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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- RHODE ISLAND CHILDCARE IS ESSENTIAL ACT

Introduced By: Senators Vargas, Mack, DiMario, Murray, DiPalma, Lawson, Gallo,
Urso, and Bissaillon

Date Introduced: February 13, 2025

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Legislative findings.

2 The general assembly finds that:

3 (1) Access to affordable, high-quality childcare is essential to support labor force
4 participation of parents with children from infancy through age twelve (12) years and to maximize
5 the economic productivity of the state.

6 (2) Access to affordable, high-quality childcare is essential for all parents to achieve
7 economic security and independence, particularly for mothers who often have lower lifetime
8 earnings because they earn lower wages, work reduced hours, and take longer breaks from work in
9 order to care for children.

10 (3) High-quality childcare programs, staffed by qualified and effective educators, are
11 essential for children to promote healthy development and optimize learning during early childhood
12 and school-age years.

13 (4) A landmark report by the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council found
14 that children begin learning at birth and the adults that provide for the care and education of children
15 bear a great responsibility for their health, development, and learning -- setting the critical
16 foundation for lifelong progress. The report recommends that states work to increase the
17 qualifications and compensation of childcare educators, including those who care for infants and
18 toddlers.

19 (5) Childcare educators are among the lowest paid workers in Rhode Island. In 2023, the

1 median wage of a childcare educator in Rhode Island was sixteen dollars and ninety-one cents
2 (\$16.91) per hour.

3 (6) The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides significant funding to
4 Rhode Island through the Child Care and Development Block Grant and has established clear
5 guidelines for setting rates that provide low-income families with "equal access" to the childcare
6 market as required under federal law. The "equal access" guideline is to pay rates equal to or above
7 the seventy-fifth percentile of a recent market rate survey.

8 (7) The Rhode Island Governor's Workforce Board recommends that Rhode Island pay
9 child care rates that meet or exceed the equal access standard as a first step to support program
10 quality and to improved wages and retention of child care educators. As of 2024, there were
11 seventeen (17) states that met or exceeded the equal access standard, including New York and
12 Vermont. Rhode Island's base rate for infant care in a licensed child care center was at the 5th
13 percentile of the 2024 market rate survey, well below the 75th percentile equal access standard.

14 (8) The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has also established a clear
15 guideline for determining whether childcare is affordable. Currently, the federal guideline for
16 affordability is that families should pay no more than seven percent (7%) of family income for
17 childcare. Using that guideline, almost all families with young children in the State of Rhode Island
18 need a subsidy to afford the cost of high-quality childcare staffed by qualified, effective, and fairly-
19 compensated educators.

20 (9) The Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant focuses on helping lower income
21 families access child care, limiting the use of federal funds to families with incomes at or below
22 eighty-five percent (85%) of the state median income (\$106,529) for a family of four in Rhode
23 Island in Federal Fiscal Year 2025), and allows states to waive this limit for children who are
24 members of a protected population such as children in foster care. As of 2024, there were sixteen
25 (16) states that set family income eligibility limits at or above eight-five percent (85%) of state
26 median income, including Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont.

27 SECTION 2. Title 40 of the General Laws entitled "HUMAN SERVICES" is hereby
28 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

29 CHAPTER 6.7

30 RHODE ISLAND CHILDCARE IS ESSENTIAL ACT

31 **40-6.7-1. Childcare assistance - Families or assistance units eligible.**

32 (a) The department of human services shall provide appropriate childcare to every
33 participant who is eligible for cash assistance and who requires childcare in order to meet the work
34 requirements in accordance with this chapter.

1 **(b) Low-income childcare.** The department shall provide childcare to all other families with
2 incomes at or below eighty-five percent (85%) of the state median income, the low-income family
3 eligibility benchmark in the federal Childcare and Development Block Grant if, and to the extent,
4 these other families require childcare in order to work at paid employment and/or to participate in
5 training, apprenticeship, internship, on-the-job training, work experience, work immersion, or other
6 job-readiness/job- attachment programs sponsored or funded by the human resource investment
7 council (governor's workforce board) or state agencies that are part of the coordinated program
8 system pursuant to § 42-102-11. The department shall also provide childcare assistance to families
9 with incomes below eighty-five percent (85%) of the state median income when such assistance is
10 necessary for a member of these families to enroll or maintain enrollment in a Rhode Island public
11 institution of higher education.

