

HB 387 -- Quality Rating System for Child Care Facilities

Sponsor: Cooper

This bill requires the Department of Social Services, in collaboration with the departments of Health and Senior Services, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Mental Health, to develop by September 1, 2009, a quality rating system for early childhood and before- and after-school programs that are licensed by the Department of Social Services. Licensing will be the baseline rating, with the highest rating being accreditation. The Department of Social Services must use the model developed by the University of Missouri Center for Family Policy and Research to establish the rating system. The rating system will allow an individual to evaluate and select high-quality programs, create an accountability system for policymakers and funders, and guide providers through a system of ever increasing levels of quality with specific outcomes for child care.

By July 1, 2012, the Coordinating Board for Early Childhood within the Children's Services Commission must develop a plan for a tiered rating system of reimbursement for child care subsidies based on the rating system for licensed facilities that receive funding or services to improve the quality of their program. By December 31, 2010, a proposed plan with recommendations for implementation of the reimbursement system must be submitted to the General Assembly. The plan will only become effective after authorization by the General Assembly.

The bill creates the Quality Rating System Program Improvement Fund to be administered by the Department of Social Services to provide grants directly to licensed providers to make quality improvements to comply with the rating system or to community-based organizations assisting providers with the improvements. Grants must be awarded in a geographically diverse manner. Moneys in the fund will consist of donations, gifts, transfers, bequests, and appropriations from the General Assembly.

The Department of Social Services, in collaboration with the departments of Health and Senior Services, Mental Health, and Elementary and Secondary Education, will be responsible for collecting, developing, and distributing resource materials to educate the public and early childhood and before- and after-school programs in Missouri about the quality rating system and posting the ratings on the Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network web site by December 31, 2012.

The provisions regarding the child care quality rating system will expire six years from the effective date.