

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Health and Welfare to which was referred House Bill
3 No. 531 entitled “An act relating to Vermont’s child care and early learning
4 system” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and recommends
5 that the Senate propose to the House that the bill be amended by striking out all
6 after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

7 * * * Legislative Intent * * *

8 Sec. 1. LEGISLATIVE INTENT

9 It is the intent of the General Assembly that:

10 (1) Vermont strives to enhance the capacity and affordability of the
11 child care and early learning system and support the retention, growth, and
12 professional development of its workforce;

13 (2) investments and initiatives set forth in this act are meant to
14 compliment the anticipated redesign of the Child Care Financial Assistance
15 Program, which shall be monitored by the General Assembly; and

16 (3) investments set forth in this act are meant to be the first of many
17 aimed at strengthening families and the economy.

18 * * * Child Care Financial Assistance Program * * *

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

20 § 3512. CHILD CARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM;

21 ELIGIBILITY

1 (B) 75 percent of the available financial assistance benefit for
2 families at 150 percent of the current federal poverty guidelines;

3 (C) 50 percent of the available financial assistance benefit for
4 families at 200 percent of the current federal poverty guidelines; and

5 (D) 10 percent of the available financial assistance benefit for
6 families at 300 percent of the current federal poverty guidelines; and

7 (2) align rates of reimbursement for preschool age children participating
8 in CCFAP in fiscal year 2020 with the market rates reported on the 2012
9 Vermont Market Rate Survey, align rates of reimbursement for school age
10 children participating in CCFAP in fiscal year 2020 with the market rates
11 reported on the 2010 Vermont Market Rate Survey, and maintain rates of
12 reimbursement for infants and toddlers participating in CCFAP in fiscal year
13 2020 with the market rates reported on the 2017 Vermont Market Rate Survey.

14 * * * Early Child Care and Development Program Grant Funds * * *

15 Sec. 4. REALLOCATION OF EARLY CHILD CARE AND
16 DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FUNDS AND PROGRAM
17 CESSATION

18 In fiscal year 2020, any funds proposed to be appropriated to the
19 Department for Children and Families' Child Development Division for the
20 Early Care and Child Development Grant Program established pursuant to
21 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 85, §§ E.318 and E.318.1 and 2018 (Sp. Sess.)

1 Acts and Resolves No. 11, § E.318 shall be available to fund the Child Care
2 Financial Assistance Program in fiscal year 2020 and thereafter. The Early
3 Care and Child Development Grant Program shall cease operation on June 30,
4 2019.

5 Sec. 4a. 33 V.S.A. § 3515 is added to read:

6 § 3515. INFANT AND TODDLER CHILD CARE PROVIDER GRANTS

7 (a) There is established an infant and toddler child care provider grant
8 program administered by the Division for the purpose of expanding infant and
9 toddler child care capacity. The Division shall award grants to new or existing
10 center-based child care programs and family child care homes in accordance
11 with subsections (b) and (c) of this section.

12 (b) An eligible applicant shall:

13 (1) be a regulated, privately-operated center-based child care program or
14 family child care home in good standing;

15 (2) participate in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP)
16 and maintain the enrollment of CCFAP supported children **at a level of at**
17 **least 30 percent;**

18 (3) provide year-round, full-day child care and early learning services
19 for infants and toddlers; and

20 (4) participate in the SStep Ahead Recognition System (STARS).

1 (c) In determining how to distribute grants pursuant to this section, the
2 Division shall give priority to center-based child care programs and family
3 child care homes operating or opening in underserved regions of the State.

4 (d) The Division shall provide grants pursuant to this section as funds
5 allow. Center-based child care programs or family child care homes receiving
6 a grant shall remain in compliance with the Division’s rules, continue
7 participation in STARS, and maintain high enrollment of children receiving a
8 CCFAP subsidy.

9 Sec. 4b. APPROPRIATION; INFANT AND TODDLER CHILD CARE

10 PROVIDER GRANT

11 In fiscal year 2020, \$1,250,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to
12 the Department for Children and Families’ Child Development Division for the
13 purpose of funding the infant and toddler child care provider grants set forth in
14 Sec. 4a of this act.

15 * * * Bright Futures Information System * * *

16 Sec. 5. BRIGHT FUTURES INFORMATION SYSTEM;

17 MODERNIZATION PLAN

18 In fiscal year 2020, up to \$100,000.00 appropriated for the Child Care
19 Financial Assistance Program pursuant to Sec. 3 of this act may be used by the
20 Department for Children and Families’ Child Development Division for the
21 purpose of developing a modernization plan for the Bright Futures Information

1 System. On or before Dec. 1, 2019, the Commissioner shall submit a report to
2 the House Committees on Appropriations and on Human Services and to the
3 Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Health and Welfare providing:

4 (1) an initial project plan and timeline;

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

6 (3) the project team tasked with overseeing the project's
7 implementation.

8 Sec. 5a. BRIGHT FUTURES INFORMATION SYSTEM;

9 MODERNIZATION PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND

10 IMPLEMENTATION

11 (a) In fiscal year 2020, \$200,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund
12 to the Department for Children and Families' Child Development Division to
13 begin development of the project plan established pursuant to Sec. 5 of this act.

14 (b) In fiscal year 2020, \$1,000,000.00 is appropriated one time from the
15 General Fund to the Department for Children and Families' Child
16 Development Division to begin implementation of the plan established
17 pursuant to Sec. 5 of this act.

