

2014 -- S 2317

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2014

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A N A C T

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES - THE RHODE ISLAND WORKS PROGRAM

Introduced By: Senators Crowley, Goldin, Pichardo, Cool Rumsey, and Miller

Date Introduced: February 12, 2014

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 40-5.2-20 of the General Laws in Chapter 40-5.2 entitled "The  
2 Rhode Island Works Program" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **40-5.2-20. Child care assistance.** -- Families or assistance units eligible for childcare  
4 assistance.

5 (a) The department shall provide appropriate child care to every participant who is  
6 eligible for cash assistance and who requires child care in order to meet the work requirements in  
7 accordance with this chapter.

8 (b) Low-Income child care. - The department shall provide child care to all other  
9 working families with incomes at or below one hundred eighty percent (180%) of the federal  
10 poverty level, if and to the extent such other families require child care in order to work at paid  
11 employment as defined in the department's rules and regulations- or for time spent in an education  
12 or training program provided, that the adult member of the family is employed for at least twenty  
13 (20) hours per week and child care is required for the adult to attend the program.

14 (c) No family/assistance unit shall be eligible for child care assistance under this chapter  
15 if the combined value of its liquid resources exceeds ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). Liquid  
16 resources are defined as any interest(s) in property in the form of cash or other financial  
17 instruments or accounts which are readily convertible to cash or cash equivalents. These include,  
18 but are not limited to, cash, bank, credit union, or other financial institution savings, checking and  
19 money market accounts, certificates of deposit or other time deposits, stocks, bonds, mutual

1 funds, and other similar financial instruments or accounts. These do not include educational  
2 savings accounts, plans, or programs; retirement accounts, plans, or programs; or accounts held  
3 jointly with another adult, not including a spouse. The department is authorized to promulgate  
4 rules and regulations to determine the ownership and source of the funds in the joint account.

5 (d) As a condition of eligibility for child care assistance under this chapter, the parent or  
6 caretaker relative of the family must consent to and must cooperate with the department in  
7 establishing paternity, and in establishing and/or enforcing child support and medical support  
8 orders for all children in the family in accordance with title 15 of the general laws, as amended,  
9 unless the parent or caretaker relative is found to have good cause for refusing to comply with the  
10 requirements of this subsection.

11 (e) For purposes of this section "appropriate child care" means child care, including  
12 infant ~~oddler~~ toddler, pre-school, nursery school, school-age, which is provided by a person or  
13 organization qualified, approved, and authorized to provide such care by the department of  
14 children, youth, and families, or by the department of elementary and secondary education, or  
15 such other lawful providers as determined by the department of human services, in cooperation  
16 with the department of children, youth and families and the department of elementary and  
17 secondary education.

18 (f) Families with incomes below one hundred percent (100%) of the applicable federal  
19 poverty level guidelines shall be provided with free childcare. Families with incomes greater than  
20 one hundred percent (100%) and less than one hundred eighty (180%) of the applicable federal  
21 poverty guideline shall be required to pay for some portion of the childcare they receive,  
22 according to a sliding fee scale adopted by the department in the department's rules.

23 (g) In determining the type of childcare to be provided to a family, the department shall  
24 take into account the cost of available childcare options, the suitability of the type of care  
25 available for the child, and the parent's preference as to the type of child care.

26 (h) For purposes of this section "income" for families receiving cash assistance under  
27 section 40-5.2-11 means gross earned income and unearned income, subject to the income  
28 exclusions in subdivisions 40-5.2-10(g)(2) and 40-5.2-10(g)(3) and income for other families  
29 shall mean gross earned and unearned income as determined by departmental regulations.

30 (i) The caseload estimating conference established by chapter 17 of title 35 shall forecast  
31 the expenditures for childcare in accordance with the provisions of section 35-17-1.

32 (j) In determining eligibility for child care assistance for children of members of reserve  
33 components called to active duty during a time of conflict, the department shall freeze the family  
34 composition and the family income of the reserve component member as it was in the month prior

1 to the month of leaving for active duty. This shall continue until the individual is officially  
2 discharged from active duty.

3 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
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1           This act would allow a family to qualify for low-income child care assistance for the time  
2 an adult member of the family is participating in education or training, provided that the adult is  
3 working at least 20 hours per week, and such child care is necessary.

4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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