

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2002 Session

**FISCAL NOTE**

Senate Bill 555 (Senator Exum)  
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Family Day Care Providers - Adult to Child Ratio - Home Safety Enhancements**

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This bill allows family day care providers under certain circumstances to broaden their adult-to-child ratio to at least 1 adult to 2 children under the age of 18 months and a third child between 18 and 24 months.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The change is procedural in nature and would not directly affect governmental finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** Family day care providers can broaden their adult-to-child ratio if: (1) automatic sprinklers are installed throughout the home; (2) smoke detectors in the home are wired directly into the structure's electrical system and are interconnected, with battery backup; (3) smoke detectors in the home provide automatic notification to the local fire department in the event of a fire emergency; (4) children are located at grade level at all times; (5) the provider has been in business for at least two years; and (6) the provider has undergone additional evacuation training.

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) must adopt regulations to provide for additional evacuation training.

**Current Law:** An adult-to-child ratio of at least one adult to every two children under the age of two years must be maintained at all times in family day care homes. At any given time, a day care provider may not care for more than eight children, of whom no more than four may be under the age of two. If DHR determines that the maximum number of children allowed in a family day care home is unsuitable for a particular home, the department may decrease the number of children allowed to be in the care of that provider.

**Background:** According to the National Fire Protection Association, the incidents of fire deaths among children under the age of 5 averaged 29.6 per million population annually from 1993 through 1997. Children aged two and younger are more than twice as likely to die in a fire as the general population. These children had higher percentages of deaths during the hours between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Human Resources, National Fire Protection Association, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 8, 2002  
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