

HOUSE BILL 748

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6lr2648

By: ~~Delegate Mireku-North~~ **Delegates Mireku-North and Palakovich Carr**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: February 26, 2026

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Publicly Funded Prekindergarten – Early Childhood Educator Career Ladder**
3 **for Private Providers – ~~Repeal of Deadlines~~ New Pathways**

4 FOR the purpose of ~~repealing the requirements that certain experiential and educational~~
5 ~~qualifications in~~ adding new pathways to the early childhood educator career ladder
6 for eligible private prekindergarten providers ~~must be met on or before certain dates~~
7 that allow educators to meet certain experiential and educational qualifications
8 within certain periods of time; and generally relating to the requirements for eligible
9 private providers in publicly funded prekindergarten.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
11 Article – Education
12 Section 7–1A–08
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (2025 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

17 **Article – Education**

18 7–1A–08.

19 (a) (1) On or before July 1, 2025, the Department shall establish an early
20 childhood educator career ladder for eligible private providers.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 B. Hold an associate degree in early childhood education or
2 child development; ~~or~~

3 (ii) [On July 1, 2024, have] **HAVE** documented experience of actively
4 providing services in early childhood education for a minimum of 15 years for at least:

5 1. 20 hours per week; and

6 2. 180 days per year; **OR**

7 **(iii) 1. HOLD A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA; AND**

8 **2. WITHIN 3 MONTHS AFTER BEING HIRED AS AN EARLY**
9 **CHILDHOOD TEACHING ASSISTANT:**

10 **A. EARN AND MAINTAIN A CHILD DEVELOPMENT**
11 **ASSOCIATE (CDA) WITH A PRESCHOOL DESIGNATION; OR**

12 **B. HOLD AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD**
13 **EDUCATION OR CHILD DEVELOPMENT.**

14 (3) (i) Subject to subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, in order to qualify
15 as a prekindergarten lead teacher, an educator shall:

16 1. Hold at least a bachelor's degree in early childhood
17 education, child development, or a related field from an institution of higher education
18 accredited by an institutional accrediting association recognized by the U.S. Department of
19 Education;

20 2. A. Hold at least a bachelor's degree in early childhood
21 education, child development, or a related field from an institution of higher education in
22 another country; and

23 B. Have the degree under item A of this item verified as
24 comparable to a bachelor's degree granted by an accredited institution of higher education
25 in the United States by an independent agency authorized to analyze foreign credentials
26 selected by the Department;

27 3. Hold a bachelor's degree in a field unrelated to early
28 childhood education from an institution of higher education accredited by an institutional
29 accrediting association approved by the U.S. Department of Education; or

30 4. Subject to subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph, [on July 1,
31 2024,] have documented experience of actively providing services in early childhood
32 education for a minimum of 10 years for at least:

1 A. 20 hours per week; and

2 B. 180 days per year.

3 (ii) In order to qualify as a prekindergarten lead teacher through any
4 pathway other than the pathway described under subparagraph (i)1 of this paragraph, an
5 educator must achieve a minimum score on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System
6 (CLASS) assessment as set by the Department in addition to the requirements listed under
7 subparagraph (i) of this paragraph.

8 (iii) 1. [On or before July 1, 2030] ~~WITHIN 6 YEARS AFTER~~
9 ~~QUALIFYING AS A LEAD TEACHER,~~ A prekindergarten lead teacher who qualifies
10 through the pathway described under subparagraph (i)4 of this paragraph shall earn an
11 associate degree in early childhood education;

12 A. ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2030, IF THE TEACHER
13 QUALIFIED THROUGH THE PATHWAY ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2024; OR

14 B. WITHIN 6 MONTHS AFTER QUALIFYING AS A LEAD
15 TEACHER, IF THE TEACHER QUALIFIED THROUGH THE PATHWAY AFTER JULY 1,
16 2024.

17 2. Teachers from level three of the career ladder shall mentor
18 and provide professional support to a prekindergarten lead teacher described under this
19 subparagraph to ensure that the teacher earns a degree within the required amount of
20 time.

21 (iv) In order to maintain status as a prekindergarten lead teacher,
22 each year a lead teacher shall complete at least 20 working hours of professional learning
23 and development in:

24 1. Early childhood instruction;

25 2. Developmentally appropriate practice; and

26 3. Any other professional skill areas the Department
27 determines are valuable.

28 (4) In order to qualify as an early childhood consulting teacher, an educator
29 shall:

30 (i) Be a prekindergarten lead teacher in good standing;

31 (ii) Beginning in the 2027–2028 school year, hold early childhood
32 education certification or be pursuing certification;

1 (iii) Be able to lead other early childhood educators in an effective
2 and disciplined way to improve the curriculum and instruction of prekindergarten
3 students;

4 (iv) Demonstrate the skills and knowledge to mentor early childhood
5 assistant teachers and new prekindergarten lead teachers, including by helping them to
6 meet the educational and certification qualifications necessary to qualify for and maintain
7 status on the career ladder; and

8 (v) Supervise and support prekindergarten lead teachers, if
9 practicable through prekindergarten provider hubs, in one or more sites in order to improve
10 developmentally appropriate instructional practices for prekindergarten students.

11 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
12 1, 2026.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.