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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Introduced By: Representatives Shallcross Smith, Casey, Cruz, Alzate, Casimiro, and Fellela

Date Introduced: February 27, 2026

Referred To: House Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 42-12-23.1 of the General Laws in Chapter 42-12 entitled  
2 "Department of Human Services" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **42-12-23.1. Quality of early care and education and school-age child care through**  
4 **voluntary quality rating system.**

5 (a) There is hereby established a voluntary quality rating system which will assess quality  
6 in early care and education programs and school-age child care. For purposes of this section, early  
7 care and education programs and school-age child care shall mean programs licensed under chapter  
8 12.5 of title 42 and approved under chapter 48 of title 16, including, without limitation, childcare  
9 centers, family childcare homes, group family childcare homes, school-age childcare programs and  
10 preschools, but excluding child placement agencies. The voluntary quality rating system is  
11 established to promote continuous quality improvement of programs and to further the goals of  
12 Rhode Island's "starting right" initiative.

13 (b) The department of human services, the department of children, youth and families, the  
14 department of health, the department of elementary and secondary education, and other partners  
15 and agencies shall share information and work cooperatively with the Rhode Island quality rating  
16 system, a public-private partnership, to ensure that Rhode Island children have access to quality  
17 early care and education programs and school-age child care.

18 (c) The voluntary quality rating system shall also provide a mechanism to gather data about

1 program quality, and shall report this information to parents, providers, and other persons interested  
2 in the quality of early care and education programs and school-age childcare services in Rhode  
3 Island.

4 (d) Any licensed child care facility including, but not limited to, a licensed child care center,  
5 licensed family child care home, group family child care home, or licensed school age program,  
6 that applies for a BrightStars quality rating and improvement system (“QRIS”) rating shall have  
7 the sum of all applicable standards averaged to determine the final awarded rating or star level.

8 (e) The department of human services shall ensure that the methodology used to calculate  
9 the final awarded rating under subsection (d) of this section is transparent, publicly available, and  
10 consistently applied to all participating licensed child care facilities.

11 (f) Nothing in subsection (d) of this section shall alter the existing provision that any  
12 licensed child care facility upon receiving national accreditation status shall be awarded a five star  
13 overall assessment through the QRIS.

14 (g) The department shall promulgate any rules and regulations necessary to implement the  
15 provisions of this section, including guidance on the calculation methodology, appeals process, and  
16 public reporting of ratings.

17 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

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SERVICES

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1           This act would require BrightStars QRIS ratings for licensed child care facilities to be  
2 based on an average of all standards, ensure transparent scoring methods, and preserve automatic  
3 five-star ratings for nationally accredited programs.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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