12 **(c) No family/assistance unit shall be eligible for childcare assistance under this chapter if**
13 the combined value of its liquid resources exceeds one million dollars (\$1,000,000), which
14 corresponds to the amount permitted by the federal government under the state plan and set forth
15 in the administrative rulemaking process by the department. As used in this section "liquid
16 resources" means any interest(s) in property in the form of cash or other financial instruments or
17 accounts that are readily convertible to cash or cash equivalents. These resources include, but are
18 not limited to: cash, bank, credit union, or other financial institution savings, checking, and money
19 market accounts; certificates of deposit or other time deposits; stocks; bonds; mutual funds; and
20 other similar financial instruments or accounts. These resources do not include educational savings
21 accounts, plans, or programs; retirement accounts, plans, or programs; or accounts held jointly with
22 another adult, not including a spouse. The department is authorized to promulgate rules and
23 regulations to determine the ownership and source of the funds in the joint account.

24 **(d) The parent or caretaker relative of any family applying for childcare assistance may**
25 voluntarily access the state's office of child support services for assistance in locating the non-
26 custodial parent, establishing parentage, establishing a child support and/or medical order, and
27 enforcement of the order, but this shall not be a requirement to qualify for or access childcare
28 assistance.

29 **(e) For purposes of this section, "appropriate childcare" means childcare, including infant,**
30 toddler, preschool, nursery school, and school age, that is provided by a person or organization
31 qualified, approved, and authorized to provide the care by the state agency or agencies designated
32 to make the determinations in accordance with the provisions set forth in this section.

33 **(f)(1) Families with incomes at or below one hundred percent (100%) of the applicable**
34 federal poverty level guidelines shall be provided with free childcare. Families with incomes

1 greater than one hundred percent (100%) of the applicable federal poverty guideline shall be
2 required to pay for some portion of the childcare they receive, according to a sliding-fee scale
3 adopted by the department in the department's rules, not to exceed seven percent (7%) of income
4 as defined in subsection (h) of this section.

5 (2) Families who are receiving childcare assistance and who become ineligible for
6 childcare assistance as a result of their incomes exceeding eighty-five percent (85%) of state
7 median income shall continue to be eligible for childcare assistance until their incomes exceeds
8 one hundred percent (100%) of the state median income. To be eligible, the families must continue
9 to pay for some portion of the childcare they receive, as indicated in a sliding-fee scale adopted in
10 the department's rules, not to exceed seven percent (7%) of income as defined in subsection (h) of
11 this section, and in accordance with other eligibility standards.

12 (g) In determining the type of childcare to be provided to a family, the department shall
13 take into account the cost of available childcare options, the suitability of the type of care available
14 for the child; and the parent's preference as to the type of childcare.

15 (h) For purposes of this section, "income" for families receiving cash assistance under §§
16 40-5.2-10(g)(2) and 40-5.2-10(g)(3), and income for other families shall mean gross, earned, and
17 unearned income as determined by departmental regulations.

18 (i) The caseload estimating conference established by chapter 17 of title 35 shall forecast
19 the expenditures for childcare in accordance with the provisions of § 35-17-1.

20 (j) In determining eligibility for childcare assistance for children of members of reserve
21 components called to active duty during a time of conflict, the department shall freeze the family
22 composition and the family income of the reserve component member as it was in the month prior
23 to the month of leaving for active duty. This freeze shall continue until the individual is officially
24 discharged from active duty.

