SENATE BILL 857

F5, O4 5lr2646

By: Senator Henson

Introduced and read first time: January 28, 2025 Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

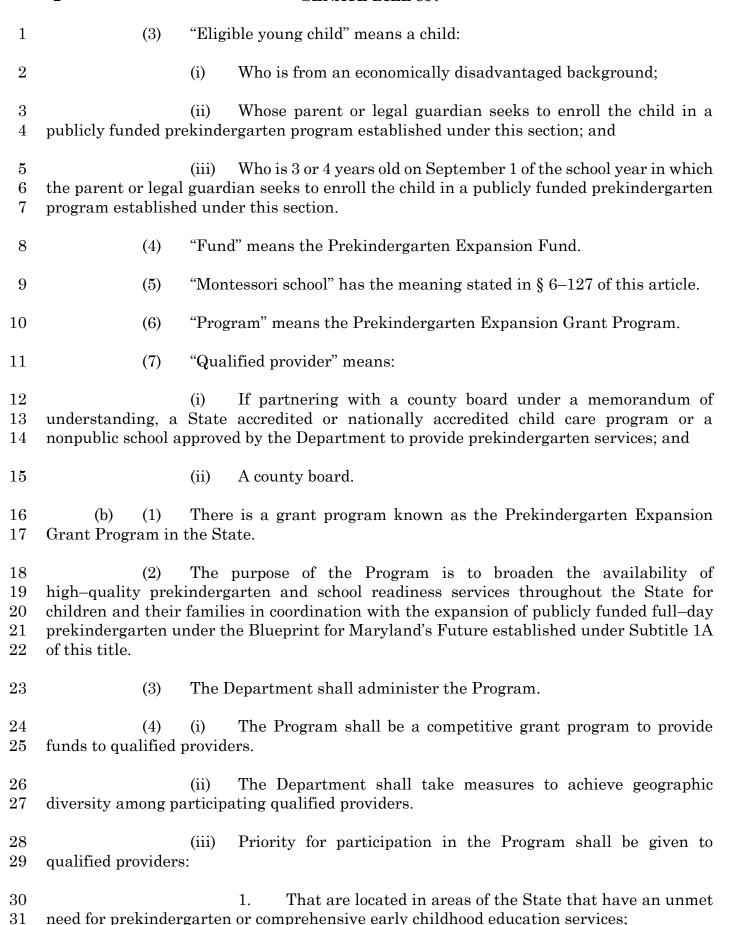
1 AN ACT concerning

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Child Care - Prekindergarten Expansion Grant Modifications and Workgroup

- 3 FOR the purpose of altering the use of Prekindergarten Expansion Grants to add slots for additional children and not supplant childcare slots for infants and toddlers; 4 5 requiring applications for the grant to use certain terminology and be accompanied 6 by certain instructions; establishing certain grant processing due dates; requiring 7 the State Department of Education to establish a multiyear grant award process, 8 provide a certain proportion of grant funding on or before a certain date each year, 9 and provide technical assistance to certain grant applicants and recipients; requiring the Department to convene a workgroup to explore and make recommendations on 10 11 opportunities to incentivize growth in certain child care providers; and generally 12 relating to child care and the Prekindergarten Expansion Grant.
- 13 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
- 14 Article Education
- 15 Section 7–101.2
- 16 Annotated Code of Maryland
- 17 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)
- 18 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
- 19 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:
- 20 Article Education
- 21 7–101.2.
- 22 (a) (1) In this section the following terms have the meanings indicated.
- 23 (2) "Economically disadvantaged background" means a family whose 24 income is no more than 300% of the federal poverty guidelines.





