

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 497 (Senator Jones, *et al.*)
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Task Force on Inclusive Child and After-School Care

This bill creates a Task Force on Inclusive Child and After-School Care that must: (1) convene regional public forums to gather information and feedback from families with children and youth with disabilities and special health care needs; (2) review relevant literature and research regarding these children and youth; (3) develop and report recommendations on reducing barriers to quality inclusive child and after-school care; (4) assist the Governor and State agencies in implementing task force recommendations; and (5) report findings, activities, and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by July 1, 2005. The task force may: (1) consult, on a pro bono basis, with child care, education, and health officials and experts; and (2) take any other necessary and appropriate action. The Department of Human Resources' (DHR) Child Care Administration (CCA) must provide staff for the task force.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2004 and terminates August 1, 2005.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for DHR are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: A Child Care Administration Advisory Council exists under statute and is responsible for: (1) advising and counseling CCA; (2) reviewing regulations proposed by State agencies regulating child care to ensure coordination and consistence; (3) reviewing issues and problems relating to caring for children and suggesting priorities to CCA; and (4) identifying interdepartmental issues important to child care providers and users that should be addressed by DHR, CCA, and other State agencies.

Background: CCA advises that it already funds several contracts to provide training and technical assistance to child care providers to increase their skills and training in serving children with special needs. In fiscal 2005, CCA will commit approximately \$450,000 of its federal Child Care Development Fund allocation for three training and technical assistance contracts to help providers who maintain children with special needs in child care centers and family day care homes. In fiscal 2003, more than 1,200 child care providers statewide participated in these training sessions funded through a \$432,000 budget appropriation for three contracts.

CCA also has a contract with the World of Wonder Program that provides medical child care placements, allowing parents to work and preventing the children from being placed in institutional settings. Children in this setting receive daily nursing care and require special equipment, such as heart monitors and feeding devices. CCA serves 24 medically fragile children ages two to five years old through this program. The existing contract term is May 1, 2003 through April 30, 2004 and is expected to be renewed. CCA expects to spend \$100,000 in fiscal 2005 to provide these services.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1289 is listed as the cross file bill, but it is not identical.

Information Source(s): Department of Human Resources, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 27, 2004
ncs/jr

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