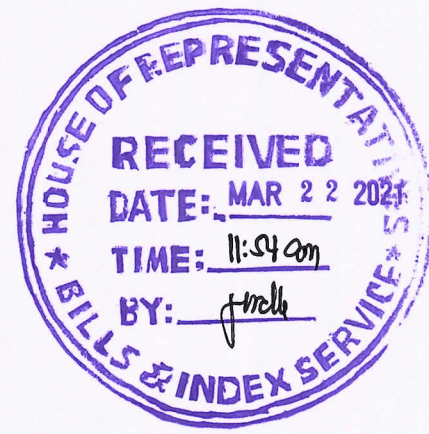


Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 9067



INTRODUCED BY
REP. ALFRED VARGAS

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS FOR INDIGENT
PRE-KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to surveys conducted by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), 42% of children aged 3-4 years old commonly attend day care centers. Organizations and private institutions partner up with the government to address the high risk of children in developing countries to be unable to reach their full development due to the circumstances such as poverty, malnutrition, and lack of better opportunities¹. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) aims to provide inclusive early learning services to children, thus, they provide technical assistance, training for preschool and kindergarten teachers, and data collection and management. With this, assistance to local government, private institutions, and other stakeholders for developmental studies and social services projects, especially for those indigent families and children with disabilities, are available².

Early learning programs can have a significant impact on the brain development of children. Globally, millions of children do not have the opportunity to reach full development. In addition, only 50% of 3 to 6-year old kids have access to pre-primary education. Studies show that early childhood programs are effective and provide long-term benefits to both children and the State. The World Bank claims that every additional

¹ Atinc, T., & Gustafsson-Wright, E. (2018, February 22). Early Childhood Development: The Promise, the Problem, and the Path Forward. Retrieved January 29, 2021, from <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/early-childhood-development-the-promise-the-problem-and-the-path-forward/>

² UNICEF. (2018, June 27). What is UNICEF doing to increase access to early learning among children in the Philippines? Retrieved January 29, 2021, from <https://medium.com/@unicefphil/what-is-unicef-doing-to-increase-access-to-early-learning-among-children-in-the-philippines-b96b1d7c8a5d>

financial support invested to early learning programs of children yields a return of more for the country's development³.

The State's commitment to quality and accessible education is enshrined in the 1987 Constitution. Article 15, Section 1 of the Constitution provides that *"[t]he state shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all."*

This bill seeks to uphold the country's commitment to quality and accessible education by providing for Filipino children, especially indigent kids, the opportunity to be molded and gain new skills through an Early Learning Program. This Program will empower and allow them to enter fairly in educational arena, and be ready for future endeavors.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



ALFRED VARGAS

³ World Bank. (n.d.). Early Childhood Development. Retrieved January 29, 2021, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/earlychildhooddevelopment>

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**AN ACT
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PRE-KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN**

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “**Early Learning Program Act**”.

SECTION 2. Purposes. – The purposes of this Act are to make widely available to pre-kindergarten children a high quality, child-revere and developmentally appropriate early learning program to make widely available to parents of pre-kindergarten children who desire the services. a program in which they can enroll their pre-kindergarten children: and to provide resources to ensure that all children enter elementary school ready to learn how to read and write

SECTION 3. Definitions. –

- a. Early Learning Programs - refer to programs that provide services for children who have not attended kindergarten or elementary school. Such programs are designed to provide indigent pre-kindergarten children with a high-quality, child-centered, and developmentally-appropriate learning program and with resources to ensure that all children enter elementary school ready to learn how to read and write;
- b. Parent – refers to a biological parent, an adoptive parent, a stepparent, or a foster parent of a child, including a legal

guardian or other person standing in loco parentis;

c. Secretary – refers to the Secretary of the Department of Education.

SECTION 4. *Early Learning Program.* - - The Secretary shall establish and maintain an Early Learning Program that provides learning services in every city or municipality of the country. The program shall be developed pursuant to guidance provided by the educational authorities and experts in early childhood development and be designed to improve child development through-improved access to and increased coordination with health care service, increased access to enhanced early learning environments, increased parental involvement.

The program shall be designed to service pre-kindergarten children including those with special needs who shall receive enhanced educational and comprehensive services and support through parent involvement and education.

SECTION 5. *Assessment.* - The Secretary shall conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the early childhood programs established and conduct needs and resources assessment and use such an assessment to:

- i. determine where early learning programs are lacking or are inadequate within a given city or municipality with particular attention to poor urban and rural areas and what special services are needed and;
- ii. specify which programs might be expanded or upgraded with the use of funds received under this Act.

SECTION 6. *Appropriation.* - The amount necessary to effectively carry out the provisions of this Act is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within fifteen (15) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of the Department of Education shall, in coordination with the Local Government and other stakeholders, issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* - If, for any reason, any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, parts or provisions of this Act which are not affected shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 9. *Non-Impairment Clause.* - Nothing in this Act shall be construed as to diminish, impair, or repeal rights recognized, granted, or

made available to disadvantaged, marginalized, or specific sectors under existing laws.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, Implementing Rules and Regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,