

HB 610 -- Quality Early Childhood Care

Sponsor: Oxford

This bill provides outreach services, educational training for child care professionals, and subsidies for early childhood programs. In its main provisions, the bill:

- (1) Requires school districts with less than 50% participation in the Parents as Teachers Program that provide outreach services for the program to be given grant funding for their outreach services, subject to appropriations, with priority given to districts that target families with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level;
- (2) Requires by July 1, 2013, all licensed child care providers that serve families receiving child care subsidy assistance to be reimbursed at the current market rate for child care services as established by the biennial state market rate survey conducted by the Department of Social Services pursuant to federal guidelines;
- (3) Requires the Children's Division within the department to establish rules by July 1, 2010, to modify the income eligibility criteria for families that have incomes less than 200% of the federal poverty level to be eligible to receive child care subsidy assistance so that their child care providers will receive benefits through vouchers or direct reimbursement, subject to appropriations. The benefits paid to the providers will be on a sliding scale based on family size and income but may be waived for a family with a special needs child. Families with incomes between 200% and 225% of the federal poverty level will be eligible to receive reduced child care subsidy benefits in accordance to a benefit scale established by the division. Families with incomes greater than 225% of the federal poverty level will not be eligible to receive child care subsidy benefits. The division must establish a waiting list and rules for the prioritization of all eligible families when there is insufficient funding for all eligible families; and
- (4) Requires the department to offer grants annually for up to 250 child care professionals through the Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) Early Childhood MISSOURI Scholarship Program and the Workforce Incentive Initiative to improve the quality of early childhood programs by increasing the skill level of child care professionals and by reducing workforce turnover.