

Department of Legislative Services

Maryland General Assembly

2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 403

(Delegate Ready, *et al.*)

Health and Government Operations

Family Child Care Homes - Adult to Child Ratio - Children Under 2 Years

This bill alters mandatory adult to child ratios in family child care homes by authorizing a ratio of one adult to every three children younger than the age of two if at least one of the children is at least 18 months old.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) can ensure compliance with the bill's provisions using existing resources. Although the bill may increase payments to some family child care homes as discussed below, overall expenditures of the Child Care Subsidy Program are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful. While the bill does not alter the maximum number of children permitted to be in care, it allows a family child care home to provide care for an additional child younger than the age of two in some circumstances without the need to have another adult present. In addition, some family child care homes participating in the Child Care Subsidy Program may receive higher subsidies and co-pays.

Analysis

Current Law: Family child care homes are residences in which family child care is provided. In family child care homes, there may not be more than (1) eight children in care at any given time and (2) four children younger than the age of two. In addition,

there must be a ratio of at least one adult to every two children younger than the age of two. A child care provider's own children younger than the age of two are counted as children served. If MSDE determines that the size provisions are unsuitable for a particular family child care home, it may decrease the number of children permitted to be in care.

Small Business Effect: Maryland's Child Care Subsidy Program, administered by MSDE, provides financial assistance with child care costs to working families who meet eligibility requirements. The program is not an entitlement, and not all families meeting eligibility requirements are awarded vouchers due to limited funding. Vouchers are given to eligible families for use in purchasing child care from providers, including family child care homes. Vouchers indicate a subsidy rate (which is paid through local departments of social services) as well as any applicable co-pay. Because the subsidy and co-payment amounts are based in part on the age of the child, with higher rates for children younger than the age of two, family child care homes with clients participating in the program may receive higher subsidies or co-payments if they begin providing care for an additional child younger than the age of two under the bill.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland State Department of Education, Department of Legislative Services

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