

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



Senate
Office of the Secretary

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SENATE
S. No. 389

RECEIVED BY: *Jia*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Research in the United States shows that investing in quality prekindergarten programs will provide savings in the form of reduced need for remedial education, decreased crime rates, lower school dropout rates, and decreased welfare dependence.

High-quality prekindergarten programs help children to succeed academically. Children who attended a high-quality prekindergarten program supposedly have higher academic achievement, lower rates of grade retention, are less likely to be placed in special education, and graduate from high school at higher rates than those who did not. Hence, full-day, full-calendar-year universal prekindergarten programs would ensure all children three, four, and five years old have access to school readiness programs and quality child care.

However, there is currently a drastic shortage of affordable, quality early education programs that are accessible for working families.¹

Thus, this bill seeks to ensure that all children three, four, and five years old have access to a high-quality full-day, full-calendar-year prekindergarten program by directing the Department of Education to develop a universal prekindergarten program that is voluntary and free-of-charge.²

acc.
Miriam Defensor Santiago
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

¹ <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h110-4060>.

² This bill was originally filed during the Fifteenth Congress, First Regular Session.



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SENATE
S. No. 389

RECEIVED BY: *ju*

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

1 AN ACT
2 DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A UNIVERSAL
3 PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM TO ENSURE THAT ALL CHILDREN THREE, FOUR,
4 AND FIVE YEARS OLD HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY FULL-DAY, FULL-
5 CALENDAR-YEAR PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

6 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Universal Prekindergarten
7 Act.”

8 SECTION 2. *Prekindergarten Program.* – The Department of Education (DepEd) shall
9 develop high-quality full-day, full-calendar-year universal prekindergarten program for all
10 children three, four, and five years old. In developing the program, DepEd shall consider the
11 following:

- 12 a. How the program will support children’s cognitive, social, emotional, and physical
13 development;
- 14 b. Reports or studies from representatives of early childhood program providers that
15 sponsor programs addressing children three, four, and five years old.
- 16 c. Raising awareness of the universal prekindergarten program among parents of all
17 backgrounds and informing them of the specifics of participation in the program.
- 18 d. A plan to address the shortages of qualified early childhood education teachers,
19 including how to increase such teachers’ compensation to be comparable to that of
20 public school teachers.

- 1 e. Providing ongoing professional development opportunities to help increase the
2 number of teachers in early childhood programs who meet DepEd's education or
3 credential requirements for prekindergarten teachers.
- 4 f. How the universal prekindergarten program will meet the needs of children with
5 disabilities, limited English proficiency, or other special needs, including children in
6 the government foster care system and homeless children.
- 7 g. Transportation to children to and from the universal prekindergarten program.

8 SECTION 3. *Requirements.* – The Prekindergarten Program shall provide for the
9 following:

- 10 a. A maximum class size of 20 children;
- 11 b. A ratio of not more than 10 children for each member of the teaching staff;
- 12 c. A description of the age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate educational
13 curriculum to be provided that will help children be ready for school and assist them
14 in the transition to kindergarten.
- 15 d. A description of how students and families will be assisted in obtaining supportive
16 services available in their communities.
- 17 e. A plan to promote parental involvement in the prekindergarten program.
- 18 f. A description of how teachers will receive ongoing professional development in early
19 childhood development and education.

20 SECTION 4. *Reporting.* – DepEd shall submit an annual report to the Congress on the
21 implementation and effectiveness of the universal prekindergarten program.

22 SECTION 5. *Authorization of Appropriations.* – To carry out the provisions of this Act,
23 such amount as may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National
24 Treasury. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continuous operation of the universal
25 prekindergarten program shall be included in the annual appropriation of the DepEd.

1 SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or
2 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain in
3 full force and effect.

4 SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees or issuances, executive
5 orders, letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules, and regulations, or parts thereof
6 inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

7 SECTION 8. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
8 in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,