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H.P. 59

House of Representatives, January 13, 2021

An Act To Improve Maine's Quality Rating System for Child Care Services

Submitted by the Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to Joint Rule 204. Received by the Clerk of the House on January 11, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative MEYER of Eliot.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

- **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3737, sub-§3,** as corrected by RR 2015, c. 1, §21, is amended to read:
- **3. Quality differential.** To the extent permitted by federal law, the department shall pay a differential rate for child care services that meet or that make substantial progress toward meeting nationally recognized quality standards, such as those standards required by the Head Start program or required for accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and shall do so from the Child Care Development Fund 25% Quality Set-aside funds or by other acceptable federal practices. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined by Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. The rules must establish a 4-step child care quality rating system with a minimum of 3 steps and must provide for graduated quality differential rates for step 2, step 3 and step 4 child care services steps that demonstrate that a child care provider meets or makes substantial progress toward meeting nationally recognized quality standards.
- Nothing in this subsection requires the department to pay a quality differential rate for child care services provided through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant.

17 SUMMARY

This bill removes language that requires a 4-step quality rating system for child care providers and instead allows the Department of Health and Human Services discretion in setting the appropriate number of steps, with a minimum of 3 steps required.