



House Bill No. 5003

Public Act No. 25-82

AN ACT CONCERNING EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) Not later than July 1, 2028, the Office of Early Childhood shall establish and maintain an electronic portal available through a mobile application and through the office's Internet web site, for purposes of providing information concerning the availability of slots in early childhood programs in the state and collecting data for analysis by the office.

(b) The portal shall include, but need not be limited to: (1) A means for parents and guardians to submit information for resource referral and enrollment purposes in an early childhood program, (2) an ability for the office to manage payments to early childhood programs, (3) information on the availability of slots in early childhood programs, including the availability of free or subsidized slots, in each town and on a regional and state-wide basis, (4) a means for early childhood program providers to enter slot availability and enrollment information into the portal efficiently, (5) access to the portal through a mobile application or Internet web site, and (6) opportunities for families to apply for child care subsidies or other assistance.

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(c) In developing the portal, the office shall (1) enter into memoranda of understanding with other state agencies for the purpose of linking data collected by such other state agencies with the functions of the portal, and (2) seek input from early childhood programs and parents and guardians of children enrolled in early childhood programs in the state.

Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) Not later than July 1, 2027, the Office of Early Childhood shall implement a prospective payment system for the child care subsidy program, established pursuant to section 17b-749 of the general statutes, as amended by this act, in accordance with federal law.

Sec. 3. Subsection (g) of section 17b-749 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(g) All licensed child care providers and those providers exempt from licensing shall provide the office with the following information in order to maintain eligibility for reimbursement: (1) The name, address, appropriate identification, Social Security number and telephone number of the provider and all adults who work for or reside at the location where care is provided; (2) the name and address of the child's doctor, primary care provider and health insurance company; (3) whether the child is immunized and has had health screens pursuant to the federal Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment Services Program under 42 USC 1396d; [and] (4) the number of children cared for by the provider; (5) the type of business entity of the provider; and (6) the names of all officers, directors and owners of the provider or, in the case of an affiliate of the provider that is receiving payments under this section, the names of all officers, directors and owners of such affiliate.

Sec. 4. (*Effective from passage*) Not later than October 1, 2025, the

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Commissioner of Early Childhood shall enter into a data sharing agreement with the Children's Funding Project for the purpose of the creation of a fiscal map that shows a comprehensive view of state funding and spending for children in the state. The commissioner shall not be required to enter into such agreement under this section if the Children's Funding Project requires a direct fee for its services.

Sec. 5. (*Effective from passage*) The Office of Early Childhood, in collaboration with the Insurance Department and the Attorney General, shall conduct a joint study regarding the prevalence, appropriateness and affordability of liability insurance for child care centers and family child care homes, as such terms are described in section 19a-77 of the general statutes. Such joint study shall include, but need not be limited to, an assessment of the factors that have given rise to increasing liability insurance costs. Not later than July 1, 2026, the office shall submit a report on the findings of such joint study, and any recommendations, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children, education and insurance, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

Sec. 6. (*Effective from passage*) The Office of Early Childhood, in consultation with the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, shall develop a report on background checks for early childhood educators. Such report shall include, but need not be limited to, (1) an examination of (A) the average processing time for background checks for early childhood educators, (B) strategies to improve the speed at which background checks are processed, and (C) strategies to improve the convenience and ease with which early childhood educators are able to be fingerprinted and to submit background check materials for processing, and (2) an assessment of whether it is possible for an early childhood educator to share his or her fingerprint and background check results with multiple prospective employers. Not later than July 1, 2026, the office shall submit a report on its findings,

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and any recommendations, to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children, education and public safety, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.

