

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 482
By: Villarreal
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Under current law, a child qualifies for enrollment in a prekindergarten class if he or she is placed in foster care, or placed in another type of residential care under the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services.

However, a child who is adopted after the child has enrolled in prekindergarten or while the child is attending prekindergarten may instantly lose his or her eligibility, and thus be forced to leave the class.

Allowing the child to remain enrolled in the prekindergarten class the child has been attending can provide an element of stability for the child while he or she undergoes the transition from foster care to adoption. Moreover, even after adoption, that child may still face many of the developmental obstacles that form the rationale for placing foster children in prekindergarten.

According to the Chicago Longitudinal Study and Pre-K Now, prekindergarten attendance provides a host of benefits, ranging from increased high school graduation rates and standardized test scores, to reduced crime rates.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

ANALYSIS

The bill provides that a child who is eligible for enrollment in a prekindergarten class under Subsection (b)(2) of Section 29.153, Education Code, because of the child's placement in foster care or other residential care under the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services remains eligible for enrollment if the child is adopted after enrolling in the class.

The bill applies beginning with the 2007-2008 school year.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon passage, or, if the Act does not receive the necessary vote, the Act takes effect September 1, 2007.