

HOUSE BILL 396

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CF 6lr1715

By: **Delegates Pasteur, Acevero, Addison, Alston, Amprey, Boyce, Conaway, Crutchfield, Ebersole, Embry, Forbes, Hill, Holmes, Lewis, J. Long, Martinez, McCaskill, Mireku-North, Patterson, Phillips, Pruski, Ruff, Schmidt, Simmons, Stein, Stinnett, Taveras, Toles, White Holland, Williams, Wilson, Wims, and Young**

Introduced and read first time: January 22, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

- 1 AN ACT concerning
- 2 **Residential Child Care Programs – Education of Children and Training of Child**
- 3 **and Youth Care Practitioners**
- 4 FOR the purpose of requiring operators of certain residential child care programs to provide
- 5 certain educational opportunities to the children for whom they have legal custody
- 6 or care and control; requiring that applicants to be child and youth care practitioners
- 7 undergo certain training; and generally relating to residential child care programs.
- 8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
9 Article – Education
10 Section 7–309
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)
- 13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
14 Article – Health Occupations
15 Section 20–302.1
16 Annotated Code of Maryland
17 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)
- 18 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
19 Article – Human Services
20 Section 8–704(8), (10), and (11)
21 Annotated Code of Maryland
22 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



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

3 **Article – Education**

4 7-309.

5 (a) (1) In this section, “residential child care program” means a program that:

6 (i) Provides care for children 24 hours a day within a structured set
7 of services and activities designed to achieve objectives related to the needs of the children
8 served; and

9 (ii) Is licensed by the Maryland Department of Health, the
10 Department of Human Services, or the Department of Juvenile Services.

11 (2) A “residential child care program” includes:

12 (i) Group homes;

13 (ii) Alternative living units; and

14 (iii) Emergency shelter care.

15 (b) Each licensed operator of a residential child care program who has legal
16 custody or care and control of a child who is at least 5 years old and under the age of 16
17 years and receives State funding as provided in § 5-526 of the Family Law Article:

18 (1) Shall enroll the child in the local school system where the residential
19 child care program is located unless the residential child care program operates an
20 approved educational program in accordance with the licensing regulations that govern the
21 residential child care program;

22 (2) Shall expeditiously initiate and monitor the transfer of the academic
23 records of a child in the operator’s care from the transferring school to [insure] ENSURE
24 that the academic records are transferred to the school that the child will be attending
25 while living in the operator’s care;

26 (3) (i) May request a meeting with the child’s teachers; [and]

27 (ii) Shall meet the child’s teachers at the time of enrollment and at
28 any other time the school or a teacher requests TO DETERMINE THE BEST WAYS TO
29 SUPPORT THE CHILD; and

4 (4) Shall sign the child's report card, [insure] **ENSURE** that the report card
5 is returned to school, and include a copy of the report card in the child's case record; AND

(5) SHALL ENSURE THAT THE CHILD IS PROVIDED:

14 (IV) FOR A CHILD WITH AN INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION
15 PROGRAM UNDER THE FEDERAL INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT
16 OR A 504 PLAN UNDER § 504 OF THE FEDERAL REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973,
17 APPLICABLE EDUCATIONAL GOALS TO COMPLETE WITHIN THE RESIDENTIAL CHILD
18 CARE PROGRAM THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE CHILD'S PROGRAM OR PLAN;

19 (v) FOR A CHILD WITH A BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION PLAN
20 UNDER SUBTITLE 11 OF THIS TITLE, BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS AND GOALS THAT
21 REINFORCE THE GOALS OF THE CHILD'S PLAN IN THE SCHOOL SETTING; AND

22 (VI) FOR CHILDREN DUALLY ENROLLED IN A HIGH SCHOOL AND
23 AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, ACCESS TO A COMPUTER IN ORDER TO
24 COMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS THAT REQUIRE COMPUTER SOFTWARE OR THE INTERNET

Article – Health Occupations

26 20-302.1.

27 (a) To qualify for a certificate as a residential child and youth care practitioner,
28 an applicant shall be an individual who meets the requirements of this section.

29 (b) The applicant shall be of good moral character.

30 (c) The applicant shall have completed:

(1) A State and national criminal history records check; and

(2) Unless waived by the Board under § 20–303(d) of this subtitle, a child services background clearance.

(d) The applicant shall be:

(1) At least 21 years old; or

(2) At least 18 years old and have earned at least an associate's or degree from an accredited college or university.

(e) The applicant shall have:

(1) A high school diploma or equivalent and have successfully completed training program; and

(2) (i) At least 2 years' experience in the human service field; or

(ii) An associate's or bachelor's degree from an accredited college or

14 (f) (1) (I) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the
15 applicant shall have successfully completed a training program approved by the Board.

(II) THE BOARD'S PROGRAM SHALL INCLUDE TRAINING ON:

1. THE ROLE OF THE RESIDENTIAL CHILD AND YOUTH

18 CARE PRACTITIONER;

2. CHILD DEVELOPMENT:

3. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

4. RECOGNIZING DIFFERENCES IN PROCESSING THE DIVERSE WAYS CHILDREN LEARN:

5. RECOGNIZING BEHAVIORS THAT IMPACT A CHILD'S PRACTICE SOCIAL NORMS:

6. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IDENTIFICATION AND

7 SUICIDE RISK ASSESSMENT AND PREVENTION:

4 9. COMMUNICATION SKILLS;

11. THE PSYCHOSOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN, FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIPS, AND THE IMPACT OF SEPARATION;

12. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND SAFETY PRACTICES;

14. MEDICATION MANAGEMENT;

15. INFECTION CONTROL; AND

24 (g) The applicant shall pass an examination given by the Board under this
25 subtitle.

26 (h) The Board shall waive the education, experience, training, and examination
27 requirements of this section for an applicant who:

28 (1) Applies for certification on or before October 1, 2015; and

1 Article – Human Services**2 8–704.****3 A contract awarded or renewed between an agency and a provider for a residential**
4 child care program shall:**5 (8) require the provider to comply with § 7–309 of the Education Article;****6 (10) require the residential child care program to have certified residential**
7 child and youth care practitioners, as required under § 20–301 of the Health Occupations
8 Article; and**9 (11) require the residential child care program to have a certified program**
10 administrator as required under § 20–301 of the Health Occupations Article.**11 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July**
12 1, 2026.