adopt the appropriate criteria for identifying Arkansas children with the greatest need to participate in Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program funded early childhood programs.~~

/s/Joey Carr