

HB370: An early learning bill to support our current workforce and to build the Granite State's workforce of tomorrow

Today's Children: Tomorrow's Leaders New Hampshire is a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family. We have strong communities, deep ties to our history and one another, and a commitment to preserving the high quality of life we know and love. Because of our long history and the strong roots many of us have in our communities, we have seen the impact of one generation upon another. We take seriously our role as stewards of the next generation – working to ensure they have what they need to lead our state in the future.

Our Children's Future: What Science Tells Us Because our children face a future that's very different from what we've known, we need to ask ourselves if we are providing them today with the strong foundations they need for future growth and well-being. Fortunately, huge advances in developmental science in recent years have provided us with a blueprint for how to do just that. HB370 is a bill that reflects what we know children and families need to be healthy and thriving.

Bill Summary

- Makes an appropriation for the purpose of meeting new federal regulations relative to child care
- Appropriates \$7,000,000 in SFY2018 and \$8,000,000 in SFY2019 to the Department of Health and Human Services
- The appropriation will allow New Hampshire to comply with new federal regulations – final rules were released on September 30, 2016 – implementing the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 (CCDBG)
- The CCDBG reauthorized the Child Care and Development Fund

New Federal Regulations

Goals of the Child Care and Development Fund include:

- Protecting the health and safety of children in child care;
- Helping parents make informed consumer choices and access information to support child development;
- Supporting equal access to stable, high quality child care for low-income children; and
- Enhancing the quality of child care and better support the workforce.¹

The primary goal of the new federal regulations is to align policies for income-eligible families receiving child care assistance with those not receiving subsidy, giving them equal access to stable, high quality child care.

The reauthorized CCDBG recognizes that child care is a two-generation support and advances the dual goals of child care assistance and child care itself: supporting parents' work and promoting children's healthy development. Child care assistance helps parents afford reliable child care, which can help them gain and maintain stable employment; for example, one study found that single mothers of young children who received child care assistance were 39 percent more likely to still be employed after two years than those who did not receive any help paying for child care. Research also demonstrates the importance of high-quality child care to children's development: studies have shown that children who have attended high-quality care perform better on tests of cognitive skills, language ability, vocabulary, mathematical ability, memory and attention, and social skills.²

For many working families, this small bit of state assistance is what they need to get ahead.

The Impact Without a sufficient appropriation to meet the new federal regulations, income-eligible working families currently receiving subsidy to attend child care could be kicked off the rolls and a large and long waiting list for assistance would result. Working parents will have to choose between leaving their job – and possibly going on higher levels of state

¹ Overview of 2016 Child Care and Development Fund Final Rule. Digital image. Administration for Children and Families. Web.

² Implementing the Child Care and Development Block Grant Reauthorization: A Guide for States (n.d.): n. pag. CLASP. Web. <<http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/publication-1/ccdbg-guide-for-states-final.pdf>>.

assistance – or find substandard and unreliable care for their children, affecting their child's readiness to enter school prepared to succeed.