

## S 2452

Strong Start for America's Children Act

**Congress:** 113 (2013–2015, Ended)

**Chamber:** Senate

**Policy Area:** Education

**Introduced:** Jun 10, 2014

**Current Status:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 427.

**Latest Action:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 427. (Jun 10, 2014)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/2452>

### Sponsor

**Name:** Sen. Harkin, Tom [D-IA]

**Party:** Democratic • **State:** IA • **Chamber:** Senate

### Cosponsors

*No cosponsors are listed for this bill.*

### Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee	Senate	Reported Original Measure	Jun 10, 2014

### Subjects & Policy Tags

#### Policy Area:

Education

### Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
113 HR 3461	Related bill	<b>Jan 22, 2014:</b> Referred to the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education.
113 S 1697	Related bill	<b>Nov 13, 2013:</b> Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Strong Start for America's Children Act - Directs the Secretary of Education (Secretary) to allot matching grants to states and, through them, subgrants to local educational agencies (LEAs), childhood education program providers, or consortia of those entities to implement high-quality prekindergarten programs for children from low-income families.

Allots grants to states based on each state's proportion of children who are age four and who are from families with incomes at or below 200% of the poverty level.

Defines "high-quality prekindergarten programs" as those that:

- serve children who are 3 or 4 by the eligibility determination date or have attained the legal age for state-funded prekindergarten;
- require staff to have high qualifications, which for teachers include specified alternative requirements that all involve possessing a bachelor's degree;
- maintain a maximum class size of 20 children and a child-to-instructional staff ratio that does not exceed 10 to 1;
- offer a full-day program;
- provide developmentally appropriate, evidence-based curricula and learning environments that are aligned with state early learning and development standards;
- offer teachers salaries comparable to those earned by kindergarten through grade 12 teachers;
- provide for ongoing monitoring and program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;
- offer accessible comprehensive services for children, including specified minimum services;
- provide high-quality professional development for all staff;
- meet education performance standards under the Head Start Act; and
- maintain evidence-based health and safety standards.

Conditions grant eligibility on states demonstrating to the Secretary that they: (1) have or will establish early learning and development standards, (2) have or will develop the ability to link prekindergarten data with their elementary and secondary school data, (3) offer kindergarten for eligible children, and (4) have established or designated, or will establish or designate, a State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care.

Allows states to reserve up to 20% of their grant funds over the first four years of their grant for prekindergarten quality improvement activities, including support for teachers seeking a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education or a closely-related field.

Authorizes states to apply to the appropriate Secretary to use up to 15% of their grant for subgrants to high-quality early childhood education and care programs for infants and toddlers whose family income is at or below 200% of the poverty level.

Requires state to develop, implement, and make publicly available performance measures and targets for their grant activities.

Prohibits state grantees from requiring any child to participate in any federal, state, local, or private early childhood education program. Limits the use of assessments funded by the grant program.

Directs the Secretary and the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop a process to provide Head Start program services to children who are younger than age four in states or regions that provide four-year-olds whose family

income is at or below 200% of the poverty level with sustained access to high-quality prekindergarten programs.

Directs the Secretary to award competitive matching grants to states, LEAs, or other local government entities to increase their capacity to offer high-quality prekindergarten programs. Requires state recipients to assure the Secretary that they will use their grant to become eligible, within three years of receiving the grant, for this Act's grants for high-quality prekindergarten programs.

Amends the Head Start Act to direct the Secretary of HHS to make grants to Early Head Start agencies to partner with center-based or family child care providers, particularly those that receive support under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (CCDBG), to assist those providers in meeting applicable Head Start and Early Head Start program performance standards.

Authorizes those partnerships to serve children through age three.

Directs the Secretary of HHS to give Early Head Start program grant priority to Early Head Start agencies that agree to enter into such partnerships with center-based or family child care providers.

Expresses the sense of the Senate regarding the need for Congress to continue providing resources to the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program to support the work of states in helping at-risk families voluntarily receive home visits from nurses and social workers.

### **Actions Timeline**

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- **Jun 10, 2014:** Introduced in Senate
- **Jun 10, 2014:** Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. Original measure reported to Senate by Senator Harkin. Without written report.
- **Jun 10, 2014:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 427.

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