Sec. 7. Section 19a-87b of the general statutes is amended by adding subsection (m) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

(NEW) (m) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2026, to June 30, 2029, inclusive, the Commissioner of Early Childhood may issue, upon receipt of a proper application and following an inspection and approval by the office, a large family child care home endorsement to any family child care home licensee in the state who was issued such license prior to June 30, 2025. Such endorsement shall permit such licensee to maintain a family child care home, in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, that provides care for up to twelve children, including the licensee's own children, provided such family child care home is operated and staffed in accordance with regulations adopted by the office and, in the case when such licensee is providing care for over nine children, with the presence and assistance of an additional assistant or substitute staff member approved by the commissioner. The commissioner shall not issue more than thirty such endorsements in any year under this subsection. The family child care home for which such endorsement has been issued shall have a minimum of thirty-five square feet of useable indoor space and seventy-five square feet per child of outdoor space. An application for an endorsement under this subsection shall include a copy of the current fire marshal certificate of compliance with the Fire Safety Code, and written verification of compliance with local zoning and building requirements and local health ordinances. The commissioner may require an applicant for an endorsement under this subsection to comply with additional conditions relating to the health and safety of the children who will be served in such facility. Any endorsement issued under this subsection

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shall expire on June 30, 2029, except the commissioner may suspend or revoke any such endorsement at any time in accordance with the provisions of section 19a-87e.

Sec. 8. (*Effective from passage*) (a) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, the Commissioner of Early Childhood, in consultation with the Commissioner of Social Services, shall, within available appropriations, develop and administer a one-year pilot program to disseminate information concerning child care services, as defined in section 19a-77 of the general statutes, early intervention programs and financial assistance programs available to expectant mothers receiving prenatal care, as defined in section 19a-912 of the general statutes, in hospitals and from providers of obstetric services in the state.

(b) In developing the pilot program, the Commissioner of Early Childhood shall develop (1) criteria for the selection of hospitals and providers of obstetric services that provide prenatal care in geographically diverse areas of the state, with preference given to hospitals and providers that serve a high proportion of low-income families and are located in areas where the availability of child care services does not meet the demand for such services; (2) requirements for the dissemination of the documents compiled pursuant to subsection (c) of this section to patients receiving prenatal care, including, but not limited to, a requirement that such documents shall be provided during the first trimester of pregnancy whenever possible; and (3) a system for tracking and reporting the number of such documents provided to patients receiving care from each selected hospital and provider each month.

(c) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall select three hospitals and two providers of obstetric services for participation in the pilot program using the criteria developed pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, and compile documents for dissemination to patients receiving prenatal care from each such hospital or provider. Such documents shall

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be tailored to each individual hospital or provider and contain the following information: (1) A list of all child care centers, group child care homes and family child care homes, as such terms are described in section 19a-77 of the general statutes, located in the municipalities in which the majority of prenatal patients served by such hospital or provider live, including contact information and Internet web site addresses, if available, for each such center and home; (2) a list of early intervention programs administered by the Office of Early Childhood, including descriptions of such programs and contact information and Internet web site addresses, if available, for each such program; and (3) information concerning financial assistance programs available to families, including instructions on how to apply to such programs.

(d) Not later than January 1, 2026, the Commissioner of Early Childhood shall electronically disseminate the documents compiled pursuant to subsection (c) of this section to the administrator of each hospital and office manager or other responsible party employed by each provider selected for participation in the pilot program. During the period beginning on January 1, 2026, and ending on December 31, 2026, a copy of the documents tailored to a participating hospital or provider shall be distributed to each patient receiving prenatal care from such hospital or provider.

(e) During the period beginning on January 1, 2026, and ending on December 31, 2027, the Commissioner of Early Childhood shall, in a form and manner prescribed by the commissioner, administer a survey to each parent or guardian that enrolls a child in (1) child care services, or (2) an early intervention program administered by the Office of Early Childhood, to determine whether such parent or guardian enrolled in such services or program as a result of the pilot program administered pursuant to this section. The completion of such survey shall be optional.

(f) Not later than June 1, 2028, the Commissioner of Early Childhood

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shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children. Such report shall include an analysis of the efficacy of the pilot program administered pursuant to this section and any recommendations for legislation to expand such program or implement such program on a state-wide and permanent basis.

Governor's Action:
Approved June 23, 2025