

Chapter 367

(House Bill 415)

AN ACT concerning

State Library Agency – Family Literacy Pilot Program – Establishment

FOR the purpose of establishing the Family Literacy Pilot Program administered by the State Library Agency in consultation with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and the Correctional Education Council to enable certain incarcerated individuals to read aloud to their children by preparing a recording; requiring the State Library Agency to submit a certain report on or before a certain date; and generally relating to the Family Literacy Pilot Program.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Education

Section 23–101(a) and (c) and 23–103

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – Education

Section 23–112

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

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

Article – Education

23–101.

(a) In this title the following words have the meanings indicated.

(c) “State Library Agency” means the Maryland State Library Agency.

23–103.

There is a State Library Agency and a State Library Board. The State Library Agency is the central State library agency.

23–112.

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

(2) “CHILD” MEANS A BIOLOGICAL OR ADOPTED CHILD, A STEPCHILD, A GRANDCHILD, OR A LEGAL WARD OF AN INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL.

(3) “PROGRAM” MEANS THE FAMILY LITERACY PILOT PROGRAM.

(B) THERE IS A FAMILY LITERACY PILOT PROGRAM.

(C) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO FOSTER FAMILY LITERACY AND STRENGTHEN PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS BY PROVIDING CHILDREN’S BOOKS IN STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS AND A MEANS FOR AN INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL TO READ ALOUD TO THE INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL’S CHILD.

(D) THE PROGRAM SHALL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE STATE LIBRARY AGENCY.

(E) THE STATE LIBRARY AGENCY, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AND THE CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL, SHALL SELECT FOUR STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY LIBRARIES OR PRERELEASE CENTERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM THAT SHALL:

(1) REPRESENT EACH OF THE WESTERN, CENTRAL, AND EASTERN REGIONS OF THE STATE;

(2) CONSIST OF AT LEAST ONE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY SERVING FEMALE INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS; AND

(3) CONSIST OF AT LEAST ONE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY SERVING MALE INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS.

(F) THE STATE LIBRARY AGENCY SHALL SELECT THE CHILDREN’S BOOKS FOR USE IN THE PROGRAM INCLUDING CHILDREN’S BOOKS IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH.

(G) THE STATE LIBRARY AGENCY, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AND THE CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION COUNCIL, SHALL:

(1) ESTABLISH A PROCESS TO SECURE WRITTEN PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM FROM THE CUSTODIAL PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF AN INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL’S CHILD;

(2) ESTABLISH A PROCESS TO ASSIST AN INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL IN SELECTING AN AGE-APPROPRIATE CHILDREN’S BOOK, PREPARING A RECORDING OF THE INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL READING THE BOOK ALOUD, AND DISTRIBUTING A COPY OF THE BOOK AND THE RECORDING TO THE INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL’S CHILD; AND

(3) ENSURE PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM IS FREE OF CHARGE FOR THE INCARCERATED INDIVIDUAL, THE CHILD, AND THE CUSTODIAL PARENT OR GUARDIAN.

(H) THE STATE LIBRARY AGENCY MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS NECESSARY TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before December 1, 2028, the State Library Agency shall report to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, on the results of the Family Literacy Pilot Program.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2025. It shall remain effective for a period of 3 years and 3 months and, at the end of December 31, 2028, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved by the Governor, May 6, 2025.