25 **40-6.7-2. Childcare assistance - Rates established.**

26 (a) Effective July 1, 2025, the rates to be paid by the department of human services and the
27 department of children, youth and families for licensed childcare centers and family childcare
28 homes shall be updated to reflect findings from the 2024 Rhode Island childcare market rate survey
29 and shall be implemented in a tiered manner, reflective of the quality rating the provider has
30 achieved within the state's quality rating system outlined in § 42-12-23.1. All rates shall meet or
31 exceed the federal equal access benchmark (seventy-fifth percentile of the most recent Rhode Island
32 childcare market rate survey) and programs that have achieved a high-quality rating shall be paid
33 rates at or above the ninetieth percentile of the most recent Rhode Island childcare market rate
34 survey. Weekly rates shall be paid as follows:

1 LICENSED CHILDCARE CENTERS & FAMILY CHILDCARE HOMES

2 Tier One Tier Two Tier Three Tier Four Tier Five

3 Infant/Toddler \$356 \$363 \$371 \$378 \$385

4 Preschool \$312 \$320 \$329 \$337 \$345

5 School-Age \$280 \$287 \$295 \$303 \$310

6 The rates for licensed family childcare providers paid by the department of human services,
7 and the department of children, youth and families are determined through collective bargaining.
8 The rates for infant/toddler and preschool age children paid to licensed family childcare providers
9 by both departments is implemented in a tiered manner that reflects the quality rating the provider
10 has achieved in accordance with § 42-12-23.1.

11 (b) Beginning July 1, 2025, childcare providers serving infants under age eighteen (18)
12 months who are receiving childcare assistance shall be paid an additional infant bonus rate equal
13 to fifty percent (50%) of the toddler rate by the department of human services and the department
14 of children, youth, and families to help stabilize and expand access to quality infant care and to
15 help cover the costs associated with the required staff: child ratio for infants under age eighteen
16 (18) months.

17 (c) By June 30, 2027, and triennially thereafter, the department of human services in
18 consultation with the department of labor and training shall conduct an independent survey or
19 certify an independent survey of the then-current weekly market rates for childcare in Rhode Island
20 and shall post the findings from the market rate survey on the department's public website. The
21 departments of human services and labor and training will jointly determine the survey criteria
22 including, but not limited to, rate categories and sub-categories.

23 (d) In order to expand the accessibility and availability of quality childcare, the department
24 of human services is authorized to establish, by regulation, alternative or incentive rates for quality
25 enhancements, innovative or specialized childcare, and alternative methodologies of childcare
26 delivery, including nontraditional delivery systems and collaborations.

27 (e) All childcare providers have the option to be paid every two (2) weeks and have the
28 option of automatic direct deposit and/or electronic funds transfer of payments.

29 (f) Effective July 1, 2025, full-time childcare assistance payment rates cover thirty (30) to
30 forty-five (45) hours of care per week. Any child needing forty-five (45) to sixty (60) hours of care
31 per week will be paid at a super full-time rate of at least ten dollars (\$10) per hour. No child will
32 be enrolled in the Childcare Assistance Program for more than sixty (60) hours per week.

33 (g) Effective January 1, 2026, all childcare assistance payments to childcare providers shall
34 be paid prospectively, on or before the Friday preceding the beginning of the childcare service

1 period, based on children's authorized enrollment.

2 (h) Effective January 1, 2026 and annually thereafter, the department of human services
3 shall pay a registration fee for each child enrolled in the childcare assistance program to the
4 childcare centers where the children are enrolled. The per child registration fee for childcare centers
5 shall be equivalent to the per child annual registration fees paid to family childcare providers.

6 SECTION 3. Section 40-5.2-20 of the General Laws in Chapter 40-5.2 entitled "The Rhode
7 Island Works Program" is hereby repealed.

8 ~~**40-5.2-20. Childcare assistance — Families or assistance units eligible. [Effective**~~
9 ~~**January 1, 2025.]**~~

10 ~~(a) The department shall provide appropriate child care to every participant who is eligible~~
11 ~~for cash assistance and who requires child care in order to meet the work requirements in~~
12 ~~accordance with this chapter.~~

