

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 573

H.P. 368

House of Representatives, February 14, 2023

An Act Regarding Child Care Subsidy Payments and Eligibility

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative CRAVEN of Lewiston.

Cosponsored by Representatives: ABDI of Lewiston, BOYLE of Gorham, CLOUTIER of Lewiston, LAJOIE of Lewiston, MADIGAN of Waterville, SHAGOURY of Hallowell, STOVER of Boothbay.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3737, sub-§4**, as enacted by PL 2017, c. 412, §1, is amended to
3 read:

4 **4. Child care rates.** The department shall establish payment rates for child care
5 services that are up to the 75th percentile of local market rates for the various categories of
6 child care services. ~~The payment rates for child care services for children with special~~
7 ~~needs may be higher than the 75th percentile of local market rates~~ commensurate with the
8 costs of providing care.

9 **Sec. 2. Salary supplement eligibility determinations.** The Department of
10 Health and Human Services, in determining the eligibility for early childhood educator
11 workforce salary supplements in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22,
12 section 3737-A, shall develop a process for evaluating and accepting qualified training
13 provided and degrees awarded outside of the training network of the entity contracted by
14 the department to evaluate early childhood educator workforce salary supplement
15 eligibility.

16 **Sec. 3. Quality child care rating.** The Department of Health and Human Services
17 shall direct the entity responsible for determining quality indicators for child care services
18 as described in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, section 4100 to develop a ratings
19 system for child care sites based on average performance, rather than on the lowest
20 performing indicator.

21 **Sec. 4. Report.** The Department of Health and Human Services shall report on its
22 progress regarding acceptance of outside training, as described in section 2, and the
23 development of an updated ratings system, as described in section 3, by January 15, 2024
24 to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

25 **SUMMARY**

26 This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to establish payment
27 rates for child care services commensurate with the cost of care, rather than based on market
28 rates for care. It requires that the department, in determining the eligibility for early
29 childhood educator workforce salary supplements, develop a process for evaluating and
30 accepting qualified training provided and degrees awarded outside of the training network
31 of the entity contracted by the department to evaluate eligibility for such salary
32 supplements. It requires that the department direct the entity responsible for determining
33 quality indicators for child care services to develop a ratings system for child care sites
34 based on average performance, rather than on the lowest performing indicator.