

SENATE, No. 4637

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED OCTOBER 1, 2026

Sponsored by:

Senator ROBERT W. SINGER
District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)
Senator NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI
District 22 (Somerset and Union)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes agency after-school respite care utilization pilot program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing an agency after-school respite care utilization
2 pilot program.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. a. The Commissioner of Children and Families shall establish
8 a three-year agency after-school respite care utilization pilot
9 program to allow the parent or legal guardian of an individual under
10 the age of 21 with developmental disabilities who has been
11 authorized to receive respite care services from an agency providing
12 family support services to utilize agency after-school care hours as
13 agency weekend recreation respite care hours.

14 b. An agency providing family support services may participate
15 in the pilot program established pursuant to subsection a. of this
16 section if the agency:

17 (1) is located in Monmouth or Ocean County and is contracted
18 with the Division of Children's System of Care in the Department
19 of Children and Families to provide such services to an individual
20 under the age of 21 with developmental disabilities;

21 (2) submits an application to the Commissioner of Children and
22 Families on a form and in a manner prescribed by the
23 commissioner; and

24 (3) is authorized by the Division of Children's System of Care to
25 provide after-school respite care and agency-weekend respite care
26 as defined in subsection d. of this section and as provided in the
27 contract entered into between the agency and the division.

28 c. (1) A parent or legal guardian of an individual under the age
29 of 21 with developmental disabilities who has been authorized to
30 receive respite care services from an agency contracted with the
31 division to provide family support services and chooses to
32 participate in the pilot program may utilize authorized agency after-
33 school respite care hours for use as agency weekend recreation
34 respite care hours during an authorization period, provided that the
35 total number of respite care hours used does not exceed the number
36 of service hours that can be used during the authorization period.

37 (2) The utilization of agency after-school service care respite
38 care hours for use as agency weekend recreation respite care hours
39 pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection shall not:

40 (a) require an amendment to, modification of, or change in, the
41 individual's existing service authorization or authorization status; or

42 (b) increase, reduce, or limit the amount of authorized respite
43 hours or eligibility for respite care services an individual under the
44 age of 21 with developmental disabilities who has been authorized
45 to receive respite care services from an agency contracted with the
46 division to provide family support services is entitled to receive.

47 d. As used in this section:

1 “Agency after-school respite care” means respite care, including
2 social and recreational experiences, provided by a trained respite
3 care worker employed by an agency contracted with the Department
4 of Children and Families to an individual under the age of 21 with a
5 developmental disability at the agency’s site.

6 “Agency-weekend respite care” means social and recreational
7 experiences provided during the weekend by a trained respite care
8 worker employed by an agency contracted with the Department of
9 Children and Families to an individual under the age of 21 with
10 developmental disability outside of the individual’s home.

11 “Division” means the Division of Children’s System of Care in
12 the Department of Children and Families.

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

21
22 2. Within 90 days following the conclusion of the pilot program
23 the division, in consultation with the agencies participating in the
24 pilot program, shall submit to the Governor and, pursuant to section
25 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature, a report that
26 summarizes the implementation of the pilot program established
27 pursuant to subsection a. of section 1 of this act including, but not
28 limited to, feedback and recommendations on the program.

29
30 3. This act shall take effect 90 days next following enactment,
31 and shall expire upon submission of the report required pursuant to
32 section 2 of this act.

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35 STATEMENT

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37 This bill establishes a three-year agency after-school respite care
38 utilization pilot program to allow the parent or legal guardian of an
39 individual under the age of 21 with developmental disabilities who
40 has been authorized to receive respite care services from an agency
41 contracted with the Division of Children’s System of Care (the
42 division) to provide family support services to utilize agency after-
43 school care hours as agency weekend recreation respite care hours.

44 An agency providing family support services may participate in
45 the pilot program if the agency: is located in Monmouth or Ocean
46 Counties; submits an application to the Commissioner of Children
47 and Families (the commissioner); and is authorized by the division
48 to provide after-school respite care and agency-weekend respite

1 care as defined in the bill and as provided in the contract entered
2 into between the agency and the division.

3 The bill allows a parent or legal guardian who chooses to
4 participate in the pilot program to utilize authorized agency after-
5 school respite care hours for use as agency weekend recreation
6 respite care hours during an authorization period.

7 The utilization of agency after-school service care respite care
8 hours for use as agency weekend recreation respite care hours under
9 the program would not: require an amendment to, modification of,
10 or change in, the individual's existing service authorization or
11 authorization status; or increase, reduce, or limit the amount of
12 authorized respite hours or eligibility for respite care services an
13 individual is entitled to receive.

14 Within 90 days following the conclusion of the pilot program the
15 division, in consultation with agencies participating in the program,
16 is to submit to the Governor and the Legislature, a report that
17 summarizes the implementation of the pilot program including, but
18 not limited to, any feedback and recommendations on the program.
19 The program is to expire upon submission of the report.