13 ~~(b) **Low-income child care.** The department shall provide child care to all other working~~
14 ~~families with incomes at or below two hundred sixty one percent (261%) of the federal poverty~~
15 ~~level if, and to the extent, these other families require child care in order to work at paid~~
16 ~~employment as defined in the department's rules and regulations. The department shall also provide~~
17 ~~child care to families with incomes below two hundred sixty one percent (261%) of the federal~~
18 ~~poverty level if, and to the extent, these families require child care to participate on a short-term~~
19 ~~basis, as defined in the department's rules and regulations, in training, apprenticeship, internship,~~
20 ~~on-the-job training, work experience, work immersion, or other job-readiness/job attachment~~
21 ~~program sponsored or funded by the human resource investment council (governor's workforce~~
22 ~~board) or state agencies that are part of the coordinated program system pursuant to § 42-102-11.~~
23 ~~Effective from January 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, the department shall also provide childcare~~
24 ~~assistance to families with incomes below one hundred eighty percent (180%) of the federal poverty~~
25 ~~level when such assistance is necessary for a member of these families to enroll or maintain~~
26 ~~enrollment in a Rhode Island public institution of higher education provided that eligibility to~~
27 ~~receive funding is capped when expenditures reach \$200,000 for this provision. Effective July 1,~~
28 ~~2022 through December 31, 2024, the department shall also provide childcare assistance to families~~
29 ~~with incomes below two hundred percent (200%) of the federal poverty level when such assistance~~
30 ~~is necessary for a member of these families to enroll or maintain enrollment in a Rhode Island~~
31 ~~public institution of higher education. Effective January 1, 2025, the department shall also provide~~
32 ~~childcare assistance to families with incomes below two hundred sixty one percent (261%) of the~~
33 ~~federal poverty level when such assistance is necessary for a member of these families to enroll or~~
34 ~~maintain enrollment in a Rhode Island public institution of higher education.~~

1 ~~(c) No family/assistance unit shall be eligible for childcare assistance under this chapter if~~
2 ~~the combined value of its liquid resources exceeds one million dollars (\$1,000,000), which~~
3 ~~corresponds to the amount permitted by the federal government under the state plan and set forth~~
4 ~~in the administrative rulemaking process by the department. Liquid resources are defined as any~~
5 ~~interest(s) in property in the form of cash or other financial instruments or accounts that are readily~~
6 ~~convertible to cash or cash equivalents. These include, but are not limited to: cash, bank, credit~~
7 ~~union, or other financial institution savings, checking, and money market accounts; certificates of~~
8 ~~deposit or other time deposits; stocks; bonds; mutual funds; and other similar financial instruments~~
9 ~~or accounts. These do not include educational savings accounts, plans, or programs; retirement~~
10 ~~accounts, plans, or programs; or accounts held jointly with another adult, not including a spouse.~~
11 ~~The department is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to determine the ownership and~~
12 ~~source of the funds in the joint account.~~

13 ~~(d) As a condition of eligibility for childcare assistance under this chapter, the parent or~~
14 ~~caretaker relative of the family must consent to, and must cooperate with, the department in~~
15 ~~establishing paternity, and in establishing and/or enforcing child support and medical support~~
16 ~~orders for any children in the family receiving appropriate child care under this section in~~
17 ~~accordance with the applicable sections of title 15, as amended, unless the parent or caretaker~~
18 ~~relative is found to have good cause for refusing to comply with the requirements of this subsection.~~

19 ~~(e) For purposes of this section, "appropriate child care" means child care, including infant,~~
20 ~~toddler, preschool, nursery school, and school age, that is provided by a person or organization~~
21 ~~qualified, approved, and authorized to provide the care by the state agency or agencies designated~~
22 ~~to make the determinations in accordance with the provisions set forth herein.~~

23 ~~(f)(1) Families with incomes below one hundred percent (100%) of the applicable federal~~
24 ~~poverty level guidelines shall be provided with free child care. Families with incomes greater than~~
25 ~~one hundred percent (100%) and less than two hundred percent (200%) of the applicable federal~~
26 ~~poverty guideline shall be required to pay for some portion of the child care they receive, according~~
27 ~~to a sliding fee scale adopted by the department in the department's rules, not to exceed seven~~
28 ~~percent (7%) of income as defined in subsection (h) of this section.~~

29 ~~(2) Families who are receiving childcare assistance and who become ineligible for~~
30 ~~childcare assistance as a result of their incomes exceeding two hundred sixty one percent (261%)~~
31 ~~of the applicable federal poverty guidelines shall continue to be eligible for childcare assistance~~
32 ~~until their incomes exceed three hundred percent (300%) of the applicable federal poverty~~
33 ~~guidelines. To be eligible, the families must continue to pay for some portion of the child care they~~
34 ~~receive, as indicated in a sliding fee scale adopted in the department's rules, not to exceed seven~~

1 percent (7%) of income as defined in subsection (h) of this section, and in accordance with all other
2 eligibility standards.

