

2022 -- S 2679

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LC005148
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

A N A C T

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- EARLY LEARNING HUBS

Introduced By: Senators DiMario, Cano, Gallo, Lawson, Valverde, DiPalma, Miller,
Seveney, Coyne, and Burke

Date Introduced: March 15, 2022

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 40 of the General Laws entitled "HUMAN SERVICES" is hereby
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 6.7

4 EARLY LEARNING HUBS

5 **40-6.7-1. Definitions.**

6 As used in this chapter:

7 (1) "Early learning hub" means any entity serving as an intermediary among regional
8 partners to coordinate support for early learning providers in the delivery of early childhood care
9 and education, as determined by rules adopted by the department of human services.

10 (2) "Early learning intermediary" means any Rhode Island-based entity with experience
11 and expertise in the design, implementation and/or evaluation of early childhood care and
12 education, who has the capacity and authority, as determined by the department of human services,
13 to coordinate programs, resources and services intended to support other early childhood care and
14 learning providers to offer, expand or improve service delivery to children and families in Rhode
15 Island.

16 (3) "Regional partners" may include, but are not limited to, early childhood care and
17 education providers, community-based service providers, the Rhode Island department of
18 education, the Rhode Island department of labor and training, cities or towns, school districts,
19 community colleges, public universities, private educational institutions, faith-based organizations,

1 and tribes.

2 **40-6.7-2. Early learning hubs established.**

3 (a) The department of human services shall establish no more than five (5) early learning
4 hubs throughout the state, coordinated by early learning intermediaries identified by the
5 department.

6 (b) Led by early learning intermediaries, the early learning hubs, shall serve as one-stop
7 service centers to support early childhood care and education providers, and those looking to
8 become providers, to access resources, receive technical assistance, achieve licensing and other
9 quality standards, recruit and retain qualified staff, and deliver high-quality early childhood
10 services.

11 (c) The department shall ensure that early learning hubs:

12 (i) Conduct outreach to early childhood care and education providers to assess the most
13 critical needs facing providers in the delivery of high-quality services to children and families;

14 (ii) Convene and coordinate regional partners for the purpose of coordinating resources
15 and services aimed at building capacity among early childhood care and education providers;

16 (iii) Reduce barriers facing prospective, new or existing early childhood care and education
17 providers in establishing, expanding or improving programs in the early childhood care and
18 learning system in Rhode Island;

19 (iv) Evaluate the impact of enhanced and streamlined services to providers through
20 measures defined by the department.

21 (d) The department of human services may promulgate rules and regulations to achieve the
22 purpose of this chapter.

23 **40-6.7-3. Proposals and requirements.**

24 (a) The department shall implement a process for requesting proposals from entities to
25 become early learning hubs. Proposals submitted under this subsection must comply with criteria
26 and requirements adopted by the department by rule, including:

27 (1) The entity will be able to coordinate early learning provider support services.

28 (2) The entity will ensure that the support services will be in alignment with, and further
29 the quality standards defined by the department of human services and department of elementary
30 and secondary education.

31 (3) The entity will be able to integrate efforts among education and workforce providers,
32 providers of health and human services and providers of other programs and services in the
33 community.

34 (4) The entity will use coordinated and transparent budgeting.

1 (5) The entity will operate in a fiscally sound manner.

2 (6) The entity must have or establish a community advisory body that:

3 (i) Has the authority to initiate audits, recommend the terms of a contract and provide
4 reports to the public and to the department on the outcomes of the provision of early learning
5 services to the community served by the entity.

6 (ii) Has members selected through a transparent process and includes both public and
7 private entities, locally based parents and service recipients, social service providers, childcare
8 providers, and representatives of local governments from the service area.

9 (7) The entity will collaborate on documentation related to coordinated services with public
10 and private entities that are identified by the department as providers of services that advance the
11 early learning of children.

12 (8) The entity will serve a community that is based on the population and service needs of
13 the community and will demonstrate the ability to improve results for children served by the
14 providers in the early learning hub’s network.

15 (9) The entity will be able to raise and leverage significant funds from public and private
16 sources and to secure in-kind support to support early learning services coordinated by the entity
17 and operate in a fiscally sound manner.

18 (10) The entity may provide administrative support, such as, but not limited to, payroll,
19 inventory, or staffing support, to providers within the entity’s early learning hub.

20 (11) The entity meets any other qualifications established by the department.

21 (d) The department may adopt by rule requirements that are in addition to the requirements
22 described in this section that an entity must meet to qualify as an early learning hub. When
23 developing the additional requirements, the department must use a statewide public process of
24 community engagement that is consistent with the requirements of the federal Head Start Act.

25 (e) When determining whether to designate an entity as an early learning hub, the
26 department shall balance the following factors:

27 (1) The entity’s ability to engage the community and be involved in the community.

28 (2) The entity’s ability to produce outcomes that benefit children.

29 (3) The entity’s resourcefulness.

30 (4) The entity’s use, or proposed use, of evidence-based practices.

31 (5) The entity’s ability to develop a mixed delivery early childcare system that includes
32 infant childcare and pre-Kindergarten education.

33 (f) The department shall use appropriate and relevant metrics for the purpose of providing
34 funding to early learning hubs designated under this section. The metrics must:

1 (1) Focus on community readiness, high capacity development and progress toward
2 tracking child outcomes;

3 (2) Establish a baseline of information for the area to be served by the early learning hub,
4 including information about the inclusion of community partners in the governance structure of the
5 early learning hub, the availability of data on local programs and outcomes and the success in
6 leveraging private, nonprofit and other governmental resources for early learning; and

7 (3) Include child performance metrics.

8 (g) An entity designated as part of an early learning hub may not use more than fifteen
9 percent (15%) of the monies received by the entity from the department to pay administrative costs
10 of the entity.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- EARLY LEARNING HUBS

1 This act would establish "early learning hubs" to serve as an intermediary among regional
2 partners in order to coordinate support for early learning providers in the delivery of early childhood
3 care and education.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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