
By: **Delegate Rudolph**

Introduced and read first time: February 10, 2006

Assigned to: Ways and Means

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 21, 2006

CHAPTER_____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Education - Task Force on Universal Preschool Education**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a Task Force on Universal Preschool Education;
 4 providing for the membership and staffing of the Task Force; specifying the
 5 purposes and goals of the Task Force; requiring the Task Force to evaluate and
 6 make recommendations regarding certain issues by a certain date and to submit
 7 a report to the Governor and the General Assembly; providing for the
 8 termination of this Act; and generally relating to a Task Force on Universal
 9 Preschool Education.

10 **Preamble**

11 WHEREAS, The legislature finds that the purpose and mission of education is
 12 to advance the endowment of human nature itself, so that each succeeding generation
 13 finds itself further along the road towards peace, social justice, and environmental
 14 sustainability in a society guided by creativity, compassion, and curiosity; and

15 WHEREAS, The legislature further finds that children are born ready to learn
 16 and that early childhood learning opportunities are essential and fundamental to
 17 developing self-esteem, personal values, social behaviors, attitudes that contribute to
 18 collaborative living, and skills that promote lifelong learning; and

19 WHEREAS, Nearly 85% of brain development occurs in the first 5 years of life
 20 and research has proven that a child's early years are the most crucial in their
 21 cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development; and

22 WHEREAS, It also has been affirmed that early childhood education
 23 measurably impacts kindergarten through grade 12 student achievement, as well as a
 24 child's ability to integrate into society as a productive, contributing member; and

1 WHEREAS, The legislature finds that every \$1 invested on quality early
2 childhood education saves \$7 in welfare and penal system costs through improved
3 student achievement, increased college attendance rates, and a corresponding
4 reduction in crime and the need for welfare; and

5 WHEREAS, Early childhood education encourages and provides the support
6 that friends need to improve the quality of life of children by ensuring that children
7 have enhanced access to a good beginning in life, laying the firm foundation that will
8 enable children to reach the potential with which they are born; and

9 WHEREAS, The legislature recognizes the importance of providing children
10 with early learning opportunities of the highest quality, including parenting
11 programs, parent-child education programs, licensed and license-exempt child care,
12 and center-based programs; and

13 WHEREAS, Early childhood education programs, both public and private,
14 should meet professionally-accepted standards and be staffed by well-trained,
15 appropriately-compensated educators; and

16 WHEREAS, The purpose of this Act is to:

17 (1) Improve early childhood education by establishing and appropriating
18 funds for a temporary early childhood education task force to develop a framework to
19 increase access to early childhood education;

20 (2) Improve the quality of early childhood learning programs;

21 (3) Support the professional and career development of early childhood
22 educators and service providers;

23 (4) Educate families about the value of early childhood education;

24 (5) Identify funding mechanisms to appropriately compensate early
25 childhood educators; and

26 (6) Increase the inventory of available facilities for early childhood
27 education programs; now, therefore,

28 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
29 MARYLAND, That:

30 (a) There is a Task Force on Universal Preschool Education.

31 (b) The Task Force shall consist of ~~23 members as follows~~ the following
32 members:

33 (1) ~~The Speaker~~ One member of the House of Delegates ~~or the Speaker's~~
34 ~~designee, appointed by the Speaker of the House~~;

35 (2) ~~The President~~ One member of the Senate ~~or the President's designee~~
36 appointed by the President of the Senate;

- 1 (3) The State Superintendent of Schools or the State Superintendent's
2 designee;
- 3 (4) ~~The Secretary of Human Resources or the Secretary's designee;~~
- 4 (5) ~~The Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene or the Secretary's~~
5 ~~designee;~~
- 6 (6) (4) The Dean of the College of Education at the University of
7 Maryland at College Park or the Dean's designee;
- 8 (7) (5) ~~Two representatives~~ One representative, chosen by the
9 Maryland Association of Boards of Education, who ~~work~~ works with local school
10 systems and ~~are~~ is engaged in providing early childhood education services to
11 children in their local communities;
- 12 (8) (6) The President of the Maryland Head Start Association or the
13 President's designee;
- 14 (9) (7) The President of the Maryland State Child Care Association;
- 15 (10) (8) The Executive Director of the Governor's Office for Children or
16 the Executive Director's designee;
- 17 (11) (9) One representative from the family child care community,
18 appointed by the Governor;
- 19 (12) (10) ~~Two parents~~ One parent whose ~~children receive~~ child receives
20 early childhood services, appointed by the Governor;
- 21 (13) ~~The Executive Director of the Association of Independent Maryland~~
22 ~~Schools or the Executive Director's designee;~~
- 23 (14) (11) One member to be selected by the Maryland Chamber of
24 Commerce;
- 25 (15) ~~Three representatives of the University System of Maryland~~
26 ~~designated by the Chancellor;~~
- 27 (12) One professor from a community college who teaches early childhood
28 education, appointed by the Governor;
- 29 (16) ~~The Executive Director of the Maryland Association of Community~~
30 ~~Colleges or the Executive Director's designee;~~
- 31 (17) ~~Two members of the public selected by the Governor; and~~
- 32 (18) ~~A communications professional as recommended by a majority vote of~~
33 ~~the Task Force.~~