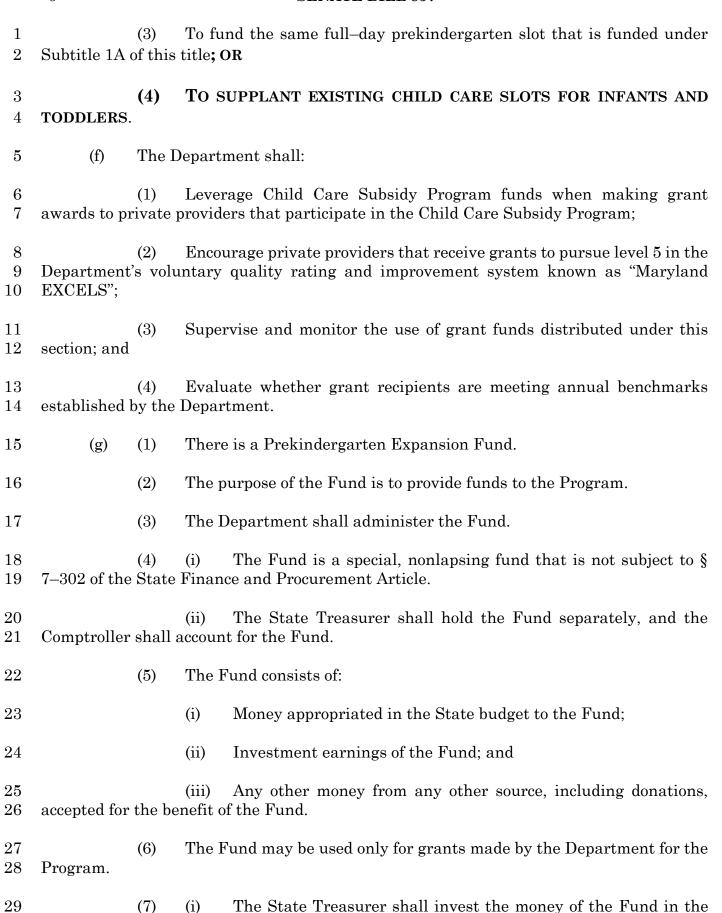
$\frac{1}{2}$	2. That include a plan for long-term sustainability, including community and business partnerships and matching funds to the extent possible; and
3 4	3. That incorporate parental engagement and the benefits of educational activities beyond the classroom into the providers' programs.
5 6 7	(iv) Prekindergarten Expansion Grants may be used to [expand prekindergarten services] ADD AVAILABLE SLOTS TO PROVIDE PREKINDERGARTEN SERVICES TO ADDITIONAL CHILDREN, including:
8	1. Establishing or expanding full—day prekindergarten for eligible young children; and
10	2. Expanding existing half-day prekindergarten programs into full-day prekindergarten programs for eligible young children.
2	(v) The Department may establish:
13 14	1. Additional eligibility criteria for the selection of qualified providers;
15 16 17 18	2. [Application] SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPHS (VI) AND (VII) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, APPLICATION and award processes including the submission date for applications, renewal procedures, and application review processes for making awards under the Program; and
19 20	3. Any other policies and procedures necessary to implement the Program.
21 22 23	
24 25	2. APPLICATIONS FOR A GRANT UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL BE DUE ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 15.
26 27 28	3. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE GRANT APPLICANTS WITH A NOTICE OF A GRANT AWARD OR GRANT DENIAL ON OR BEFORE MARCH 1.
29 30	(VII) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH A MULTIYEAR GRANT AWARD PROCESS SO THAT RECIPIENTS WILL HAVE GREATER PREDICTABILITY AND

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FINANCIAL STABILITY FROM YEAR TO YEAR.

1 2	(VIII) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE 100% OF THE GRANT AMOUNT TO THE GRANT RECIPIENT ON OR BEFORE JULY 1.					
3 4 5	(IX) 1. THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON THE GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS TO:					
6	A. MULTILINGUAL APPLICANTS;					
7	B. FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDERS; AND					
8	C. SMALL, INDEPENDENT CHILD CARE PROVIDERS.					
9 10 11	2. To the extent practicable, the Department may provide the technical assistance through a hub model under $\$ 7–1A–05 of this title.					
12 13	3. THE DEPARTMENT MAY CONTRACT WITH A THIRD PARTY TO PROVIDE THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.					
14 15 16 17	(c) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, before approving qualified providers for prekindergarten services to receive a grant under this section, a qualified provider shall certify to the Department that for each classroom funded under this section the provider will:					
18 19	(i) Maintain a student-to-classroom personnel ratio of no more than 10 to 1 with a maximum of 20 children per classroom;					
20 21	(ii) Provide in each classroom at least one teacher and at least one teacher's aide who meet the high staff qualifications of § 7–1A–04(a)(1)(i) of this title;					
22	(iii) Operate an educational program for:					
23	1. 5 days per week;					
$\begin{array}{c} 24 \\ 25 \end{array}$	2. 180 days per year, in accordance with the public school calendar established by the local school board; and					
26 27	3. A. For half–day programs, at least 2.5 hours per day; or					
28	B. For full-day programs, at least 6.5 hours per day; and					
29 30	(iv) To receive a grant under this section, meet the requirements of § 7–1A–04 of this title.					

1 2 3 4	(2) Before approving qualified providers who are Montessori schools or Montessori programs for prekindergarten services to receive a grant under this section, a qualified provider shall certify to the Department that for each classroom funded under this section the provider will:				
5 6	subsection;	i) Meet	the requirements under paragraph (1)(iii) of this		
7 8 9	than 10 to 1, with a maximum of 20 students per classroom if all of the students are under				
10 11 12	than 14 to 1, with a maximum of 28 students per classroom if some of the students are at				
13	(iv) Require a classroom teacher to:				
14		1.	Hold a bachelor's degree in any field; and		
15		2.	Hold a Montessori credential issued by:		
16		A.	The Association Montessori Internationale;		
17		В.	The American Montessori Society; or		
18 19					
20 21 22	Governor shall annually appropriate to the Fund an amount that is at least equal to the				
23 24 25	shall be consolidated into the publicly funded full-day prekindergarten program				
26 27	(2) The Governor may provide funds to the Department to administer the Program.				
28	(e) Grants awarded under this section may not be used:				
29	(1) To supplant existing funding for prekindergarten services;				
30	(2) F	For capital i	mprovements; [or]		



same manner as other State money may be invested.

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(ii) Investment earnings of the Fund shall be paid into the Fund. 1 2(8)Expenditures from the Fund may be made only in accordance with the 3 State budget. 4 In accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the Department shall report to the General Assembly by November 1 of each year on the implementation of 5 6 the Program. 7 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That: 8 The State Department of Education shall convene a workgroup of child care providers in the State to explore opportunities to incentivize growth in child care providers 9 10 with slots for infants and toddlers. 11 (b) On or before December 1, 2025, the Department shall report to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, on 12 13 recommendations resulting from the workgroup.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July

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