

1 Introduced by Committee on Human Services

2 Date:

3 Subject: Human services; child care; child care financial assistance program;  
4 student loan repayment assistance; scholarships

5 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to increase the  
6 market rates used to make benefit determinations within the Child Care  
7 Financial Assistance Program. It proposes to enable expenditures for the  
8 modernization of the Bright Futures Information System. This bill also  
9 proposes to appropriate funds for scholarships and student loan repayment  
10 assistance for individuals employed by a regulated, privately operated center-  
11 based child care program or family child care home. This bill proposes to  
12 allow certain family child care providers to use their experience to meet the  
13 Department for Children and Families' educational requirements.

14 An act relating to Vermont's child care and early learning system

15 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

16 \* \* \* Findings \* \* \*

17 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

18 The General Assembly finds that:

19

\* \* \* Child Care Financial Assistance Program \* \* \*

Sec. 2. 33 V.S.A. § 3512 is amended to read:

§ 3512. CHILD CARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM;

ELIGIBILITY

(a)(1) The Child Care Financial Assistance Program is established to subsidize, to the extent that funds permit, the costs of child care for families that need child care services in order to obtain employment, to retain employment, or to obtain training leading to employment. Families seeking employment shall ~~not~~ be entitled to participate in the Program for ~~a period in excess of one month~~ up to three months, unless that period is extended by the Commissioner.

\* \* \*

(4) By September 30, 2021, a regulated center-based child care program or family child care home as defined by the Department in rule shall not receive funds pursuant to this subsection that are in excess of what the center-based child care program or family child care home charges for tuition.

\* \* \*

Sec. 3. CHILD CARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

In fiscal year 2020, \$ X is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department for Children and Families’ Child Development Division for the

1 purpose of adjusting the rate in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program as  
2 follows:

3 \* \* \* Bright Futures Information System \* \* \*

4 Sec. 4. BRIGHT FUTURES INFORMATION SYSTEM;

5 MODERNIZATION PLAN

6 Up to \$100,000.00 appropriated for the Child Care Financial Assistance  
7 Program pursuant to Sec. 3 of this act may be used by the Department for  
8 Children and Families' Child Development Division for the purpose of  
9 developing a modernization plan for the Bright Futures Information System.  
10 On or before Dec. 1, 2019, the Commissioner shall submit a report to the  
11 House Committees on Appropriations and on Human Services and to the  
12 Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare providing:

13 (1) a project plan and timeline;

14 (2) a fiscal analysis of the plan; and

15 (3) the project team tasked with overseeing the project's

16 implementation.

17 \* \* \* Student Loan Repayment Assistance and T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships \* \* \*

18 Sec. 5. STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT ASSISTANCE

19 (a)(1) In fiscal year 2020, \$X is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
20 Department for Children and Families' Child Development Division, which  
21 shall use the funds to provide student loan repayments to any individual

1 employed by a privately operated center-based child care program or family  
2 child care home that is regulated by the Division.

3 (2) An eligible individual shall:

4 (A) work in a privately operated center-based child care program or  
5 family child care home that is regulated by the Division for at least an average  
6 of 30 hours per week for 48 weeks of the year; and

7 (B) receive an annual salary of not more than \$40,000.00.

8 (3) Upon submission of an application to the Division, an individual  
9 may receive up to \$2,000.00 annually in student loan repayment assistance for  
10 work in a private preschool classroom and up to \$3,000.00 annually in student  
11 loan repayments for work in an infant or toddler classroom.

12 (b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that an appropriation be made  
13 in fiscal years 2021 through 2024 to accomplish the purpose set forth in  
14 subsection (a) of this section.

15 (c)(1) The Division shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines  
16 necessary to implement the provisions of this section.

17 (2) Funds used from this appropriation shall be expended for repayment  
18 of student loans. Student loan repayments shall be available pursuant to this  
19 section on a first-come, first-served basis until the appropriation is depleted.

1        (d) Otherwise eligible individuals with access to alternative loan  
2        forgiveness or loan repayment programs shall not be considered eligible for  
3        repayment assistance under this section.

4        Sec. 6. T.E.A.C.H. EARLY CHILDHOOD VERMONT SCHOLARSHIP  
5                PROJECT

6        (a) In fiscal year 2020, \$X is appropriated from the General Fund to the  
7        Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VTAEYC) for the  
8        purpose of expanding eligible recipients to include any individual employed by  
9        a privately operated center-based child care program or family child care home  
10       that is regulated by the Department for Children and Families' Child  
11       Development Division.

12       (b) VTAEYC shall adopt policies, procedures, and guidelines necessary to  
13       implement the provisions of this section. Scholarships distributed pursuant to  
14       this section shall be available on a first-come, first-served basis until any  
15       designated funds are depleted.

16       (c) It is the intent of the General Assembly that appropriations be made in  
17       fiscal years 2021 through 2024 to accomplish the purpose set forth in  
18       subsection (a) of this section.

1       Sec. 7. REPORT; T.E.A.C.H. AND STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT

2                   ASSISTANCE EVALUATION

3           On or before January 1, 2024, Commissioner for Children and Families, in  
4           consultation with stakeholders, shall submit a report to the House Committee  
5           on Human Services and to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare:

6                   (1) evaluating the effectiveness of the student loan repayment program  
7           set forth in Sec. 5 of this act and the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Vermont  
8           Scholarship Project set forth in Sec. 6 of this act; and

9                   (2) making recommendations as to whether the programs should be  
10           continued and if so, the appropriate funding amount and source.

11                                   \* \* \* Educational Variance \* \* \*

12       Sec. 8. EDUCATIONAL VARIANCE

13           (a) Through July 1, 2024, the Commissioner for Children and Families may  
14           issue a variance to the Child Development Division’s rule to allow a family  
15           child care provider with ten or more continuous years of experience as of July  
16           1, 2019 to use his or her professional experience to satisfy the Division’s  
17           education and experience requirements regardless of whether the family child  
18           care provider intends to attain additional educational advancement. To be  
19           eligible for a variance, the family child care provider shall:

20                   (1) work in a regulated program;

1           (2) have demonstrated capacity for providing quality child care and  
2 early learning; and

3           (3) not have any cited violations of the Division’s rules.

4           (b) The Commissioner shall review any violation occurring while a family  
5 child care provider is under variance and may determine to revoke the variance  
6 depending upon the seriousness and circumstances of the violation.

7           \*\*\* Early Care and Development Program Funds \*\*\*

8 **Sec. 9. REALLOCATION OF EARLY CARE AND DEVELOPMENT**

9 **PROGRAM FUNDS AND PROGRAM CESSATION**

10           In fiscal year 2020, any funds previously appropriated the Department for  
11 Children and Families’ Child Development Division for the Early Care and  
12 Development Program established in X shall be available for the Child Care  
13 Financial Assistance Program funding amount in fiscal year 2020. The Early  
14 Care and Development Program shall cease operation on June 30, 2019.

15   \*\*\* Effective Date \*\*\*

16 **Sec. 10. EFFECTIVE DATE**

17           This act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.