

2024 -- S 2608

LC004532

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2024

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- OFFICE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Introduced By: Senators DiMario, Miller, Lauria, Cano, Valverde, and Lawson

Date Introduced: March 01, 2024

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 42-7.2 of the General Laws entitled "Office of Health and Human
2 Services" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **42-7.2-21. Early childhood mental health hub - Pilot program.**

4 (a) There is hereby established a five (5) year pilot program to be administered by the
5 executive office of health and human services.

6 The executive office of health and human services shall establish an early childhood mental
7 health hub program focused on improving access to infant and early childhood mental health
8 services for children under age six (6) and their families. The hub shall be funded as a pilot program
9 funded for a minimum of five (5) years to:

10 (1) Train and support infant and early childhood mental health professionals in Rhode
11 Island;

12 (2) Maintain a registry of infant and early childhood mental health professionals and their
13 qualifications;

14 (3) Monitor the availability of services, new national recommendations, and advancements
15 in interventions/therapies; and

16 (4) Make recommendations to Medicaid and behavioral health systems to address gaps.

17 (b) The early childhood mental health hub shall be designed to integrate and align with the
18 Rhode Island children's behavioral health system of care managed by the executive office of health

1 and human services. Needs outlined in the Rhode Island infant early childhood mental health plan
2 shall be early priorities for the hub including:

3 (1) Offer state-supported training and ongoing implementation support for clinicians to
4 become certified and to use evidence-based, family-based dyadic therapy models for young
5 children under age six (6), such as Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP), Parent-Child Interaction
6 Therapy (PCIT), and Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up (ABC)). Building the training
7 capacity in the state by holding train-the-trainers should be considered.

8 (2) Offer state-supported training and ongoing implementation support on
9 developmentally-appropriate screenings to identify mental health challenges in young children
10 from infancy to age six (6).

11 (3) Offer state-supported training and ongoing implementation support for clinicians to
12 conduct developmentally-appropriate evaluations of mental health in young children under age six
13 (6).

14 (4) To advance equitable access to services and reduce racial and ethnic disparities,
15 increase the number of infant and early childhood qualified mental health clinicians who are
16 bilingual and/or represent the diverse races, ethnicities, and cultures of young children and families
17 in Rhode Island.

18 (5) Serve as a community resource for families and health professionals to find and connect
19 with effective therapeutic services for young children suffering with mental health challenges.

20 (c) The general assembly shall appropriate the funds required to administer the pilot
21 program established pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

22 (d) The secretary shall report a summary of the programs activities, accomplishments,
23 anticipated activities to be implemented in the future, consolidated financials and disbursements,
24 and recommendations to enhance or improve the program to the governor, the speaker of the house
25 and the president of the senate by January 1, 2025 and annually thereafter.

26 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- OFFICE OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES

1 This act would require the executive office of health and human services to establish an
2 early childhood mental health hub program focused on improving access to infant and early
3 childhood mental health services for children under age six (6) and their families. The hub would
4 be funded as a pilot program funded for a minimum of five (5) years.

5 This act would take effect July 1, 2024.

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