

CHAPTER 360

AN ACT concerning the Division of the Children's System of Care and amending and supplementing P.L.2024, c.24.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 1 of P.L.2024, c.24 (C.30:4-25.24) is amended to read as follows:

C.30:4-25.24 Maximum respite care service hours, Department of Children and Families.

1. a. The family of a child that is eligible to receive respite care services for the child, which services are funded through the Division of the Children's System of Care in the Department of Children and Families, shall be eligible to receive no more than 90 hours of respite care services, provided by either an agency-hired or self-hired respite worker, over a 90-day period, through funding provided by the department.

- b. The Commissioner of Children and Families shall use available State and federal funds to effectuate the provisions of subsection a. of this section.

- c. As used in P.L.2024, c.24 and P.L.2025, c.360 (C.30:4C-4.7 et al.):

"Agency after-school care" means social and recreational experiences provided at a facility by a community-based agency contracted with the Division of Children's System of Care to an individual up to the age of 21 with a developmental disability during after school hours and outside of the individual's home.

"Agency-hired respite worker" means a respite care worker who is recruited, trained, and employed by a qualified agency under contract with the Division of Children's System of Care in the Department of Children and Families.

"Respite care" means the provision of temporary, short-term care for, or the supervision of, an eligible child on behalf of the caregiver in emergencies or on an intermittent basis to relieve the daily stresses and demands of caring for a child with a functional impairment. Respite care may be provided hourly or daily, may be provided by an agency-hired or self-hired respite worker or by a volunteer, but may not exceed service and cost limitations as determined by the Commissioner of Children and Families.

"Self-hired respite worker" means a respite care worker who is recruited, trained, and paid directly by a family of a child that is eligible for respite care services.

C.30:4C-4.7 Use of service hours before school hours and during school closures.

2. Notwithstanding any law, rule, or regulation to the contrary, the Division of Children's System of Care in the Department of Children and Families shall ensure that, once an individual up to the age of 21 with a developmental disability has been authorized to receive services from an agency after-school program contracted with the division to provide family support services, the family or guardian of the individual shall be allowed to utilize any amount of unused agency after-school care service hours, offered by the same agency contracted with the division to provide after-school care to the individual, for use before official school hours and during official school closures, provided that the closure occurs during an otherwise official school day during the 90-day authorization period.

3. The Department of Children and Families shall promulgate rules and regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of P.L.2025, c.360 (C.30:4C-4.7 et al.).

4. This act shall take effect on the 90th day after enactment.

Approved January 20, 2026.