

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 515 Session of
2001

INTRODUCED BY BLAUM, GEORGE, CAPPABIANCA, GEIST, ROONEY, HERMAN,
DeLUCA, GRUCELA, DeWEESE, BELFANTI, WASHINGTON, COY, BELARDI,
SOLOBAY, WALKO, SHANER, STURLA, MANN, THOMAS, HENNESSEY,
STABACK, BISHOP, SCRIMENTI, HARHAI, FRANKEL, WOGAN, CURRY,
KAISER, FREEMAN, JOSEPHS, LAUGHLIN, BUTKOVITZ, STEELMAN,
CIVERA, McCALL, L. I. COHEN, C. WILLIAMS AND BROWNE,
FEBRUARY 6, 2001

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH, FEBRUARY 6, 2001

AN ACT

1 Providing for a Statewide Child Day-Care Resource and Referral
2 System; and imposing additional responsibilities upon the
3 Department of Public Welfare.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Child Day-
8 Care Resource and Referral Act.

9 Section 2. Legislative findings.

10 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

11 (1) The demand for high quality, affordable, accessible
12 child day care has increased dramatically in the last decade
13 in correlation with a dramatic increase in the labor force
14 participation rate of parents with young children.

15 (2) Approximately 190,000 children are currently in care
16 through a variety of child day-care programs in this

1 Commonwealth.

2 (3) A comprehensive, coordinated effort is needed to
3 ensure that accurate, up-to-date child day-care information
4 is readily available and easy to access.

5 (4) Local child day-care resource and referral services
6 are beneficial to:

7 (i) working parents of all economic means by
8 enabling them to make informed choices in selecting and
9 purchasing the child day care that best meets their
10 family's unique needs;

11 (ii) existing and prospective child day-care
12 providers in their efforts to develop and maintain safe,
13 high-quality child day-care services;

14 (iii) businesses by providing them with information
15 to use in responding to child day-care needs of their
16 employees; and

17 (iv) the community-at-large by contributing directly
18 to the health, safety and well-being of this
19 Commonwealth's children and their families.

20 Section 3. Definitions.

21 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
22 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
23 context clearly indicates otherwise:

24 "Child day care." Care in lieu of parental care, given for
25 part of the 24-hour day to children under 16 years of age, away
26 from their own homes. The term does not include child day care
27 furnished in places of worship during religious services.

28 "Child day-care resource and referral agency." A public or
29 private nonprofit entity that performs functions related to
30 child day-care resource and referral services. The term includes

1 an association or a corporation.

2 "Child day-care resource and referral services." The term
3 includes, but is not limited to, the following:

4 (1) The provision of updated information to the parents,
5 employers and individuals in a community regarding the
6 availability, cost and quality of child day-care services in
7 a defined geographic area.

8 (2) Assistance to parents so they can make informed
9 decisions regarding appropriate, affordable child day-care
10 services for their children.

11 (3) Information to employers on programs designed to
12 meet the child day-care needs of employees.

13 (4) Provision of start-up information to potential child
14 day-care providers to increase the supply of providers.

15 "Department." The Department of Public Welfare of the
16 Commonwealth.

17 Section 4. Resource and referral services.

18 The department shall arrange for child day-care resource and
19 referral services across this Commonwealth through contracts
20 with public or private entities that can fulfill the
21 responsibility of a child day-care resource and referral agency,
22 which shall provide, at a minimum, the following services:

23 (1) Identification of all State-approved child day-care
24 providers in their specific geographic area and a profile of
25 each provider to indicate the types of services they provide
26 and the costs of such services.

27 (2) Maintenance of a regularly updated resource file
28 that demonstrates supply and demand of services.

29 (3) Maintenance of a resource and referral service for
30 child day-care users and assistance, if requested, in

1 evaluating child day-care needs and appropriateness of types
2 of child day care.

