



# 132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

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Legislative Document

No. 1689

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H.P. 1124

House of Representatives, April 17, 2025

### **An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Commission to Study Expansion of Public Preschool and Early Care and Education**

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Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative HASENFUS of Readfield.  
Cosponsored by Senator PIERCE of Cumberland and  
Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, CROCKETT of Portland, Speaker FECTEAU of  
Biddeford, MURPHY of Scarborough, Senators: President DAUGHTRY of Cumberland,  
LIBBY of Cumberland.

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

2               **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §4273** is enacted to read:

3       **§4273. Elementary schools to include area for preschool or child care**

4               A public elementary school constructed after October 1, 2025 must include an area that  
5       may be used for preschool instruction or child care.

6               **Sec. 2. Department of Education to revise essential programs and services**  
7       **funding formula.** The Department of Education shall revise the essential programs and  
8       services funding formula under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, chapter 606-B  
9       regarding the method it uses to fund preschool instruction to use a method similar to that  
10      used for funding kindergarten instruction in order to provide incentives to school  
11      administrative units to provide full-day preschool instruction.

12              **Sec. 3. Department of Education to study early childhood education**  
13      **credentialing procedures and policies.** The Department of Education shall study early  
14      childhood educator and provider credentialing procedures and policies as they relate to  
15      nursery school teachers, preschool teachers, kindergarten teachers and elementary school  
16      teachers. The department shall identify barriers to the expansion of preschool programs in  
17      this State and recommend improvements to early childhood educator and provider  
18      credentialing procedures and policies that would provide greater flexibility in credentialing  
19      and facilitate the expansion of preschool programs by school administrative units.

20              **Sec. 4. Department of Health and Human Services to study standards and**  
21      **rules for early childhood educators and providers.** The Department of Health and  
22      Human Services, in collaboration with the Department of Education and stakeholders, shall  
23      study the standards and rules for early childhood educators and providers in order to better  
24      align standards and rules across all early childhood educators and providers and reduce  
25      barriers to the expansion of preschool programs and the provision of early childhood  
26      education services.

27              **Sec. 5. Reports.** The Department of Education and the Department of Health and  
28      Human Services shall each report their findings under sections 3 and 4, including any  
29      suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
30      and the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services no later than December  
31      3, 2025. The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint  
32      Standing Committee on Health and Human Services may each report out legislation based  
33      on the reports to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

34              **Sec. 6. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and  
35      allocations are made.

36       **EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF**

37       **Early Childhood Infrastructure Z315**

38       Initiative: Provides ongoing funds to establish 4 Education Specialist II positions to serve  
39       as regional coordinators to work with schools and potential partners in different regions of  
40       the State that are looking to start or expand public preschool programs.

41 <b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>
42       POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	4.000	4.000

1	Personal Services	\$342,690	\$463,597
2	All Other	\$37,312	\$37,312
3			
4	GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$380,002</u>	<u>\$500,909</u>
5	<b>Early Childhood Infrastructure Z315</b>		
6	Initiative: Provides one-time funds in fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27 for a preschool		
7	expansion grant program.		
8	<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>
9	All Other	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
10			
11	GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$2,000,000</u>	<u>\$2,000,000</u>
12			
13	<b>EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF</b>		
14	<b>DEPARTMENT TOTALS</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>
15			
16	<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>\$2,380,002</b>	<b>\$2,500,909</b>
17			
18	<b>DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS</b>	<u><b>\$2,380,002</b></u>	<u><b>\$2,500,909</b></u>

19 **SUMMARY**

20 This bill implements the recommendations of the Commission to Study Expansion of  
21 Public Preschool and Early Care and Education, which was established pursuant to Public  
22 Law 2023, chapter 477. It provides that a public elementary school constructed after  
23 October 1, 2025 must include an area that may be used for preschool instruction or child  
24 care.

25 It directs the Department of Education to revise the essential programs and services  
26 funding formula regarding the method it uses to fund preschool instruction to use a method  
27 similar to that used for funding kindergarten instruction in order to provide incentives to  
28 school administrative units to provide full-day preschool instruction.

29 It directs the Department of Education to study early childhood educator and provider  
30 credentialing procedures and policies as they relate to nursery school teachers, preschool  
31 teachers, kindergarten teachers and elementary school teachers. The department is required  
32 to identify barriers to the expansion of preschool programs in this State and recommend  
33 improvements to early childhood educator and provider credentialing procedures and  
34 policies that would provide greater flexibility in credentialing and facilitate the expansion  
35 of preschool programs by school administrative units.

36 It directs the Department of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with the  
37 Department of Education and stakeholders, to study the standards and rules for early  
38 childhood educators and providers in order to better align standards and rules across early  
39 childhood educators and providers and reduce barriers to the expansion of preschool  
40 programs and the provision of early childhood education services.

41 It requires the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human  
42 Services to each report their findings, including any suggested legislation, to the Joint  
43 Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee

1 on Health and Human Services no later than December 3, 2025. The Joint Standing  
2 Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Health  
3 and Human Services each may report out legislation based on the reports to the Second  
4 Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

5 The bill provides funding to establish 4 regional coordinator positions in the  
6 Department of Education to work with schools and potential partners in different regions  
7 of the State that are looking to start or expand public preschool programs. The bill also  
8 provides a total of \$4,000,000 for fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27 for a preschool  
9 expansion grant program.