

SENATE, No. 401

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED JANUARY 18, 1996

By Senator BRYANT

1 AN ACT concerning the Family Development Initiative, amending
2 P.L.1992, c.523 and supplementing chapter 6 of Title 18A of the
3 New Jersey Statutes.

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5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

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8 1. Section 6 of P.L.1992, c.523 (C.44:10-24) is amended to read
9 as follows:

10 6. A recipient who without good cause fails or refuses to enroll and
11 actively participate in the program, which includes failure to comply,
12 or make a good faith effort to comply, with the requirements set forth
13 in the family plan established for the participant and the participant's
14 family under the program, and which further includes failure to attend
15 or make a good faith effort to achieve satisfactory academic progress
16 in educational or vocational training classes under the program,
17 including classes in four-year and community colleges, according to
18 rules and regulations adopted by the commissioner, in consultation
19 with the Commissioner of Education and the Chancellor of Higher
20 Education, shall thereupon, as determined by the commissioner, be
21 subject to a reduction in benefits of at least 20%, or shall become
22 ineligible for benefits for a period of at least 90 days. The period of
23 ineligibility shall commence at the end of the current benefit period,
24 and at the end of the period the recipient shall again become eligible
25 for benefits, if the recipient complies with all requirements of the
26 program as determined by the commissioner or shows a willingness to
27 do so. For a subsequent failure or refusal to enroll and actively
28 participate in the program without good cause, the recipient may be
29 subject to a termination of benefits.

30 (cf: P.L.1992, c.523, s.6)

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32 2. Section 7 of P.L.1992, c.523 (C.44:10-25) is amended to read
33 as follows:

34 7. a. Services shall be provided to each participant in the program

EXPLANATION - Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 according to a family plan which includes a written contract. The
2 contract shall be written in English or Spanish, according to the
3 participant's needs. The contract shall be signed by the participant and
4 a program representative who shall act as a case manager, advocate
5 and broker of services for the participant and the participant's family,
6 and shall set forth the specific mutual obligations of the participant and
7 the program and a detailed plan for the participant and the participant's
8 family. The contract, in addition to stipulating any other obligations
9 on the part of the participant, shall specifically require a recipient to:
10 supply documentation that the recipient's preschool child has received
11 all immunizations required under regulations adopted by the
12 Department of Health; supply documentation that the recipient's
13 school-age child under age 16 regularly attends school, and that the
14 recipient participates in the school's educator-parent development
15 association if the recipient resides in a school district designated by the
16 Commissioner of Education pursuant to section 3 of P.L. _____, c. _____
17 (C. _____)(pending before the Legislature as this bill); and complete a
18 program of instructional classes in parenting and conflict resolution
19 offered by the program or agencies with which the program contracts.
20 The program representative shall regularly monitor compliance with
21 these requirements. The family plan and contract, which shall
22 explicitly state the services that the program will provide to the
23 participant, shall be reviewed by both the participant and the program
24 representative at least once a year and may be revised from time to
25 time according to the needs of the participant, the participant's family
26 and the program.

27 The commissioner may also establish by regulation a requirement
28 that a recipient participate in the parent-teacher association at the
29 recipient's child's school, as part of a recipient's family plan, according
30 to guidelines adopted by the commissioner.

31 b. The services to be provided under the program shall include, but
32 not be limited to: job development and placement in full-time
33 permanent jobs, preferably in the private sector; counseling and
34 vocational assessment; intensive remedial education, including
35 instruction in English-as-a-second language; financial and other
36 assistance for higher education, including four-year and community
37 colleges, and for post-secondary vocational training programs; job
38 search assistance; community work experience; employment skills
39 training focused on a specific job; and on-the-job training in an
40 employment setting.

41 c. The program shall be designed to ensure that each participant
42 and member of the participant's family, as age appropriate, has attained
43 the equivalent of a high school degree, before assigning that person to
44 a vocational-related activity under the program. The commissioner
45 may exempt a participant or member of the participant's family from
46 this requirement if the commissioner determines that: based upon an

1 assessment of the person's ability and aptitude, the person lacks a
2 reasonable prospect of being able to successfully complete the
3 academic requirements of a high school or equivalency program of
4 study, in which case the commissioner shall refer the person to an
5 alternative educational program as appropriate; or the person is
6 gainfully employed or engaged in a job search or job training activity,
7 in which case the program representative acting pursuant to the
8 provisions of subsection a. of this section shall review the person's
9 progress on a quarterly basis to assess whether the person's exemption
10 from this requirement should continue.

11 d. The program shall assign one or more persons in each county
12 which is participating in the program to be responsible, on a full-time
13 basis, for job development for persons who have completed their
14 educational or training activities under the program, with an emphasis
15 on finding and creating permanent full-time unsubsidized jobs,
16 preferably in the private sector, which offer wages and benefits that
17 are adequate to support recipients and their families.

18 e. The commissioner, in consultation with the Commissioners of
19 Commerce and Economic Development and Labor, and with the
20 private industry councils established pursuant to section 18 of
21 P.L.1989, c.293 (C.34:15C-15), shall develop a program to recruit
22 private sector employers in each county to offer employment to
23 persons who have completed their educational or training activities
24 under the program.

25 f. The commissioner, in consultation with the Chancellor of Higher
26 Education and the Commissioner of Education, shall, within the limits
27 of available funds, provide financial assistance through the New Jersey
28 Educational Opportunity Fund established pursuant to P.L.1968, c.142
29 (C.18A:71-28 et seq.) and other State student assistance programs, in
30 an amount sufficient to cover all tuition and educational expenses, to
31 each program participant or other family member who has been
32 accepted into an institution of higher education, including public
33 four-year colleges and community colleges, or a post-secondary
34 vocational training program, according to standards established by the
35 commissioner.