3 (4) Establishment of a public education program to
4 inform consumers and provide referral counseling about child
5 day-care options, including information on types of child day
6 care, availability, cost and standards, through such means as
7 printed materials, telephone contacts, education sessions or
8 workshops and resource libraries.

9 (5) Provision of information and technical assistance to
10 providers and prospective providers, as requested. Types of
11 information to be made available shall include, but not be
12 limited to, information regarding career opportunities in the
13 field, continuing education, training opportunities,
14 accreditation programs, regulatory requirements, food
15 programs and demographic information to determine the
16 existence of markets for services and to help stimulate the
17 supply of child day-care services needed in the area.

18 (6) Provision of information to employers who are trying
19 to meet the child day-care needs of their employees.

20 (7) Collection and maintenance of data, as may be useful
21 in State and local planning efforts, on the number and usage
22 of different child day-care providers, the type, availability
23 and cost of child day care in a particular geographic area
24 and demographic information to determine whether the supply
25 meets the demand for child day-care services in a given area.

26 (8) Provision of information to low-income parents about
27 child day-care services for which they may be eligible and
28 referral to a local entity responsible for administering
29 Federal and State child day care funds. The child day-care
30 resource and referral agency shall also provide to parents

1 receiving public assistance information about child day-care
2 services for which they may be eligible, and how they can
3 access those funds. The child day-care resource and referral
4 agency shall avoid duplicating services and shall develop
5 procedures to streamline services for all low-income parents
6 needing child day-care services.

7 Section 5. Standard operating procedures.

8 Local management agencies, as providers of child day-care
9 resource and referral services shall:

10 (1) Conduct business during hours convenient to working
11 parents, including some evening and weekend hours, if deemed
12 necessary.

13 (2) Have the authority to establish a reasonable range
14 of fees for services, with the approval of the department.

15 (3) Advertise their services. All recipients of services
16 shall be informed of applicable fees prior to the provision
17 of such services, as designated in this act.

18 (4) Tailor services provided for in this act to the
19 geographically defined area in which they are located.

20 (5) Seek opportunities to provide educational and
21 consumer awareness programs.

22 (6) Utilize, to the maximum extent, the most cost-
23 effective means of providing child day-care resource and
24 referral services in accordance with this act, including, but
25 not limited to, public-private partnerships, where deemed
26 appropriate, and contractual arrangements with existing
27 providers of resource and referral services.

28 (7) Maintain confidentiality of records. Information
29 contained in the records shall not be publicly disclosed in
30 such a manner so as to identify individuals. Certain

1 nonidentifying information may, however, be collected in
2 aggregate form for the purposes of data collection.

3 (8) Report to the department on a regular basis
4 information regarding:

5 (i) The number of parents and children served.

6 (ii) The extent of assistance given to providers,
7 parents, businesses and others.

8 (iii) Fees charged for resource and referral
9 services provided for in this act.

10 (iv) The impact of the resource and referral
11 services on quality and availability of child day care in
12 their particular geographically defined area.

13 (v) Any recommendations that may contribute to the
14 improvement of the provision of child day-care resource
15 and referral services.

16 Section 6. Annual report.

17 The department shall submit an annual report to the General
18 Assembly which shall reflect the information collected by the
19 child day-care resource and referral agencies designated by the
20 department. The report shall describe how the child day-care
21 resource and referral agencies further the department's goal to
22 improve the quality, availability and affordability of child
23 day-care services. This report shall also include any
24 recommendations of the department for improvements to the
25 Statewide resource and referral system, as well as the
26 availability of private, corporate and government funding for
27 resource and referral services.

28 Section 7. Regulations.

29 The department shall, in the manner provided by law,
30 promulgate the regulations necessary to establish child day-care

1 resource and referral services to be offered in accordance with
2 this chapter.

3 Section 8. Resource and referral services implementation.

4 The department shall establish a three-year implementation
5 schedule for phasing in child day-care resource and referral
6 services throughout this Commonwealth.

7 Section 9. Effective date.

8 This act shall take effect July 1, 2001.