



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 273

February Session, 2012

* _____SB00273APP__040412_____*

AN ACT CONCERNING THE CARE 4 KIDS PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17b-749 of the 2012 supplement to the general
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
3 (*Effective October 1, 2012*):

4 (a) The Commissioner of Social Services shall establish and operate
5 a child care subsidy program to increase the availability, affordability
6 and quality of child care services for families with a parent or caretaker
7 who is working, attending high school or who receives cash assistance
8 under the temporary family assistance program from the Department
9 of Social Services and is participating in an approved education,
10 training, or other job preparation activity. Services available under the
11 child care program shall include the provision of child care subsidies
12 for children under the age of thirteen or children under the age of
13 nineteen with special needs. The department shall open and maintain
14 enrollment for the child care subsidy program and shall administer
15 such program within the existing budgetary resources available. The
16 department shall issue a notice on the department's Internet web site
17 and shall provide written notice to recipients of program benefits and
18 to service providers any time the department closes the program to
19 new applications, changes eligibility requirements, changes program
20 benefits or makes any other change to the program's status or terms,

21 provided the department shall not be required to issue such notice
22 when the department expands program eligibility. Any change in the
23 department's acceptance of new applications, eligibility requirements,
24 program benefits or any other change to the program's status or terms
25 for which the department is required to give notice pursuant to this
26 subsection, shall not be effective until thirty days after the department
27 issues such notice.

28 (b) The commissioner shall establish income standards for
29 applicants and recipients at a level to include a family with gross
30 income up to fifty per cent of the state-wide median income, except the
31 commissioner (1) may increase the income level to up to seventy-five
32 per cent of the state-wide median income, (2) upon the request of the
33 Commissioner of Children and Families, may waive the income
34 standards for adoptive families so that children adopted on or after
35 October 1, 1999, from the Department of Children and Families are
36 eligible for the child care subsidy program, and (3) on and after March
37 1, 2003, shall reduce the income eligibility level to up to fifty-five per
38 cent of the state-wide median income for applicants and recipients
39 who qualify based on their loss of eligibility for temporary family
40 assistance. The commissioner may adopt regulations in accordance
41 with chapter 54 to establish income criteria and durational
42 requirements for such waiver of income standards.

43 (c) The commissioner shall establish eligibility and program
44 standards including, but not limited to: (1) A priority intake and
45 eligibility system with preference given to serving recipients of
46 temporary family assistance who are employed or engaged in
47 employment activities under the department's "Jobs First" program,
48 working families whose temporary family assistance was discontinued
49 not more than five years prior to the date of application for the child
50 care subsidy program, teen parents, low-income working families,
51 adoptive families of children who were adopted from the Department
52 of Children and Families and who are granted a waiver of income
53 standards under subdivision (2) of subsection (b), and working
54 families who are at risk of welfare dependency; (2) health and safety

55 standards for child care providers not required to be licensed; (3) a
56 reimbursement system for child care services which account for
57 differences in the age of the child, number of children in the family, the
58 geographic region and type of care provided by licensed and
59 unlicensed caregivers, the cost and type of services provided by
60 licensed and unlicensed caregivers, successful completion of fifteen
61 hours of annual in-service training or credentialing of child care
62 directors and administrators, and program accreditation; (4)
63 supplemental payment for special needs of the child and extended
64 nontraditional hours; (5) an annual rate review process for providers
65 which assures that reimbursement rates are maintained at levels which
66 permit equal access to a variety of child care settings; (6) a sliding
67 reimbursement scale for participating families; (7) an administrative
68 appeals process; (8) an administrative hearing process to adjudicate
69 cases of alleged fraud and abuse and to impose sanctions and recover
70 overpayments; (9) an extended period of program and payment
71 eligibility when a parent who is receiving a child care subsidy
72 experiences a temporary interruption in employment or other
73 approved activity; and (10) a waiting list for the child care subsidy
74 program that reflects the priority and eligibility system set forth in
75 subdivision (1) of this subsection, which is reviewed periodically, with
76 the inclusion of this information in the annual report required to be
77 issued annually by the Department of Social Services to the Governor
78 and the General Assembly in accordance with subdivision (10) of
79 section 17b-733. Such action will include, but not be limited to, family
80 income, age of child, region of state and length of time on such waiting
81 list.

82 (d) Not later than January 1, 2011, an applicant determined to be
83 eligible for program benefits shall remain eligible for such benefits for
84 a period of not less than eight months from the date that such
85 applicant is determined to be eligible, provided the commissioner has
86 not determined, during such eight-month period, that the applicant's
87 circumstances have changed so as to render the applicant ineligible for
88 program benefits. The commissioner shall not make an eligibility

89 determination for a recipient of program benefits more than one time
90 per eight-month period, except as provided in subsection [(e)] (f) of
91 this section.

92 (e) Within available appropriations, a recipient of program benefits
93 who takes unpaid leave from her employment due to the birth or
94 impending birth of a child shall be granted not more than twelve
95 weeks of payment eligibility during the leave if: (1) The recipient
96 intends to return to work at the end of the unpaid leave; (2) the
97 recipient verifies that eligibility is needed to prevent the loss of a slot
98 in a school-based program or licensed child care setting; and (3) the
99 child receiving child care services under the program continues to
100 attend the program during the recipient's leave.

101 [(e)] (f) Not later than October 15, 2011, the commissioner shall
102 submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to
103 the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having
104 cognizance of matters relating to human services and appropriations
105 and the budgets of state agencies concerning eligibility
106 redeterminations made on an eight-month basis. Such report shall
107 include an analysis of overpayments of program benefits made by the
108 department and administrative costs incurred by the department as a
109 result of eligibility redeterminations made on an eight-month basis. On
110 and after October 15, 2011, the commissioner may make eligibility
111 redeterminations on a six-month basis if, after January 1, 2011, the
112 department's overpayments of program benefits have increased in
113 comparison with the period between January 1, 2010, and December
114 31, 2010, as a result of having an eight-month eligibility
115 redetermination period.

116 [(f)] (g) A provider under the child care subsidy program that
117 qualifies for eligibility and subsequently receives payment for child
118 care services for recipients under this section shall be reimbursed for
119 such services until informed by the Department of Social Services of
120 the recipient's ineligibility.