3 (g) ~~In determining the type of child care to be provided to a family, the department shall~~
4 ~~take into account the cost of available childcare options; the suitability of the type of care available~~
5 ~~for the child; and the parent's preference as to the type of child care.~~

6 (h) ~~For purposes of this section, "income" for families receiving cash assistance under §~~
7 ~~40-5.2-11 means gross, earned income and unearned income, subject to the income exclusions in~~
8 ~~§§ 40-5.2-10(g)(2) and 40-5.2-10(g)(3), and income for other families shall mean gross, earned and~~
9 ~~unearned income as determined by departmental regulations.~~

10 (i) ~~The caseload estimating conference established by chapter 17 of title 35 shall forecast~~
11 ~~the expenditures for child care in accordance with the provisions of § 35-17-1.~~

12 (j) ~~In determining eligibility for childcare assistance for children of members of reserve~~
13 ~~components called to active duty during a time of conflict, the department shall freeze the family~~
14 ~~composition and the family income of the reserve component member as it was in the month prior~~
15 ~~to the month of leaving for active duty. This shall continue until the individual is officially~~
16 ~~discharged from active duty.~~

17 (k) ~~Effective from August 1, 2023, through July 31, 2025, the department shall provide~~
18 ~~funding for child care for eligible childcare educators, and childcare staff, who work at least twenty~~
19 ~~(20) hours a week in licensed childcare centers and licensed family childcare homes as defined in~~
20 ~~the department's rules and regulations. Eligibility is limited to qualifying childcare educators and~~
21 ~~childcare staff with family incomes up to three hundred percent (300%) of the applicable federal~~
22 ~~poverty guidelines and will have no copayments. Qualifying participants may select the childcare~~
23 ~~center or family childcare home for their children. The department shall promulgate regulations~~
24 ~~necessary to implement this section, and will collect applicant and participant data to report~~
25 ~~estimated demand for state funded child care for eligible childcare educators and childcare staff.~~
26 ~~The report shall be due to the governor and the general assembly by November 1, 2024.~~

27 SECTION 4. Section 40-6.2-1.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 40-6.2 entitled "Child
28 Care — State Subsidies" is hereby repealed.

29 **40-6.2-1.1. Rates established.**

30 (a) ~~Through June 30, 2015, subject to the payment limitations in subsection (c), the~~
31 ~~maximum reimbursement rates to be paid by the departments of human services and children, youth~~
32 ~~and families for licensed childcare centers and licensed family childcare providers shall be based~~
33 ~~on the following schedule of the 75th percentile of the 2002 weekly market rates adjusted for the~~
34 ~~average of the 75th percentile of the 2002 and the 2004 weekly market rates:~~

1	Licensed Childcare Centers	75th Percentile of Weekly Market Rate
2	Infant	\$182.00
3	Preschool	\$150.00
4	School Age	\$135.00

5	Licensed Family Childcare Providers	75th Percentile of Weekly Market Rate
6	Infant	\$150.00
7	Preschool	\$150.00
8	School Age	\$135.00

9 ~~Effective July 1, 2015, subject to the payment limitations in subsection (c), the maximum~~
10 ~~reimbursement rates to be paid by the departments of human services and children, youth and~~
11 ~~families for licensed childcare centers and licensed family childcare providers shall be based on the~~
12 ~~above schedule of the 75th percentile of the 2002 weekly market rates adjusted for the average of~~
13 ~~the 75th percentile of the 2002 and the 2004 weekly market rates. These rates shall be increased by~~
14 ~~ten dollars (\$10.00) per week for infant/toddler care provided by licensed family childcare~~
15 ~~providers and license exempt providers and then the rates for all providers for all age groups shall~~
16 ~~be increased by three percent (3%). For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018, licensed childcare~~
17 ~~centers shall be reimbursed a maximum weekly rate of one hundred ninety three dollars and sixty~~
18 ~~four cents (\$193.64) for infant/toddler care and one hundred sixty one dollars and seventy one~~
19 ~~cents (\$161.71) for preschool age children.~~

