

HOUSE BILL 685

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9lr2718
CF SB 414

By: **Delegate Kaiser (Joint Committee on Children, Youth, and Families) and
Delegates Bates, Benson, Eckardt, Frush, Gilchrist, Gutierrez,
Hubbard, Nathan-Pulliam, Oaks, and Stocksedale**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2009

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Family Law – Maryland Quality Ratings and Improvement System for Child**
3 **Care Programs**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the State Department of Education to establish the
5 Maryland Quality Ratings and Improvement System (QRIS); establishing
6 certain requirements for the Maryland QRIS; clarifying the purpose of the
7 Maryland QRIS; requiring the Department to use existing State and federal
8 resources to fund the Maryland QRIS; authorizing the use of certain funds for
9 certain purposes; requiring the Department to select an independent party to
10 evaluate the validity and reliability of the Maryland QRIS; requiring the
11 Department to provide certain information to the public on child care programs
12 evaluated by the Maryland QRIS; requiring the Department to reduce
13 unannounced visits to certain child care programs under certain circumstances;
14 authorizing the Department to adopt regulations to implement this Act;
15 requiring the Department to submit a certain report to the Governor and
16 General Assembly each year; defining certain terms; and generally relating to
17 the Maryland Quality Ratings and Improvement System for child care
18 programs.

19 BY adding to
20 Article – Family Law
21 Section 5–585.1
22 Annotated Code of Maryland
23 (2006 Replacement Volume and 2008 Supplement)

24 Preamble

25 WHEREAS, Recent brain research confirms that the most rapid brain growth
26 occurs in the first 5 years of life; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, High-quality early care and education programs make a significant
2 contribution to the development of skills required by young children to succeed in
3 schools; and

4 WHEREAS, Not all Maryland children have access to quality early care and
5 education programs; and

6 WHEREAS, Parents who purchase child care services are entitled to receive
7 information about the quality of child care; and

8 WHEREAS, The State Department of Education has oversight of all licensed
9 and registered child care programs; and

10 WHEREAS, Maryland has numerous systems that support early care and
11 education programs, including the Early Childhood Accreditation Program, the
12 Maryland Child Care Credential Program, and the Tiered Reimbursement Program;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Seventeen states have established a Quality Ratings and
15 Improvement System (QRIS) to identify the level of quality among licensed and
16 registered child care providers; now, therefore,

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
18 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

19 **Article – Family Law**

20 **5-585.1.**

21 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE
22 MEANINGS INDICATED.

23 (2) “EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCREDITATION PROGRAM” MEANS A
24 PROGRAM THAT ASSESSES A FACILITY IN ACCORDANCE WITH COMAR
25 13A.14.09.

26 (3) “LEVELS OF QUALITY” MEANS AWARDS GIVEN TO A LICENSED
27 OR REGISTERED FAMILY DAY CARE PROGRAM THAT HAS MET QUALITY CRITERIA
28 ESTABLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT UNDER THIS SECTION.

29 (4) “LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER” MEANS A CHILD CARE
30 CENTER THAT RECEIVED A LICENSE FROM THE DEPARTMENT UNDER § 5-574
31 OF THIS SUBTITLE, WHICH GIVES PERMISSION TO OPERATE A CHILD CARE
32 CENTER, IN ACCORDANCE WITH COMAR 13A.16.01.

1 (5) **“MARYLAND CHILD CARE CREDENTIAL PROGRAM” MEANS**
2 **THE PROGRAM OPERATED BY THE DEPARTMENT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH**
3 **COMAR 13A.14.09.**

4 (6) **“MARYLAND QUALITY RATINGS AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM”**
5 **MEANS THE PROCESS BY WHICH AWARDS OF QUALITY RATINGS ARE GIVEN TO**
6 **LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS AND REGISTERED FAMILY DAY CARE**
7 **PROVIDERS AS DEFINED IN COMAR 13A.14.09.**

8 (7) **“REGISTERED FAMILY DAY CARE” MEANS ANY FAMILY DAY**
9 **CARE AS DEFINED IN § 5-501 OF THIS SUBTITLE.**

10 (8) **“TIERED REIMBURSEMENT” MEANS WEEKLY PAYMENTS IN**
11 **ACCORDANCE WITH COMAR 13A.14.06.**

12 (B) (1) (I) **THERE IS A MARYLAND QUALITY RATINGS AND**
13 **IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM (QRIS) FOR ALL LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS AND**
14 **REGISTERED FAMILY DAY CARE PROVIDERS.**

15 (II) **THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH THE MARYLAND**
16 **QRIS ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2011.**

17 (2) **THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DETERMINE FIVE LEVELS OF**
18 **QUALITY FOR THE MARYLAND QRIS.**

19 (3) **THE MARYLAND QRIS SHALL INCLUDE, AT A MINIMUM, AN**
20 **EVALUATION OF THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS:**

21 (I) **LICENSING STATUS AND COMPLIANCE;**

22 (II) **LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS;**

23 (III) **PROGRAM EVALUATIONS;**

24 (IV) **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT;**

25 (V) **ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES;**

26 (VI) **PARENT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT; AND**

27 (VII) **ASSESSMENT OF CHILD GROWTH AND LEARNING.**

1 **(C) THE PURPOSE OF THE MARYLAND QRIS IS TO PROMOTE SCHOOL**
2 **READINESS BY ESTABLISHING A SYSTEM TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF ALL**
3 **LICENSED AND REGISTERED CHILD CARE PROVIDERS IN THE STATE.**

4 **(D) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL USE EXISTING STATE AND**
5 **FEDERAL RESOURCES TO ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM AND TO IMPLEMENT A**
6 **STATEWIDE EXPANSION OF THE MARYLAND QRIS.**

7 **(2) FUNDS THAT ARE USED FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE**
8 **MARYLAND QRIS MAY BE USED TO:**

9 **(I) IMPROVE THE COMPLIANCE RATES OF CHILD CARE**
10 **FACILITIES;**

11 **(II) ESTABLISH A METHODOLOGY TO EVALUATE QUALITY**
12 **LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS;**

13 **(III) EXPAND THE NUMBER OF CHILD CARE PROGRAMS**
14 **OBTAINING STATE OR NATIONAL PROGRAM ACCREDITATION;**

15 **(IV) EXPAND THE NUMBER OF CHILD CARE PROVIDERS**
16 **RECEIVING QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING**
17 **POSTSECONDARY AND CONTINUING EDUCATION; AND**

18 **(V) EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS, INCLUDING VALIDITY**
19 **AND RELIABILITY, OF THE MARYLAND QRIS.**

20 **(E) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL SELECT AN INDEPENDENT PARTY TO**
21 **EVALUATE THE VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE MARYLAND QRIS.**

22 **(F) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC**
23 **ON THE EVALUATION AND RATING OF ALL LICENSED AND REGISTERED CHILD**
24 **CARE PROGRAMS WITHIN THE MARYLAND QRIS.**

25 **(G) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REDUCE THE NUMBER OF UNANNOUNCED**
26 **MONITORING VISITS FROM ONE VISIT ANNUALLY TO ONE VISIT EVERY 2 YEARS**
27 **TO ANY LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTER OR REGISTERED FAMILY DAY CARE**
28 **THAT HAS REACHED, AT A MINIMUM, LEVEL 3 OF THE 5-LEVEL MARYLAND**
29 **QRIS.**

30 **(H) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE**
31 **REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION.**

1 (I) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1 OF EACH YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT
2 SHALL REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1246 OF
3 THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE
4 PROGRESS OF THE MARYLAND QRIS.

5 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
6 July 1, 2009.