18 (c) Any unused funds appropriated pursuant to Sec. 3 of this act or pursuant
19 to subsection (a) of this section shall be reserved to begin implementation of
20 the plan developed pursuant to Sec. 5 of this act.

1 * * * Child Care Provider Incentives and Professional
2 Development Opportunities * * *

3 Sec. 6. [Deleted.]

4 Sec. 7. [Deleted.]

5 Sec. 7a. **33 V.S.A. § 3516 is added to read:**

6 **§ 3516. GRANT INCENTIVIZING CHILD CARE PROFESSION**

7 (a) **There is established** an incentive program that fosters an interest in the
8 child care profession among students, including students participating in adult
9 education. The incentive program shall provide grants to fund a combination
10 of opportunities for students employed in regulated, privately operated center-
11 based child care programs and family child care homes, including:

- 12 (1) scholarships;
13 (2) paid internships; and
14 (3) hiring or retention bonuses, or both.

15 (b) The Division shall administer the incentive program set forth in this
16 section or contract for its administration and adopt policies, procedures, and
17 guidelines necessary to implement the provisions of this section. Grants shall
18 be available pursuant to this section on a first-come, first-served basis until
19 appropriated funds are depleted.

20 (c) An individual shall not simultaneously receive funds from the Vermont
21 Department of Labor to complete a paid internship in regulated, privately

1 operated center-based child care programs and family child care homes while
2 receiving funds pursuant to this section.

3 **Sec. 7b. APPROPRIATION; GRANT INCENTIVIZING CHILD CARE**
4 **PROFESSION**

5 **In fiscal year 2020, \$600,000.00 is appropriated from the General Fund**
6 **to the Department for Children and Families' Child Development Division**
7 **for the purpose funding the incentive program set forth in 33 V.S.A.**
8 **§ 3516.**

9 **Sec. 7c. TECHNICAL CENTERS; CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

10 **ASSOCIATE CREDENTIAL**

11 (a) In fiscal year 2020, \$50,000.00 is appropriated **one time** from the
12 General Fund to the Department for Children and Families' Child
13 Development Division to facilitate the implementation of the Council for
14 Professional Regulation's Child Development Associate Credential curriculum
15 in technical centers throughout the State.

16 (b) Any unused funds appropriated pursuant to this section shall be
17 reserved to fund grants set forth in **33 V.S.A. § 3516** for students who
18 completed the Child Development Associate Credential at a Vermont technical
19 center.

1 * * * Evaluation of Expenditures and Programs * * *

2 Sec. 8. REPORT; EVALUATION OF EXPENDITURES AND PROGRAMS

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

7 (1) evaluating the effectiveness of the expenditure in the Child Care
8 Financial Assistance Program set forth in Sec. 3 of this act, **the infant and**
9 **toddler child care provider grants set forth in 33 V.S.A. § 3515, the grant**
10 incentivizing the child care profession set forth in 33 V.S.A. § 3516, and the
11 expenditure for technical centers' curriculum development set forth in Sec. 7b
12 of this act;

13 (2) making recommendations as to whether the expenditures and
14 programs in **Secs. 3 and 7b of this act and in 33 V.S.A. §§ 3515–3516** should
15 be continued and, if so, the appropriate funding amount and source; and

16 (3) evaluating how the expenditures and programs in **Secs. 3 and 7b of**
17 **this act and in 33 V.S.A. §§ 3515–3516** contribute to Vermont's children and
18 young people reaching their potential pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 2311.

1 * * * Variance for Educational and Experiential Requirements * * *

2 Sec. 9. EDUCATIONAL AND EXPERIENTIAL VARIANCE

3 (a) For individuals operating or employed in a registered family child care
4 home or as a director or teacher associate in a center-based program for 10 or
5 more years prior to September 1, 2016, the Commissioner for Children and
6 Families or designee may issue a variance to the Child Development
7 Division’s rule regarding educational and experiential requirements to allow an
8 individual to maintain employment in that same role regardless of whether the
9 family child care provider, family child care assistant, director, or teacher
10 associate intends to attain the otherwise necessary educational requirements.
11 To be eligible for a variance, the family child care provider, family child care
12 assistant, director, or teacher associate shall:

13 (1) work continuously in a regulated program with a full license in good
14 standing; and

15 (2) meet the Divisions’ educational and experiential requirements in
16 place prior to the adoption of the new rule, which was effective beginning
17 September 1, 2016.

18 (b) The Commissioner or designee shall review any violation occurring in a
19 regulated program where a family child care provider, family child care
20 assistant, director, or teacher associate is under variance and may revoke the

1 variance granted by this section depending upon the seriousness and
2 circumstances of the violation.

3 (c) Any variance granted under this section shall be terminated on July 1,
4 2024, and extensions shall not be granted beyond that date.

5 * * * Children's Integrated Services * * *

6 Sec. 10. REIMBURSEMENT RATES; PROVIDERS OF CHILDREN'S
7 INTEGRATED SERVICES

8 In fiscal year 2020, \$309,714.00 is appropriated from the General Fund to
9 the Department for Children and Families' Children's Integrated Services for
10 the purpose of increasing reimbursement rates to providers.

11 * * * Effective Date * * *

12 Sec. 11. EFFECTIVE DATE

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

14

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16

17 (Committee vote: _____)

18

19

Senator _____

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FOR THE COMMITTEE