20 ~~(b) Effective July 1, 2018, subject to the payment limitations in subsection (c), the~~
21 ~~maximum infant/toddler and preschool age reimbursement rates to be paid by the departments of~~
22 ~~human services and children, youth and families for licensed childcare centers shall be~~
23 ~~implemented in a tiered manner, reflective of the quality rating the provider has achieved within~~
24 ~~the state's quality rating system outlined in § 42-12-23.1.~~

25 ~~(1) For infant/toddler child care, tier one shall be reimbursed two and one half percent~~
26 ~~(2.5%) above the FY 2018 weekly amount, tier two shall be reimbursed five percent (5%) above~~
27 ~~the FY 2018 weekly amount, tier three shall be reimbursed thirteen percent (13%) above the FY~~
28 ~~2018 weekly amount, tier four shall be reimbursed twenty percent (20%) above the FY 2018 weekly~~
29 ~~amount, and tier five shall be reimbursed thirty three percent (33%) above the FY 2018 weekly~~
30 ~~amount.~~

31 ~~(2) For preschool reimbursement rates, tier one shall be reimbursed two and one half~~
32 ~~percent (2.5%) above the FY 2018 weekly amount, tier two shall be reimbursed five percent (5%)~~
33 ~~above the FY 2018 weekly amount, tier three shall be reimbursed ten percent (10%) above the FY~~
34 ~~2018 weekly amount, tier four shall be reimbursed thirteen percent (13%) above the FY 2018~~

1 ~~weekly amount, and tier five shall be reimbursed twenty one percent (21%) above the FY 2018~~
2 ~~weekly amount.~~

3 ~~(e) [Deleted by P.L. 2019, ch. 88, art. 13, § 4.]~~

4 ~~(d) By June 30, 2004, and biennially through June 30, 2014, the department of labor and~~
5 ~~training shall conduct an independent survey or certify an independent survey of the then current~~
6 ~~weekly market rates for child care in Rhode Island and shall forward the weekly market rate survey~~
7 ~~to the department of human services. The next survey shall be conducted by June 30, 2016, and~~
8 ~~triennially thereafter. The departments of human services and labor and training will jointly~~
9 ~~determine the survey criteria including, but not limited to, rate categories and sub-categories.~~

10 ~~(e) In order to expand the accessibility and availability of quality child care, the department~~
11 ~~of human services is authorized to establish, by regulation, alternative or incentive rates of~~
12 ~~reimbursement for quality enhancements, innovative or specialized child care, and alternative~~
13 ~~methodologies of childcare delivery, including nontraditional delivery systems and collaborations.~~

14 ~~(f) Effective January 1, 2007, all childcare providers have the option to be paid every two~~
15 ~~(2) weeks and have the option of automatic direct deposit and/or electronic funds transfer of~~
16 ~~reimbursement payments.~~

17 ~~(g) Effective July 1, 2019, the maximum infant/toddler reimbursement rates to be paid by~~
18 ~~the departments of human services and children, youth and families for licensed family childcare~~
19 ~~providers shall be implemented in a tiered manner, reflective of the quality rating the provider has~~
20 ~~achieved within the state's quality rating system outlined in § 42-12-23.1. Tier one shall be~~
21 ~~reimbursed two percent (2%) above the prevailing base rate for step 1 and step 2 providers, three~~
22 ~~percent (3%) above prevailing base rate for step 3 providers, and four percent (4%) above the~~
23 ~~prevailing base rate for step 4 providers; tier two shall be reimbursed five percent (5%) above the~~
24 ~~prevailing base rate; tier three shall be reimbursed eleven percent (11%) above the prevailing base~~
25 ~~rate; tier four shall be reimbursed fourteen percent (14%) above the prevailing base rate; and tier~~
26 ~~five shall be reimbursed twenty three percent (23%) above the prevailing base rate.~~

27 ~~(h) Through December 31, 2021, the maximum reimbursement rates paid by the~~
28 ~~departments of human services, and children, youth and families to licensed childcare centers shall~~
29 ~~be consistent with the enhanced emergency rates provided as of June 1, 2021, as follows:~~