1 (13) The Executive Director of the Maryland Committee for Children or
2 the Executive Director's designee;

3 (14) One representative of the early childhood special education
4 community, appointed by the Governor; and

5 (15) One preschool coordinator from a local board of education, appointed
6 by the Governor.

7 (c) The purposes and goals of the Task Force shall be to:

8 (1) Propose an overall plan to increase access to early childhood
9 education opportunities for families, which may include incentives, resource
10 development, the need for and availability of infrastructure, and possible funding
11 sources through:

12 (i) The identification of criteria, procedures, and methods for
13 issuing subsidies to parents and legal guardians of children to facilitate their
14 attendance at preschools and early learning programs; and

15 (ii) The development of processes designed to:

16 1. Promote public-private partnerships;

17 2. Create new and expand existing early childhood learning
18 programs; and

19 3. Provide needs assessment and planning, including a
20 coordinated data system;

21 (2) Develop plans and identify resources needed to improve the quality
22 and services of early childhood learning programs by:

23 (i) Determining performance indicators of quality programs;

24 (ii) Identifying and recommending quality assessment instruments
25 for the purpose of addressing early learning needs in children;

26 (iii) Identifying strategies to expand the number of programs
27 meeting national or State standards of quality through program accreditation;

28 (iv) Proposing incentives and rewards programs designed to
29 increase overall program quality;

30 (v) Using any guidelines developed by the Maryland State
31 Department of Education for preschool and early childhood education as guidelines
32 for program improvement; and

33 (vi) Identifying and promoting State and local coordination;

- 1 (3) Design proposals to support the professional development of early
2 childhood education staff, which may include:
- 3 (i) Identifying appropriate and desired education levels of staff;
- 4 (ii) Recommending a compensation plan related to educational
5 levels and experience that recognizes the value of early childhood education;
- 6 (iii) Promoting mentor relationships in quality programs for
7 educators and aspiring educators who seek to enter or improve the field as an early
8 childhood education teacher;
- 9 (iv) Identifying incentives and rewards to encourage ongoing
10 professional development; and
- 11 (v) Expanding access to and the creation of innovative strategies
12 for professional development opportunities;
- 13 (4) Create an implementation plan to motivate and promote the value of
14 and participation in early childhood learning opportunities for parents and the
15 general public, including the business community;
- 16 (5) Recommend to the legislature a conceptual framework, along with
17 proposals for policies and legislation necessary to facilitate and monitor the
18 implementation of that framework; and
- 19 (6) Identify or develop appropriate evaluation methods, including
20 appropriate performance indicators that will allow monitoring, improvement, and
21 accountability of any initiative it proposes.
- 22 (d) The Task Force may form workgroups and subcommittees to:
- 23 (1) Obtain input from stakeholders, early education professionals, and
24 any other individuals it determines necessary; and
- 25 (2) Perform any other functions it deems necessary to fulfill its mission.
- 26 (e) A member of the Task Force:
- 27 (1) May not receive compensation; but
- 28 (2) Is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State
29 Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.
- 30 (f) The Maryland State Department of Education, the Maryland Higher
31 Education Commission, and the University System of Maryland shall provide staff to
32 the Task Force.
- 33 (g) The Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the
34 Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the
35 General Assembly, on or before December 1, 2007.

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
2 July 1, 2006. It shall remain effective for a period of ~~1 year and 6 months~~ 2 years and,
3 at the end of ~~December 31, 2007~~ June 30, 2008, with no further action required by the
4 General Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.