



132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1736

S.P. 682

In Senate, April 22, 2025

An Act to Increase the Supply of Child Care Services Through the Use of Contracts

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D M Grant", is positioned above the printed name of the Secretary of the Senate.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator RENY of Lincoln.

Cosponsored by Senators: BENNETT of Oxford, GROHOSKI of Hancock, MOORE of Washington, TIPPING of Penobscot, Representatives: BOYER of Cape Elizabeth, FARRIN of Jefferson, GRAHAM of North Yarmouth.

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

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3737, sub-§6 is enacted to read:

6. Direct contracts with child care providers. In order to increase the availability of child care in the State and to better stabilize payment practices for providers of child care, the office may directly contract with providers of child care to provide contracted child care slots to those providers in accordance with this subsection.

A. As used in this subsection, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

(1) "Direct contract" means a contract entered into by the office with a provider of child care to provide contracted child care slots.

(2) "Office" means the Office of Child and Family Services established in section 5308.

B. The office shall use direct contracts to increase the availability of child care for children under 3 years of age, children with disabilities and children in underserved geographic areas.

C. The office may use direct contracts to increase the availability of child care for children other than children identified in paragraph B based on priorities identified by the office. Such priorities may include, but are not limited to, homeless children, children who are receiving services under the child welfare system, children who need care during nontraditional hours, children for whom English is a 2nd language and other regional child care needs.

D. The office shall review regional needs assessment information to determine priorities for the use of direct contracts, including, but not limited to, needs assessment information from Head Start programs and early childhood learning and development resource groups.

E. To the extent permitted by federal law, the office may use funding from any public or private source for the purposes of this subsection.

F. The office shall adopt rules to implement this subsection. Rules adopted pursuant to this paragraph are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services to enter into direct contracts with providers of child care to provide child care slots for children under 3 years of age, children with disabilities and children in underserved geographic areas. It authorizes the office to use direct contracts to provide child care slots for other categories of children based on priorities identified by the office.