30

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
31 Infant/Toddler	\$257.54	\$257.54	\$257.54	\$257.54	\$273.00
32 Preschool Age	\$195.67	\$195.67	\$195.67	\$195.67	\$260.00
33 School Age	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$245.00

34 ~~The maximum reimbursement rates paid by the departments of human services, and~~

~~children, youth and families to licensed family childcare providers shall be consistent with the enhanced emergency rates provided as of June 1, 2021, as follows:~~

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Tier 5
Infant/Toddler	\$224.43	\$224.43	\$224.43	\$224.43	\$224.43
Preschool Age	\$171.45	\$171.45	\$171.45	\$171.45	\$171.45
School Age	\$162.30	\$162.30	\$162.30	\$162.30	\$162.30

~~(i) Effective January 1, 2022, the maximum reimbursement rates to be paid by the departments of human services and children, youth and families for licensed childcare centers shall be implemented in a tiered manner, reflective of the quality rating the provider has achieved within the state's quality rating system outlined in § 42-12-23.1. Maximum weekly rates shall be reimbursed as follows:~~

~~Licensed Childcare Centers~~

	Tier One	Tier Two	Tier Three	Tier Four	Tier Five
Infant/Toddler	\$236.36	\$244.88	\$257.15	\$268.74	\$284.39
Preschool	\$207.51	\$212.27	\$218.45	\$223.50	\$231.39
School Age	\$180.38	\$182.77	\$185.17	\$187.57	\$189.97

~~The maximum reimbursement rates for licensed family childcare providers paid by the departments of human services, and children, youth and families is determined through collective bargaining. The maximum reimbursement rates for infant/toddler and preschool age children paid to licensed family childcare providers by both departments is implemented in a tiered manner that reflects the quality rating the provider has achieved in accordance with § 42-12-23.1.~~

~~(j) Effective July 1, 2022, the maximum reimbursement rates to be paid by the departments of human services and children, youth and families for licensed childcare centers shall be implemented in a tiered manner, reflective of the quality rating the provider has achieved within the state's quality rating system outlined in § 42-12-23.1. Maximum weekly rates shall be reimbursed as follows:~~

~~Licensed Childcare Centers~~

	Tier One	Tier Two	Tier Three	Tier Four	Tier Five
Infant/Toddler	\$265	\$270	\$282	\$289	\$300
Preschool	\$225	\$235	\$243	\$250	\$260
School Age	\$200	\$205	\$220	\$238	\$250

~~(k) Effective July 1, 2024, the maximum reimbursement rates to be paid by the departments of human services and children, youth and families for licensed childcare centers shall be implemented in a tiered manner, reflective of the quality rating the provider has achieved within~~

1 ~~the state's quality rating system outlined in § 42-12-23.1. Maximum weekly rates shall be~~
2 ~~reimbursed as follows:~~

3 ~~Licensed Childcare Centers~~

	Tier One	Tier Two	Tier Three	Tier Four	Tier Five
Infant/Toddler	\$278	\$284	\$296	\$303	\$315
Preschool	\$236	\$247	\$255	\$263	\$273
School Age	\$210	\$215	\$231	\$250	\$263

8 SECTION 5. This act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

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LC000920
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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- RHODE ISLAND CHILDCARE IS ESSENTIAL ACT

1 This act would create the Rhode Island Childcare Assistance Program that governs both
2 family eligibility for the state’s childcare subsidy program and the rates paid to childcare providers
3 serving families receiving a subsidy. The act would expand eligibility for the program to meet the
4 federal eligibility benchmark so that families with incomes at or below eighty-five percent (85%)
5 of the state median income would be eligible. The act would allow families to continue eligibility
6 until their income exceeds one hundred percent (100%) of the state median income and would make
7 participation in the state’s child support enforcement program voluntary for the childcare subsidy.
8 The act would also increase the tiered rates of paid for licensed childcare centers to meet or exceed
9 the federal equal access benchmark, implement a new differential bonus rate for infants under age
10 eighteen (18) months and adopt fair payment practices consistent with the federal rules for the Child
11 Care and Development Fund.

12 This act would take effect on July 1, 2025.

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