

HOUSE BILL NO. 648

INTRODUCED BY A. BUCKLEY, T. WELCH, G. NIKOLAKAKOS, G. FRAZER, E. BUTTREY, G. OBLANDER,
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HOWELL

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE BEST BEGINNINGS CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; SETTING THE INCOME ELIGIBILITY LEVEL AT ~~200%~~ 185% OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY LEVEL; REQUIRING A MONTHLY COPAYMENT FROM AN ELIGIBLE FAMILY; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTION 52-2-713, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Best beginnings child care scholarship program.** There is a best beginnings child care scholarship program administered by the department. The program is established to provide scholarships to qualified low-income families whose child received care provided by a licensed OR REGISTERED child care provider or day-care facility.

NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Family income eligibility requirements.** In determining income eligibility for the best beginnings child care scholarship program, the department shall:

(1) set a qualifying income threshold at no less than ~~200%~~ 185% of the federal poverty level for each family size; AND

(2) SET A MAXIMUM QUALIFYING INCOME LEVEL THAT IS NO HIGHER THAN THAT ALLOWED BY THE FEDERAL CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT.

NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Copayment requirements.** Each eligible family shall participate in the cost of child care by making a copayment. ~~The department shall establish the following copayment amounts:~~

(1) ~~for an eligible family with a qualifying income less than 100% of the federal poverty level, a~~

1 copayment of \$10 for each eligible family for each month; and
2 (2) ~~for an eligible family with a qualifying income of 100% of the federal poverty level or more, a~~
3 ~~copayment based~~ BASED on a sliding fee scale not to exceed ~~7%~~ 9% of an eligible family's monthly income.

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5 **Section 4.** Section 52-2-713, MCA, is amended to read:

6 **"52-2-713. Payments for eligible children.** The department shall pay a rate ~~established by the~~
7 ~~department and appropriated by the legislature~~ based on a child's AUTHORIZED enrollment SLOT and set at the
8 child's monthly authorized amount to a day-care facility licensed or registered by the department for each child
9 receiving day-care service and certified eligible by the department to receive day-care services."

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11 NEW SECTION. Section 5. Appropriation. There is appropriated \$10 million from the general fund
12 to the department of public health and human services in each year of the biennium beginning July 1, 2023, for
13 the purposes of [sections 1 through 4].

14
15 NEW SECTION. Section 6. Codification instruction. [Sections 1 through 3] are intended to be
16 codified as an integral part of Title 52, chapter 2, part 7, and the provisions of Title 52, chapter 2, part 7, apply
17 to [sections 1 through 3].

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19 NEW SECTION. Section 7. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2023.

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