

ASSEMBLY CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND FOOD SECURITY
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO
ASSEMBLY, No. 2291

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 10, 2025

The Assembly Children, Families and Food Security Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 2291.

As amended by the committee, this bill provides categorical eligibility for child care subsidies to qualifying employees of licensed child care centers or registered family child care providers, regardless of the qualifying employee's annual income. Providing access to child care subsidies for employees of child care facilities, regardless of income, will raise the compensation level for these essential workers and support the recruitment and retention of child care employees.

The bill provides eligibility for child care services through the State's subsidized child care assistance program for "qualifying child care workers," regardless of the individual's annual family income. As amended by the committee, the bill defines a qualifying child care worker as an educator or staff member who is employed for a minimum of 30 hours per week by a licensed child care center or a registered family child care provider, who has children ages zero through five, and is not otherwise eligible for the State's subsidized child care assistance program.

Under the bill, the Commissioner of Human Services is directed to establish a process by which the department will confirm that a qualifying child care worker is employed by a child care provider for the number of hours required to access the child care subsidy benefit. The commissioner, moreover, is to apply for any State plan amendments or waivers necessary to ensure continuation of federal funding for subsidized child care services for eligible families under the "Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990."

The bill requires the Commissioner to report to the Governor and Legislature in writing no later than three years after the effective date of the bill on the effectiveness of this benefit in fostering recruitment and retention of teachers and staff for licensed child care centers and registered family child care providers, including the number of individuals eligible for this benefit and the number who actually receive the benefit.

This bill is modeled on a similar policy adopted by several states including Kentucky, Washington, Nebraska, Rhode Island, Indiana, and Massachusetts.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2024-2025 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS

The committee amendments change the definition of “qualified child care worker” to mean an educator or staff member who: is employed for a minimum of 30 hours, instead of 20 hours, as originally provided in the bill; has children ages zero through five; and is not otherwise eligible for the State’s subsidized child care assistance program. The committee amended the bill to require the Commissioner of the Human Services to report to the Governor and Legislature on the effectiveness of the child care benefit proposed no later than three years after the effective date of the bill. The committee amendments also makes technical corrections involving punctuation.