

HB 1099 -- Child Care

Sponsor: Oxford

This bill changes the laws regarding child care. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Requires the Children's Division within the Department of Social Services to change the federal poverty level income eligibility requirements so that persons with:

(a) Incomes less than 150% of the federal poverty level will receive full child care assistance;

(b) Incomes between 150% and 225% of the federal poverty level will receive child care assistance reduced by the amount of income in excess of 150% of the level. If the child has special needs, this provision will not apply; or

(c) Incomes greater than 225% of the federal poverty level are not eligible for child care assistance;

(2) Requires the department to establish a market payment rate for child care providers and requires child care providers to be reimbursed at the seventy-fifth percentile of that market rate;

(3) Requires the departments of Social Services, Health and Senior Services, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Mental Health to develop a quality rating system for licensed child care facilities and early childhood, before-school, and after-school programs by September 1, 2007. Licensed child care facilities should be rated by July 1, 2014. Licensing will be the baseline rating, with the highest rating being accreditation. The rating system will allow an individual to evaluate and select the best early childhood program, provide accountability information to policymakers and funders, and provide a guide to achieve quality outcomes for child care providers. The Coordinating Board for Early Childhood within the Children's Services Commission must develop a tiered rating system of reimbursement for child care subsidies;

(4) Establishes the Early Childhood Program Quality Improvement Grant Fund to administer grants to licensed child care providers needing assistance for quality improvements to prepare for the rating evaluation; and

(5) Requires the departments of Social Services, Health and Senior Services, and Elementary and Secondary Education to be responsible for:

(a) Collecting and distributing information to the public and child care providers about the rating system and its usefulness; and

(b) Posting the ratings on the Internet by January 1, 2009.

The provisions of the bill will expire six years from the effective date.