36 g. The program shall provide supportive services to a program
37 participant as a last resort when no other source is available therefor
38 and when these services are included in the family plan. The
39 supportive services shall include, but not be limited to, one or more of
40 the following:

41 (1) day care services for the participant's child, to be provided for
42 up to one year if the participant becomes ineligible for financial
43 assistance under P.L.1959, c.86 (C.44:10-1 et seq.) as a result of
44 earned income and to be purchased through a voucher issued to the
45 participant by the program, which may be used to obtain care at a
46 State licensed child care center or school age child care program, or

1 at a family day care home approved by the department, that accepts
2 the voucher, or to be provided through an alternative child care
3 arrangement agreed to by the participant and the program
4 representative acting pursuant to the provisions of subsection a. of this
5 section;

6 (2) transportation services, to be provided directly by the program
7 or through an allowance or other means of subsidy by which the
8 participant may purchase transportation; and

9 (3) health insurance coverage, to be provided by a participant's
10 employer, or through a continuation of Medicaid benefits pursuant to
11 P.L.1968, c.413 (C.30:4D-1 et seq.) for up to two years if the
12 participant becomes ineligible for financial assistance under P.L.1959,
13 c.86 (C.44:10-1 et seq.) as a result of earned income; or health care
14 services to be provided by a school-based health care program.

15 (cf: P.L.1992, c.523, s.7)

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17 3. (New section) a. The Commissioner of Education, in
18 consultation with the Commissioner of Human Services, shall establish
19 the Educator-Parent Development Component of the Family
20 Development Initiative established pursuant to the "Family
21 Development Act," P.L.1991, c.523 (C.44:10-19 et seq.), to be known
22 as the FDI Educator-Parent Development Program.

23 The Commissioner of Education shall designate three school
24 districts to participate in the program, one each in the three counties
25 with the largest number of recipients of aid to families with dependent
26 children benefits pursuant to P.L.1959, c.86 (C.44:10-1 et seq.). Each
27 school within the three school districts selected shall establish an
28 educator-parent development association, which is to provide the
29 parents of its students with training which will assist them to
30 participate in their children's educational experience.

31 The association shall offer training programs which emphasize
32 parental involvement in school-related issues and interaction between
33 parents, teachers and administrators, and which provide guidance to
34 ensure that each parent communicates with his child's teacher
35 regarding the child's academic performance, reviews and comments on
36 each school report card issued for that child, makes a reasonable effort
37 to ensure the child's timely completion of homework assignments, and
38 otherwise participates in school-related activities which will further the
39 child's education. The Commissioner of Education, in consultation
40 with the Commissioner of Human Services, shall establish guidelines
41 for parental education involvement to effectuate the purposes of this
42 section.

43 b. The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the
44 Commissioner of Human Services, shall report to the Governor and
45 the Legislature no later than one year after the implementation of the
46 FDI Educator-Parent Development Program on the results of the

1 program and shall include with that report any recommendations for
2 expanding the program to cover additional school districts.

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4 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

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7 STATEMENT

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9 This bill amends the "Family Development Act," P.L.1991, c.523
10 (C.44:10-19 et seq.) to provide additional requirements for recipients
11 of aid to families with dependent children (AFDC) benefits who are
12 participating in the Family Development Initiative (FDI), the program
13 established as New Jersey's JOBS (job opportunities and basic skills
14 training) program under that law.

15 Under the FDI program, participants establish a family plan which
16 includes a written contract stipulating the services to be provided to
17 participants and their families, and the reciprocal obligations of
18 participants and their families. This bill sets forth certain specific
19 obligations on the part of FDI participants who are receiving AFDC
20 benefits, in addition to any which are already included in their family
21 plan pursuant to P.L.1991, c.523 and the rules and regulations adopted
22 by the Commissioner of Human Services.

23 Specifically, an AFDC recipient must:

24 **M** ensure that the recipient's preschool child receives all
25 immunizations required by the Department of Health;

26 **M** furnish documentation of school attendance by a school-age child
27 under age 16, and participate in the school's educator-parent
28 development association established pursuant to this bill, as
29 appropriate; and

30 **M** complete a program of parenting and conflict resolution classes
31 offered by the FDI program or agencies with which the program
32 contracts.

33 The FDI program representative who acts as a case manager for the
34 FDI participant and the participant's family is responsible for
35 monitoring compliance with these requirements.

36 The bill requires the Commissioner of Education, in consultation
37 with the Commissioner of Human Services, to establish the FDI
38 Educator-Parent Development Program. The Commissioner of
39 Education shall designate three school districts to participate in the
40 program, one each in the three counties with the largest number of
41 AFDC recipients. Each school within the three school districts
42 selected shall establish an educator-parent development association,
43 which is to provide parents with training which will assist them to
44 participate in their children's educational experience.

45 The requirements to be imposed upon AFDC recipients under this
46 bill are designed to meet a number of important objectives: reduce

1 health care costs for preventable childhood diseases, improve the
2 health and education of AFDC-recipient children, reduce truancy and
3 teenage crime, and strengthen AFDC-recipient families, thereby
4 creating the conditions for a more responsible, productive, hopeful
5 outlook on the part of this population as it strives for economic
6 self-sufficiency.

7 This bill is part of a legislative package that is designed to build
8 upon the AFDC reform initiatives enacted into law during the 1990-91
9 legislative session, in order to effect further significant reforms in that
10 program that will strengthen families, restore the dignity and hope of
11 AFDC recipients, encourage them to exercise personal responsibility,
12 and facilitate the efforts of these persons to escape the bonds of
13 welfare dependency and achieve economic independence.

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18 Strengthens requirements for AFDC recipients as part of the family
19 plan for participants under the Family Development Initiative.

WITHDRAWN