

HB 2964-S2 - DIGEST

(DIGEST AS ENACTED)

Finds that the early years of a child's life are critical to the child's healthy brain development and that the quality of caregiving during the early years can significantly impact the child's intellectual, social, and emotional development.

Declares that the purpose of this act is: (1) To establish the department of early learning, the purpose of which is to coordinate and consolidate child care and early learning programs;

(2) To safeguard the health, safety, and well-being of children receiving child care and early learning services, which is paramount over the right of any person to provide care;

(3) To promote linkages and alignment between early learning programs and elementary schools and support the transition of children and families from prekindergarten environments to kindergarten;

(4) To promote the development of a sufficient number and variety of adequate child care and early learning facilities, both public and private; and

(5) To license agencies and to assure the users of such agencies, their parents, the community at large and the agencies themselves that adequate minimum standards are maintained by all child care and early learning facilities.

Provides that two years after the implementation of the department's early learning program, and every two years thereafter by July 1st, the department shall submit to the governor and the legislature a report measuring the effectiveness of its programs in improving early childhood education. The first report shall include program objectives and identified valid performance measures for evaluating progress toward achieving the objectives, as well as a plan for commissioning a longitudinal study comparing the kindergarten readiness of children participating in the department's programs with the readiness of other children, using nationally accepted testing and assessment methods. Such comparison shall include, but not be limited to, achievement as children of both groups progress through the K-12 system and identify year-to-year changes in achievement, if any, in later years of elementary, middle school, and high school education.