

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 46th Legislature (1998)

HOUSE BILL NO. 2474

By: Seikel

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to child care; providing for legislative purposes; requiring the Department of Human Services to provide and augment duties and responsibilities to certain persons providing child care services; providing legislative intent; providing for codification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 430 of Title 10, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. 1. The Oklahoma Legislature recognizes the importance of providing quality child care to the children of this state so that they can grow to be productive and successful adults.

2. The Oklahoma Legislature also recognizes the importance of having affordable child care for those parents who entrust their children to child care facilities in this state.

3. Further, the Oklahoma Legislature recognizes the important services that child care facilities provide in this state.

4. Therefore, to effectively assure that the highest quality, affordable child care is available to families in this state, the

Legislature supports programs, services and initiatives that will achieve these objectives.

B. As an augmentation to the child care component of the Statewide Temporary Assistance Responsibility System (STARS) and to other programs providing for child care assistance benefits, the Department of Human Services, the Oklahoma Health Care Authority, and other state entities shall:

1. Increase the child care reimbursement rate for both metropolitan and rural areas of the state with special emphasis on those child care providers who serve:

- a. infants 0-6 months of age,
- b. children with disabilities, and
- c. clients needing weekend, evening or shift child care;

2. In order to enhance child care services, encourage stronger private/public partnerships at the community level in order to provide training and continued education for child care providers;

3. Generally expedite child care assistance eligibility application approval process;

4. Establish presumptive eligibility for temporary assistance to needy families for child care and provide for reimbursements at the time the child is authorized for placement in child care;

5. Provide for additional grants, stipends, scholarships for training and upgrading personnel and equipment with specific emphasis on strengthening child care development in rural areas;

6. Assign additional personnel to licensing and field staff divisions of the Department;

7. Allow for differing child care provider requirements based on metropolitan and rural areas including but not limited to allowing decrease in staff ratios for children under two (2) and in the transportation of children;

8. Assist in development of transportation services of children to child care and parents to work or school; and

9. Promote mutual respect and understanding between the Department.

C. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact mechanisms and initiatives with regard to affordable and highest quality child care service and programs including, but not limited to, authorizing the design and establishment of special license plates for child welfare services; a voluntary child care check-off on state tax refunds; to fund quality enhancements in licensed child care facilities, tax credits for owners and operators of licensed child care facilities who provide services to the children of persons receiving state benefits; and innovative loan programs for construction, renovation, equipment and working capital needs for licensed child care services in this state.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 1998.

SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

46-2-9117

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